

Jesus: Our More Excellent Prophet

Messiah Bible Church – December 24, 2025 - Adam Casalino

OPENING WELCOME:

Merry Christmas! Welcome to our Christmas Eve Service. This year, we will be celebrating our Messiah Jesus, who is our Prophet, Priest, and King. Mitch Palermo will share on Jesus our Priest. Pastor Tony will share on Jesus, our King. First, we will see how Jesus is a More Excellent Prophet than those who came before him.

Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)

15 “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—

INTRODUCTION:

Moses promised another prophet just before his death:

Many years ago Moses, the great leader of Israel, stood before the people. Foreseeing his death, Moses made them a promise. “I might be going away, but there is another one coming... God is going to raise up another prophet like me who will lead.”

Moses was a great prophet, but he fell short:

Moses was the picture of the ideal prophet. A man totally sold out to God. He performed great miracles, secure deliverance, and revealed who God was to Israel. But, for all the great things Moses did, his still fell short—because of own weaknesses, sins, and death.

The promised prophet would be more excellent than Moses:

So, God promised a more excellent prophet who was to come. He would be like Moses, but he would surpass him in every way. Because this prophet would be the Messiah, the savior of the world.

PART 1 – MESSIAH REVEALED AS PROPHET:

God called Messiah “prophet” so they would recognize him:

But why describe the Messiah as a prophet? The prophets were messengers of God. They were given great power to serve and lead. Moses was the best example of that, so God called his promised savior a prophet like Moses, so the people would recognize him when he came.

All the OT prophets fell short... until Jesus:

God raised up many prophets in Israel. But like Moses, they all fell short. Yet this little baby born in Bethlehem, watched over by shepherds, was the promised prophet. And he would outclass all the other prophets, in every way.

PARTK 2 - MORE EXCELLENT MIRACLES THAN MOSES:

Moses' miracles killed, Jesus' miracles healed:

Jesus Christ was a “prophet like Moses.” Yet he outclassed Moses in every way. Case in point: miracles. Moses did a lot of those. He stretched out his rod and brought plagues and death. But Jesus stretched out his hand and cleansed lepers, opened blind eyes, and raised the dead.

Matthew 8:16 (ESV) 16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

Moses' miracles were punishment; Jesus' were salvation:

Moses' miracles were acts of judgment against an evil nation. God's power worked through him to punish Pharoah for his cruelty. But Jesus' miracles demonstrated God's great love—and spoke of a better covenant between God and man. He did not come to condemn the world, but through him, save all who believe.

PART 3 - A MORE EXCELLENT DELIVERER:

Moses delivered from physical death:

The prophet Moses was a deliverer. He rescued Israel from physical peril. One time, he lifted up his hands and parted the Red Sea. Another time, he made a bronze serpent to save dying people. He struck the rock to provide water in the middle of the desert.

Jesus delivers from eternal death:

But Jesus is a much more excellent deliverer. He was lifted up on a cross, his hands and feet pieced by nails, to deliver us from eternal peril: sin, death, and hell.

John 3:14–15 (ESV) 14 “...As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

Moses could not deliver us from our sins:

Moses could only provide temporary rescue. He could not remove our sins. But the more excellent prophet, Jesus the Son of God, bore our sins on the cross. He paid the price we owed, taking on the punishment we deserved, so that every person who believes in him receives eternal life.

PART 4 - A MORE EXCELLENT REVEALER OF GOD

Moses knew God and revealed his word:

There was another very important role prophets played: they revealed God to the people. Moses spoke with God face to face and learned of his ways. God gave him the law and he gave it to Israel. Like all the prophets, he spoke the truth, judge wisely, and provided God's word to the people.

But Moses fell short because of his sin:

But he was an imperfect representative of God. Moses fell short, at one point disobeying the Lord due to his anger. For all the great things Moses did, he could never perfectly reveal God to humanity.

The same was true of all the other prophets. They could speak God's words, but they could never truly display God's perfect character to the world.

Jesus is the perfect representative of God:

But where Moses failed, Jesus succeeded. He is the perfect image of God the Father. He is the exact representation of his nature. Jesus only spoke what the Father said, only did what he saw the Father doing. In Jesus, we don't just learn about God, we see him.

Hebrews 1:2-3 (ESV) 2 ...In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

Jesus isn't just a man, he is God:

If you want to know who God is, look at Jesus. He isn't merely a man, who came to teach us about God. He is God, God the Son, who came down to earth in human flesh.

In Jesus, we know God:

As Prophet, Jesus does more than speak God's words. In him, we know God. We fellowship with God. We walk with God. Because of Jesus, we can have the life we were always meant to have.

John 17:3 (ESV) 3 "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Moses gave rules to keep, but Jesus makes us God's people:

Moses provided rules Israel had to follow to be God's people. But Jesus gave us something much more precious: he gave us his very life. So that in him—in knowing and believing in him—we are God's people forever.

John 1:17 (ESV) 17 For the law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Moses brought law down to man, Jesus brings God down to us:

The grace of God, in Christ, did what the law of Moses never could. Moses brought tablets of stone down from the mountain. But Jesus, the more excellent prophet, brought God down to us.

In Jesus, we are born again:

In Christ, we have God's Spirit living inside of us. We are God's children. We are born again into a life more spectacular than we can ever imagine. That is what this more excellent prophet does for us.

CONCLUSION:

This Christmas, think of the more excellent prophet:

When we think of Christmas, we picture that quaint, little nativity. A tiny baby, sleeping in a manger.

But that baby came for a purpose—to be the deliverer that Moses never could be.

To be a more excellent prophet who perfectly revealed God to a world in darkness.

So, this Christmas, don't stay in the dark. Put your trust in Jesus Christ, the one who reveals God's heart of love and grace.

He is one who teaches humanity the truth and serves God the Father as a great high priest. Our true and better king. Amen.

Priest

Mitch Palermo

If God made a job description for a Levitical priest it would read like this:

1. Must be from the tribe of Levi.
2. Must be undefiled and keep oneself pure.
3. Well versed in Levitical Law.
4. Not grossed out by blood.
5. Excellent throat slitting skills preferred.

All of these attributes were necessary for a priest to fulfill the role of intermediary between God and man. They were the go-between.

Before priests, Moses was the sole-representative of the people. He worked on their behalf, interceding for them and managing the relationship between God and man. Moses's role is perhaps best illustrated in the story of God rescuing his people from Egypt and leading to the promised land. You see Moses continually pleading with God on behalf of Israel who was constantly grumbling and rebelling.

Around the same time that God led his people out of Egypt he also started shifting mediation responsibilities away from Moses and to a new group of people.

That new group of people would be the levitical priests. These priests followed an extensive set of rules or laws that were given to them by God. Some of those rules involved purifying the people through sacrifice.

Some of the rules were acts of service to God that were to be performed as a reminder to the people of Israel of the holiness of their God. God promised that if the people of Israel followed his rules for life, which included the 10 commandments, they would be his treasured people, he would protect them, cause them to be prosperous, and that he would walk among them. And God being gracious, knowing that his people would struggle to follow these rules also gave them some procedures to follow in the case that the rules are broken.

That's where the priests come in. They knew what to do if someone sinned. They knew what things needed to be sacrificed and how to sacrifice those things. The people would sin, the priests would sacrifice.

Seems pretty cut and dry. But despite the orderliness of the sacrificial system the priests were never meant to be a permanent solution for God's people. Why? Well there are actually lots of reasons. The most basic reason is that earthly priests die!

Just like a dish sponge or a pair of shoes, they had a limited lifespan. Here's another drawback of earthly priests: they could only go into the presence of God once a year. They were only actually with God once a year. They did lots of other things throughout the year. But we all know that in the most important relationships, facetime is important.

Another problem was the sinfulness of the priests. They were sinful humans which made them flawed representatives. When they served God on behalf of the people, they did so as broken, sinful, men. But none of these were the biggest problem. No, their most foundational shortcoming was their inability to fully take away sins.

Listen to how Hebrews 10:11 describes their work in making sacrifices.

Hebrews 10:11 (ESV)

11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

The sacrifices for sins satisfied God's law, but they needed to keep happening. Despite the faithful work of the priests to sacrifice and mediate between God and man, scripture says they were a reminder that sin was still a problem. The people of Israel were beset with sin, and had no way to permanently deal with it. The priests couldn't fully remove sin from the people. Even though God commanded priests to make these sacrifices, they were insufficient to take away the people's sins. Why? Because God never meant these priestly sacrifices to permanently deal with sin.

You see their insufficiency pointed to something better. Or better put - the insufficiency of these sacrifices pointed to someone better who had yet to come. Someone who could take their sin away.

Thousands of years have passed since then, and most of us aren't Jewish, but no matter what era you live in or what people group you belong to - you share in this need. You need someone to take your sin away. We all need someone to take our sin away. Not just temporarily pay for our sins. We need a true and better Priest. Jesus is that.

Jesus is our true and better priest. In all of the ways that the priests were flawed, Jesus is perfect. In all the ways that earthly priests are lacking, Jesus is complete. We talked about a few shortcomings earlier and in every one Jesus supersedes earthly priests.

- Earthly priests die - but Hebrews 7:24 tells us that Jesus "holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever."
- Earthly priests could only go into God's presence once per year, Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father - right now.

Listen to how Hebrews 6:20 describes this.

Hebrews 6:19–20 (ESV)

19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus represents us as our high priest! And unlike the earthly priests who sinned, Jesus never sinned. Jesus is able to sympathize with our weakness, because he became a man and endured temptation, just like us. But unlike us he never failed. He never gave into temptation.

Jesus understood and experienced the weakness of being a human. He could catch a cold, but he was never short-tempered because he wasn't feeling well. He could get hungry, but he was never hangry.

He does not have to bring an offering to cover his own sins. He has no sin of his own that needs to be expiated from him. He is the perfect conduit of God's grace to us.

And it's through his work as our true and better priest that he removes our sins from us forever. The sacrifices that the earthly priests made couldn't do that. Earthly priests sacrificed animals, Jesus the better priest - sacrificed himself.

It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. But through his death he has perfected those who believe once and for all.

Forgiveness is available. You don't have to bring an animal. You don't have to perform a ritual. You just have to believe that Jesus our true and better priest has died to the punishment that we deserve for our sin, and then he rose again to rule and reign.

Our Prophet, Our Priest, and Our King

Pastor Tony Caffey

Jesus is our prophet, our priest, and our king. Our king. King Jesus.

In America, we historically haven't been fond of kings. The last king of America was George III. We took his tea, and we threw it into Boston Harbor. Later we tried to make George Washington king over America. But Washington said "no thank you," and he became the first president of our nation. And today, ironically, American presidents have more power than just about any king who ever lived.

Now, it's understandable why we are leery of kings in America. The monarchy in mother England was pretty much a clown show. Good monarchs were hard to find. Good monarchs like Elizabeth I were rare, and even she had her foibles.

It's not much better in the OT with the kings of Israel. Good kings like Hezekiah, Josiah, Asa, and David were a rarity. Bad kings were legion. The northern kingdom of Israel didn't have one good king **in** over hundreds of years, or at least one of whom it was said, "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord."

And yet, despite this horrible track record with all these kings, there is still a human longing for a good king and a perfect kingdom. We write stories about good kings. King Arthur. King Richard in *Robin Hood*. The greatest fictional story produced in the twentieth century (*The Lord of the Rings*) climaxes with "the Return of the King." There is, I think, a longing in the human heart for good, righteous kingship. And, as Christians, we have that in the once and future rule of King Jesus.

I say *once*, because Christ Jesus did something that no king in the history of the world ever did for his subjects. He humbled himself greatly, in a way that no other king could humble himself. As God eternal, he took on human flesh. We call this the incarnation. We celebrate this at

Christmas time. And then he lived a perfect life in a human body, only to willingly sacrifice that life for the lives of those who were lost in sin.

Let me say it another way—he became a ransom. He came not to be served but to serve and give his life for others. That was our king. That's King Jesus. Born in a barn. Placed in a feeding trough. Wrapped in strips of clothing. Born and raised in the backwaters of Israel, only to live and die in humility for his people. "Blessed are those who take refuge in him."

But remember now, I said once and future king. That king of the past is the same future king, but his return and his kingship will look way different at his second coming. The babe in the manger will become the Son of Man envisioned by Daniel in Daniel 7: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion [that wasn't said about any king ever... kings come and go in our world], which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

What's envisioned here is King Jesus coming with power and with might. The book of Zechariah states that he will split the Mount of Olives on his return and rule from Jerusalem. The book of Revelation speaks of this king riding on a stallion, robe dipped in blood, sword protruding out of his mouth, thighs emblazoned with the tattoo, "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords." Is that the babe born in Bethlehem? Is that the Jew crucified on a cross? Yes. Yes, it is. And the humblest king who ever lived becomes ruler of the world. And as Paul says in Philippians every knee will bow before him and every tongue will confess. In other words, everyone will submit to that terror-inducing King. I don't know about you, but I plan to get a headstart on that submission.

Now as I understand it, King Jesus will return when the world is at its lowest ebb. The world will be ruled by pure evil. And the people of God, the redeemed saints including you and me, will be coming in glory with him. And he will make war on his enemies. He will establish a thousand-year reign with him ruling on his throne and his people ruling alongside him. He will rule with an iron rod. And that kingdom will be good and righteous and everything that we long for.

And yet, there will be a final rebellion. Don't worry, it's nothing he can't handle. And Jesus will judge and condemn all evildoers for eternity. And then remake the entire world from scratch. Everything will pass away. Everything in our material world will burn up and be destroyed, and there will be, in its place, a New Heaven and a New Earth, and a New Jerusalem. And the main symmetry between that old world and our new world is Christ's Kingship. Theologians refer to this new world as the eternal state. It's written about in Revelation 21–22. And that eternal state will be ruled by an eternal King. The Bridegroom. The Son of God. The Son of Man. The God-man. The Messiah.

Now, what does that all mean for us on Christmas Eve, 2025? Well, we have a bad habit as humans of doing two things. First of all, we worship the wrong things. And secondly, we grow addicted to this world as if it's the only world that will ever exist. At his first coming, Jesus warned us about this. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,

where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:19–21).

It is a little ironic that we celebrate Jesus's birth at Christmastime with the accumulation of junk that will be destroyed. I'm not here to judge that, or to be Ebenezer Scrooge this Christmas season. All I want to say is this. Two things:

- 1) Worship King Jesus, the once and future King. The one who was born in Bethlehem, died on the cross for your sins, and then rose from the dead securing your eternal life forever. He's coming back. Get a head start on that "every knee will bow" and "every tongue confess" thing.
- 2) Keep your eyes fixed on the future. Run the earth, but watch the sky. Because eternity is racing toward us. And this world, very soon, will be a thing of the past. And all the stuff in this world will burn. Merry Christmas, kids. Enjoy your presents. But what will last forever? Christ's kingship. Our participation in that kingship. The treasure in heaven that we accumulate in this world as we worship and serve King Jesus.

If you are here this evening, and you do not know King Jesus as your Lord and Savior, let today be a day of salvation for you. December 24, 2025. Let today be a day to remember forever. Salvation is not a matter of doing good things or earning something from God. We as human beings are only worthy of death and destruction. But God in his mercy sent his Son to the cross to die for your sins. And your faith in his death and your faith in his resurrection is what saves you. Believe and be saved. And Merry Christmas.