

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Isaiah 5:1-7; Mark 11:12-33 / Isaiah 56:1-12

What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. (*Shorter Catechism* Question 23)

I. The Prophet Came to Jerusalem

A. Being fully human, Jesus was hungry as He returned to Jerusalem and encountered a tree which appeared to be ready to provide figs. “And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, *he was hungry*. And *seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves*, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, *he found nothing but leaves*; for the time of figs was not yet.” (MARK 11:12-13) “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)

B. When the fig tree did not provide what it promised, the prophet Jesus cursed the tree; and the prophecy came to pass. “And Jesus answered and said unto it, *No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever*. And his disciples heard *it*.” (MARK 11:14) *See vs. 21.*

C. Though Israel had received every blessing, it failed to bear fruit; the curse for failure to bear fruit was one last warning as holy week began. “*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*” (JOHN 15:6)

II. The Priest Came to the Temple

A. When Jesus arrived at the Temple, He found it being polluted and began to set things in order. “And they come to Jerusalem: and *Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought* in the temple, *and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers*, and the seats of them that sold doves;” (MARK 11:15)

B. The Temple was designed as a place for all people to pray and meet God. “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; *for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.*” (ISAIAH 56:7)

C. Expanding what Isaiah and Jeremiah had said, Jesus the priest judged that the Temple had become a hiding place for confidence men and bandits; the court of the nations was transformed into the center of corrupt business. “And *he taught*, saying unto them, *Is it not written*, My house shall be called *of all nations the house of prayer*? but *ye have made it a den of thieves.*” (MARK 11:17) “*Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?* Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD.” (JEREMIAH 7:11)

D. The religious administrators and professional intellectuals immediately developed a phobia, which drove them to plan Jesus' destruction, but the crowds loved the doctrine they heard. "And the *scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him*: for they feared him, because all *the people was astonished* at his doctrine." (MARK 11:18)

E. When evening arrived, Jesus simply went home to Bethany to rest; upending the dominant culture was all in a day's work. "And when even was come, *he went out of the city.*" (MARK 11:19)

III. The King Intimidated His Enemies

A. The next morning, Peter remembered the fig tree prophecy. "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw *the fig tree dried up from the roots*. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, *the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.*" (MARK 11:20-21)

B. Jesus reminded His people to take God at His word and assume the best of God; Christianity does not follow the rules of the world's game. "And Jesus answering saith unto them, *Have faith in God*. For verily I say unto you, That *whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*" (MARK 11:22-23)

C. Jesus challenged the people to live according to the Lord's Prayer envisioning and enacting holy boldness. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*. And *when ye stand praying, forgive*, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. *But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*" (MARK 11:24-26)

D. When Jesus and His disciples arrived at the Temple, the authorities demanded to examine His credentials; perhaps He could be stopped if His license were not in order. "And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the *chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders*, And say unto him, *By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?*" (MARK 11:27-28)

E. Jesus saw right through His critics and answered them in their own style "And *Jesus answered* and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and *answer me, and I will tell you* by what authority I do these things. *The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?* answer me." (MARK 11:29-30)

F. While Jesus taught His followers to trust God boldly, His critics paralyzed themselves with human fears. "And *they reasoned* with themselves, saying, *If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.*" (MARK 11:31-32)

G. Cowards cannot win; King Jesus defeated them on their turf. “And they answered and said unto Jesus, *We cannot tell.* And Jesus answering saith unto them, *Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.*” (MARK 11:33)

H. Biblical authority belongs to the Redeemer: Our Prophet, Priest, and King. “For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; *he will save us.*” (ISAIAH 33:22)