

JESUS - OUR KING, PRIEST, AND PROPHET

Palm Sunday 03/25/18 - Rev. Dcn. Dr. David Harper

Three vocations are known in Christian theology as the Threefold Office – the three “roles”, if you will, that Jesus filled in his earthly life and still continues to exercise today.

JESUS AS KING

Background – go back to Advent. Matthew 1:1 the genealogy of Jesus – a direct descendant of King David, and thus a candidate to inherit the throne.

Matthews 2 – the Magi come seeking “he who has been born king of the Jews.”

The “Triumphal Entry” of Jesus in Jerusalem. Even the possibility that Jesus could be the long-awaited Messiah filled the crowd with excitement.

JESUS AS PRIEST

This is the major theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews where Jesus is described as our “great high priest” (2:14)

Israel’s priests were all of the tribe of Levi. They oversaw the worship in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. Malachi, one of Israel’s last prophets, said this to the sons of Levi in his day, around 430 B.C.:

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver.”

The Law of God given to Moses on Mt. Sinai was filled with rituals of *cleansing*, which was one of the jobs of the priests who had the messy job of offering sacrifices.

Jesus, our high priest, cleansing the Temple itself. Mark 11:15 ff. By its very nature, the Levitical priesthood could not permanently deal with the consequences of our sins – See Heb. 7:23-27.

JESUS AS PROPHET

The priests confront Jesus, and in prophet-like manner he tells them a parable that sounds a lot like Isaiah's parable (Isaiah 5:1-7)

In the next chapter (Mark 13) our Lord predicts in great detail the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple which occurred about 40 years later in the year 70 A.D. at the hands of the Romans.

But why bother?

One final prophecy – Acts 1:8-11. See also Acts 6:7.

Jesus as KING did not restore the Kingdom to Israel as many expected and hoped he would on Palm Sunday. He did something much, much better. Michael Horton, Reformed Episcopal theologian:

“Instead of driving out the Romans, He commanded love for our enemies. Gathering the new Israel – Jew and Gentile – around Himself by His Spirit, through Word and sacrament, Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of grace that will be manifested one day as a kingdom of glory. In this time between His two comings the wheat grows together with the weeds, the sons of thunder are rebuked for calling down judgment here and now on those who reject their message, and the faithful gather regularly for the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers (Acts 2:42). Through its administration of Gospel preaching, baptism, the Supper, prayer, and discipline, the church is God's new society inserted into the heart of the secular city as a witness to Christ and the age to come when He will be all in all.”

St. John, the apostle, described that age to come in Rev. 11:15: “...and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.’” Not simply as “King of the Jews” but “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”