

THE REAL CHRISTMAS STORY

A

Theme: **The Mission of Jesus**

- **Why did Jesus Come To Earth?**

- All of human history is divided by the coming of Jesus.

- **Jesus taught that He was eternal God and His Father sent Him from heaven to earth.**

- John 6:38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.”
- John 8:42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.”

- **Jesus came to fulfill the promises and laws of OT Scriptures.**

- Matthew 5:17-18 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

- **The three major offices among the people of Israel in the Old Testament:**

- Prophet: Speaks for God.
- Priest: Serves for God.
- King: Rules for God.

- **Jesus fulfills all three of these offices.**

Jesus as Prophet

- **Prophets spoke for God.**

- The Old Testament prophets were bold and willing to stand up against an entire nation, if needed, to confront sin, command repentance, and speak out the truth of God. “thus says the Lord” (Moses, Nathan, Isaiah, Elijah)

- **Moses was the first prophet and he prophesied that there would be a greater prophet.**

- Deuteronomy 18:15,16 & 18 // “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the Lord your God 18 “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.”

Q: Why did the New Testament epistles avoid calling Jesus a prophet?

- Often those who call Jesus a “prophet” know very little about him. (Matt. 16:14) (John 4:19)

- **Jesus was the greater prophet and so much more. (Acts 3:22–24) (Hebrews 3:1-6)**

- **The prophets of the OT spoke “thus says the Lord”**

- » Truth would come from God to the prophets and then to the people .

- **Jesus spoke “but I tell you this” (Matthew 5)**

- » Jesus is God from whom the truth comes and the prophet whom is speaking the word.

- **Jesus spoke and taught from His own authority.**

- » Matthew 7:28-29 // And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- **Jesus is the word of God made flesh .**

- » John 1:1 // In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- » John 1:14 // And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- » The written word (the Bible) reveals the living word (Jesus) and they both come together in perfect harmony to declare the truth about God.

- **Jesus came to earth to preach.**

- Mark 1:36-38 // Simon and his companions went to look for Him, 37 and when they found Him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" 38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else to the nearby villages so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

Application: As the prophet, Jesus reveals the truth of God's word. God's word reveals that He is holy and righteous and we are sinners in need of a savior. God's truth then calls for repentance and obedience to His word and He will begin to work in us, convicting us and transforming us into His likeness. (Romans 12:1-2)

Our Role: As imitators of Jesus, God calls us to a "prophetic" role as we proclaim the gospel to the world and thereby bring God's saving Word to people. (Mark 16:15)

Jesus as Priest

- **Priests served for God.**

- In the Old Testament, the priests were appointed by God to offer sacrifices to show that sin was very real and deserved death, while asking God for gracious forgiveness. They also offered prayers and praise to God on behalf of the people. In so doing they "sanctified" the people or made them acceptable to come into God's presence, although in a limited way. (Aaron, Abiathar)

- **Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice for sin.**

- Animal sacrifice in the Old Testament was a reminder of sin (Hebrews 10:3) and the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)
 - Animal sacrifice did not take away sin. Hebrews 10:4 // For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
 - Jesus was the perfect, complete and final sacrifice, never to be repeated, a theme frequently emphasized in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 9:26 // But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

- **Jesus fulfilled the office of both the sacrifice and the priest who offered the sacrifice.**

- As the perfect sacrifice, Jesus grants us access to the Father through His righteousness.
 - Jesus is now the "great high priest who has passed through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14) and who has appeared "in the presence of God on our behalf" (Heb. 9:24).

- **Jesus as priest continually prays for us.**

- Hebrews 7:23-25 // The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but He holds His priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
 - As priest Jesus shows us that He is loving, merciful, compassionate and patient with us.
 - Jesus is a savior and a friend that rescues us and walks through life with us. (Luke 19:10) (Matthew 28:18-20)

- **As the greater prophet Jesus speaks and is the one who says "this is what you must do".**

- **As our priest Jesus serves and is the one who says "I will help you do it".**

- **No other religion in the world has a savior that steps off His throne and offers His life for the life of others and in doing so grants access to Himself and eternal life, like Christians.**

- **Jesus came to earth to serve.**

- Mark 10:45 // For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Application: As our priest, Jesus is here to help and serve us through trials and temptation. Jesus understands our suffering and weaknesses, He is with us and prays on our behalf always. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Our Role: As imitators of Jesus, God calls us to a “priestly” role as we are spiritual temples for the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and “to be a holy priesthood” as well as “to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”. We are called to become living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. (1 Corinthians 3:16) (1 Peter 2:5) (Rom. 12:1)

Jesus as King

- **Kings ruled for God.**

- In the Old Testament the king had authority to rule over the nation of Israel. (David, Solomon)
- In the New Testament, Jesus was born to be King of the Jews (Matt. 2:1-8)
- Jesus refused any attempt by people to try to make Him an earthly king with earthly military and political power (John 6:15)

- **Jesus’ kingdom was not of this world.**

- John 18:36 // Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”
- After His resurrection, Jesus was given by God the Father far greater authority over the church and over the universe. God raised Him up and “made Him sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and He has put all things under His feet and has made Him the head over all things for the church” (Eph. 1:20–22) (Matt. 28:18) (1 Cor. 15:25)

- **Jesus is king over all of creation seen and unseen. (people, times, places, cultures, kings, kingdoms, angels and demons)**

- Jesus is “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16) and every knee shall bow to him (Phil. 2:10).

- **Jesus came to earth to rule.**

- John 18:37 // Then Pilate said to Him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

Application: As our king, Jesus rules and reigns over every part of our life. There is no part of our life that is separate from Jesus. His ways are the right ways.

Our Role: In subjection to God, God calls us to a “kingly” role to share in ruling over the universe, for with Him we shall “reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:5). Jesus says, “He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on His throne” (Rev. 3:21).

Q: Why must we see Jesus in all three roles of our lives?

PROPHET + KING - PRIEST = JESUS OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalist Christians who are prone to legalism, moralism, and a general lack of love, grace, mercy, or patience are often the product of a deficient understanding of Jesus as priest. The strength of fundamentalism is its keen awareness of Jesus’ prophetic role as bold truth-teller and commander of repentance, along with his role as king who rules and reigns in all authority.

- You will be led to either pride or despair if you do not see Jesus as priest.

PROPHET + PRIEST - KING = JESUS OF EVANGELICALISM

Modern evangelicalism is believing basic Christian truths and morals, but living virtually indistinguishable from the average non-Christian.

- You will be led to hide your sin, hypocrisy and living a double life.

PRIEST + KING - PROPHET = JESUS OF LIBERALISM

Liberal Christianity is prone to understand Jesus as our priest, who is filled with grace, love, mercy, and tolerant patience, as well as our king, who rules over all peoples and seeks to extend to them grace, love, and mercy. However, the weakness of typical liberal Christianity is that it fails to fully appreciate the hard-edged role of Jesus as prophet.

- You will be led to not take responsibility or repent for your sin.

Review // Jesus fulfills these three offices in the following ways:

- As prophet He reveals God to us and speaks God's words to us.
 - Jesus speaks to us, sometimes hard truths and words of repentance and convict.
- As priest He both offers a sacrifice to God on our behalf and is Himself the sacrifice that is offered.
 - Jesus comes along side of us to help, empower, enable, instruct and encourage us.
- As king He rules over all the universe.
 - Jesus rules over all aspects of our lives.

Jesus came to the earth to reveal himself to us as our prophet who speaks to us, priest who walks with us, and king who rules over us. Jesus' ministry continues today and His roles are the same yesterday, today, and forever. For the three offices of Jesus to be of the greatest benefit to us, we must humbly ask God to reveal to us which aspect of Jesus' ministry we are most likely to misunderstand or even ignore and read Scripture with a humble heart seeking to see Jesus in the fullness of his glory.