

**Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin**  
(Translation by Henry Beveridge)<sup>1</sup>  
Men's Theology Study – October 20, 2021 – 6:30 pm

**Book 2 – Of the knowledge of God the Redeemer, in Christ, as first manifested to the fathers, under the law, and thereafter to us under the gospel.**

Revelation 1:12-16 – Christ Presented as Priest, King, and Prophet

WSC 24: *How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?* Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

WSC 25: *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?* Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

WSC 26: *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?* Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

**Chapter 15 – Three Things Briefly to Be Regarded in Christ—i.e., His Offices of Prophet, King, and Priest**

- I. Christ and the Office of a Prophet (s. 1-2).
  - a. All true and genuine Christian religion affirms Christ to hold the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King (s. 1).
  - b. Calvin makes the claim that the papists have Christ “in name only, not in reality.”
    - i. They have the right words to describe Jesus as “Son of God” and “Redeemer of the world;” but they “deprive him of his virtue and dignity (s. 1).”
    - ii. They do not comprehend the full meaning behind the titles Prophet, King, and Priest.
    - iii. Yet, Calvin doesn’t provide specific examples. What might be the reason for this claim?
  - c. The Purpose for the Prophets
    - i. God has supplied “an uninterrupted succession of prophets, never left his people destitute of useful doctrine, such as might suffice for salvation (s. 1)...” Why did he do this?
    - ii. “...the minds of believers were always impressed with the conviction that the full light of understanding was to be expected only on the advent of the Messiah (s. 1).” Examples:
      - 1. John 4:25, “I know that the Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”

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<sup>1</sup>Supplemental Material from *Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin* by Ford Lewis Battles (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2001 Reprint) and *A Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes* edited by David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2008).

2. Isa 55:3-4, "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples."
3. Heb 1:1-2, since Christ, God no longer speaks through the prophets.
- d. The titles "Christ" and "Messiah" mean anointed one. But anointed how?
  - i. For his three offices.
  - ii. He was anointed by the Spirit. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (Isa 61:1 [Luke 4:18])."
  - iii. As a prophet, Christ is a herald of the Father's grace (s. 2).
  - iv. As a prophet, he brings the office to perfection and ends all prophecies. Examples...
    1. Luke 9:35, "And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"
    2. Paul calls Jesus "wisdom from God" (1 Cor 1:30).
    3. Col 2:2-3, "...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
    4. Calvin is explicit, "...out of him there is nothing worth knowing, and that those who, by faith, apprehend his true character, possess the boundless immensity of heavenly blessings."

**Discussion Question: How should we respond to people who claim private and personal revelation from the voice of God?**

- II. Christ and the Office of a King (s. 3-5).
  - a. His kingship is applicable in two ways (s. 3).
    - i. The whole body of the church participates in his eternal kingdom.
      1. Ps 89:35-37, "Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies." Why couldn't this be fulfilled immediately after Solomon's death?
      2. The eternity of his kingship means "the perpetuity of the church is thus effectually secured; that amid the turbulent agitations by which it is constantly harassed, and the grievous and fearful commotions which threaten innumerable disasters, it still remains safe."
      3. "...however numerous and powerful the enemies who conspire to assault the church, they are not possessed of strength sufficient to prevail against the immortal decree by which he appointed his Son eternal king." See Ps 110:1.

- ii. Each member of the church.
    - 1. The blessing of immortality elevates the Christian's hope.
    - 2. John 18:36, "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.'"
    - 3. How does this offer Christians the hope of a better life?
- b. The blessing of his kingly office is for us (s. 4).
  - i. The blessing promised by his kingship does not reside in earthly prosperity but belongs to the heavenly life.
    - 1. "We must, therefore, know that the happiness which is promised to us in Christ does not consist in external advantages—such as leading a joyful and tranquil life, abounding in wealth, being secure against all injury, and having an affluence of delights, such as the flesh is wont to long for—but properly belongs to the heavenly life."
  - ii. The blessing promised by his kingship ensure we will persevere against our spiritual enemies.
    - 1. "...Christ also enriches his people with all things necessary to the eternal salvation of their souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unassailable by all the attacks of spiritual foes."
    - 2. "In fine, clothed with his righteousness, we can bravely surmount all the insults of the world: and as he replenishes us liberally with his gifts, so we can in our turn bring forth fruit unto his glory."
  - iii. Because Christ is our King we know he will never leave us.
    - 1. "Not being earthly or carnal, and so subject to corruption, but spiritual, it raises us even to eternal life, so that we can patiently live at present under toil, hunger, cold, contempt, disgrace, and other annoyances; contented with this, that our king will never abandon us, but will supply our necessities until our warfare is ended, and we are called to triumph: such being the nature of his kingdom, that he communicates to us whatever he received of his Father."
- c. The spiritual nature of his kingly office: the sovereignty of Christ and of the Father (s. 5).
  - i. The spiritual anointing Christ received was for our benefit.
    - 1. "...he was not enriched privately for himself, but that he might refresh the parched and hungry with his abundance."
    - 2. He is given the Spirit without measure "that we might all receive his fullness, and grace for grace." See John 1:16.
  - ii. His anointing was symbolized by his baptism when the Spirit rested upon him in the form of a dove.
  - iii. What does it mean for Christ to turn his kingdom to his Father?
    - 1. Scripture to consider: 1 Cor 15:24, "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power." 1 Cor 15:28, "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him"

who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”

2. The administration of the present kingdom will be different in the future. Presently, Christ interposes for us.
3. One day, the work of Christ as king to defend the Church will be completed.
- iv. His kingship is pastoral to the godly; however, his kingship wields an iron scepter for the ungodly.

**Discussion Question: What is over realized eschatology? How does error pertain to the kingship of Christ? What are some everyday examples?**

III. Christ and the Office of a Priest (s. 6).

- a. By his holiness, Christ procures the favor of God for us. By his sacrifice, he reconciles us to God.
  - i. What is propitiation? What is expiation?
  - ii. See Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5. The word translated as *propitiation* in Rom 3:25 is the same word in Greek translation as *mercy seat* in Hebrews 9:5. What’s the correlation?
- b. As Hebrew teaches, only the death of Christ as our priest can bring the benefit of his priesthood to us.
  - i. “The sum (of Hebrews 7-10) comes to this, that the honor of the priesthood was competent to none but Christ, because, by the sacrifice of his death, he wiped away our guilt, and made satisfaction for sin.”
  - ii. “...if the benefit and efficacy of Christ’s priesthood is to reach us, the commencement must be with his death.”
- c. Therefore, Christ is an everlasting intercessor.
  - i. What are the benefits of his intercession to us?
    1. Confidence in prayer
    2. Tranquility of pious minds who rest on the paternal indulgence of God
    3. Assurance that what has been consecrated by the Mediator is pleasing to God
- d. His priesthood not only reconciles us to God, but also makes us his companions in his priestly office.
  - i. “For we, through in ourselves polluted, in him being priests (Rev 1:6), offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary, so that the sacrifices of prayer and praise which we present are grateful and of sweet odor before him.”
  - ii. “...we please him as if we were pure and clean, no, even sacred.”
- e. The sacrifice of our high priest is once and for all.

**Discussion Questions: Is communion served from an altar or a table? What’s the difference? What is detestable about the Roman Catholic Church view of communion?**