

What In Heaven's Name is Jesus Doing Now?

He is seated at the Father's right hand subduing His enemies

Prophet, Priest, and King

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, **the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him **endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.** (Hebrews 12:1–2, ESV)*

As we New Testament believers run with endurance the race that is set before us, we are inspired by a great cloud of witnesses who have gone on before and now with Christ in Paradise. Many of those witnesses were listed in the previous chapter of Hebrews, and among them were prophets, priests, and kings in Old Testament Israel.

In the Old Testament economy God's ministers held three God-ordained roles. The prophets brought the Word from God to the people, and sometimes even made divinely-inspired predictions about the future. The priests ministered in the temple and interceded, through prayers and sacrifices, for the sins of people. The kings were the civil magistrates who administered the civil law on God's behalf.

Christians in all traditions teach a core belief that Jesus Christ, in fulfilling His mission, executed, as one God-man, the three offices of prophet, priest, and king. Hebrews 12:2 is one place in the New Testament where Christ's role in fulfilling these three offices is clarified:

Prophet: Jesus is the founder and perfecter of our faith

Priest: Jesus endured the cross and bore our shame

King: Jesus is seated, as King, at the right hand of God

When Jesus Christ victoriously completed His earthly mission, after commissioning His followers to disciple the nations (Matthew 28:18–20), He ascended to heaven where He was glorified and coronated as King over “*all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*” (Ephesians 1:21, ESV)

Jesus Christ is now seated at the Father's right hand.

He is reigning, as the supreme King, over the entire cosmos. There is nothing that is not under His rulership. How do we know? The Bible tells us so!

So what is Jesus doing now?

Just because Jesus is seated, He is by no means a passive observer to what is happening on the earth. As the victorious Son of God, He is still executing the roles of prophet, priest, and king.

Prophet: Jesus made a shocking statement, just prior to His crucifixion, His disciples simply could not understand:

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7, ESV)

How could this be true? How could it possibly be better if Jesus went away?

Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, would come to guide His followers into all truth. The Spirit would minister the word to them by reminding them of the things that He had taught. (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit would not be sent to them until after Christ was glorified (John 7:39). This happened ten days after the Ascension, on the day of Pentecost. The believers on that day received power when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them.

By sending His Spirit to His believers Jesus is fulfilling the role of prophet.

Every new believer is baptized into His church, the body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit guides believers into all truth, He reminds them of Jesus' words, and He empowers them for service.

The Apostle Paul explains in Ephesians 4:4–16 that, when Christ ascended, He gave (and is still giving) gifts to the church. These gifts include the ministry roles of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

We have the New Testament because Christ's ministers faithfully recorded, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Word (the Bible) we cherish today.

The Spirit has given spiritual capacities to believers at various times (1 Corinthians 12:1–11), gifts like faith, healing, wisdom, special knowledge, miracles, prophecy, and tongues. The Spirit also bears good fruit in the lives of believers: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22–23)

All of these gifts are for the building up of the Body of Christ so we can fulfill our mission on earth.

Christ has poured out His Spirit at times and seasons throughout church history, and He will continue doing this until He returns. No wonder it was to our advantage that He go away!

Priest: The writer of Hebrews beautifully explains why Jesus is such a great High Priest:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14–16, ESV)

We can receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Those are incredibly comforting words! The god-man Jesus Christ can relate to our daily struggles because He has “been there and done that.”

And our High Priest is not only sympathizing with our weaknesses, but He is also making intercession for us before the Father:

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25, ESV)

What can be better than the fact that Jesus is interceding for us?

When we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. (1 John 2:1) Jesus knows the Father's heart. He knows the Father's will. Christ is praying for each of us, personally, and we know His prayers are always answered! He lives to make intercession for us. It's a major part of His heavenly job description!

King: A king's role in Old Testament Israel was to oversee his kingdom by executing justice, punishing evildoers, and rewarding the righteous. The king secured the peace, prosperity, and welfare of his subjects. In particular he was a mediator of the covenant between God and His people.

The prophet Daniel, in a vision, was privileged to see hundreds of years into the future the coronation of Jesus Christ as King. After Jesus ascended, He was immediately in the presence of the Ancient of Days (God the Father). This is what Daniel witnessed:

*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,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13–14, ESV)*

Jesus was seated at the Father's right hand where He is currently reigning as King of the Universe. He has all dominion. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

From His throne, Jesus is raising up and putting down earthly kings. He is directing the affairs of the nations. His truth is marching on.

Some might say "But look at all the evil in the earth. How can you say that Jesus is reigning over this mess?" Consider the story of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel Chapter 4.

Everything was going along beautifully in Babylon where Nebuchadnezzar was king. It was one of the most amazing and beautiful cities that ever existed. But God saw things differently. God determined that the king needed to be humbled. One day, as Nebuchadnezzar was looking over his kingdom and patting himself on the back, God pulled the plug.

For seven years Nebuchadnezzar suffered from insanity. It's quite possible that Babylon was in a state of turmoil during those years. At the end of seven years Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and glorified God as the ruler over the affairs of men. God restored Nebuchadnezzar to the throne.

We can't judge the true state of affairs strictly from an earthly, temporal vantage point. People look on the outside, but God looks at the heart of the matter.

Jesus, at God's right hand, is wielding that same sword. Psalm 110:1 is the Old Testament verse most quoted and referenced by the New Testament authors. It reads like this:

*The LORD says to my Lord "Sit at My right hand
until I make Your enemies Your footstool." (Psalm 110:1, NKJV)*

David, the author of this Psalm, prophetically foresaw that God the Father would invite the glorified Messiah (Jesus) to sit at his right hand until all enemies are subdued.

The goal is world domination. All of Christ's enemies will be brought under His rulership. I know that sounds strong, but how else can it be defined when the Father says "Your enemies will become your footstool?"

But here's the amazing part...Christ as the Head will work through His body on earth, the church, to accomplish this:

*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. **For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...(2 Corinthians 10:3-5, ESV)*

Yes, all authority has been given to Jesus. Yes, He is actively putting His enemies under His feet. And He is accomplishing this through His body on earth, the church. He is accomplishing this

through you and me as we witness to the world through our words, our changed lives, and our good deeds done in His name!

It all makes sense!

Now do you understand what in Heaven's name Jesus is doing now? As our heavenly prophet, priest, and king He has taught us His word, the gospel of salvation.

The Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus, reminds us of His teachings, empowers us for service, and gives us gifts so that we can wage war against Christ's enemies. "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds." (2 Corinthians 10:4, ESV)

It's why Jesus taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." In the Great Commission, Jesus told us to go and make disciples of the nations. In the Lord's prayer, we are praying that it would be so.

Because Christ is ministering in His heavenly role as prophet, priest, and king, the things we pray for in the Lord's prayer *will* become a reality!