

Christ prophet priest and king theology religion essay



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Berkhof says, " It has been customary to speak of three offices in connection with the work of Christ, namely the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly office" (Berkhof, p. 356). The Old Testament tells us that Israel had three main offices and these are Prophet, Priest and the King. All these offices pictured the work of the Messiah here on earth. The early church fathers believed in the existence of three offices and among those Calvin was the one who recognized the importance of differentiating these offices (Berkhof, p. 356). It would be wrong to assume that all people agree that there are three offices in connection with Christ's work. Some theologians recognize the existence of prophetic and priestly offices only. The question that will be dealt with in this paper is who is a prophet? What are their functions? How is Jesus Christ a Prophet, Priest and King? The paper will also present the views of other people pertaining to the prophetic, Priestly and Kingly office of Jesus Christ.

Prophetic institution dates back in Exodus when God chose Aaron to be Moses' spokesman. In Deut. 18: 14-15 Moses as the first major prophet forewarned the Israelites before possessing the promised land that they must not listen and practice sorcery and divination because the Lord their God whom they serve never allowed them to do so. He told them that God would raise up a prophet like him among themselves and they must listen to him. A prophet is a person who speaks on behalf of God or God's spokesman. In other words they are people who represent God to people and also represent people before God. Or they are " go between" between God and people. The Old Testament predicted that the Christ would come as a

Prophet. In the New Testament we read about Christ speaking of himself as a Prophet (Luke 13: 33).

Grudem (1994) says, " Christ as a prophet fulfills this office by revealing God to us and also by speaking God's words to us" (p. 625). A prophet receives divine revelations from God and passes these messages on to people. So Christ as a prophet he claimed to bring a message from the father (Jn 8: 26-28). He was the great prophet in all history. Grudem (1994) said, " Christ's greatness as a prophet was in two ways. He (Jesus Christ) claimed that all the prophecies in the Old Testament were about him" (Grudem. p 625 - 626). Luke 24: 27 says that Jesus Christ interpreted all what the scripture said about him beginning with Moses and all the prophets. The other way is that Jesus was and is the source as well as the messenger of God's revelation. Watson (1997) said, " Christ as a prophet he taught externally by his word and inwardly by the spirit" (Watson, p. 166). When Christ is teaching he exhibits a difference in that he teaches the heart and gives us a taste of the word. His teaching causes people to obey and instills in us a desire to learn. Christ's teachings are illuminative in nature.

In explaining the Priestly office of Jesus Christ Grudem present us three functions of how Christ was and is a Priest. As a Priest Christ offered himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. Not only that, he (Jesus Christ) persistently presents us near to God. The last way is that Jesus Christ as the Priest prays for us unceasingly (Grudem, p. 626-627). Something very insightful I discovered from Grudem is that Adam was a Prophet, Priest and King. In his role as a Prophet Adam had the true knowledge about God and that in his true knowledge he was honest to God and his creation. In his role as a Priest <https://assignbuster.com/christ-prophet-priest-and-king-theology-religion-essay/>

Adam would offer prayers and praises to God freely. These were prayers and praises of thanksgiving and not of sin (Heb. 13: 5). The couple in the Garden of Eden (Adam and Eve) as Kings (or King and Queen) was given power to rule over God's creation (Gen. 1: 26-28). The entrance of sin in the Garden of Eden made these offices to no longer function as they were supposed to. Partial restoration of these offices came during when Israel was a kingdom. The coming of Christ fulfilled these roles (Prophet, Priest and King). In defining a Priest Hodge (1976) said, " A Priest is a man divinely chosen, qualified, and authorized to appear before God and to act in behalf of men." He differentiated a Priest and a Prophet by saying that a Priest goes up from man Godward while a Prophet comes from God manward" (Hodge, p. 208).

The questions are do these roles exist today? If the answer is yes, how do we (as Christians) fulfill these roles today? In answering these questions Grudem said that as prophets we fulfill this role when we truthfully speak about God to believers and nonbelievers (Grudem, p. 630). The role of Christians as prophets is to proclaim the good news. In Peter two verses nine says that we belong to the royal priesthood family. Now as Priests we fulfill this role by offering sacrifices of praise and worship to God through Jesus Christ. As Priests we have access to the Holy of holies through Jesus Christ just like the Old Testament Priests had through the blood of the bulls and goats. Grudem (2002) said that we share in partially the kingly reign of Christ because the Bible says that we have been raised up with Christ and are seated with him in heavenly places (Grudem, p. 630). Kings in the Old Testament were given power to lead, control and direct the Israelites. In Matthew 2: 2 we read that Jesus Christ was born as the King of Jews. He clarified to the Jews that his

Kingship was not like an earthly one. Jesus as king has a kingdom and his kingdom contains people who have been regenerated. In Matthew 28: 18 when Jesus Christ was commissioning his disciples (thus after resurrection) he opened his conversation with them by saying " All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." This authority shall fully be realized when Christ comes in the Second Advent (Mt 26: 64). This is the time when he will be known as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19: 16) because every knee shall bow down to him and every tongue confess that he is Lord.

There are many different positions as regards to the offices of Christ.

Scholars have differing views pertaining to his offices. Berkhof (1969) said that Gerhard (a Lutheran) was the first to develop the doctrine of the three offices (p, 356). People like Quenstedt disregarded the three offices of Christ as essential. Some people recognized that there are two offices of Christ: prophet and king. Berkhof (1969) said that the Lutherans divide themselves about the offices of Christ. Ernesti disagreed with the fact that there are three offices of Christ. He asserted that the distinction is purely artificial, not found in scripture and should not be used to describe the work of Christ. The latter Lutheran theologians denied the distinction of these offices (Berkhof, 1969. p. 356). People like Ritschl, and Haering rejected the existence of the three offices of Christ. In his argument Ritschl said, " The term " vocation" should take the place of the misleading word " office" (Berkhof, 1969. p. 357). He regarded the Kingly office of Christ as primary and the other two offices (Priestly and Prophetic office) as secondary. Haering on the other hand emphasized on calling as opposed to the three offices of Christ. The

Socinians limit the work of Christ to the time of his public ministry (Berkhof, 1969. p. 358).

Moslems believe that Jesus Christ was one of the prophets. In fact they say that as a prophet he came before Mohammed. They believe that Jesus Christ prophesied about the coming of Mohammed by quoting John 16: 7-11.

Moslems do not believe that Jesus Christ was the son of God and he was God. They do regard him as one of the prophets like those who appeared in the Old Testament. Roman Catholics believe that a priest is a person who has received the sacrament of holy orders and these holy orders are received by the laying on of hands. Thereafter this Priest becomes the partaker of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Catholics also believe that only priests are the ones to offer the Eucharist sacrifice.

Though people have differing positions on offices of Christ but from scripture point of view I believe that there are three offices of Christ in which he operated: prophet, priest and king. God created man to function as a prophet, priest and king. Christ came to earth as an ideal man in order to restore man to his original condition he necessarily functioned as God's prophet, priest and king. Now Jesus Christ as prophet (God's mouthpiece) he brought the good news to the people. I believe that not everyone in the Old or New Testament was the prophet. In the Bible God would call some people to be prophets according to his plan. Serenius (year unknown) defined a prophet as " The one who speaks by inspiration from the one true and living God and from Jesus Christ, by and through the Holy Spirit" (Serenius, p. 13).

A prophet was and is a person whom God entrust with his words, revelations or visions, and his work. His main duty was to bring the message of hope and <https://assignbuster.com/christ-prophet-priest-and-king-theology-religion-essay/>

salvation to the people. My belief is that Christ as the prophet when he came on earth he revealed God to us and brought the message of hope and salvation to the whole world. Jesus Christ continues his prophetic ministry even today by the Holy Spirit working through the word.

The Old Testament priestly practices prefigured the priesthood of the Messiah. The high priest in the Old Testament foreshadowed the priestly Messiah. Priests in the Old Testament would offer sacrifices to the Lord for the people and for himself. Jesus Christ as the priest gave up himself as a self-sacrifice for my sins and the sins of the world. This tells me that through him (Jesus) I have access to the father. Christ himself is our propitiatory sacrifice. As a priest he spoke and still speaks to God on behalf of us and speaks to us on behalf of God. He represents us to God because he intercedes for us (Heb. 7: 25). High priests in the Old Testament would enter into the Holy of Holies for people and himself. Christ as the High priest entered heaven to appear for us in the presence of the Lord God (Heb. 9: 24).

Christ as the son of God and king shares in the dominion of God over the world. I believe that his kingship is established in the hearts of believers. The administration of his kingdom is done by his word and the spirit. The kingship of Christ is exercised in the gathering, governance, protection and perfecting of his church. Christ as king is the head of the church (Eph. 1: 20-22; 5: 23). The kingdom of God is first the kingship of Christ established in believer's hearts by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and it is both present and future reality. Christ as king rules over the universe and has power over everything (Mt. 28: 18). As the king he has power to change <https://assignbuster.com/christ-prophet-priest-and-king-theology-religion-essay/>

people. To crown it all, the offices of Jesus Christ do exist until today. I believe that these offices are still in operation today. We may have trouble in distinguishing true and false prophets but God still speaks today.