

## JESUS THE MESSIAH: PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

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Our Heavenly Father's plan to give immortality and eternal life to His children required a Savior (see Moses 1:39). In the premortal council in heaven, the Beloved Son volunteered to be this Savior with the words, "Father, thy will be done" (Moses 4:2). The Beloved Son is called Jehovah in the Old Testament. He is the one who created the heavens and the earth, who gave the law on Mount Sinai, and who communicated His will through the prophets.

All of the prophets from the beginning prophesied the coming of Jehovah in the flesh to perform the Atonement and to be the Savior of the world (see Mosiah 13:33). They described the mortal Jehovah with many titles, including Savior (see Moses 1:6), Immanuel (see Isaiah 7:14), Lamb of God (see Isaiah 53:7), Redeemer (see Isaiah 41:14), and Son of Man (see Daniel 7:13). The prophets of the Book of Mormon

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knew that His earthly name would be *Jesus* (see 2 Nephi 25:19), a name that means "Jehovah is salvation." One of the most important of these titles is *Messiah*, or Anointed One, usually found in its Greek form, *Christ*.

The word *Messiah* simply means "anointed one" and derives from the Hebrew verb *mashach*, meaning "to anoint."<sup>1</sup> The word *messiah* translated into Greek is *christos*, from the Greek verb *chrío*, "to anoint." Thus, the name *Jesus Christ* is a combination of Jehovah's earthly name, *Jesus*, and title, *Christ*, and every time we see the word *Christ* we can read and understand *Messiah*. The title *Messiah* occurs in the book of Moses (see Moses 7:53) and throughout the Old and New Testaments, where it usually occurs in English translations of the Bible as *Christ*. This title is also of great significance in the Book of Mormon, where the title page records that one of the most important purposes of this ancient record is "the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ." The meaning of the title *Messiah* or *Christ* is a key to understanding the role of Jehovah in the plan of salvation.

In ancient Israel, those who held any of three religious offices were anointed: prophets, priests, and kings. Jesus Christ fulfilled all three of these offices. An exploration of the *Messiah* as prophet, priest, and king will greatly increase our understanding and appreciation of the Savior, Jesus the *Messiah*.

### ANOINTING AND ANOINTED ONE

The practice of anointing was widespread in ancient Israel and throughout the ancient world. In particular, those who

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1. The English word *Messiah* is an anglicized form of the Latin *Messias*, borrowed from the Greek *Messias*, adapted from Aramaic *meshicha*, a translation of the Hebrew *ha-mashiach*, "the Anointed." A convenient discussion of this word can be found in E. Jenni, "Messiah," G. A. Buttrick et al., *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:360-61.

were called to any one of three sacred offices were anointed in ancient Israel: prophets (see 1 Kings 19:16), priests (see Exodus 29:7-9; Leviticus 8:10-12), and kings (see 1 Samuel 10:1).<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, anointing was done with olive oil, which was sometimes mixed with perfumes and spices.<sup>3</sup> Olive oil, associated with prosperity, wealth, cleansing, healing, and purity, symbolized the Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The ritual of anointing was performed by pouring oil on the head of the individual to be anointed, was often done in conjunction with washing and clothing in new clothes, and was accompanied by blood sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> A review of the biblical texts reveals several symbolic aspects of anointing that help us understand the meaning of the term *Messiah*.

1. *Anointing symbolized a change in status or setting apart to a divinely inspired calling.* This is demonstrated by the consecration of kings, priests, and prophets, who were called to specific functions: kings to rule, priests to represent the people before the Lord in holy places, and prophets to deliver the word of the Lord.

2. *Anointing is a symbol of purification.* In the case of priests (see Leviticus 8:6-9), brides as they entered into marriage (see Ezekiel 16:9-13), and lepers (see Leviticus 14:8-20), anointing was accompanied with washing and dressing in new clothes.

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2. A convenient review of anointing can be found in Donald W. Parry, "Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion," in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994), 262-89.

3. The recipe for the sacred anointing oil is found in Exodus 30:22-25.

4. See John A. Tvedtnes, "Olive Oil: Symbol of the Holy Ghost," in Ricks and Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, 427-59.

5. In Exodus 29:4-9 and Leviticus 8:6-9, Aaron and the priests were washed with water and clothed in the clothing of the priesthood before their ordination. This anointing was followed by sacrifice. In Ezekiel 16:9-13, a bride is washed with water, anointed with oil, and then arrayed in the clothing of the bride.

3. *Anointing is a symbol of consecration—making someone or something holy.* Priests were anointed so that they could be consecrated, able to officiate in sacred places—in particular, the tabernacle and the temple (see Exodus 30:30). Sacred objects and furnishings of the tabernacle and temple were also anointed with oil to consecrate them (see Exodus 30:26–29).

4. *Anointing with oil was a symbol of gladness among the common people.* This anointing is called the “oil of gladness” (Psalm 45:7) and was not to be done in times of mourning (see 2 Samuel 14:2).

5. *Anointing was done in connection with specific blessings given to the individual.* Some scholars have identified this with the symbolism of the ability of olive oil to penetrate the skin. Some have suggested that one of the aspects of anointing is to internalize specific blessings or curses pronounced at the time of the anointing.<sup>6</sup>

A review of the scriptural records of the anointing of specific individuals can increase our understanding of how the Old Testament peoples understood the ritual of anointing and hence the meaning of the term *Messiah*.

The anointing of prophets is attested in the story of Elijah and Elisha. Elijah was commanded to anoint Elisha as his successor (see 1 Kings 19:16). While no account of the anointing is found, this anointing is clearly to be understood as a symbol of the transfer of the prophetic call from Elijah to his successor. In the story, this transfer is further symbolized when Elisha took up the mantle of the translated Elijah (see

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6. For example, a passage from an Assyrian treaty reads: “As oil penetrates your flesh, so may they [the gods] make this curse enter into your flesh.” D. J. Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon” *Iraq* 20 (1958), 78, lines 622–24.

This same symbolism is perhaps reflected in Psalm 109:18: “As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.”

2 Kings 13). The mantle was a visible symbol of the significance of the anointing—that Elisha would resume the power, authority, and responsibilities of the mission of Elijah and would deliver the same message and perform many of the same miracles—miracles that would prefigure the coming of a future prophet. Thus, Elijah and Elisha both parted the waters of the Jordan (see 2 Kings 2:8; 14), both multiplied food (see 1 Kings 17:14–16; 2 Kings 4:42–44), and both raised children from the dead (see 1 Kings 17:23; 2 Kings 4:34–37). Jesus, the Anointed One, would do the same miracles as He calmed the storm, fed the five thousand, and raised the dead.

The anointing of priests conveys the sense of making holy—of consecration or sanctification. Anointing in the Old Testament is often connected with the term “to sanctify,” as with the instruction to “anoint” and “sanctify” (Exodus 29:36). The ordinance of anointing priests is recounted in Exodus 29:4–9 and Leviticus 8:6–9. In this ceremony, the priests are washed with water and anointed with blood and oil. In fact, throughout the Old Testament priests are anointed to set them apart, to separate them from the realm of the profane, and to enable them to function in the realm of the sacred at the tabernacle and temple. Their calling is often described with the verb meaning “to consecrate”—to “make holy.”<sup>7</sup> Their function was to represent the people before the Lord in the tabernacle and the temple and in turn to bless the people on behalf of the Lord through their priesthood.

There are several accounts in the Old Testament of the anointing of kings.<sup>8</sup> This anointing apparently conferred on the king the Spirit of the Lord (*ruach YHWH*). The accounts of

7. Parry, “Ritual Anointing,” 271–75.

8. Saul (see 1 Samuel 10:1); David (see 1 Samuel 16:1); Solomon (see 1 Kings 1:39); Joash (see 2 Kings 11:12); Jehoahaz (see 2 Kings 23:30); Hazael of Aram, Jehu son of Nimshi of Israel (see 1 Kings 19:15–16).

the anointing of Saul and David record that after the anointing the Spirit of the Lord fell upon them. Hence, in ancient Israel olive oil and anointing often symbolized the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> An example of this can be found in Isaiah 61:1, the passage of Isaiah that the Savior read in the synagogue in Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4:18–19; there the Anointed One described in Isaiah 61:1 states that “the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.” The anointing with oil also symbolized the giving of help and support from the Lord (see 1 Samuel 16:13–14). The anointing of kings promised them specific blessings of strength (see Psalm 89:21–25), wisdom (see Isaiah 11:1–4) and justice (see Isaiah 11:3).

### JESUS THE MESSIAH

Jesus came as the Messiah, or Anointed One, in all three offices: prophet, priest, and king. When was Jesus anointed to His calling? In fact, there is evidence of three anointings of Jesus: once in the premortal existence, and twice during His mortal ministry.

The Prophet Joseph Smith supports the belief that Jesus was first anointed in the premortal existence: “He, the Lord being a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek, and the *anointed Son of God, from before the foundation of the world.*”<sup>10</sup> Elder Bruce R. McConkie, echoing the words of Joseph Smith, taught the same doctrine: “And Christ our Lord, Firstborn of the Father, mightiest of all the spirit host, a Man like unto his Father, was also chosen and foreordained and anointed to

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9. Anointing with oil symbolizes the giving of the Spirit (see 1 John 2:20, 27). See D&C 45:57, where the oil also represents the Holy Spirit in the parable of the ten virgins.

10. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 265; emphasis added.

come into mortality and do the very work that he then accomplished."<sup>11</sup>

The second anointing occurred in conjunction with the baptism of Jesus. In the New Testament, Peter taught that the bestowal of the Holy Ghost to Jesus after His baptism represented a mortal anointing of the Messiah. In a sermon recorded in the book of Acts, Peter stated: "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, . . . after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:37-38).

The third account of anointing is found in John 12:3-8, when Mary anointed the Savior in Bethany just prior to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Elder McConkie taught:

As Samuel poured oil on the head of Saul and anointed him to be captain over the Lord's inheritance, and all Israel then marched at their king's word;

As he also poured oil on David and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, so that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward;

And as Zadok took an horn of oil and anointed Solomon, and all the people said, "God save king Solomon"—

So Mary of Bethany, in the home of Simon the leper, as guided by the Spirit, poured costly spikenard from her alabaster box upon the head of Jesus, and also anointed his feet, so that, the next day, the ten thousands of Israel might acclaim him King and shout Hosanna to his name.

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11. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979-81), 1:26.

We see Jesus thus anointed and acclaimed, heading a triumphal procession into the Holy City.<sup>12</sup>

Jesus was prefigured in the offices of prophet, priest, and king by three pivotal figures in the Old Testament. The office of prophet is represented by Moses, through whom the Lord prophesied, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee [Moses]" (Deuteronomy 18:18). The office of priest is represented by Melchizedek. The Lord prophesied to David that his messianic descendant would be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). And the office of king is represented by David—hence, Jesus' title as the Son of David. The lives and ministries of these three individuals—Moses, Melchizedek, and David—provided types to help those in Old Testament times who did not know the details of the future life of the Messiah to understand the mission of the Messiah even before He came in the flesh. The following will explore the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, the Anointed One, in terms of prophet, priest, and king and discuss how the Savior fulfilled each of these offices in His mortal ministry.

### JESUS AS PROPHET

The central mission of the prophets in the Old Testament was to be the mouthpiece of the Lord to call people to repent of their sins and to come unto the Lord. In short, the role of prophets is to bring people to Christ. One function of all prophets was to teach the people about the coming of the Messiah. Abinadi taught that "all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began" testified of Christ and His future coming (Mosiah 13:33).

One of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament was

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12. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 3:327.



Moses. He taught of the coming of Christ in two ways—by his actions and through his words. First, his life stands in the Old Testament as a type of Christ in many ways. He delivered Israel from Egypt, he taught them of the Lord's redemption on the night of Passover, he gave them the law on Mount Sinai, he was a worker of great signs and miracles, he led the children of Israel in battle against their enemies, and he mediated between God and the people. Moses stands as a type of deliverer, redeemer, lawgiver, miracle worker, and mediator.

Moses also fulfilled the prophetic role of mouthpiece for the Lord as he called the children of Israel to repentance and prepared them to enter the promised land. In one of his final sermons to his people, Moses spoke of a revelation from the Lord about the coming of the Messiah: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18). Nephi taught that "this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel" (1 Nephi 22:21). The children of Israel understood that they would recognize in the Messiah one like unto Moses, one who would be a prophet, one who would deliver them, teach them, manifest great power, and mediate with God for them.

Thus, the Savior would come to His people in the anointed role of prophet. The Gospels give us many examples of Jesus in His role as a prophet.

1. *Jesus was likened to Moses.*<sup>13</sup> Many of the stories of the life of the Savior are deliberately shaped to show that Jesus came as the prophet like unto Moses. For example, both were miraculously saved from death: Moses as an infant in the basket in

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13. Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

the Nile (see Exodus 1, 2) and Jesus as an infant taken to Egypt (see Matthew 2). In Matthew 4, Jesus is tempted in the desert for forty days and nights in preparation for His ministry. Although the parallel record of Satan's encounter with Moses is missing in the Bible, it is preserved in the Pearl of Great Price (see Moses 1). Moses, in his ministry, confronted Pharaoh (see Exodus 5-12), while Jesus, in His ministry, confronted the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Herod Antipas, and Pilate. Moses was the mouthpiece through which the Lord delivered the law at Mount Sinai (see 19-24), while Jesus delivered His law in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 5-7). Moses performed many miracles—the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the water from the rock, bread and quail in the wilderness. Jesus healed the sick, fed the five thousand, walked on water, and raised the dead. Moses entered into the presence of God and was transfigured before Him (see Moses 1:11), and “the skin of his face shone” (Exodus 34:29) when he came off the mount from talking with the Lord. Likewise, the Savior was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration, and “his face did shine as the sun” (Matthew 17:2). Moses officiated at the first Passover meal in Egypt (see Exodus 12), while the Savior presided at the last Passover celebrated at the Last Supper (see Matthew 26).

When the Savior appeared to the Nephites following His resurrection, He himself announced: “I am he of whom Moses spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (3 Nephi 20:23).

2. *Jesus was recognized as a great prophet risen up among Israel.* Elijah was another great prophet of the Old Testament and one to whom the Israelites looked to return. He did indeed return with Moses at the Transfiguration and yet again to the Kirtland Temple to deliver priesthood keys. During his

ministry, Elijah confronted the priests of Baal, sealed the heavens, and raised the son of the widow of Zarephath. Similarly, when Jesus entered a small village called Nain, He was met by a widow whose only son had died. After Jesus raised her son from the dead, the people became afraid "and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:16). The news spread all about the region, for the people recognized one who manifested the power of God as did Elijah and the great Israelite prophets. When Herod Antipas heard of His fame, he feared John the Baptist had risen from the dead, but others said, "That it is Elias [the New Testament form of Elijah]. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets" (Mark 6:15).

3. *Jesus acknowledged Himself as a prophet.* After reading the messianic passages from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus declared, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." When the crowd began to wonder, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Jesus replied, "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country" (Luke 4:21, 22, 24). Later, when warned to "depart hence: for Herod [Antipas] will kill thee," Jesus replied that He would continue on, "for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:31, 33).

4. *Jesus followed in the tradition of the prophets.* Moses passed along his prophetic keys to Joshua by the laying on of hands. Elijah had anointed the prophet Elisha to follow him and also passed his mantle to Elisha. Jesus followed the prophet John the Baptist. John's message was simple: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Jesus, at the outset of His ministry, began with the same message, and later His Apostles were given the same message. Just before announcing that He would give unto Peter the

keys of the kingdom, the Lord provided Peter with the opportunity to declare his faith. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13-16).

Jesus Christ was indeed a prophet but he was even more than a prophet. He was, as Nephi said six hundred years before His birth, "a prophet . . . —even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world" (1 Nephi 10:4).

### JESUS AS PRIEST

In the Old Testament, the Lord prophesied to David that the future Messiah would be a priest: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4).

Just as the prophetic role of the Messiah was prefigured in the Old Testament by Moses, so the priestly role of the Messiah was prefigured in the Old Testament by the great Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God (see Genesis 14:18). The Joseph Smith Translation and the Book of Mormon restore many important truths about Melchizedek (JST, Genesis 14:25-40; Alma 13:14-19). Melchizedek was "an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch" (JST, Genesis 14:27). Through the power of this priesthood, Melchizedek had the same power as Enoch—power over the elements, power to defy the armies of nations, and the power to be translated and taken into heaven (see JST, Genesis 14:30-32). Through this power, Melchizedek established peace in Salem and was called the "Prince of peace," and "King of peace" (JST, Genesis 14:33, 36)—titles that

would foreshadow the coming of Christ. According to the Joseph Smith Translation, the people of Melchizedek "wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch" (JST, Genesis 14:34). Melchizedek became the name used for the Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God (see D&C 107:1-2). It was Melchizedek who ordained Abraham to the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 84:14) and to whom Abraham paid his tithing (see Genesis 14:20). And the scriptures record that Melchizedek blessed Abraham (see Genesis 14:19, JST, Genesis 14:40).

The God Jehovah came to earth and officiated with the Melchizedek Priesthood. Jesus was not born of a Levitical lineage but came through Judah, the royal lineage. He fulfilled the prophecy, being the priest after the order of Melchizedek, since the lineage of Levi was not required for the higher priesthood (see Hebrews 7:11-12). While there is little information in the Old Testament about priests holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, there is much about the Aaronic Priesthood, and the mission of Jesus Christ is largely explained in the New Testament after the model of the Aaronic high priest.

The anointing of the Aaronic priests is recorded in Leviticus 8. Aaron was washed with water (see Leviticus 8:6) and clothed with the clothing of the high priest: a coat, a robe, an ephod, the Urim and Thummim, and a head covering with a gold plate on his forehead that said "holiness to the Lord" (Exodus 28:26). Moses anointed Aaron with blood upon the tip of his right ear, upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot—probably symbolizing the anointing of the whole body. Finally, Moses anointed Aaron with oil and sprinkled the oil and the blood on his garments (see Leviticus 8:30). Thus, the priests were washed, clothed, and anointed with blood and oil. In the scriptures, this entire

process is called consecration, and it symbolized purification—by water and blood—with a setting apart by oil.

In the Old Testament, the priests had many functions. Their duties can be summarized under three categories: (1) to bless the people (see Numbers 6:22–27); (2) to offer sacrifices and offerings for the people in order to bring about the forgiveness of their sins and transgressions (see Leviticus 1–6); and (3) to be a mediator between God and His people (see Leviticus 16). It is possible to trace how Jesus fulfilled each of these three priestly functions in His ministry:

1. *The high priest and the priests would formally bless Israel.* Twice each day after the regular sacrifices at the temple, the priests would bless all of Israel with a blessing called the Priestly Benediction, found in Numbers 6:22–27:

*And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,  
Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye  
shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,  
The Lord bless thee,  
and keep thee;  
The Lord make his face shine upon thee,  
and be gracious unto thee,  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee,  
and give thee peace.  
And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel;  
and I will bless them.*

Each part of this blessing was fulfilled by the Savior in His mortal ministry.

*The Lord bless thee,  
and keep thee:*

The Sermon on the Mount began with a series of blessings called the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). Throughout His ministry, Jesus blessed the lame, the deaf, and especially little children: "And he took their little

children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them" (3 Nephi 17:21). At the Last Supper, the Lord pronounced the high priestly prayer upon His Apostles (see John 17).

*The Lord make his face shine upon thee,  
and be gracious unto thee,*

These verses bring to mind the times when Jesus' face shone upon the lame as He caused them to walk, the blind as He caused them to see, the lepers as He healed them, the sinners as He forgave their sins, and the dead when He raised them. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus "was transfigured before them [Peter, James, and John]: and his face did shine as the sun" (Matthew 17:2).

*The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee,  
and give thee peace.*

The Savior told His Apostles at the Last Supper: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth" (John 14:27).

*And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel;  
and I will bless them.*

Throughout His ministry, Jesus taught, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). John explains this doctrine at the beginning of his Gospel: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). The sacrament prayer teaches that through the Atonement disciples are invited to take the name of the Savior upon themselves, "that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son" (D&C 20:77).

2. *Priests offered sacrifices and offerings on behalf of the people in order to obtain forgiveness from their sins and*



*transgressions*. Through the system of sacrifices and offerings, the priests under the law of Moses facilitated the final stages of repentance by offering on behalf of the children of Israel their sacrifices at the temple. Throughout His ministry, Jesus Christ exercised the power of His priestly office as God in forgiving sin. Consider a passage from Matthew 9: "And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. . . . But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (vv. 2, 6).

3. *The high priest was a mediator and represented the people before the Lord, and the Lord before the people.* The high priest bore upon his chest the breastplate which contained twelve stones—one for each tribe (see Exodus 28:15–21)—and upon his shoulders two onyx stones, each bearing the names of six of the tribes of Israel (see Exodus 28:9–12). Thus, he represented Israel before the Lord at the tabernacle and the temple (see Exodus 28:29). On the Day of Atonement, under the law of Moses, the high priest would first make sacrifice on his own behalf and then enter into the Holy of Holies bearing the blood of the sacrifice, which he would then sprinkle onto the mercy seat. He would do this once a year to bring about a remission of the sins and transgressions of the people, for which they had repented and to bring at-one-ment between the people and God (see Leviticus 16).

In the final week of His life, the high priestly ministry of the Savior became apparent. At the Last Supper, Jesus presided over the Passover meal, at which He introduced the symbols of the new covenant—the bread and the wine. At the end of the Last Supper, He exercised His divinely given right of intercession with the Father in His great High Priestly Prayer (see John 17).

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He began the process of



expiation for the sins of the world by offering Himself, before His Father, as the blood sacrifice. His suffering caused Him to tremble because of pain and to bleed at every pore (see D&C 19:18). On the cross, He continued His suffering until He died. At His death, the veil of His temple was rent, "and, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27:51). The book of Hebrews explains that Jesus, through the Atonement, was fulfilling the symbolism of the high priest on the Day of Atonement (see Hebrews 8–10). Symbolically, Jesus entered the Holy of Holies, or presence of God, one time. He did not have to make sacrifice for Himself because He was pure; He brought to God the sacrifice of His own blood, offering one sacrifice—an infinite and eternal sacrifice—for the sins of the world. The rending of the veil symbolized the fulfilment of the old covenant and that through the power of the Atonement and the Melchizedek Priesthood all are invited to repent of their sins and enter into the presence of God.

### JESUS AS KING

The most prominent imagery in the scriptures of the coming of the Messiah is the imagery of the Messiah as the anointed king of Israel. In ancient Israel, the king was God—Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth. During the time of Samuel, the people clamored for a king, and with a warning the Lord allowed them to have one. The anointed king was to represent God on earth. We can learn both from the prophecies concerning the Messiah and from the kings of Israel, particularly David, what the future king was to be like and what characteristics the messianic king would have:

1. *Lineage.* In his patriarchal blessing given by his father Jacob, Judah was promised that the king would come through his lineage: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto

him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10). David, a descendent of Judah, was promised, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Samuel 7:16). The Davidic covenant was an unconditional promise to the house of David that a descendant from his seed would rule forever. One of the titles by which the messianic king became known and was often called was the Son of David.

The Gospels present Jesus as the fulfilment of these prophecies. The Gospel of Matthew, for example, begins with a genealogy of Jesus, tracing His royal lineage back to David. "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). David is mentioned five times in the seventeen-verse genealogy so the reader will surely be aware of the divinely decreed lineage of David from which Jesus is descended. In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel revealed to Mary, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32). The Wise Men came seeking "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2) and brought the Savior gifts fit for a king.

2. *Anointing.* The anointing of Saul, David, and Solomon helps us to understand that the king was called upon for special responsibilities from the Lord and given special gifts in connection with those responsibilities. After taking the vial of oil and pouring it upon the head of Saul, Samuel told Saul, "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee . . . and [thou] shalt be turned into another man" and that "God gave him another heart" (1 Samuel 10:1, 6, 9). When David was chosen, "Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13).

As mentioned earlier, Peter tells us "how God anointed

Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38). Anointing was like being set apart with an invitation to be filled with the Spirit.

3. *Roles.* One of the most common metaphors for kings in the ancient Near East was the shepherd. Often when we talk about kings, we emphasize power and might. The king actually had a wide range of responsibilities. Kings were called to shepherd their people, to care for them, to reach out to the poor and oppressed, to offer release from prison. In Ezekiel the Lord chastises "the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken . . . neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezekiel 34:2-4). To Ezekiel the Lord prophesied the coming of the Messiah: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David [referring to the Son of David, the messianic king]; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it" (Ezekiel 34:23-24).

Jesus came and declared, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Jesus taught that the Good Shepherd knows His sheep by name and they know His voice. When the Lord said these things, there was a division among the Jews, and some came, asking, "If thou be the Christ, (Messiah) tell us plainly," and following Jesus' response they "took up stones again to stone him." Clearly, they didn't like Christ's teaching that He was the one Shepherd of Israel.

4. *Attributes.* Isaiah gives us many attributes concerning

the messianic king. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:6-7). Isaiah also tells us, "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:2-4).

David ruled during the golden age of Israel and became the type of the king—brave, faithful, loyal, sensitive, and full of the Spirit. His final words are an admonishment for future kings: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Samuel 23:3).

Jesus embodied all of these attributes. He was the champion of the poor and meek. He judged the wicked and offered compassion and forgiveness to those who would repent. Perhaps one of the most dramatic episodes of His justice and mercy occurred at the temple when the Pharisees brought the woman taken in adultery: "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? . . . But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." Finally, when they continued to press Him, Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Those who heard it were

convicted by their own conscience and left, and Jesus admonished the woman to "go, and sin no more" (John 8:5-6, 7, 11).

In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus recited the messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (v. 1).

The symbolism of Jesus as king fills the Gospels. He was born humbly and performed His ministry with meekness. Kings traditionally entered cities on horses or mules, symbols of military might; Jesus entered the holy city on a donkey, a symbol of humility and peace (see Matthew 21:5). In His triumphal entry, the people greeted Jesus waving palm branches and singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9). Jesus fulfilled the prophecy in Zechariah 9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (v. 9).

## CONCLUSION

In the course of the Savior's life, the significance of His messianic mission becomes more clear through a study of the three offices of prophet, priest, and king. At His birth, He was acknowledged as the descendant of David—the son of David—the king of the Jews. At His baptism, Jesus took upon Himself the symbol of water and was anointed with the Holy Ghost. During His ministry and especially at the Last Supper, Jesus had begun the process of passing His prophetic and priestly ministry to His Apostles.

In the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, Jesus the Messiah suffered for the sins of the world. As He prayed in the

garden—reminiscent of the anointing of the high priest with blood—He bled from every pore (see D&C 19:18). And there in Gethsemane, He told the Father, as He had in the premortal existence, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39; see also Moses 4:2).

Through His atonement, Jesus Christ rent the veil, inviting all who would follow in His name to enter back into the presence of His Father. Pilate had placed above His head on the cross a sign of His messiahship—a plaque in three languages that said, “JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS” (John 19:19; see also Luke 23:38). Thus, Jesus fulfilled His mortal messiahship. Three days later, He was resurrected and through His resurrection brought life to all. John recorded the events of His life in his Gospel and explained, “But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

We rejoice in the living Messiah and bear testimony of Jesus Christ the Prophet, Priest, and King, as beautifully expressed in the words of the familiar hymn “I Know That My Redeemer Lives”:

*He lives, my kind, wise heav'nly Friend  
He lives and loves me to the end,  
He lives, and while he lives, I'll sing.  
He lives, my Prophet, Priest, and King.*<sup>14</sup>

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14. *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 136. The words of this well-known hymn were written by Samuel Medley. This hymn was included in the first Latter-day Saint hymnbook, 1835.