

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Lesson 26: Of Christ the Mediator (¶ 8.3)

High Plains Fellowship PCA

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Introduction

Having addressed the covenants in Chapter 7, we are now reaching the doctrinal “mountaintop” in Chapter 8. Much of what follows in the rest of the Confession is “details”—the *outworking* of the Mediatorial office of Christ in relation to his elect.

Paragraph 3 describes how Christ is called, anointed, and equipped for his offices of “mediator” and “surety.” He is able to perform everything necessary to redeem and secure a people to himself.

Opener

- How is the idea of prophecy distorted by many in the church today? What is the danger of such distortions? How does it distract from the work of Bible study and expository preaching?

WLC Q/A #43-45

Q43: How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A43: Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church,[1] in all ages, by his Spirit and word,[2] in divers ways of administration,[3] the whole will of God,[4] in all things concerning their edification and salvation.[5]

1. **John 1:18** - No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

2. **1 Peter 1:10-12** - Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made careful searches and inquiries, inquiring to know what time or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He was predicting the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been declared to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

3. **Heb. 1:1-2** - God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days spoke to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

4. **John 15:15** – “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

5. **Acts 20:32** - And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified. **Eph. 4:11-13** - And He Himself gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **John 20:31** - But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

- “Prophecy” takes us back to the first chapter of the Confession:

WCF 1.6: *The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. . . .*

- What does WCF 1.6 specifically *exclude*?
- Referring back to the first paragraph of Chapter 1:

WCF 1.1: . . . for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; *those former ways of God’s revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.*

- What reason does scripture give for the cessation of revelation in “diverse” ways today?

Heb 1:1-3 - God, having spoken long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, *in these last days spoke to us in His Son*, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds, who is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

- Christ is not only the *subject* of revelation, but the *incarnation* of it—and the *completion* of it.

Q44: How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A44: Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God,[1] to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people;[2] and in making continual intercession for them.[3]

1. **Heb. 9:14, 28** - How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? . . . So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

2. **Heb. 2:17** - Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

3. **Heb. 7:25** - Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

- The whole OT system of priests, sacrifices, and ordinances pass away when the fulfillment of them is realized in the one perfect priesthood of Christ.
- We have no need to try to duplicate or imitate any part of that system today—none of the rituals, ceremonies, or restrictions.
- Notice, for example, how Paul vehemently opposes the continuation of circumcision under the New Covenant. *Doing such as this begins to confuse grace and works.*

Gal 5:3-4 - And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are being justified by law; you have fallen from grace!

Q45: How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A45: Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself,[1] and giving them officers,[2] laws,[3] and censures, by which he visibly governs them;[4] in bestowing saving grace upon his elect,[5] rewarding their obedience,[6] and correcting them for their sins,[7] preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings,[8] restraining and overcoming all their enemies,[9] and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory,[10] and their good;[11] and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.[12]

1. **Acts 15:14-16** - Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE FALLEN BOOTH OF DAVID, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT.' **Isa. 4:4-5** - When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and rinsed away the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then Yahweh will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her convocation a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. **Gen. 49:10** - "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." **Psa. 110:3** - Your people will offer themselves freely in the day of Your power; In the splendor of holiness, from the womb of the dawn, The dew of Your youthfulness will be Yours.

2. **Eph. 4:11-12** - And He Himself gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. **1 Cor. 12:28** - And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

3. **Isa. 33:22** - For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; He will save us.

4. **Matt. 18:17-18** - "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as the Gentile and the tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." **1 Cor. 5:4-5** - In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

5. **Acts 5:31** - This One God exalted to His right hand as a Leader and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

6. **Rev. 2:10** - "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." **Rev. 22:12** - "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his work."

7. **Rev. 3:19** - "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent."

8. **Isa. 63:9** - In all their distress He was distressed, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the ancient days.

9. **1 Cor. 15:25** - For He must reign UNTIL HE HAS PUT ALL HIS ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET. **Psa. 110:1-2** - Yahweh says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I put Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet." Yahweh will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Have dominion in the midst of Your enemies."

10. **Rom. 14:10-11** - But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you view your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, TO ME EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."

11. **Rom. 8:28** - And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

12. **2 Thess. 1:8-9** - Executing vengeance on those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, AWAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS MIGHT. **Psa. 2:8-9** - "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like a potter's vessel."

- This question addresses a variety of issues from church leadership, to discipline, to God's special protections.
- Let's not miss the point that Christ is the King and Head of his church. All others are pretenders and usurpers.
- What are the promises and warnings we see here?

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3. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure;^a having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,^b in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell;^c to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth,^d he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety.^e Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father,^f who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.^g

a. **Psa 45:7** - You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of joy above Your companions. **John 3:34** - For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

b. **Col 2:3** - In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

c. **Col 1:19** - For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

d. **John 1:14** - And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Heb 7:26 - For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.

e. **Acts 10:38** - You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **Heb 7:22** - So much more Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant. **Heb 12:24** - And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

f. **Heb 5:4-5** - And no one takes this honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. In this way also Christ did not glorify Himself to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU".

g. **Mat 28:18** - And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” **John 5:22, 27** – “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son. . . . and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.” **Acts 2:36** – “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- Last week we saw the divine nature united to the human nature; this week we consider more carefully the human nature of Christ.
 - He was specially set apart and equipped by the Spirit
 - He was both mediator and “surety”—the guarantor of a better covenant
 - He was chosen for this office and willingly undertook it
 - He was given all power and judgment—both to save his people and to judge the rest
- Christ didn’t just force himself into his humanity—man was made from the beginning with such dignity that it was possible for God to have *communion* with him, and to *become* man.

“The effect of this [hypostatic] union was . . . to exalt the human nature of Christ to a degree of dignity and honor greatly beyond that attained by any other creature. . . . [and] to fill it with a perfection of intellectual and moral excellence beyond that of any other creature.”¹

- How absurd are all the present efforts to define man in terms of some arbitrary “group” identity? Why is this effort doomed to fail?
- Why are men grasping so desperately for an identity?
- How does modern man’s belief in evolution make him far *less* than he is even in his fallen condition?
- What is the best man can do (in terms of identity) apart from God?
- Why does man settle for less than what he *is*?
- Christ is now the perfect man: the exact representation (likeness, *charakter*) of all that man was meant to be—and all that man is becoming *after his likeness*.

1 John 3:2 - Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not been manifested as yet what we will be. We know that when He is manifested, *we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is*.

- The old covenant of works is still in play:

“In the covenant of grace the Mediator assumes in behalf of his elect seed the broken conditions of the old covenant of works precisely as Adam left them.”²

¹ Hodge, p. 143.

² Hodge, p. 145.

- Christ is called the “firstfruits” of the resurrection: *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.* (1 Cor 15:20)

“The resurrection of Christ is the pledge for the fulfillment of all the prophecies and promises of both Testaments. . . . His resurrection secures ours.”³

- Christ now reigns in heaven: it is a present reality that continues to unfold.

“This right hand of God denotes the official exaltation of the Mediator to supreme glory, felicity, and dominion over every name that is named.”⁴

Eph 1:19-23 - . . . the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of the might of His strength, which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And HE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- Hodge and Williamson seem to have a difference of opinion regarding the soul of Christ after his bodily death:

“While the body of Jesus remained buried in the sepulchre his soul remained temporarily divorced from it in the unseen world of spirits.”⁵

“Were he not God and thus infinite in capacity for suffering, how could he have suffered the limitless wrath of God in three days?”⁶

- The death and resurrection of Jesus (among others, including Lazarus) raises the question of where the souls of the dead go when their resurrection is imminent.
- The Confession doesn’t answer this question:

WCF 32.1: The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (*which neither die nor sleep*), having an immortal subsistence, *immediately return to God who gave them*. . . . Besides these two places [heaven and hell] *for souls separated from their bodies*, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

Concluding Thoughts

- In his human nature, Jesus embodies everything that man was created to be, and what we are becoming who are renewed after his likeness.

³ Hodge, p. 147.

⁴ Hodge, p. 148.

⁵ Hodge, p. 146.

⁶ Williamson, p. 76.

Upcoming Lessons

- April 2: Chapter 8, Paragraph 4
- April 9: [Easter Brunch]
- April 16: Chapter 8, Paragraph 5
- April 23: Chapter 8, Paragraph 6
- April 30: Chapter 8, Paragraph 7
- May 7: [Dominic Aquila Q&A]
- May 14: Chapter 8, Paragraph 8

Resources & Bibliography (new items added to the top of the list / older items removed)

- *Systematic Theology*, Louis Berkhof, 1949. (PDF version [here](#))
- *The Confession of Faith*, A. A. Hodge, 1869.
- *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, G. I. Williamson, 1964.
- *Roman Catholicism*, Loraine Boettner, 1962. (online version [here](#); PDF version [here](#))

All scripture quotations are *Legacy Standard Bible* (LSB) unless otherwise noted.
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