

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

FREEDOM

This is not a word or thing to be taken lightly. It becomes the master passion of the enslaved masses of the world. Think of those in China who are giving their lives for freedom. Such a thing is not taken lightly with them. Surely this means something to the person that is enslaved by addiction. What of the person suffering from some life threatening disease? Surely this thing called freedom comes to mean all the world to such people.

Many times when men speak of freedom, they mean freedom to do as they please. It means freedom from restraints, no matter what those restraints may be. It means freedom to gratify their own lusts and passions. It means freedom to abuse the rights of others.

It would do us well to look at the word as used by Jesus. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). That means real freedom for one would enjoy freedom in deed or in fact. One might find himself under some restraints, but he will be free to serve the Lord no matter what these restraints might be. Yes, under Christ one is free indeed.

1. **There is Freedom from the Burdens of Life**

Did not the Lord describe man as "heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28)? There are the burdens too heavy to carry. Yes, some of those burdens may have been created by the religious leaders of that day. Did not the Pharisees bind burdens that were heavy to bear: "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4)? There the burdens caused by the sins we commit. Those are the things that weigh heavily upon man's conscience and soul. Judas found that weight more than he could stand. It caused him to bring the betrayal money and cast it at the feet of those leaders with whom he had bargained. He could not longer live with that burden. He sought freedom but did not go far enough. Had he carried that burden to the Lord in proper repentance, the story would have been different.

2. **There is Freedom from Bondage**

That is the context of the word in John 8:33. "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" These people are in bondage to the traditions of the Pharisees. There is also a sense in which they were in bondage to the law of Moses. Jesus would not make them free from the restraints of all kinds of law, but He would make them free from those laws imposed by man and also by the law of Moses. This is clearly outlined and defined in Paul's letter of Colossians.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Text: _____

I. John's _____ of the Lamb

Notes:

II. John's _____ of the Lamb

Notes:

III. John's _____ of the Lamb

Notes:

ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN CHRIST

Text: _____

I. Its _____

Notes:

II. Its _____

Notes:

III. Its _____

Notes:

is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh” (Colossians 2:14-23).

Here Paul shows clearly that they are not to allow men to impose laws upon them of their own making, nor are they to impose those laws that had formerly been binding, such as the Sabbath. They were to allow no man to judge them, or bind upon them such laws. They were therefore free.

3. There is the Freedom from Blindness

Note carefully that Jesus says “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). These would be able to see the way clearly. They would know what they are to do. They would know the direction they are to take. They would not walk in darkness.

Paul defined his mission as one where he was, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18). Such people would be free from the blindness of ignorance and would be able to see what they ought to see. That would be freedom indeed.

Yes, Jesus speaks of freedom. He spoke of the kind that would lift the souls of men to higher plains and would help them see the vital and important thing of life. This is the kind of freedom still available to men of our day through the blessed gospel of our Lord.

-J. Winfred Clark

JESUS CHRIST: PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

Amazing and awe-inspiring are the descriptive illustrations set forth of Jesus Christ in Scripture. He is the Savior of the world (Luke 19:10), the Son of God (John 9:33-37), the Son of Man (Matthew 16:13), the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), Emmanuel (Matthew 1:23), Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8,11), the true Vine (John 15:1-8), and the Teacher come from God (John 3:2). Many and manifold are these designations with regard to His personality, purpose, propagation, and product. Found also, though, are three more designations that together are applied to no other person in all of the Bible; and they are the roles filled as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Prophets are multitudinous in both the Old Testament and the New. The earliest of mention was Noah who was God's "preacher of righteousness" to the wicked antediluvians who were wholly given to evil (II Peter 2:5). Moses was God's prophet to the chosen nation of God's people, and from that nation came a whole host of others such as Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and each of the minor prophets. Priests, too, are found throughout the Bible, prominent especially following the bestowment of the Levitical priesthood through Mosaic mandate (Exodus 28-29). Aaron and his four sons served in that capacity at the beginning, but countless others served through history. Kings, as well, are found throughout the Bible. The heathen nations had long since established monarchal governments directed and lead by kings. Eventually Israel followed in suit eventually having three men reign over the united nation and thirty-nine combined over the two divided kingdoms. Additionally, there are some mentioned in Scripture that filled dual roles at the same time. Melchisidec, for instance, filled the role of both king and priest in Genesis 14. Abraham served as both a prophet and a patriarchal priest. Samuel served in the same capacity as prophet and priest, only after the Mosaic order. But yet, through the span of history, no man served in the capacity of all three—except Christ.

Christ served in the capacity of prophet in two ways. Prophets as described in the Bible filled dual roles of being forth-tellers and foretellers. By this is meant that these Divine spokesmen both told of things past and present as preachers, as well as of things to come as speakers of future events. Christ, too, involved Himself in both. Christ preached the marvelous gospel as a "forth-teller" during the course of His earthly advent in countless places and to countless people. But He also foretold of future events including the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world, and even His own death and the manner thereof (Matthew 24, John 12:32, etc.). Additionally are the multiple passages that refer to Christ as a prophet. Moses spoke of the coming prophet who would come out of Judah that God would raise up like unto him (Deuteronomy 15:18-19). Christ's contemporaries and even Jesus Himself referred to His prophetic nature in a number of verses (Acts 3:22-23; John 6:13; Luke 4:16ff). So it is clearly evident that Jesus served in the marvelous role as Prophet as He lived and worked on earth.

Christ served, and serves, also, as the great High Priest for all servants of God. Speaking of Jesus in just such a role, the Hebrews' writer said, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). It was Jesus who entered into the Most Holy Place of Heaven and offered one sacrifice for sins forever filling that role that was so desperately needed (Hebrews 10:12). Other passages that depict the Lord in this way are Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; and 5:1-10. Without a doubt did and does Jesus fill this role as the great High priest for all children of God.

Christ serves as the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). Even that day of His birth was He recognized in that Supreme position as men of the east went searching for "he that is born King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2). According to the inspired prophecy spoken hundreds of years earlier by Zechariah, Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly as King (Matthew 21:5; Zechariah 9:9). Three times to Pilate did Jesus Himself refer to His "kingdom" as He stood in judgment of the Roman procurator (John 18:36). Still does Jesus reign as King of our lives sitting at the right hand of the throne of God, as the one in whom all authority resides, and the one to whom we are subject. Yes, Jesus is not only Prophet and Priest, but also King.

Only Jesus Christ could supremely and succinctly fill each of these roles in perfection and in prominence. And what would life be if He had not? Man would be hapless, hopeless, and helpless in his pursuit of the eternal blessing. May we forever recognize Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King.

-Andy Brewer