

Second Sunday in Advent

Christ the Final Priest

12/5/10

St. Francis Church

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Introduction

Buddhism is just a pantheistic religion without a personal God. It is a philosophy of life that holds to reincarnation. There is a life force that holds all things together (thus the “force” in the **Star Wars** series).

Hinduism is a split off Buddhism, and holds to much the same, but they have millions of gods. They can have an incarnation, called an **Avatar** (thus the name **Avatar** of the movie for kids to introduce them to Hinduism).

In His messianic office, Christ was **prophet, priest** and **king**. As **prophet**, He represented God to us, the perfect revelation of God so that the one who had seen Him had seen the Father (John 14:9).

Then another part of His messianic office was His **priesthood**, which meant that He was both sacrificing priest as well as the sacrifice itself. As priest He represented (and still represents) us to God. As priest, He had the privilege of approach to God on behalf of the people of God, to intercede for them.

As **king** He was and is the sovereign ruler as does such as man, being identified with us, and as God, being identified with God Almighty, since He is the same.

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These three offices cannot be separated, for it is as the Christ, the Messiah, that He exercises these three offices. In other words, if we could have another sacrificing priest, we could have another prophet or another king. It is as one sacrificing priest that He “**offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God**, from that time waiting till **His enemies are made His footstool**” (Hebrews 10:12-13). His (and our) enemies are dominated by sin so if He solves the sin problem, He has conquered them.

Since He was God in the flesh, there can be no higher prophet, priest, or king to come. One does not get higher than God, but He was also Incarnate which meant He was identified with us. Thus there cannot be another God-man who is a truer revelation of God, a greater sacrifice for sin, or has more authority than He does.

Therefore, **Mohammed** is not the final prophet, for he was just a human. As far as I know he did not claim to be a priest, and he was not proclaimed as king of the whole world.

I. Christ Made Atonement with One Sacrifice Forever

¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. ¹¹ And every priest stands ministering daily and **offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins**. ¹² But this Man, after He had **offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God**, ¹³ from that time waiting till His ene-

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mies are made His footstool. ¹⁴ For by **one offering** He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Heb 10:10-14 NKJ).

Considering who Christ was, the God-Man, we would expect that whatever He did would not need to be supplemented. Considering that the atonement was intra-Trinitarian (Hebrews 9:14, the Son offering to the Father by the Holy Spirit), there could not possibly be anything left undone.

Thus the imagery of sitting down reminds us that the Old Testament priests were never allowed to sit in God's presence in the tabernacle/temple because their work was never done. But Christ, and God-Man, once He made one sacrifice, sat down forever!! This is why when He cried out on the Cross "It is finished," the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, signifying that the way into the Most Holy Place was permanently open to all "who come to God by Him," as our text says.

No need to return to a temple in Jerusalem where animal sacrifices are again offered for all that was the shadow, the type, and now the substance, the fulfillment has come. Once we get to the destination, we don't need the road signs anymore.

No need for purgatory as the penalty of sin has been paid. No need to have another sacrifice in our worship services, for that would slight what Christ has done, casting aspersions on the perfection of what He did on the Cross.

People may think that atonement and sacrifice is a primitive idea. Yet God's categories do not go away. Societies are

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always trying to make atonement or to deal with sin in some rebellious way. Islam believes in self-atonement, for if one dies in a Jihad as a martyr, this blood atonement means he goes to heaven; otherwise, they have no assurance of such at all.

Atheistic régimes shed the blood of others for the good of society, thinking that they can achieve long term peace by death, the death of innocent people.

But it is only with Christianity that God who makes atonement, the person of Christ being the Old Testament tabernacle and the Old Testament temple. He took our justice on the Cross so that He could extend to us His mercy. At the Cross, justice and mercy kissed one another. This is the only solution for sin, and it is a permanent solution concerning which nothing can be added or subtracted.

II. He Ever Lives to Make Intercession for Us

Listen to the verse we quote every Lord's Day in Holy Communion:

¹ My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the **Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous.

² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John 2:1-2 NKJ).

Notice what John says: "We **HAVE** (not will have, and had in the past) an **ADVOCATE** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, for it took a righteous priest to offer a righteous

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sacrifice. We see once again that the atonement is intra-Trinitarian, for Jesus is the advocate with the **FATHER**. The Son does not win the Father's favor but demonstrates it. And the reason we can be confident that our sins are forgiven is that "**HE HIMSELF IS THE PROPITIATION** for our sins," **IS**, not will be or was once in the past. And this Advocacy is based on His once for all death, for in the Old Testament no priest would have thought about approaching God on behalf of the people without first the blood sacrifice. In other words, there was always the blood sacrifice first and then the Intercession, which is what we have in the New Testament. **Because His death was effectual, His Intercession is also effectual.**

This is precisely what we read in our text for today:

Therefore He is also **able to save to the uttermost** those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25 NKJ).

Indeed, it is the Person of the Son of God who IS the propitiation, not Mary, not Paul, not Mohammad, not anyone else, just Him alone. So how can He always make intercession? It is because He never dies (front of the bulletin), because His death was not just necessary but also sufficient, one for all. Therefore, based on who He was, based on the once for all work of the Cross, He, in Himself, is our propitiation, forever. The Father and the Son have agreed! There is no penalty for us, ever, for if there were, He would not be Jesus Christ the righteous but Jesus Christ the liar. We can die on that!

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In other words, Christ is the Advocate, the One who takes up our cause, saying in effect that when we sin, He paid for it as our propitiation, and the Father is pleased with that as well. There is no one else mentioned in these verses as co-redemptrix or co-mediatrix, as Mary is sometimes referred to by others who misunderstand the finality of Christ's priesthood. As Paul stated:

⁵ For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the Man* Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NKJ).

In other words, there is only one mediator, and we don't need a mediator to go to the mediator to butter Him up, as I've sometimes heard. There is no one more qualified to mediate than one who is our peer as Man and is God's peer as God. As one person, He brings God and man together. As we sin, He points to His work as the perfect sacrificed priest as the perfect Man and as the undiminished deity.

Conclusion

Here is the point: As priest, He died once for all, and as priest He continually intercedes for us. As God-Man, there can be no other sacrificing priest.

Let's make other **pastoral applications**. Someone sins against you so what do you do? We don't seek revenge, for that assumes that we are the judge; rather, God is the judge and has judged sin in Christ. If the person who sinned against us is a Christian, we may seek reconciliation, but even if that does not happen, we must thank God that that person's

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sins are forgiven even as ours are in the Advocate with the Father.

If we sin, we can try to justify it, but that only brings more condemnation. We can ignore it, which only delays our dealing with it personally. We can become angry at others for pointing out our sin, which only demonstrates our arrogance. But the only way to deal with our sins rightly is precisely what John says. If we sin—and we will—we must confess it (1 John 1:9) and recognize that that particular sin, and all our sins, were placed on the substitute, the final priest, who once for all paid for them so that now we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and **He Himself** is the propitiation.

Recall the great hymn, written by William Cowper in 1772, titled *There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood*:

This is one of the first hymns Cowper wrote after his first attack of temporary madness. Cowper had been promised a post as Clerk of the Journal to the House of Lords, but was dismayed upon learning he would have to undergo a public examination in the House before beginning his duties.

After several attempts to commit suicide with no success, Cowper was at his wits end. He wanted to die, and even tried to hang himself, fell unconscious while dangling, but then the rope broke. After other attempts, including poison, one night he was awakened at 3:00 a.m., and he began to contemplate the death of Christ. His life was turned around, and here is one of the first of many hymns he penned:

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There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's
veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.
Washed all my sins away, washed all my sins away;
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.
Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.
Lies silent in the grave, lies silent in the grave;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared, unworthy though I be,
For me a blood bought free reward, a golden harp for me!
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years, and formed by power di-
vine,
To sound in God the Father's ears no other name but Thine.

Let us remember that He embraced the nails (Hebrews
12:2) with joy and love for you and me. Our only and imme-
diate connection to the loving Father is through the loving
Son. Thus, **we come to God this way:**

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Just as I am without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O **Lamb** of God, I come, I come.

Amen.