



MOUNT MERRION FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND].



Pulpit Ministry of Mount Merrion Free Presbyterian Church

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Series 'The Covenant Offices of Christ'

No.3 "Christ The Faithful Prophet"

Scripture Reading Luke Ch4:16-34; Rev Ch1:5

By. Rev. Paul Thompson.

The key passage in any study of the prophetic office of Christ are the words of Moses found in Deut Ch18:15-18, *“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.”* Those words are a prophecy, a prophecy that ought to have created in the hearts of all men living then an expectation. God then was telling the world through Moses to expect the appearance of a prophet. A prophet who would appear with a message to which all men must give attention to. The prophet of whom Moses spoke was none other than Christ, the promised Messiah who would declare a message of deliverance for the captives held in sin. Indeed deliverance could only be obtained through the words of this prophet. There are some key thoughts in the words of Deut Ch18:15,18. (1) This Prophet would be of divine origin, sent by God, *“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet”* (2) This Prophet would be taken from among men *“from the midst of thee”* (3) He would have all the characteristics of Moses *“like unto me”* In that Moses acted faithfully as Israel’s mediator, priest, prophet and king. (4) All men are called to externally attend to His word and internally receive His doctrine, *“Unto him shall ye hearken.”*

This world is to expect a prophet from God. This world has received a prophet from God, Christ was a teacher sent from God [John Ch3]. Immediately after His baptism and his reception of the approbation of heaven, *“This is my beloved son, hear ye him”* Christ entered immediately upon the discharge of his office as prophet. He continued in that office right until his death, even on the cross he prophesied, to the dying thief, *“Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.”* He continues to do so from His pulpit in heaven.

However, many today still do not accept that this *‘Greater than Moses, Prophet’* has actually come. It is therefore important that the Church of Christ be diligent in declaring to this world that Christ the Great Prophet of the Lord has come. Today I want to focus upon the authentication or verification of Christ as the Covenantal prophet. There is a need for us to identify Christ as the true prophet. Man needs a prophet in order to reveal to him his sin. Without a prophet we will perish.

Turn to Matt Ch24:5, 11, we are warned, *“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ and shall deceive many.”*; *“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”* [v24], *“For there shall arise false Christ’s, and false prophets...insomuch that, if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect.”* John warns men, [1John Ch4:1], *“Many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* you live in a time were the danger of being deceived is ever present, Christ was prophesying that multitudes will go after these false prophets, Paul warns Timothy in 2 Tim Ch3:1 that *“Perilous times shall come.”* Ch4:3, *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but...shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth...”*

Satan is always busy in the work of producing counterfeits. In his book *‘The Returning King’* Vern Poythress [Prof. N.T. Interpretation at Westminster Theological Seminary Philadelphia] points out that for everything that God creates and does, Satan has his counterfeit. Counterfeiting is one of the most important themes of Revelation. Turn to Rev Ch13:1-13.

Christ is the image of the Father [Col Ch1:15-16]. The dragon who is Satan [Rev Ch20:2] imitates God by bringing forth one in His image. Look at Ch12:3, the dragon is described as having *‘seven heads and ten horns’* The beast in Ch13:1 is very similar to the Dragon [he is his image], an imitation of the incarnation. He imitates the resurrection in Ch13:3, the wound is supposed to be fatal but is not. This beast did not die and come alive again, but his recovery is amazing leading people to follow the beast. Satan has a counterfeit prophet Ch13:11-14. This second beast is latter described as the prophet Ch16:13. In Ch13:14, it is said of this prophet, *“He...deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do...”*

If we are to present Christ to this world as the Prophet of the Lord, then we need to verify Him as being such. We turn today to the words of Luke Ch 4:16-32. The words of Christ, here Christ preached his first sermon from Isa Ch61:1-2.

1) The Verification of Christ as Prophet.

In order for Christ to be received and validated as *‘The Faithful witness’*, He must demonstrate Himself to be a verified prophet. There was biblical criteria that a man must meet in order to be accepted as a prophet sent from God thus distinguishing him from other false prophets. Three marks in particular verified a prophet to

“Although all the Old Testament prophets were spokesmen for God and men of God, how imperfectly they represented God when compared to the Lord Jesus.” ...Dr. Michael Barrett...

be true. Let us look at each briefly.

i) He Must Prophesy as a Prophet Sent from God.

A prophet's authority depended upon his speaking only the word of God. The source of His message was from God alone. God gave the message, and the prophet relayed that message as God's spokesman, his message was either prefaced by or concluded by the words "*Thus saith the Lord.*" However, Christ's unique relationship to the Father gave him authority to proclaim His message not only as the messenger of God, but as God himself, "*I and my father are one*" [John 10:30]. Christ states in John Ch 7:16, "*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*" Christ said and proclaimed only that which the Father had given him, He is the faithful witness [Rev Ch1:5]. Christ is a prophet with heavenly origin. He speaks the words of God. The key distinction between Christ and all other prophets was that Christ spoke as if directly from God. All the other prophets received their messages from God, their words were prefaced by "*Thus saith the Lord.*" Christ spoke as God [John Ch3:34].

ii) Confirmation of Revelation by Signs and Wonders. [Deut Ch13:1].

The prophetic office was to be verified by signs and wonders. Miraculous works demonstrated a man to be a true prophet. Applying this to Christ, the Lord was verified beyond any doubt as a prophet by His works. Let us consider some examples.

a) Christ's prophetic office was verified at the feeding of the five thousand. Turn to John Ch 6:14, "When they had seen the miracle that Jesus did said, *this is of a truth that prophet that should come into this world.*"

b) Christ was verified by the resurrection of the widow's son, see Luke Ch7:16, "*A great prophet is risen up among us.*" Clearly here is another demonstration of the works of Christ verifying him to be the Lord's prophet.

Remember the words of Nicodemus, how he testified of Christ's prophetic office, [John Ch3:2] "*Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.*" The Jews expected that when the Messiah would come he would do many miracles, Isa Ch35:4-6 plainly reveals that this expectation would be correct, "*Behold your God will come...he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...*" when the Jews saw the miracles that Christ wrought, many of them were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah but many refused to believe, even though His works testified to who He was.

c) Christ stated that by His works He would be verified. Turn to John Ch5:36-39.

Christ here delivers a threefold proof to his deity, three witnesses are called forth to verify the Son of God. In v31 Christ says "*If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*" We often use the phrase '*self praise is no recommendation at all*' Christ did not recommend himself by His own words. As a true prophet he knew that his office must be verified by a source outside of himself. In v32 Christ cites John the Baptist as a true witness, "*Ye sent unto John and He bare witness of the truth.*" However, in v34-36 Christ says, "*But I receive not testimony from man...But I have a greater witness than that of John...*" Christ then calls forth the first witness [v36], "*The same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*" The second witness is the Father [v37], "*The Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.*" The Third witness is the scriptures [v39], "*Search the scriptures...they are they which testify of me.*"

iii) His Prophecies must be fulfilled. [Deut Ch18:20-22].

A prophet was verified by his predictions coming true. If the words of the prophet did not come true that prophet was to be rejected. However, the scriptures are replete with examples of Christ's prophecies being realised, some during his lifetime, others after His death and ascension to Heaven.

i) His death. [Matt Ch20:18-19].

Christ gave prophetic details of his own death, right to the specifics of what would precede his death [mocking, scourging etc], and the very method that would be used to inflict death, I.e. crucifixion. The Matt Ch20 prophecy was to be fulfilled before the disciples very eyes.

ii) The Betrayal. [Matt Ch26:21; John Ch6:64].

Christ before the disciples prophesied that one of them would betray him, Matt Ch26:21, "*Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*" John Ch 6:64 reveals that Christ knew who would betray him, that

*"The most rude and ignorant may be taught, seeing Christ executes the office of teacher."
...Thomas Boston...*

Judas would be the one. When the time of Christ's arrest drew nigh, Christ again prophesies, "*He is at hand that doth betray me*" [Matt Ch26:46]. Those words were prophetic, for no sooner had Christ spoken those words were that prophecy was fulfilled before Peter, James and John - Judas entered the Garden and betrayed Christ.

iii) *The Denial of Peter and the behaviour of the disciples.* [Matt Ch26:31-34;].

Christ prophesies that his disciples will all forsake him [Matt Ch26:31], "*The sheep of the flock shall be scattered.*" He draws Peter to the side and foretells his denial [v34], "*This night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*" So specific is Christ with the details that he informs Peter not only of his denial, but of the exact number of times that he will deny his saviour. Again these prophecies regarding the behaviour of the disciples was fulfilled, [v56], "*Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.*" v74-75 records Peter's denial of Christ.

iv) *The Destruction of Jerusalem.* [Matt Ch24].

Christ foretells the destruction of Jerusalem again this prophecy of the Saviour would be fulfilled after his death. The Roman armies under Titus would ravage the City of Jerusalem in the year AD70.

v) *His Resurrection.* [Matt Ch20:19], "*And the third day he shall rise from the dead.*"

The resurrection was the '*test prophecy.*' It would be the ultimate prophesy of Christ during his ministry on earth. "*The one single prediction upon which Christ staked his entire prophetic and messianic credibility was the prophecy of His own resurrection from the dead.*" [Michael Barrett]. "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" [John Ch2;19]. The fulfilment of that prophecy [His resurrection] would be heaven's verification of Christ as the Prophet of the Lord.

The Jewish Religious leaders knew the consequences should Christ rise from the dead. Therefore they did all that they could to ensure that Christ would not rise, they placed a huge stone over the Tomb, they stationed guards on a twenty four hour watch. However, this '*test*' prophecy was fulfilled, Christ did rise from the dead after three days. The fulfilment of this prophecy now meant that all men should listen to Christ, the prophet sent from God! Still today all those who oppose Christ seek to discredit the resurrection of Christ. The scribes in Christ's day spread the lie that his disciples had stolen the corpse, [Matt Ch28:13] the false prophets of the contemporary cults to this day attack vehemently the resurrection of Christ, for they know that any acceptance of the fulfilment of the Resurrection prophecy demands that this world listen to Christ!

2) *His Words Regarding the Church.*

Christ has declared himself to be verified beyond any shadow of doubt that He is the Faithful witness. Being the '*Faithful witness* [prophet]' means that Christ cannot deceive or be deceived. We can have the absolute confidence that what Christ reveals to us is absolutely true. Heb Ch13:8, "*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.*" He still is the faithful and true witness. John Ch14:6, "*I am the truth.*" As His Church we then should take careful note of His words concerning us. He tells us that "*In this world ye shall have tribulation.*" [John Ch16:33]. He informs us that the world will hate us [John Ch15:19]. We need to in the light of Christ's words cultivate a worldview that sets the world apart from the Church. The world is no friend to the Church. If we feel that we can befriend the world we deceive ourselves and deny the word of the Prophet Christ. If Christ has said that I will come again for thee, he will surely come [John Ch14:1]. He cannot deny himself, God cannot lie [Titus Ch1:2].

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