Articles by B. Bell

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Christ—Prophet, Priest And King (Oct 1964)

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“The Prophet”

When we apply these titles to our Lord Jesus Christ, we are adapting Old Testament terms to New Testament revelation. Moreover, in so doing there is no thought of forming any comparison between Christ and Israel’s past prophets, priests and kings. There always is a contrast between the Perfect Man Christ and all other men. For example, Jonah is an official type of Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection (Matt 12:40), but personally as a man he was a failure through disobedience to the commission that God gave him. Solomon also is a type of Christ in His Glory (Matt 12:42), but he too was a failure through idolatry, and his immoral standard of behaviour.

It is in these three offices, the Prophet, (of whom I am specially writing in this meditation) the Priest, and the King that Christ performs His work for men. The Prophet must function before the King can reign. As Prophet, Christ represents God to men. As Priest, He represents men before God. As King, He brings both God, and men into perfect relationship one to the other. It is as the Man Christ Jesus, that He fills these three offices which present His ministry, in the past during His lifetime, revealing the Father; in the present in Heaven, representing His people; in the future ages, reigning in Glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ claims superiority to all prophets, priests, and kings of the past. In Matthew 12, the Lord declared before men. “A greater than the temple is here,” for He is the greatest Priest (verse 6). “A greater than Jonah is here” (verse 41), for He is the greatest Prophet. “A greater than Solomon is here” (verse 42), for He is the greatest King. God, in ordering His ancient people Israel, decreed that all prophets, priests and kings, be consecrated to their offices by the ceremony of anointing with oil. With this in mind the Father declares the superiority of Christ above all others, saying, “God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” (Heb. 1:9).

Christ The Prophet

A Prophet is one who tells forth, rather than fore-tells the divine will, and is this not indeed the very purpose for which Christ came into the world? The Promise of Christ as Prophet is found in passages from the Old Testament (Deut. 18:15, etc.). God had in mind His particular Prophet to Israel, and to the world. In our Lord’s days on earth this was the understanding of the people. John the Baptist was asked, “Art thou Elias, art thou that Prophet?” and he answered “No.” On another occasion the people said, “This is of a truth that Prophet, that should come into the world” (John 6:14). Peter in his address in Acts 3 identifies Christ as the Prophet like unto Moses. Stephen also does the same in Acts 7.

Look at the parallel between Christ and Moses. Both were born of the same nation; Moses, when it was oppressed by the Egyptians; Christ when the nation suffered under the Romans. The life of the babe Moses is jeopardized by Pharoah; the life of Jesus by Herod.

Moses was spared by the royal family of Egypt; Christ was spared by being taken into Egypt. Moses offered himself as saviour of his people and was rejected; Christ offered Himself as Saviour and King, and He also was rejected. Moses returned as deliverer and established Israel as a nation; our Lord Jesus Christ will return to Israel and sit upon the Throne of His Father David. With the prophets of old, the “Word of the Lord” came unto them; Christ in this respect was unlike all other prophets, for all knowledge, wisdom and power resided in Him. The Word of God did not come to Him for He was the Word of God (John 1, 1, 3). The ministry of Christ as Prophet during the days of His flesh was to reveal the Father to men (Matt 11:27). His prophetic ministry He carries on in the Church by means of the New Testament prophets and apostles. Notice Acts 1:1, “All that Jesus began both to do, and to teach.” The future ministry of Christ as Prophet will be that of revealing the Father to His people (John 16:25). The prophetic ministry of Christ is the burden of the four Gospels. The Scriptures promised a Prophet for Israel, and the world (Deut. 18:15). Moses said, “A Prophet, the Lord thy God shall raise up from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto Him ye shall harken.” This is our Lord Jesus Christ: Prophet, Priest and King.

Christ—Prophet, Priest and King (Part 2) (Nov 1964)

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The Priest

Since I have penned a brief meditation on Christ as Prophet, I now take in hand to outline a few thoughts about Christ as Priest, our Great High Priest.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us the greatest insight into the priesthood of our Lord Jesus. Therein we have the ground upon which His high-priestly service rests; the sin question fully settled (Heb. 1:3). His priestly work follows the shedding of His precious blood. Christ's death makes Him the true propitiatory or mercy seat for His people. On that basis He can be their High Priest, the meeting place between God and the Christian.

Priestly Service

Christ is "a merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb. 2:16-17), and thus takes up the cause of His people; He does not take up the cause of angels, they do not need His priestly ministry, but the many sons He is bringing to glory do. Those whom He has sanctified and calls brethren always need His high-priestly intercession; they need His help along the desert road. He is merciful to them in their weaknesses, but at the same time He is faithful to God.

Priestly Office

Christ is Son over God's house (Heb. 3:16). He is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. As the Apostle Christ is sent from God to speak for God; He pleads God's cause with men. As priest He pleads with God on the behalf of men. Who could ever hope to find acceptance with God if it were not that Christ as High Priest is available?

Here are some of the qualifications of our Great High Priest; these are all found in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: His sufferings in death (Heb. 2:7), His position of glory (Heb. 2:9), His perfection through suffering (Heb. 2:10), His being made like unto His brethren (Heb. 2:14-17), His accomplishing reconciliation (Heb. 2:17), His suffering being tempted (Heb. 2:18), and His being able to succour (Heb. 2:18). All this is summed up for us in Hebrews 6:4 and 14:17: "We have a Great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Here is stated the greatness of our High Priest; all the resources of the throne are available to us through Him, and, thereby we are sustained in our infirmity and frailty. In Hebrews 4:14-16, it is intimated that we have Him as a possession. He is ours, and because He has ascended on high, we can understand something of His pathway from the altar to the holiest. He is man, accordingly His humanity is assumed; it is real and pure. His pre-eminence is undisputed. He is sympathetic (V. 15), and approachable (V. 16). He has help for us in every time of need (V. 16).

The Priestly Person

The Great High Priest, the Son of God, is “a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” He has entered within the veil, and is now seated upon the throne (Heb. 6:19). Throughout chapter 7 and at the beginning of chapter eight, He is pictured to us as “the Minister of the Sanctuary and of the true tabernacle.” the minister of good things to come (Heb. 9:11). Through Him we have a welcome into the holiest (Heb. 10:19-25).

Jottings On The Hebrew Letter

In chapter one Christ is presented as God the Son; His deity is the foundation of His sacrifice.

In chapter two He is revealed as the perfect Man. His glory is that of Son and Messiah; He is superior to angels and they worship Him.

Chapter three states that Moses was only a servant in God’s house, whereas Christ was the Son. These two personalities are contrasted.

Chapter four deals with the rest of God, the Word of God, and the living priesthood of Christ.

Chapter five treats of the eternal sonship of Christ, the power of His heavenly priesthood.

Chapter seven: in this passage the eternal priesthood of the Son of God is contrasted with the former Levitical priesthood.

Chapters eight, nine and ten contrast the old covenants of the past dispensations with the new of the present and the future. They also contrast the inefficient sacrifices of the old with the eternal value of the sacrifice of Christ.

Christ—Prophet, Priest And King (Part 3) (Dec 1964)

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King

The Old Testament presents many prophets, priests, and kings, all of whom awaken a desire to know the greater prophet, priest, and king, the Lord Jesus. He, thank God, has come! He is the Christ; a greater Prophet than Moses, a greater Priest than Aaron, and a greater King than David. His prophetic ministry was known while He was here on earth; His priestly ministry continues in Heaven; His kingly rule will extend eventually over the entire Universe. “The Most High ruleth among the kingdoms of men” (Dan. 4:32). The Scriptures outline in general God’s government over mankind; over the nation of Israel, and over the separate Gentile nations.

In the Old Testament we have many prophecies concerning Christ as king; for example, Isaiah 9:6-7; 32:1, Psalm 2:6; 72:1 and 20. In the New Testament it is recorded that the Wise Men asked, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” When Pilate raised the question, “Art Thou then a king?” The Lord Jesus affirmed that He was. Over the cross Pilate placed the superscription, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians asserted that Christ was a king in saying “He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).

The Apostle John does likewise: “Grace and peace … from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince (ruler) of the kings of the

earth” (Rev. 1:5). If a text were needed for this article Paul would provide a splendid one: “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Tim. 1:17). Our Lord Jesus was, and is, and always will be King. He is King of angels, King of saints, King over all to be testified in due time, that time when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to His Father, it will be perfect and rid of every opposing influence.

The preparation for the King’s reign is seen in the judgment of apostate christendom (Rev. 17:1-18), the overthrowal of the beast and the false prophet (Rev. 19:19-20), and the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-3). Other evidences of His triumph will be the judgment of the nations (Matt. 25:31-46), and the regathering of Israel. The benefits of the King’s reign will be: the abolition of war (Isa. 2-4. Mich. 4:3), the liberation of all nature (Rom. 8:19-22), and the blessings and the glory of Christ seen throughout the entire earth (Psa. 72). In Revelation 22:3-5, we have the sevenfold glories of the eternal order in a new creation, in a New Heaven and a New Earth wherein shall dwell righteousness. Unto Christ be the honour, the power, and the dominion. In the language of the Psalmist we adore Him: “In Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre.