



MOUNT MERRION FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND].



Pulpit Ministry of Mount Merrion Free Presbyterian Church

Lord's Day Morning 13th April 2008.

Series - The Covenant Offices of Christ.

No.2 "Heaven's Approbation On Christ's Offices"

Scripture Reading Rev Ch1:5; Luke Ch4:18

By. Rev. Paul Thompson.

Last Sabbath day we commenced a study relating to the offices of Christ. Time did not permit us to finish what we intended to say in that first message, so today we will complete the content of that initial message. The passage of study was that of Revelation Chapter one. May I remind you of our initial proposition concerning the book of Revelation, viz. that the message of these twenty two chapters is intended to convey truth to the soul that will bless the heart of the Child of God. We observed from v1 that God gave this Revelation to Christ [v1], Christ in turn relays it to the Angel and the Angel then delivers it to John and finally John circulates this letter to the Churches, with the admonition “*He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*” Tragically Revelation has become a neglected book for many Christians, this I believe is due to the false presupposition that Revelation entails a lot of hard reading without a lot of blessing, that is the conclusion of many. However, look at v3, “*Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein...*”

‘*Those things*’ referred to in v3 and revealed to us in this book are intended to bring you blessing Christian. Revelation has heaven’s approval stamped upon it! That means that we are not to dismiss heaven’s approbation upon the book or its contents. All things written therein are intended to bless and edify, not to confuse and bewilder.

Right away in the opening verses John begins to reveal truth about Christ. In our inaugural message we stated that in v5 we have clearly demonstrated vital truth about Christ, there He is declared to be “*The faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth.*” Those expressions reveal Christ to be a Prophet, a Priest and a King. Don’t dismiss that with a sigh and think ‘*so what!*’ View those words with this premise, that the truth that v5 holds is full of blessing, God wants me to understand this, Christ wants me to feel its power and John wants me to be blessed.

In the last message our primary focus was upon the authentication of Christ, functioning as a Prophet, Priest and King. We noted also His ‘*Covenant appointment*’ to these offices. Time was given to establish Christ’s exclusive appointment to each of these three offices, we observed the two revealed elements that point to Christ’s exclusive position as the Covenantal Prophet, Priest and King, those being, (1) His election [appointment] by the Father and (2) His being anointed to fulfil those functions. Altogether Christ is our ‘*appointed*’ and ‘*anointed*’ Prophet, Priest and King. Each office receives the approbation of heaven [

Our purpose in considering these introductory thoughts will lead us to see that Christ is a perfect Saviour, however, as stated last week, my prayer is that the relevance of these doctrinal truths will impact your soul. These truths have immense practical value for the saint, it is my desire that as we look at each office the natural application will suffuse our souls. However, it is necessary that we understand the nature of these offices.

1) The Authority Of These Offices.

The Prophet, Priest or King was an individual who was invested with authority. This was true of all three offices. The Priest had authority to sacrifice, the King had the authority to rule and the prophet had the authority to preach! In Malachi Ch2:1-7 we read of the Priests being invested with authority or the right to perform their duties [v4], “*My Covenant might be with Levi.*” No man dare challenge the authority of the Priest, the penalty for doing so was death, [Deut Ch17:12]. Thinking about the prophet for a moment, consider Haggai Ch1:12-13. This passage provides a clear understanding of the authority of the God appointed, anointed prophet. We often pray Haggai Ch1:12-13 in regards to ministers, ‘*may he be the Lord’s messenger in the Lord’s message*’, the truth contained in Haggai Ch1:12-13 has become lost as a cliché. The minister of Christ who is sent by God and continues in that office is always a man with the authority to preach, each message is the Lord’s message, it may be delivered in a different manner or style with etc, yet it remains the Lord’s message. What validates a man in the office of minister, verifying him to be a true minister of the gospel is his faithfulness to the message of God. To hear Haggai preach was to hear God speak!

There are men who masquerade as ministers of Christ, claiming to have authority, but God says, “*I have not sent these prophets, yet they prophesy.*” [See Jer Ch14:14; Ch23:21; Ch27:15; Ch29:9], such have no authority from Christ, yet those who are appointed and anointed have the recognition and accreditation of heaven. Yet none has more authority than Christ who is the ultimate prophet, who is the Great High Priest and

who rules as an Imperial Monarch. Heaven's authentication of Christ as the Messiah is seen at Christ's Baptism [Matt Ch3:17] and again on the Mount of Transfiguration [Matt Ch17:5], "*This is my beloved son...hear ye him.*" Turn to John Ch17:2, here Christ acknowledged the Father's investing Him with "*power over all flesh.*" Study the word and recognise the power and authority of Christ, Christ has been given the authority over the body to heal the sick [Mark Ch2:10], He has Regal authority over the elements, that even the sea and wind must submit to His rule [Mark Ch4:39]. Christ has Kingly authority over Hell, the devils must obey him [Mark Ch1:27], "*For with authority he commandeth he even the unclean spirit's and they do obey Him.*" He has authority and the power to forgive sins, [Matt Ch9:6; Mark Ch2:10]. Dear Christian Christ has not lost any of His authority or power over all things, to heal, to subdue and to save! Be confident of this very Christ who is yours!

Turn to Matt Ch21:23 Christ had been healing the sick and forgiving sins, He has just cast out the money changers from the Temple, as Christ returns to Jerusalem [v23] the Chief Priests and elders demand from Christ, "*By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?*" Who gives thee the right to act in such a manner. This question is intended to ensnare Christ. All appointments to temple service were through the Chief Priests, no man could preach except by their endorsement, if Christ says that He received His authority from man, they would deny this, '*You have no authority from us.*' If Christ responds saying that God has commissioned Him to speak it would be considered by them to be blasphemy to pretend to have direct commission from God. The question that Christ puts to them regarding John demands only one answer, that '*there was a man sent from God whose name was John.*' if they had believed John's report, they would have recognised Christ as the Messiah before them, they were beholding "*the Lamb of God!*" Paul says of Christ, Rom Ch1:3-4, "*Jesus Christ...declared to be the Son of God with power.*"

Christ derived all His authority from God. When Christ spoke He spoke with one who had authority! Hell and earth listened to when He spoke! Unconverted you need to listen.

2) The Power of These Offices.

Another aspect of the offices of Christ that is vital for us to consider is that the one who was chosen and appointed as a Prophet, Priest or King was an '*empowered*' individual. Michael Barrett again states, "*When the Lord anointed one for some sphere of service, whether priestly, prophetic or kingly, He did not abandon that individual to his own abilities or ingenuity, the Lord always supplied the power for that service.*" If we examine these three old testament functions we find that when the individual was anointed [usually with oil], the Holy Spirit came upon that person enabling him to perform the task for which he was set apart. If a prophet was anointed with oil, set apart for the prophetic office, then he was empowered to preach, so it was also with the Priest and the King. Let us consider some examples of selected individuals being empowered for these tasks.

i) King David. [1 Sam Ch16:13], "*Then 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.*" When he became King David was already empowered to discharge his office.

ii) The Prophet Ezekiel. [Ezekiel Ch2:1-2], "*Stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee...and the spirit entered into me when he spoke unto me.*" The Spirit empowered Ezekiel to stand as a prophet sent from God. The prophet Micah was the same, he was given Spiritual power to speak with boldness [Micah Ch3:8].

iii) The Priest Zechariah. [2 Chron Ch24:20], "*And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah...*" Again the Priest was emboldened with power to witness against the people's sin for which he eventually was killed.

Power to minister or leadership qualities were the consequences of this Spiritual anointing, not the cause of anointing. That renders it absolutely essential, beyond anything else that a man enter the service of God with the approbation of heaven upon him, for without such he will be a powerless preacher labouring in a powerless ministry. The ministry is not a profession, although it must be executed in a dignified and professional manner, yet it is not a career, it is a calling in which men are set apart by God and then receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit to execute their calling. It is this Spiritual power resting upon God's servants that sets apart the preaching of the gospel from other gospels, [1Cor Ch2:4], "*And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

All this pointed forward to Christ, our Prophet, Priest and King. The Gospels record how the Spirit

"Christ did not take the office of mediator upon himself by His own initiative, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest." (Heb Ch:5:5)." {Wilhelmus a Brakel}.

descended like a dove upon Christ, empowering Him as the Godman [Matt Ch3;16; Mark Ch1:10; Luke Ch3:22; John Ch1:32]. When the Spirit descended upon Christ, never again do we read of Christ being empowered. The Spirit remained upon Christ!

As the Prophet He declared His power over every malady that inflicted man. His word has power to give life, the example of Lazarus, “*Come forth.*” His word to the blind imparted illumination. His word to the lame imparted strength. As the Priest and King, he declares His power as He rose from the dead, [Acts Ch2:24], “*Having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*” The power of Christ demonstrates that He continueth forever as our Prophet Priest and King, though men may believe that Christ is no more, this world has not seen the last of the Great Prophet, Priest and King! He is a Prophet with Power, a Priest with Power and a King with Power! The Spirit wants you to know this, “*He that hath a ear let him hear what the Spirit saith.*”

3) The Necessity of These Offices.

God foreknew in eternity past, that man who would fall, would need a saviour who would be together a Prophet, Priest and a King. In the sending of Christ as such, we must acknowledge the wisdom of God. The saviour of man could not be any saviour, He could not be an Angel or a created saviour, but He must be God and He must fulfil these three offices. Wilhelmus a Brakel states in his unsurpassed work, ‘*The Christian’s Reasonable Service*’ [pub; Reformation Heritage Books], “*Just as three categories of individuals were anointed as types of Christ, it was thus necessary that Christ would also have these three offices and minister in them, so that He would be able to remove the threefold misery of man.*” What is the threefold misery of man? ‘*Blindness*’, ‘*enmity with God*’ and ‘*complete spiritual inability.*’

i) As a Prophet He was appointed and send By God To Reveal. In his prophetic office, As He reveals His word to men He removes the blindness. The light of His word scatters the darkness. 1 Peter Ch2:9, “*To give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” The word of Christ the Prophet has illuminating power, this is seen in the case of Lydia, the ‘*Lord*’ opened her heart, I.e. gave spiritual understanding! See also Acts Ch26:18, “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness into his marvellous light.*”

ii) As Priest He was appointed and sent To Reconcile. In His Sacerdotal [priestly] office He removes enmity with God, His merit removing the guilt of sin.

iii) As King He was appointed and sent To Rule. In His Regal [Kingly] office He removes the inability and bondage that conquers man. He removes the hostility and enmity that enshrouds your entire being, He breaks the power of sin, imparting to your soul an new spiritual liberty. To summarise, the prophet shows us God, the priest leads us to God and the King joins us and glorifies us with God.

You cannot receive Christ as your Saviour without taking Christ as your Prophet, your Priest and Your King! Many profess to have Christ as their saviour, yet there is a blatant disregard and aversion of His prophetic office, they do not desire His word. Many reject Christ as their Priest, they seek to work their own righteousness. Many who profess to belong to Christ refuse to have Christ as their King! Sinners must have Christ as Prophet Priest and King. When an individual trusts Christ, he dispenses with his own wisdom and receives the words of the faithful prophet, he renounces his own attempts to provide a righteousness that will satisfy God, he turns away from anarchy, he ceases to be a rebel and submits to the rule of Christ. That is the description of a Christian. Unregenerate man or woman, Christ commends Himself to you as a perfect, suitable saviour. He alone can smash the power of the Prince of this world.

Dear Christian it was the blood of the Faithful witness, the blood of the First begotten of the dead and the Blood of the Prince of the Kings of the Earth that has redeemed you. Christ owns you, you are His possession, you own Christ as Prophet Priest and King.

By. Paul Thompson.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.”

Hebrews 10:16