



MOUNT MERRION FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND).



Pulpit Ministry of Mount Merrion Free Presbyterian Church

Lord's Day Morning 6th April 2008.

Series 'The Covenant Offices Of Christ

No.1. "The Covenant Offices Introduced."

Scripture Reading Rev. Ch1:1-5

By. Rev. Paul Thompson.

Iain Murray in compiling the biography of Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones observed that in general Welsh preaching tended to follow a style that was either heavily expositional or fuelled with anecdotes and illustrations intended to produce an artificial effect. However, early in his ministry Martyn Lloyd Jones adopted a new approach that was entirely distinct from the expected norm of Welsh preaching. The new approach espoused by Lloyd Jones was that of bringing his people to see the relevance of the passage about to be expounded. I believe that Lloyd Jones was right, if preaching is going to affect people, it must be shown to be relevant, I am careful how I use my words as I form that last clause. God's word must '*be shown to be relevant*', not '*made relevant*' by the preacher. No minister can make the scriptures relevant, the scriptures '*are relevant*' for people today. It is incumbent upon the minister of Christ to be diligent in his application, he must be careful in presenting the truth of God in such a manner that God's people feel the weight of God's truth coming down to their everyday experience. Nevertheless, it is also true that in preaching the congregational obligation remains ever present, Jesus Christ says "*take heed how ye hear*" [Luke Ch8:18]. These are the two essential ingredients ensuring effective preaching. I want us to depart for a few weeks from our studies of the outworking of the Covenant of Grace in the life of the Christian and consider one of the most relevant sections of Theological study to the Church and to sinful man, that being the Offices of Christ. Jesus Christ as the Covenant Head and redeemer of His people who is declared to be, and set forth in scripture as, *Prophet, Priest and King*.

Proof for the prophetic, priestly and Kingly offices of Christ could be drawn from any part of the scripture, however, I bring you to the opening verses of the closing book of the New Testament Canon, Revelation. In Ch1:5 we read, "*Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth...*" (1) *The prophetic office* of Jesus Christ is said to be "*The Faithful witness*", He reveals faithfully the will of God to man [Isaiah Ch55:4] Christ stands forth bearing solemn testimony in regard to God to his law. (2) *The Priestly Office* of Christ is shown by how Christ is described, "*The first begotten of the dead.*" As priest He has offered Himself up to death, the effectiveness of His priesthood demonstrated in His resurrection from the dead. (3) *The Kingly Office* easily recognisable under the title, "*The Prince of the Kings of the earth.*"

As an aside may I say that God gives this Revelation to Christ [v1], Christ relays it to the Angel and the Angel delivers it to John, then John circulates this letter with the admonition "*He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*" God wants you to listen Christian, He has words for you, words that when understood will bless your heart [v3], for, "*Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein...*" Due to the enigmatic language and pictorial language many Christians avoid study of Revelation as well as other parts of the scriptures such as Leviticus or Ezekiel, many conclude, "*A lot of hard reading without a lot of blessing!*" How wrong! Study of the book of Revelation is not intended to confuse, its perusal and study will not only lead to blessing but to the production of an effective ministry with effective Christians, "*keep those things.*" Read the contents of this book with that intent Christian, to be blessed and to be doing!

In this introductory study I want to introduce the subject, by showing to you the importance and necessity of Christ being appointed by God as our Prophet Priest and King.

1) The Authentication of These Offices.

I have specifically titled this message and series '*The Covenant Offices of Christ.*' The reason for this is to emphasise again the eternal dimension that surrounds the appointment of Christ as our mediator and Redeemer. Our starting point must ever be the Covenant arrangement between God the Father, God the Son and God The Holy Spirit in eternity past. How does Christ come to be man's Prophet Priest and King? In answer to that question we must consider two essential elements of Christ's Messiahship.

i) *Appointed.* One of the striking comparisons between the '*lesser Messiahs*' and Christ was that the Messiah was a chosen individual. Let it be known that God never opened up the Old Testament offices of prophet, Priest or King to anyone and anybody. God appointed men for the task and then revealed those individuals to the world. This is seen in the example of David. The law of Moses stated that the man who would be appointed King must be the one "*Whom the Lord thy God shall chose*" [Deut Ch17:15]. In 1 Sam Ch 16:5-10, where Samuel is instructed to go to the house of Jesse and have the future King of Israel revealed to him, [v3],

"The Fundamental need for the Church is to recover an understanding of what she truly is."

...Iain. H. Murray...

“I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.” it seems that the temptation to manipulate the situation is ever ready to break forth, Samuel becomes distracted forgetting that it is God’s purpose to reveal, he looks on Eliab and says, [v6] *“Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him.”* It is not man’s task to seek out the qualities of those whom God appoints over his work! God appoints and sets apart those whom He deems qualified, may the Church learn to do things God’s way! What about Jeremiah the Prophet [Jer Ch1:4-10], *“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee...and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”* God appoints! When this world needed a prophet to point the way to God, God appointed and revealed Christ see John Ch1:18, *“No man hath seen God at anytime, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him.”* Christ was ‘eternally’ elected to these offices by God the Father. He was chosen for the work of saving His people from their sins [Matt Ch1:21]. He is Prophet, Priest and King by Covenant appointment. God did not advertise the position as many liberal theologians so mockingly suggest, God did not walk through heaven trying to find a suitable saviour, He appointed His own Son from all eternity and declared him to be so!

ii) Anointed. [Luke Ch4:18], *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me...”*

A further element of Christ’s Messiahship is his anointing. In the aforesaid passage [1Sam Ch16:5-10] after the appointment of the King there is the anointing, [v12] *“The Lord said, arise anoint him, for this is he.”* The Old Testament word for ‘Christ’ is ‘Messiah’ meaning ‘anointed one.’ The verb ‘anoint’ relates to the smearing with oil [usually olive oil]. In the scriptures when someone or something was anointed with oil, they or it were set apart for a particular task or function, such as the Altar in Exodus Ch29:36, *“Thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.”* However, the bible records three particular offices in which the subjects who were people were anointed and set apart for a particular task, these were The Prophet [1Kings Ch19:16]; The Priest [Exodus Ch 28:41; Ch 29:7] and The King [1Sam Ch 16:13; 1Sam Ch 10:6-10]. Understanding the term Messiah as referring to ‘anointed one’, there then were many individuals in the Scriptures who could be accurately described as being ‘messiahs.’ The anointing that each man in his office received thereby identified him as being qualified and chosen for the appointed task. Dr. Michael Barrett states, *“In other words there was to be an active demonstration of the office to which the passive anointing pointed.”* The anointed prophet would preach, the anointed priest would minister and the anointed monarch would rule, an active demonstration followed the anointing. Yet let us consider Christ appointed by God and anointed not with oil as in the case of many Old Testament types, but with the Holy Spirit [Luke Ch4:18]. Christ actively demonstrated that which for He was anointed, set apart and called to do. He was a prophet anointed to preach, Christ preached in a manner that those who heard Him were astounded at His doctrine and the effect of His ministry. He was a King anointed to rule, continually Christ was taking ground from Satan, releasing the captives from his control, spoiling the strongman’s house. He was a Priest anointed to sacrifice and pray, even today this world is experiencing the power of His atoning sacrifice and powerful intercession. Christ actively demonstrated that He was chosen and set apart to be the Only Redeemer of God’s Elect.

2) 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!

“Young men and women, my one great attempt, will be to prove to you not merely that Christianity is reasonable, but that ultimately, nothing else is reasonable. That is, as I see it, the challenge of the Gospel of Christ to the modern world.”

...Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones...{1899-1981}.

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.

3) The Absolute 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.

i) As a Prophet He was appointed and sent By God To Reveal. ii) As Priest He was appointed and sent To Reconcile. iii) As King He was appointed and sent To Rule. 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.

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