

Redeemer OPC, Hawaii
Adult Sunday School
The Person and Atoning Work of Christ (5)
“The Offices of Christ”

- I. Introduction. This study takes up a matter that requires some explanation up front about offices and Christ.
 - A. What Is an Office? An office is a position of agency charged with a task to fulfill; i.e., given a commission. It involves the specific functions necessary to fulfill the commission given, and includes the resources necessary to fulfill it. It involves the responsibility to carry out the commission, but also the authority to carry it out. One example is political office. The commission is given by the people who elect the politician and whom he represents. He is given the task of governing according to the laws, and his commission involves performing the functions necessary to fulfill the task. By electing him to his office, the people give him both responsibility and authority to carry out his functions and the task as a whole. Another example is the church office of elder. Christ calls men to the eldership through the church, by certification by the session and election by the people. They are thus commissioned to their task, and are given the responsibility and authority to perform the functions necessary to oversee the church in its Great Commission. How does this relate to Christ?
 - B. Christ and Office. Christ was given a commission by the Father to be the Mediator between God and men, the only go-between. In His case, there are three principle offices by which He fulfilled His commission, which involved mediatorial functions, the responsibility and authority necessary to each, with the resources of His Deity and His anointing by the Holy Spirit. He still fills those offices as He continues fulfilling mediatorial functions in His estate of exaltation, after having fulfilled those functions especially connected to His estate of humiliation. All three of His offices were foreshadowed in the OT: prophet, priest, and king. They were selected by God for their task, and enabled to fulfill their task by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. That was signified by their being anointed with oil. Now, on to the offices themselves.
- II. Prophet.
 - A. God’s Spokesman. The prophet was God’s agent of revelation to deliver the Word of God to God’s

people (2 Pet. 1:21). He kept the people from the need to hear God's voice directly and unmediated. That was a matter of fear and the terror of judgment, such as when God thundered His law from Sinai. (READ Dt. 18:15-19.) This is the Biblical response to our charismatic brothers who claim to receive messages directly from God outside of and apart from the Bible, hearing God's voice, etc. Every person who was recorded as hearing God's voice other than those who were commissioned to the extraordinary offices authorized to receive revelation were utterly terrified. God's unmediated voice was so terrifying to the OT saints that they begged God never to speak directly to them again. It reminded them only of how deserving of judgment they were. We need a Mediator to receive God's word of salvation, as well as to accomplish that salvation for us by His sacrificial death that reconciled us to God. The people never received God's voice directly after that. It was only received by those who filled the offices of prophet and apostle, and was mediated to pass to God's people. It was often enough, as well, that the people did not want to hear God's word, and they followed false prophets. As with Jeremiah, the prophet was called to be faithful, no matter what dreams the dreaming false prophets told, and no matter what persecution they underwent at the hands of rebellious people.

B. Christ as Prophet. Jesus Christ is *the* Prophet. He proclaimed the word of God, but He is Himself the Word of God. "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2a). Jesus manifests all that the Father gives Him and is; He is the Incarnation of the Word of God. He is the focal point of all prophecy as well as the One who declared it authoritatively (Rev. 19:10). He still declares the will of God, but by His written word and the power of the Holy Spirit to open spiritual ears and enlighten the eyes of our understanding. WSC # 24: "Christ executeth the office of prophet, in revealing to us, by His word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation." Next,...

III. Priest. (READ Ps. 110.) This is the most quoted OT passage in the NT. It speaks of the perfect and eternal priesthood of Christ.

A. Old Testament Priesthood. The OT priest stood with his back to the people, facing God, as mediator. He was the spokesman for the people to God. He made intercession for the people to God by both sacrifice and prayer.

B. The Priesthood of Christ. Cp. Hebrews with Ps. 110. In Ps. 110, there is a promise to the Messiah of

kingship and priesthood. Hebrews shows that Christ's priesthood was unique, and better than the priesthood of Aaron and the Levites. His priesthood was prior to the Levites', and superior to the Levites' being of the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was superior to Abraham; Abraham was superior to Levi; therefore, Melchizedek was superior to Levi, and His priesthood superior to the Levites'. Jesus' lineage was from Judah, not from Levi; He was not allowed to be a priest of the levitical order, but, was allowed to be a priest by being a priest of a different order, the order of Melchizedek. By being of the tribe of Judah, the same as David and his whole line, Christ met the tribal qualification for kingship. But His priesthood fulfills a higher order as prophesied by Scripture. It was of a higher moral order; no sacrifice for Himself was necessary, as Aaron was commanded to do. It was of a higher sacrificial order because it was not necessary for His sacrifice to be repeated. It was of a higher effectual order because it was the sacrifice of Himself, not the blood of bulls and goats. Also, He fulfilled the functions of both Offerer (Priest) and Offering (Sacrifice). And it was a higher order eternally because when He died, He did not vacate the office of priest, but arose from the dead and ever lives to intercede for us at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

IV. King.

- A. The Old Testament King. The mediatorial function is also seen in the kingship. In Israel, the king did not have absolute power in himself. He was called by God and exercised his power under God. He was subject to the "king's law." He was under God and His law. He was the agent to uphold and administer God's law to the people; thus, he was a mediator. Similarly, there is an application to...
- B. The New Testament Civil Magistrate. The Biblical doctrine of the relationship of church and state (crassly called the separation of church and state) provides for differing functions that are given to each by God, not to be interfered with by each other. But the Bible never teaches that the state is separate from God. He ordains governments and sovereignly puts them in place, and He sovereignly deposes them as He will. As "kings," or in the kingly office, they are to uphold righteousness and justice.
- C. Christ's Kingship. The Davidic kings in the OT were all corrupt to some degree due to the presence of sin in them. But David's reign was blessed with the promise to provide an incorruptible King to reign forever. We saw this in Christ's state of exaltation. He is the Shepherd-King whom David foreshadowed and who was promised in the OT. He rules absolutely while at the same time bestowing

tender care upon His people. The difference between His kingdom now on earth and in eternity is that in eternity it will be vastly more visible through its completeness and the fact that it will all be the church triumphant (no more church militant), and in eternity it will be the absolutely incorrupt kingdom because there will be no more sin in us, its subjects.