

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 17 (HCLD 12) ¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1

Vocabulary: Prophet, Priest, King

Question:: How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? How does Christ execute the office of a priest? How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

Answer: Christ executes the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church,[a] in all ages, by his Spirit and word,[b] in divers ways of administration,[c] the whole will of God,[d] in all things concerning their edification and salvation.[e]

Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God,[f] to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people;[g] and in making continual intercession for them.[h]

Christ executes the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself,[i] and giving them officers,[j] laws,[k] and censures, by which he visibly governs them;[l] in bestowing

¹ Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 12

Q31: Why is He called "Christ," that is, Anointed?

A31: Because He is ordained of God the Father and anointed with the Holy Ghost [a] to be our chief Prophet and Teacher,[b] who has fully revealed to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption;[c] and our only High Priest,[d] who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and ever lives to make intercession for us with the Father;[e] and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.[f]

- a. Heb. 1:9
- b. Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22
- c. John 1:18; 15:15
- d. Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:21
- e. Rom. 5:9-10
- f. Psa. 2:6; Luke 1:33; Matt. 28:18; Isa. 61:1-2; I Peter 2:24; Rev. 19:16

Q32: But why are you called a Christian?

A32: Because by faith I am a member of Christ [g] and thus a partaker of His anointing,[h] in order that I also may confess His Name,[i] may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him,[j] and with a free conscience may fight against sin and the devil in this life,[k] and hereafter in eternity reign with Him over all creatures.[l]

- g. Acts 11:26; I John 2:20, 27
- h. Acts 2:17
- i. Mark 8:38
- j. Rom. 12:1; Rev. 5:8, 10; I Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6
- k. I Tim. 1:18-19
- l. II Tim. 2:12; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 3:21

saving grace upon his elect,[m] rewarding their obedience,[n] and correcting them for their sins,[o] preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings,[p] restraining and overcoming all their enemies,[q] and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory,[r] and their good:[s] and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.[t]² (Westminster Larger Q. 43-45)

PROPHET JESUS – The Westminster Assembly rendered both the question and answer in the present tense (how does). The gift of some as prophets is a part of the fivefold gift of the Spirit to the church. I am not of the cessationist school and affirm the gifts of the Spirit as valid today. However like Calvin, I don't expect to meet any apostles or prophets on my morning walk; though I would never dare to limit God and say He could not call another to either of these offices. Thus, I had not considered the office of prophet in the present tense until I prepared this study. The first question for me then, does Christ continue to execute the office of prophet?

The Westminster Assembly qualifies this statement with "by his Spirit and word." I believe the last true prophet passed from this temporal world by the end of the first century. While I wouldn't plant my feet in concrete, I don't think the office of prophet as we can understand it as men, nor point to it in biblical history is being presently exercised by Christ. We see him fill this office perfectly in His earthly ministry as the God-man, Jesus Christ. The revelation of God of Himself to man is finished. This in no way denies Christ as prophet, but does say that while it is true He was and is a prophet from the perspective of men, this is not a continuing office in that even by word and Spirit Christ will make further revelations. The canon of Scripture is closed. Hebrews one confirms the perfect or mature and complete word of God having come in the person of Jesus Christ. There is a sense of this word still being applicable both in Christ and in His ministers in that the primary function of a prophet was not foretelling as much as forth-telling the word of God. Thus in Scripture Christ in the Spirit still speaks, and the minister when faithfully sharing the word of God speaks the word of God.

PRIEST JESUS – The question concerning the office of the priesthood of Christ is a little different in that while the element concerning sacrifice is past; once for all, it is true that He continues to offer intercession for us, though we would be more apt to call this His office that of Mediator, and in this sense, intercession can rightly belong to both offices. We then are left with

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- ²a. John 1:18
b. I Peter 1:10-12
c. Heb. 1:1-2
d. John 15:15
e. Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11-13; John 20:31
f. Heb. 9:14, 28
g. Heb. 2:17
h. Heb. 7:25
i. Acts 15:14-16; Isa. 4:4-5; Gen. 49:10; Psa. 110:3
j. Eph. 4:11-12; I Cor. 12:28
k. Isa. 33:22
l. Matt. 18:17-18; I Cor. 5:4-5
m. Acts 5:31
n. Rev. 2:10; 22:12
o. Rev. 3:19
p. Isa. 63:9
q. I Cor. 15:25; Psa. 110:1-2
r. Rom. 14:10-11
s. Rom. 8:28
t. II Thess. 1:8-9; Psa. 2:8-9

the question of the present tense in Christ as prophet. I choose to think His role as prophet has ended. In John 14:26 Christ says the Holy Ghost shall teach us all things. Thus the Westminster Assembly is correct in the qualifying statement “by his Spirit and word.” But is this not then the work of the Holy Spirit Himself and one of the purposes for which He came, rather than the continuing office of Christ? His word, in the fullness of the Godhead, being the Holy Scriptures, we indeed have in the present tense. Nonetheless, none can understand these apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and my thoughts return to the beginning. In the true sense of the word prophet in Scripture, none exist today, to include Jesus Christ.

The other view of this is that the calling of God is without shadow or turning and Jesus Christ being a prophet, and still living is a prophet. We recognize this in the churches today whereby ordination is for life, not a term of office. Thus it is a true saying that Christ is our high priest, and prophet today. All in all then I find no real points in this statement to argue without appearing to merely be about disputing the Westminster Assembly.

I think we need to pay close attention to the wisdom shown by the Westminster Assembly in making Christ our present prophet though. If Christ, the perfection of God in the flesh still operates as a prophet, what need can we have for lesser prophets among men? I also note that the Westminster Assembly was careful to state that the revelation is to the church. That is collective for God’s people, not an individual. Peter reminds us of the same principle when he says “no word of the Scripture is of any private interpretation” (1 Pet. 2:20-21). The church then has solid ground upon which to declare the canon closed, and no need for the appearance of further prophets to “speak” God’s word, the same having been reduced to written form for almost two millennium now. Nonetheless, we do have need for Christ by His Spirit to continue to reveal the will of God to the church continually.

KING JESUS – . On first reading the only twinge came not from the words of the Assembly, but the choice of proof texts from the book of Revelation. These passages most view as being yet future, and Christ as the King is not future. However the jab of the Revelation references was more than soothed with the many references to the Old Testament. Taken as a whole then I think in their choice of references alone the Assembly has shown us this is an office past, present, and future of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There is so much that warms the heart and brings hope and comfort in the midst of this temporal world in this one statement it is hard to express the joy and comfort one finds here, much less offer a critique. Yet for that purpose we are gathered. Perhaps I would begin with the “bestowal of grace upon His elect;” believing the understanding of grace is a thorn in the side of the reformed church that has brought much discussion and even division at places in our history. Personally I do not recognize common and special grace, but God’s grace bestowed upon the elect, and that which we are want to call common grace is the over flow of God’s abundant grace so bestowed on His elect. And even as these words clear the pen I am drawn to the statement “and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory. . .” For this purpose all was created, and this purpose, grace has been bestowed. These two fit hand in glove so to speak. Having my own beliefs vindicated would perhaps silence any further critique, but I immediately find myself looking at the phrase “also in taking vengeance on the rest. . .” and my heart mourns for those outside this glorious knowledge of Christ.

It is at this point so many refuse the truth and wander into error because we cannot accept that some are “created” for this purpose. I would deny they were created for this purpose, though that is how the election/reprobate issue would appear to present it. Man was created without sin,

and we can blame the current situation of being dead in sin on none other than the created, not the Creator. In the sense God created all alone can we say some were created for hell. Hell itself being created for Satan and the fallen angels, not man. Yet hell will be populated by men, because of the fall, not God's perfect creation.

Nonetheless, for this reason alone many turn away from our precious faith and many denominations have come into being in church history. I would that I had the ability to silence such doubt of God's sovereign grace forever, but laboring in trust, faith, and with much trembling, continue with the fragile ability given of our Lord toward this end. Our logic fails because we see something of value in the creation apart from its Creator. Our true value lies not in the substance of the dust that we are, but as image bearers of God. Yes we were created logical and reasoning beings, and herein is our down fall. Logic has never and never will bring one soul to bow before the Sovereign God who created us. We stand guilty, condemned to hell, one and all. God of His pure and sovereign grace chose some to elect in Christ Jesus for His own glory. It is not as if God caused man to sin and be condemned, but rather that God allowed them the freedom they demanded, whereby they condemned themselves to hell. Were it possible (and it is not possible) for man apart from the Holy Spirit working repentance able to turn to God, then God would be bound to bestow grace and salvation in Christ Jesus. None have, and none will; for this reason our Lord could say none come unto Me unless the father draw them. Were it possible (and it is not possible) for any to obey the law 100 %, some believe this would mean salvation and bestowal of grace. This is not so for the law was not given to ever work salvation, but to labor as a school master showing what sin is and how fallen we are and in need of a Sovereign King, able to guide, support, and preserve a people for Himself; The law made the necessity of Jesus manifest in the Old Testament, so those in the New Testament could seize the promise with even more zeal than those who had gone before. Christ said to Thomas that those who believed and saw not would be more blessed than he who had seen with his own eyes. Surely this added blessing extended backward to the Old testament saints who perceived of His day only by faith.

In short then, mankind as a whole has fallen and is condemned to hell. From this condemned mass of humanity, Christ the King of kings has called forth a people of His own, and proceeds to lovingly, yet sovereignly rule over them and by His almighty power, so ordering things in the world, that all work according to His holy purpose and for the ultimate good of His people. No monarch before or since has ever been able, nor will be able to so preserve his kingdom as our Lord and God has His. Earthly monarchs from the beginning have claimed kin with deity. They were near a truth in that God ordained them to office, but our King is God. And lest we become prideful in service to the King of kings and lord it over others, we are constantly reminded, we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.

Israel wanted a king to be like the nations around them. God became a King that we might be different than all other kingdoms from eternity past to eternity future! And with this I point not to an error, but a place where I personally would have again chosen different words than the Assembly. They ask how Christ executes the office of a king, I would choose the article "the." For Christ has always been King of kings and Lord of lords, and has never surrendered this title, this authority to none. Christ is *the* King of Glory!

We then can trace all the troubles in this temporal world to the denial of Christ Jesus as King. Man sets himself above men, and bows before the idols of the world in denial of the Sovereign Ruler of all, from whom their own position and power came. The price for sin is paid for in this life, not the next only, and that price today is human misery

This should stand as an extra caution for those who like myself, do not see the gifts of the Spirit to man and the church as having ceased with the apostolic age. This is an error of the Pentecostal faith and so called “charismatic movement.” The continuum for this position is rather long, and not on subject for the present work. However, while embracing a non-cessationist position personally, caution is the watch word of the day less we enter also into this error. I will simply state that I believe to demand a total cessation of the gifts is to limit God and I find myself in good company from Calvin forward in the reformed faith to dare not assume the prerogatives of God. The manifestation and application of such gifts is another topic.

From Scripture then, we like the Westminster Assembly can declare Jesus Christ prophet, priest and king, yesterday, today, forever.

SUGGESTED SERMON OUTLINE

The Anointed One

Why is He called Christ, that is, the Anointed One?

Because He is ordained by God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, fully revealing to us the secret purpose and will of God concerning our redemption; to be our only High Priest, having redeemed us by the one sacrifice of His body and ever interceding for us with the Father, and to be our eternal King, governing us by His Word and Spirit, and defending and sustaining us in the redemption He has won for us.

But why are you called a Christian?

Because through faith I share in Christ and thus in His anointing, so that I may confess His name, offer myself a living sacrifice of gratitude to Him, and fight against sin and the devil with a free and good conscience throughout this life and hereafter rule with Him in eternity over all creatures.

I. The Anointing Designates the Promised Savior

A. The prophecy about salvation predicted God’s distinct appointment of a Redeemer-Prophet The Spirit of the Lord God 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; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Messiah / Christ / Anointed [Ordained or Appointed]

B. The prediction of a prophet was literally fulfilled in the baptism of Jesus. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. (Luke 3:21-22)

C. God told His people to expect an anointed end time prophet like Moses. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto

him ye shall hearken; (Deuteronomy 18:15) 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)

Acts 3:22 claimed the fulfillment of the prophecy in Jesus.

D. The Savior is also the designated High Priest of all priests representing believers to God. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:34)

E. And the Savior is further the designated King of Kings and end-time Lord. 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. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:32-33).

F. All the authority of the definitive final Prophet, Priest, and King predicted in the Old Testament is summarized in Christ, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (Matthew 28:18)

II. Our Name Derives from His

A. Christians share in Christ's work. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

B. Enemies actually first gave us the name Christians. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)

Would there be enough evidence to convict you ?

C. Accepting the name is one of the ways we testify that we belong to Jesus Christ. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)

D. The name follows the name. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

E. As Christians we have an intimate and important part in the long-range plan of God. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:: (1 Peter 2:9)

III. The Present Extends into the Eternal

A. Being Christians puts believers in conflict with the evil of the age. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having

put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: (I Timothy 1:18-19)

B. The rewards are incalculable. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

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Lord's Day 012
Questions 31-32
Dr. Edwin P. Elliott, Jr.