

# THEOLOGY SESSION 7

## THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

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*O how we should meditate on the work of Christ. Because here we meet the work of God.  
If you want to know the love of God, know the work of Christ.<sup>1</sup>*

*John Piper*

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**Group Work:** What are the theological implications of these verses in regard to the doctrine of the Work of Christ? (Isaiah 53:4-7; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 2:10-18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Acts 1:6-11; Hebrews 2:5-9)

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<sup>1</sup>John Piper, "Much More Shall We Be Saved By His Life," *Desiring God*, Dec. 12, 1999, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/much-more-shall-we-be-saved-by-his-life>.

# WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORK OF CHRIST?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, functioning as Prophet, Priest, and King, has secured redemption for God's people through the atoning work of the cross and his resurrection, and he is now enthroned in heaven where he rules the world and mediates on behalf of his ransomed ones

## THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

*Therefore, in order that faith may find a firm basis for salvation in Christ, and thus rest in him, this principle must be laid down: the office enjoined upon Christ by the Father consists of three parts. For he was given to be prophet, priest, and king.*<sup>2</sup> (John Calvin)

### 1. Prophet

*A prophet is one who speaks God's word to man. Thus, Christ functions as a prophet by revealing God to us and speaking forth His word.*<sup>3</sup> (Matt Perman)

*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—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. 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.* (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... 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.* (John 1:1, 14)

*I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.* (John 8:26-28)

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.* (Hebrews 1:1-2)

*Jesus was not merely a messenger of revelation from God (like all the other prophets), but was himself the source of revelation from God. Rather than saying, as all the Old Testament prophets did, 'Thus says the Lord,' Jesus could begin divinely authoritative teaching with the amazing statement, 'But I say unto you' (Matthew 5:22, et al.).*<sup>4</sup> (Wayne Grudem)

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<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1 & 2. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Vol. 1. The Library of Christian Classics. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 494.

<sup>3</sup>Matt Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King," *Contend For The Faith*, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.oocities.org/mattperman/office.html>

<sup>4</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 626

1. *In his humiliation:* Christ exercised this office by revealing God to us in His teaching and miracles.
2. *In his exaltation:* Christ exercises this office by illuminating the Bible to believers, through the Holy Spirit, so that we understand it and by working through the preaching of the word to make it effective in creating faith in unbelievers and building up faith in believers<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Priest

*In the Old Testament, the priests were appointed by God to offer sacrifices. 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, albeit in a limited way during the Old Testament period. In the New Testament Jesus becomes our high priest.<sup>6</sup> (Wayne Grudem)*

*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4)*

*Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. (Hebrews 3:1-2)*

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 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. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)*

1. *In his humiliation:* Christ offered sacrifice for sin to which all other Old Testament sacrifices pointed
2. *In his exaltation:* Christ, having offered Himself for our sins on earth, continues His priestly work by interceding for us in heaven.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. King

In the Old Testament the king had authority to rule over God's people. In the New Testament, Jesus was born as the King of God's people.

*"Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2)*

*Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. (John 6:15)*

*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." (John 18:36)*

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<sup>5</sup>Matt Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King"

<sup>6</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 626

<sup>7</sup>Matt Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King"

... that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him 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 the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church. (Ephesians 1:20-22)

On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19:16)

1. *In his humiliation:* While He was on earth, He called people to acknowledge His Lordship and proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God which one enters through faith in Him, and which will fully be manifest when He comes again, judges the world, and brings about the New Heavens and New Earth where only righteousness will dwell.
2. *In his exaltation:* Upon His ascension to heaven and seating at the right hand of the Father, Jesus' Lordship entered upon a new dimension. He is now officially enthroned as ruler and king of the universe. From His throne He now governs the church and rules the world.<sup>8</sup>

*It is wonderful that our priest who offered Himself for us and intercedes for us is also King—King of the Universe, and in a more intimate way, King of the Church. And as our King and Priest, Christ is also our Prophet who reveals God to us through His teaching and miracles on earth, and now through illuminating His Scriptures to us through the Holy Spirit.*<sup>9</sup> (Matt Perman)

How can a right understanding of the offices of Christ strengthen our intimacy with God?

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How can a right understanding of the offices of Christ strengthen our missional activity?

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<sup>8</sup>Matt Perman, "Christ as Our Perfect Prophet, Priest, and King".

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.