

"OFFICES OF CHRIST"

(from: *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, 2nd Edition*)

(Robert L. Reymond)

As the only Redeemer of his church, Jesus Christ performed his saving work in the threefold role of *prophet* (Deut 18:15; Luke 4:18-21; 13:33; Acts 3:22), *priest* (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5-6; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1), and *king* (Isa. 9:6-7; Pss. 2:6; 45:6; 110:1-2; Luke 1:33; John 18:36-37; Heb. 1:8; II Pet. 1:11; Rev. 19:16). Theologians refer to these as the three offices of Christ, with all the other Christological designations such as *apostle*, *shepherd*, *intercessor*, and *head of the church* being subsumed under one of these three general offices.

Fulfilling his office work of *prophet*, Christ (1) claims to bring the Fathers message (John 8:26-28; 12:49-50), (2) proclaims his message to the people (Matt 4:17) and his disciples (Matt. 5-7), and (3) foretells or predicts future events (Matt. 24-25; Luke 19:41-44). He continues to exercise his work as prophet in "revealing to us, by his word [John 16:12-15] and spirit [I Pet 1:10-11] the will of God for our salvation" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 24) and edification (Eph. 4:11-13).

Executing his office work of *priest*, Christ (1) offered himself up to God as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile the church to God (Rom. 3:26; Heb. 2:17; 9:14, 28) and (2) makes continual intercession for all those who come unto God by him (John 17:6-24; Heb. 7:25; 9:24).

Performing his office work of *king*, Christ (1) calls out of the world a people for himself (Isa. 55:5; John 10:16,27); (2) gives them officers, laws, and censures by which he visibly governs them (I Cor. 5:4-5; 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12; Matt 28:19-20; 18:17-18; I Tim. 5:20; Titus 3:10); (3) preserves and supports them in all their temptations and sufferings (II Cor. 12:9-10; Rom. 8:35-39); (4) restrains and overcomes all their enemies (Acts 12:17; 18:9-10; I Cor. 15:25); (5) powerfully orders all things for his own glory and their good (Rom. 8:28; 14:11; Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:19-20); and (6) finally takes vengeance on those who know not God and who obey not the gospel (Ps. 2:9; II Thess. 1:8).

This delineation of Christ's execution of his three offices indicates that he exercises his offices in the estates of his humiliation and his exaltation (Isa. 9:6-7; Ps. 2:6; Rev. 19:16). That is to say, one must not think that it was his prophetic and priestly ministries which he exercised before his

death and entombment while it is his kingly office which he has exercised since his resurrection from the dead. To the contrary, the Scriptures clearly represent him as exercising all three offices in both estates—both during his earthly ministry prior to his death and now, since his resurrection and ascension.

In filling these offices Christ fulfills all the needs of men. "As prophet he meets the problem of man's ignorance, supplying him with knowledge. As priest he meets the problem of man's guilt, supplying him with righteousness. As king he meets the problem of man's weakness and dependence, supplying him with power and protection" (J. B. Green, *A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards*, pp. 65-66).

