

*What the Humiliation
and Exaltation
of Jesus Mean for Us*



MAN OF SORROWS

KING OF GLORY



JONTY RHODES

“Too often, Christians think narrowly about Jesus’s saving work, as though saying ‘Christ died for our sins’ exhausts the gospel. Jonty Rhodes gives us a more full-orbed view of the work of Christ, taking us back to classical formulations of Christ’s threefold office (prophet, priest, and king) and twofold state (humiliation and exaltation). *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory* is theologically rich while remaining accessible and devotional. This edifying book will help Christians understand Jesus more fully and love him more deeply.”

Gavin Ortlund, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Ojai; author, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On*

“As soon as we begin to speak of Jesus, we’re doing the work of theology. This book provides sound teaching for that task, exploring the person and work of Christ with a fresh sense of wonder. *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory* is rich without being dense, theological without being stuffy, and corrective without being combative.”

Nancy Guthrie, Bible teacher; author, *Even Better than Eden*

“This book is full of biblical insight and draws on a rich stock of historic Reformed theologians. In *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory*, we move from Adam to the new creation and see how in Christ’s exaltation he becomes the human king the world has been awaiting. Jonty Rhodes shows that the death and resurrection of Jesus have so much more importance for Christians than we usually recognize.”

Simon Gathercole, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of Cambridge

“Pastor Jonty Rhodes’s words comfort us that our dear Savior, Jesus Christ, is both immanently sympathetic and transcendentally sovereign. This book helps inform us how understanding Christ’s threefold office as our prophet who teaches us, our priest who mediates for us, and our king who rules over us makes a daily difference.”

Karen Hodge, Coordinator of CDM Women’s Ministries, Presbyterian Church in America; coauthor, *Transformed*

“Some people think that being Reformed means believing in the five *solas* of the Reformation or the five points of Calvinism. In his book *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory*, Jonty Rhodes shows us that the Reformed faith is deeper and broader, as he invites us to look at the person and work of Christ from the perspective of his twofold state (humiliation and exaltation) and threefold office (prophet, priest, and king) set within the drama of the relationship between Father and Son. This book helps us understand the gospel through new eyes as we see the rich structures that undergird Reformed theology. I hope all Christian ministers will encourage every church member to read it!”

Jonny Gibson, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Westminster Theological Seminary

“Rare are the books that make forgotten theology accessible. Rarer still are those that do so while retaining their sense of wonder. In *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory*, we dive deep into ancient truths concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Combining biblical insight with devotional application, this book is one to read slowly, prayerfully, and joyfully. And as we do so, we can’t fail to find ourselves in awe and love and praise at the humiliation and exaltation of so great a Savior.”

Dave Gobbett, Lead Minister, Highfields Church, Cardiff, Wales;
Trustee, World Alive

“In this clear and engaging study of, and meditation on, our Lord’s threefold office, Jonty Rhodes reaches beyond the academic community to hold out great encouragement to the contemporary church. The theological significance and pastoral relevance of understanding Christ as our prophet, priest, and king is explained and applied in this book in a way that stirs the heart to worship. Indeed, the emphasis on the ongoing nature of the Lord’s work in his church today is a particular highlight of the book that will refresh how many of us think about the Christian life.”

Reuben Hunter, Lead Pastor, Trinity West Church, London

Man of Sorrows, King of Glory

Man of Sorrows, King of Glory

What the Humiliation and Exaltation of Jesus Mean for Us

Jonty Rhodes

 **CROSSWAY**[®]
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

Man of Sorrows, King of Glory: What the Humiliation and Exaltation of Jesus Mean for Us

Copyright © 2021 by James Rhodes

Published by Crossway

1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided for by USA copyright law. Crossway® is a registered trademark in the United States of America.

Cover design: Darren Welch

First printing 2021

Printed in the United States of America

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

All emphases in Scripture quotations have been added by the author.

Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4335-7170-1

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-7173-2

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-7171-8

Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-7172-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Rhodes, Jonty (Clergy), author.

Title: Man of sorrows, King of glory : what the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus mean for us / Jonty Rhodes.

Description: Wheaton, Illinois : Crossway, [2021] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020026187 (print) | LCCN 2020026188 (ebook) | ISBN 9781433571701 (trade paperback) | ISBN 9781433571718 (pdf) | ISBN 9781433571725 (mobi) | ISBN 9781433571732 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Jesus Christ—Humiliation. | Jesus Christ—Exaltation. | Jesus Christ—Person and offices.

Classification: LCC BT222 .R46 2021 (print) | LCC BT222 (ebook) | DDC 232/.1—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020026187>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020026188>

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

VP 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21
15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For Charlotte, Mathilda, Otilie, and Henry:
May Christ the prophet grant you sight,
Christ the priest cleanse you,
Christ the king conquer and subdue all your enemies.*

Contents

PART 1: THE JOURNEY OF THE SON OF GOD

- 1 Man of Sorrows! What a Name 15
The Whole Christ and the Whole Cross
- 2 For the Son of God, Who Came 31
The Person of Christ

PART 2: TO THE FAR COUNTRY

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

- 3 Bearing Shame and Scoffing Rude 47
The Humiliation of Christ
- 4 "It Is Finished!" Was His Cry 59
The Humiliation of Christ Our Prophet
- 5 In My Place Condemned He Stood 69
The Humiliation of Christ Our Priest
- 6 Ruined Sinners to Reclaim 87
The Humiliation of Christ Our King

PART 3: TO THE FATHER'S RIGHT HAND

CHRIST'S EXALTATION

- 7 Now in Heaven Exalted High 103
The Exaltation of Christ
- 8 Then Anew This Song We'll Sing 115
The Exaltation of Christ Our Prophet
- 9 Sealed My Pardon with His Blood 127
The Exaltation of Christ Our Priest
- 10 When He Comes, Our Glorious King 139
The Exaltation of Christ Our King
- Acknowledgments 151
- General Index 153
- Scripture Index 158

Man of Sorrows! what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim:
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned he stood,
Sealed my pardon with his blood:
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless, we;
Spotless Lamb of God was he;
Full atonement! can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Lifted up was he to die,
“It is finished!” was his cry:
Now in heav’n exalted high:
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

When he comes, our glorious King,
All his ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we’ll sing:
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

PHILIP BLISS, 1875

Written . . . shortly before his death, this was the last hymn I heard Mr. Bliss sing. . . . When Mr. Moody and I were in Paris, holding meetings in the old church which Napoleon

had granted to the Evangelicals, I frequently sang this hymn as a solo, asking the congregation to join in the single phrase, "Hallelujah, what a Saviour," which they did with splendid effect. It is said that the word "Hallelujah" is the same in all languages. It seems as though God had prepared it for the great jubilee of heaven, when all his children shall have been gathered home to sing "Hallelujah to the Lamb!"

IRA D. SANKEY

PART 1

THE JOURNEY OF
THE SON OF GOD

Man of Sorrows! What a Name

The Whole Christ and the Whole Cross

WHAT HAS JESUS DONE FOR YOU? Ask that question in any Bible-honoring church, and you'll likely hear the same answer: "He died for me." Christians are known as people of the cross, and rightly so. The cross stands at the center of the good news of salvation for sinners. Hence the apostle Paul's resolution in ministering to the Corinthians, "to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

And so we strive to be gospel-centered parents, cross-centered preachers, Christ-centered worshipers. All this is well and good: the cross *is* at the heart of the gospel. But there are two pitfalls we would do well to avoid.

The Danger of a Disconnected Cross

To say the cross is at the center of Christ's work immediately implies that there's a wider picture; a broader canvas that *has* a center. My children recently had to study John Constable's painting *The*

Hay Wain. In the middle of the canvas, resting in a gently flowing river, is the hay wain itself (*wain* being an old English word for a wagon). But to fully appreciate this centerpiece, you also need to see the setting: the Suffolk meadows in the background, the dog playing in the shallows, the rowboat tucked in the rushes. So too the cross. The cross must not become detached from the resurrection, the ascension, or any other event in Christ's life. We may be able to answer the question "Why did Jesus die for you?" But why did he rise? Why was he buried? Why was he circumcised?

Does it even matter? Yes, I suggest it does. God has spoken about all these things in his word, and God doesn't waste his breath. All the events of Christ's life are part of his saving work: he was buried *for us*, he was circumcised *for us*, he was baptized *for us*. Each has something to teach us.

The cross connects not just to every other event in Christ's life but to every aspect of his ministry. Historically, this ministry has been viewed through the lens of Christ's threefold office. Jesus is our prophet, priest, and king. We'll explore these three aspects of Christ's office in the chapters ahead, but for now I'm simply claiming that the cross relates to each one. Of course the cross is about Christ's priestly ministry: we readily see how he is the perfect sacrifice for sin. As those outside (and sadly sometimes inside) the church attack the view that Jesus was bearing the wrath of God at our sin, we've become justifiably ferocious in our defense of what is known as penal-substitutionary atonement. Yet penal substitution doesn't exhaust the significance of Golgotha. Without it, as I'll argue later, nothing else makes sense. But we need to connect the cross to Christ's prophetic and kingly work too. The cross is Christ's pulpit and throne as well as altar. As Gavin Ortlund puts it, "a rigorous

‘cross-centeredness,’ rightly understood, need not entail a focus on the cross instead of other aspects of salvation—but rather the cross at their center, as in a great spider web.”¹

The Danger of a Disconnected Christ

In stitching the cross back into the work of Christ as prophet, priest, and king, and in reattaching it to the other events recorded in the Gospels, our work is only half done. If we’re to see the whole canvas, we need to ask not just what Jesus has done for us but what he’s doing now. Again, those who’ve gone before us are on hand to help. Alongside Christ’s threefold office, they also speak of Christ’s two states: the state of humiliation and the state of exaltation. These two states describe Jesus’s journey. His humiliation begins at the incarnation and takes him through to his burial. His exaltation begins at his resurrection and ends—well, in one sense, never!

Question 23 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism gives a concise summary of an understanding of Christ’s work that emphasizes his twofold state and threefold office:

Q. What offices does Christ execute as our redeemer?

A. Christ, as our redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.²

- 1 Gavin Ortlund, “‘The Voice of His Blood’: Christ’s Intercession in the Thought of Stephen Charnock,” *Themelios* 38, no. 3 (2013): 375–89, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/the-voice-of-his-blood-christs-intercession-in-the-thought-of-stephen-charn/>.
- 2 Westminster Shorter Catechism, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, <https://www.opc.org/sc.html>. I have lightly modernized the language of the Westminster Standards throughout the book.

In a right desire to be cross centered, it's possible that we've fallen into the trap of only ever speaking about Christ in his humiliation and neglecting his ongoing work in his state of exaltation. Perhaps without noticing, we begin to preach a disconnected Christ. "Jesus was a great Savior; he was the Messiah; he was God's Son come to earth." What's the problem here? Not the nouns but the verbs—or, to be more precise, the tenses. It's not just that Jesus *was* our Savior; he *remains* so today. He is just as active as Messiah now as he was two thousand years ago in Jerusalem.

Think of the last time you heard a sermon. What was going on? Whose voice were you hearing? Only the pastor's, as he faithfully expounded God's word? Disconnect Jesus from his ongoing work, and that's all you're left with: one man telling others about a distant third party. It's far more wonderful to realize that Christ himself was speaking to you in his ongoing work as prophet.

Or think of mission. It's so easy to slip into the mindset that says Jesus died for our sins, retired to heaven, and left us with the job of gathering a people for him. Then we remember his own words: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). "I will." It is Jesus who is building, not us. He is still active as a conquering king. We preach the parable of the lost sheep and drive toward a rousing exhortation to be like Jesus and go and find those lost sheep. But subtly, we've shifted the focus from Jesus to us. The shepherd in the parable becomes first and foremost an example for us to follow rather than a reminder of the love of Christ—which, of course, we should then try to imitate but only in a secondary sense. We must not disconnect Christ from his ongoing ministry today. If

we do, someone will have to pick up the work, and that usually leads to burdened pastors and guilt-laden sheep.

But does the Bible really present Jesus as having this threefold office in a twofold state, or is this just a case of “theologians at play”? Let’s turn to the story and see the patterns unfold.

Back to the Beginning

A man was in a garden. He was a good man. Holy. Happy. Healthy.

But he was alone, and his Father saw it. So the Father gently put the man to sleep and pierced his side. From the flesh and bone of the man came a bride, and when the man awoke and saw her, he sang for joy.

But there was a serpent in the grass. The serpent was full of poison and, unable to attack the almighty Father, struck at the bride instead. The bride was in danger, but the man was there. The mighty king commissioned to protect her. The faithful prophet to warn her. The zealous priest to guard the holiness of his beloved and her sanctuary. It was time to crush the serpent’s head.

The man stayed still. The man stayed silent. His sword stayed sheathed.

The serpent struck. The bride fell.

So begins the story of the world . . .

Introducing Adam

That’s a story I imagine you recognize, but it’s not a story originally written for you. Jesus tells us it’s a story written by Moses, so it’s a story whose first readers were Israelites. The Israelites lived in a very different world from ours, a world of Pharaohs and pyramids;

of snakes and deserts; and, most significantly for our purposes, of prophets, priests, and kings.

These were the three roles given to Adam in the garden, as any Israelite would immediately have noticed. None of those three words (*prophet*, *priest*, or *king*) is used in Genesis 1–2, but that doesn't mean the concepts aren't there. We're used to picking up messages from stories without a narrator needing constantly to interrupt to explain. Any child upon hearing, "Rollo put on his crown, gathered his robes, and settled into his throne," knows straightaway that Rollo is a king. For that matter, any Christian can read Genesis 3 and know that we're seeing the origin of sin, though none of the Bible's words for "sin" are used.

So let's meet Adam the prophet, priest, and king.

Adam the King

Adam's kingly office is perhaps the easiest to see:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (Gen. 1:26)

Adam has dominion, or rule, over the earth. Only God stands above him. As the firstborn of all creation, Adam was to rule in the image of his gracious heavenly Father, overseeing the extension of his kingdom from shore to shore, as he worked and developed God's world.

Adam the Prophet

Prophets in the Bible speak God's words to God's people. And in the garden Adam receives just this task:

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
(Gen. 2:15–17)

Why does this command establish Adam as the first prophet? Notice when it comes: before God has made the woman. At this stage Adam is alone. How is Eve (as she is later named) to know to avoid the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? By Adam telling her. The story is very carefully written to make it clear that Adam alone receives this knowledge directly from God. This is part of the reason why, ultimately, Adam rather than Eve bears final responsibility for the fall. Adam is a prophet whose duty is to faithfully pass on God's holy word to his bride. He must reveal God's will to God's people.

Adam the Priest

Of all the offices, the priestly office is the one we're most likely to miss, lacking, as we do, the language and customs of the original Israelite readers. But look again at Genesis 2:15. Adam is to "work" and "keep" the garden in Eden. What does this involve? On its own we might assume that working was simply gardening: Adam is to plant seeds, water crops, take in the harvest. And no doubt,

he did just that—or would have done had he not rebelled. But the Hebrew word is used elsewhere in a more expansive sense to mean worship or service of God: it has “temple” connotations. And what about “keep”? What does it mean for Adam to “keep” the garden? The sense here is to guard—to keep safe, we might say.

Significantly, later in the writings of Moses, these two words (“work” [or “minister,” ESV] and “keep”) are paired again to describe the work of the Levites, the priestly tribe, in guarding and serving God in the tabernacle (Num. 3:7–8). In fact, G. K. Beale has shown that the whole description of the garden is meant to make us think of the tabernacle or temple.³ At the simplest level, a temple is where God meets his people, and it is in the garden that God comes to meet Adam and Eve. There are other, subtler clues too. The entrance to the garden was on the east; so was the entrance to the tabernacle. The candlestick in the temple was shaped like a tree, reminiscent of the trees of the garden. Also, Solomon’s temple was decorated all over with carvings of flowers and trees (1 Kings 6). And just as the garden was eventually guarded by two cherubim, so the temple curtain that kept men from coming back into God’s Holy Place had cherubim woven into it. It seems that both Adam’s job description and his place of work are meant to make us think of him as a priest.

In the Bible, priestly work is all about holiness and worship. Later this will involve offering sacrifices for sin, to cleanse what

3 For a fuller description of the links between Eden and the temple, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004). For a shorter introduction, see G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014).

has become dirty. But for Adam, before mankind rebels, his chief duty is to protect the holiness of paradise—and Eve—from Satan, leading them in joyful thanksgiving to God. Already he is the appointed guardian of God's people, the rescuer from Satanic threat.

So Adam is prophet, priest, and king. And why? For the blessing of his bride. Don't miss this: all three roles make sense only in relation to someone else. A prophet on his own isn't much use. Neither is a king with no one to rule or a priest with no one to guard and protect. No, Adam was given these roles for the sake of others. Initially, this is Eve, but in time his responsibility would also be to their descendants. Adam was to be head of the church and therefore prophet, priest, and king for all God's people. After all, as Paul tells us, Eve was a picture of the church, the bride of Christ (Eph. 5).

The Serpent Strikes

Suddenly, it all goes wrong. Satan, the serpent, slides into paradise, and Adam fails to act. As prophet, Adam should have spoken up and led Eve to the truth when Satan started to cast doubt on God's word. As king, Adam should have exercised his rule over all creatures and conquered the snake. As priest, Adam ought to have crushed the serpent's head and protected the holiness of both his bride and his garden-temple. But instead—standing by Eve's side (Gen. 3:6)—he watched as she reached out and plucked sin and misery from the tree. Indeed, he joined her in rebellion, a false prophet, a defeated king, an unclean priest.

And so sin entered the world. Humanity became blind to the truth about God, ignorant of his glory and goodness. We became

guilty and unclean, stained by the corruption of sin, enslaved to Satan and our own distorted passions. That's why a second Adam was needed: a true prophet to open our eyes, a priest to cleanse us from sin, and a king to conquer death and the devil on our behalf. In short: a Messiah.

Short-Term Saviors: The Many Messiahs

As the story of the Old Testament unfolds, God sends a series of people to fill these roles. Prophets preach, priests sacrifice, kings rule. Each, in their limited way, is a messiah, a minichrist. *Messiah* is the Hebrew word for “anointed,” and *Christ* is its Greek equivalent. Prophets, priests, and kings all had oil poured on their heads as a sign of their commissioning for their roles. We might say that David was “messiahed” as king in 1 Samuel 16. Aaron was “messiahed” as priest in Leviticus 8. Elijah was to “messiah” Elisha as prophet in 1 Kings 19 (cf. 1 Chron. 16:22).

None, however, can deal fully and finally with the problem of sin. For that we need one greater than all the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament combined.

Jesus Messiah

As we come to the New Testament, the Holy Spirit takes the categories of prophet, priest, and king that he has already established in Israel's history and weaves them together to give a glorious portrait of Jesus the Messiah. The official anointing of Jesus comes at his baptism, where he is anointed—“messiahed”—not with oil but with the Holy Spirit, who descends on him in the form of a dove. Although Jesus has, of course, been filled with the Spirit since his conception (Luke 1:35), this anointing marks his

official commissioning as God's Messiah at the start of his public ministry. Shortly afterward, he enters a synagogue and, reading from Isaiah, announces,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me. (Luke 4:18)

He is the truly Spirit-anointed Christ, gathering the offices of prophet, priest, and king up into his own person. This is why we've spoken of one threefold office rather than three offices. Jesus's office is that of Messiah or Redeemer. He fulfills that calling in three ways: as prophet, priest, and king.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Jesus is explicitly called a prophet, a priest, and a king at various points in the New Testament, as we'll see. In Matthew 12, he claims to be greater than Jonah the prophet, Solomon the king, and the temple itself. At other times, the allusions are subtler. Matthew's Gospel begins by claiming that Jesus is the son of David, listing his family tree, replete with Israel's kings, and it ends with Jesus claiming "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). Mark begins with quotations from two Old Testament prophets and moves straight to the ministry of John the Baptist, the last prophet before Christ. It ends with Mary and the other women being sent to "go, tell" of Jesus's resurrection (Mark 16:7). And Luke begins and ends in the temple, the priestly zone: Zechariah the priest receiving an angelic visit in chapter 1 and Christ blessing the disciples, arms aloft like Aaron, before they return to worship God back in his temple in chapter 24. Christ the anointed one is a greater prophet, priest, and king.

The Heidelberg Catechism spells this out:

Q. 31. Why is he called “Christ,” meaning “anointed”?

A. Because he has been ordained by God the Father
and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit
to be
our chief prophet and teacher
who perfectly reveals to us
the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance;
our only high priest
who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body,
and who continually pleads our cause with the Father;
and our eternal king
who governs us by his Word and Spirit,
and who guards us and keeps us
in the freedom he has won for us.⁴

God the Messiah?

Back to Genesis. Adam and Eve have taken the fruit, and the serpent has triumphed. Then God enters the scene. First, he calls to gather his wayward children and to promise that one day Satan will be crushed. Then he punishes the snake, demonstrating his complete authority over him. Finally, he clothes the man and the woman with animal skins: blood has been shed that they might be clothed, their shame covered. God has stepped in as prophet, priest, and king.

Yet these were roles that Adam was meant to fulfill, and it is one of Eve’s sons, God announces, who will ultimately crush the ser-

⁴ *The Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive, 1988), 21.

pent's head. So who would this Messiah be? Already, it seems, we're getting a hint that he would need to be both God and man. Some have held that any time God appears in the Old Testament, it is God the Son whom we should understand to be present—and that therefore it is the Son whom we hear in Genesis 3, already acting in his threefold office. Whatever we make of this, it's certainly the case that the Son was Redeemer before he became man: he functioned as mediator from the fall onward. As Geerhardus Vos puts it, "Prophets, priests, and kings in Israel were not only shadows or types but also messengers and representatives of the great antitype. They derived their official authority from the person Himself whom they as office bearers proclaimed in a shadowy fashion."⁵ The Old Testament system wasn't just a visual aid. Although in itself it was utterly powerless to deliver salvation, Christ was already active through it, giving the grace to his people that he would win for them when finally he came to earth.

So before we look at the work of Christ, we must be clear on his identity. In fact, we must be careful not to separate the subjects of his person and work too sharply. Even those Christians who hold the Bible in the highest regard can fall into the trap of thinking of salvation as a series of gifts given by Jesus but somehow separate from him.

J. I. Packer cautions us:

Some Christians seem to prefer the epistles as if this were a mark of growing up spiritually; but really this attitude is a very

5 Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Christology*, trans. and ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2014), 90.

bad sign, suggesting that we are more interested in theological notions than in fellowship with the Lord Jesus in person.⁶

Of course, good theology itself is not the problem, because good theology leads us to the person of Jesus. In fact, every benefit of our salvation is found in him. He is not a divine Father Christmas, dispensing gifts of salvation; he *is* the gift.

As Stephen Charnock writes, “There is something in Christ more excellent and comely than the office of a Saviour; the greatness of his person is more excellent, than the salvation procured by his death.”⁷

We must not separate Christ from the gospel, still less prize the gifts above the giver. Consider one final quotation, from the Puritan Samuel Rutherford, who wrote these extraordinary words to Lady Kilconquhar:

Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises like the garden of Eden in one.

Put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness in one. O, what a fair and excellent thing that would be! And yet it would be less to that fair and dearest Well-Beloved Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths.⁸

6 J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, exp. ed. (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 61.

7 Quoted in Mark Jones, *A Christian's Pocket Guide to Jesus Christ: An Introduction to Christology* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2012), 3.

8 Samuel Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, ed. Andrew A. Bonar (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1891), 446 (letter 226, to the Lady Kilconquhar).

That is the invitation of the gospel. Not so much “Receive these gifts: justification, sanctification, adoption, reconciliation,” but rather “Receive Christ.” After all, as Jesus said in his high priestly prayer to the Father, “This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). So we turn now to think about the person of Christ, before exploring his threefold office in his two states of humiliation and exaltation.

Christians, rightly called “people of the cross,” look to Jesus’s death and resurrection as the central points of his earthly mission. But in order to understand more fully the person and work of Christ, it’s important for believers to fix their minds on his entire ministry—his life, death, resurrection, and ongoing ministry today—and not solely on his work on the cross.

In *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory*, Jonty Rhodes uses the traditional roles of Jesus as prophet, priest, and king (often referred to as his “threefold office”) to show how his whole life—in humiliation on earth and now exaltation in glory—is lived for *us*. As believers explore Jesus’s life, death, resurrection, and ascension, they will develop a holistic portrait of the Messiah and a deeper appreciation for God’s plan to reclaim sinners.

“*Man of Sorrows, King of Glory* is theologically rich while remaining accessible and devotional. This edifying book will help Christians understand Jesus more fully and love him more deeply.”

GAVIN ORTLUND, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Ojai; author, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On*

“This book is full of biblical insight and draws on a rich stock of historic Reformed theologians. In *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory*, we move from Adam to the new creation and see how in Christ’s exaltation he becomes the human king the world has been awaiting. Jonty Rhodes shows that the death and resurrection of Jesus have so much more importance for Christians than we usually recognize.”

SIMON GATHERCOLE, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of Cambridge

JONTY RHODES is minister of Christ Church Central Leeds, a congregation of the International Presbyterian Church in Leeds, United Kingdom. He has spent the last ten years planting churches in England and is the author of *Covenants Made Simple*. Jonty is married to Georgina, and they have four children.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

 **CROSSWAY**
crossway.org

