

Westminster Larger Catechism

Question 42

Halifax, 29 June 2008

Q. 42 Why was our Mediator called Christ?

A. Our Mediator was called Christ, because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the office of a prophet, priest, and king of His church, in the estate both of His humiliation and exaltation.

Introduction:

Last week, we looked at the first question having to do with that names and titles of Jesus Christ...

- We looked at the name Jesus—
 - Do you remember what it means?
 - It means “Jehovah is salvation.”
 - It was the name that God told Mary and Joseph to give to the Son conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary’s womb before she and Joseph had come together as husband and wife...
 - It was very suited to Him because He is Jehovah Himself, having come to save His people from their sins.
 - He Himself came in human flesh in order that He might die to atone for our sins.

We have several more questions in the catechism that have to do with the names and titles of Jesus,

- and today we take up the second of these...
 - It is a title...
 - The title “Christ.”
 - This is question 42:

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A. Our Mediator was called Christ, because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the office of a prophet, priest, and king of His church, in the estate both of His humiliation and exaltation.

Before we go to our scripture reading for tonight,

- I want to speak about the meaning of this title “Christ.”
 - It is the English “version” of the Greek word *Cristov* which means “anointed.”
 - *Cristov* refers to someone who has been anointed with oil to set them apart to an office...
 - that is, they have had oil poured out on them to set them apart to their office.
 - There are examples of prophets, priests, and kings all being set apart to the office to which God called them by anointing with oil.
 - For example, in Exodus 29, the Lord told Moses to anoint Aaron as a priest.
 - In Exodus 29:7 he said,
 - **And you shall take the anointing oil** (*crismatov*), **pour it on his head, and anoint** (*criseiv*) **him.**
 - As you can probably tell, the word *crismatov* translated “anointing oil” and the word *criseiv* translated “anoint” are from the same root as *Cristov*.
 - In the both the Old and New Testaments,
 - a person who was anointed at God’s command was sometimes called “the Lord’s anointed” or “the Lord’s Christ.”
 - For example, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, David refers to Saul a number of times as “*cristov kuriou*” which means “Christ of the Lord.”
- But of course the original language of the Old Testament was not Greek, but Hebrew.
 - And in Hebrew the word that means “anointed one” is:
 - *xyvm maw-shee’-akh*
 - From this word, we get the English word **Messiah**.
 - The word “anoint” in Hebrew is
 - *xvm maw-shakh’*
 - so you can see that as with Greek, the word “anoint” in Hebrew is very much related to the word “anointed one” (*xyvm maw-shee’-akh*)...

- Now I know that sometimes it's hard to follow all the language discussion, but there is one thing I want you to remember...
 - That the words Christ, Anointed One, and Messiah are perfectly synonymous.
 - They are simply three different ways of saying "the anointed one."

Now that you know something about the title "Christ," I will read to you from our text.

- I have selected Isaiah 61 because it speaks of the Lord Jesus as the anointed one.
 - No one can dispute that this passage is about the Lord Jesus because He Himself said that it referred to Him when he preached in Nazareth.
 - In Luke 4:16 and following, we are told that He read from this text and then declared:
 - "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing..."
 - He was telling them that He was the Christ (the anointed one) that is spoken about in this passage.
 - Here then, let me read it to you:

READ> Isaiah 61:1-3

I. See from this passage that the LORD anointed Jesus to officially carry out His business.

- A. Notice that He is anointed to *do* something...
 1. First, to preach good tidings to the poor (or meek)...
 2. Second, to heal the broken-hearted...
 3. Third, to release the prisoners and set them free...
- B. In the Old Testament, persons were anointed to fill an office—to do something officially for God—something that He had called them to do...
 1. There are three offices that men were anointed to fulfill that correspond to what Christ was called to do:
 - a. The office of a **prophet**
 - A prophet is appointed to reveal God's will—
 - This corresponds to Christ's call to preach glad tidings to the poor.
 - Moses is a good example of a prophet
 - **Ex 7:1-2: So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall**

speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.”

- We have the record of a prophet being anointed to office in 1 Kings 19:17:
 - In 1 Kings 19:16, Elijah is instructed to go and anoint several persons, and in verse 17, we read...
 - 1 Kings 19:17: **And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.**

b. The office of a **priest**

- A priest is one who makes intercession to God,
 - offers sacrifices for the remission of sins,
 - and declares God’s blessing upon His people.
- This corresponds to Christ’s call to heal the broken-hearted which He did by offering sacrifices for sin to reconcile us to God.
- Aaron is a good example of a priest
 - **Ex 28:1: “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.”**
- In Exodus 29:7, we are told of Aaron’s anointing to this office
 - **Ex. 29:7: And you shall take the anointing oil, pour *it* on his head, and anoint him.**
 - Aaron was then appointed to offer sacrifices in behalf of the people and to intercede for them—which he and Moses sometimes did in very dramatic ways
 - As when the Lord was destroying the people and they stood between the dead and the living to intercede—to stop the destruction.

c. The office of a **king**

- The king’s function is to bring God’s people into subjection to God’s will, and to deliver them and defend them from their enemies.
 - This corresponds to Christ’s call to release those who were in prison—to set us free from bondage to sin, Satan, and death.
- David is a good example of a king.
 - **1 Sam 16:1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.”**

- **1 Sam 16:12-13: Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one! Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”**

TRANS> In each of these cases, persons had oil poured on them to anoint them for an office that God had given them.

2. Persons were officially called and set apart to each of these offices by anointing with oil...

- The oil symbolised the giving of the Holy Spirit to them to equip them to fulfill their office.
 - Did you notice what I Sam 16:13 said happened to David when he was anointed?
 - It said “the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”
 - The oil represented the giving of the Spirit of God.
- This equipping and gifting for office was even done for ungodly officers...
 - When Saul was anointed, we are told that he became another man.
 - He was given gifts of the Spirit to carry out his office...
 - Saul had the Holy Spirit for being king, but he did not have the Holy Spirit for holiness...
 - That is why he did such a poor job.
 - Elijah even anointed kings who were kings over ungodly nations...
 - By this showing that it is the Lord who raises up and puts down rulers and kings.
 - In Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon who took Israel captive, was brought to confess this...
 - **Dan 4:32: “that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”**

C. The scripture shows us that Jesus was anointed to all three offices...

1. As I have already mentioned, Isaiah 61 alludes to each of them—in a poetical way...
 - a. The prophetic office is the preaching of the gospel...
 - b. The priestly office is the healing of the broken-hearted...
 - c. The kingly office is the opening of the prison to those who are bound

2. The Bible shows us that Jesus is the final prophet, priest, and king sent by God—
 - He is the one who came to truly accomplish and complete the work of redemption.
 - a. Look at what we told about each office...
 - 1) Prophet
 - **Acts 3:22-23: “For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ ”**
 - You do well then to hear Him!
 - 2) Priest
 - **Hebrews 5:5-7: So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, *but it was He* who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” As *He* also says in another *place*: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”; who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,**
 - You do well to receive the cleansing He brings.
 - 3) King
 - **Psalm 110:1-3: The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people *shall be* volunteers in the day of Your power;**
 - You do well to come under His rule, to be brought into glad submission to Him as the LORD’s anointed king.
 - b. You can see that there is a finality about His work in these offices...
 - 1) It is what you do with Him that makes the difference at last...
 - He is not just a Christ, but He is the Christ of God...the anointed one.
 - 2) We are told that, unlike others who are anointed for office,
 - Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure...
 - John the Baptist testified of this at Jesus’ baptism when he said,
 - **John 3:34: For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.**
 - All others received a portion of the Spirit when they were anointed to office, but Christ received a fullness...

- You can see this at His baptism as well...
 - In Matthew 3:16, we are told that John saw the Holy Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and alight upon Him.
 - That was when He was anointed to public office.
 - Before that, He was a carpenter.
- The dove was used to represent this completeness because it was not divided...
 - He received the fullness of the Spirit to do the work that He had been given to do as the Christ.
 - And that included preaching, enduring the cross, and imparting the Spirit to all of us to cause us to be born again.
 - To do the final work of prophet, priest, and king.

TRANS> Because He is the One who is *the anointed one*,

3. Jesus is the one who brings to His church the blessing of each of these offices:

- 1 Cor 1:30 says:
 - **“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—”**
 - We who trust in him get **wisdom** as the result of His prophetic office
 - We get **righteousness** as the result of His priestly office
 - We get **sanctification** is the result of His kingly office
 - **Redemption** is the result of all three—He redeems us from ignorance, from sin, and from bondage to Satan.
- How you need Him in each of these offices!
 - The fall has made you spiritually ignorant so you need a prophet,
 - It has made you guilty so you need a priest,
 - It has brought you into bondage to sin, Satan, and death, so you need a king to deliver you.

4. Jesus fulfils each office both in His humiliation and His exaltation!

- His humiliation was His work on earth...
- His exaltation refers to His work in heaven...
 - a. As prophet—

- In His humiliation, He revealed God to us in human flesh
 - In His exaltation, He speaks by the Spirit who opens our heart to believe.
- b. As priest—
- In His humiliation, He died on the cross for our sins...
 - In His exaltation, He ever lives to make intercession for each of us.
- c. As king—
- In His humiliation, He obeyed God for us and overcame the devil's temptation...
 - In His exaltation, He gives us a new heart of repentance and faith and comes to destroy all our enemies.

TRANS> We will look at the work of each of His offices in future sermons...

- But tonight, I want say something more about the fact that the Son of God was anointed and sent (as Isaiah 61 says) to fulfill these offices...
- I want to say something about this because this is where we go wrong when we go wrong...
 - We will not accept Jesus as the one God sent to do this work...
 - We either look for someone else to do it for us—someone besides Jesus—or we try to do it ourselves.
 - This is utterly futile!
 - Christ is the anointed one and we must look to Him to be saved.

II. It difficult for us to accept someone that is set apart by God and anointed to an office...because of our pride.

- A. When God anointed Christ, He made it clear that He was the one and only One He had chosen to be our redeemer...
1. It was not until the day of His baptism that Jesus was officially placed into office.
 - As we have seen, He lived as an ordinary citizen, working as a carpenter, until that time...
 - But on that day, God clearly set Him apart...
 2. What did He do?
 - a. At His baptism, He declared with an audible voice from Heaven:

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased...”
 - b. And the Spirit descended like a dove and lighted upon Him...

3. And of course after this, it was made very clear that He was the Christ...
 - a. Jesus wrought miracles by the power of the Spirit, showing that He was indeed the one God sent from heaven to be the Christ...
 - b. And there was also His resurrection from the dead, which declared Him to be the Christ...
 - c. And finally the outpouring of the Spirit about which Peter proclaimed,
 - **Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."**

TRANS> God goes out of His way to make it very clear who it is that He has anointed so there can be no mistake about it.

B. Our rebellion against His salvation comes at this very point...

1. We want to say,
 - Who is this?
 - What is so special about Him?
 - What makes Him "God's anointed?"
 - Why is He chosen instead of somebody else?
2. That's what happened at Nazareth when Jesus told them that He was the Christ...
 - They were so angry, they tried to push Him off a cliff!
 - Luke 4:28-29:
 - **Then all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.**
 - This, in fact, was the very same spirit that caused the rebellion of Korah...
 - **Num 16:1-3: Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"**
 - Do you see their objection?
 - They are basically saying:

- “Who do you think you are?”
3. That’s exactly the problem people have with Jesus...
- a. Our flesh does not want to think that God has accepted someone else for us...
 - And that God has authorised that one to tell us what to do...
 - And to secure our forgiveness (why can’t we do it for ourselves?)...
 - And to change our hearts so that we will delight in obedience because we are so helpless.
 - b. Really, when people reject Jesus as God’s anointed, they are either saying:
 - 1) “Who are you to tell me what’s what?”
 - They won’t have Christ as their prophet...
 - They show this attitude by rejecting God’s Word which is the Word of Christ...
 - They reject that it is inspired and is a perfect rule of faith and life...
 - They want to leave room to make their own adjustments to it...

TRANS> or they are saying

- 2) “Who are you to offer a sacrifice for **my** sin?”
 - They won’t have Christ as their priest...
 - Those who have this attitude may claim to accept the scriptures as God’s Word...
 - They may claim that Jesus is the Son of God...
 - But they cannot handle the cross!
 - They can’t handle the fact that God accepts the death of His Son in their place...
 - That God’s anger is appeased by offering up His Son to bear their iniquities...
 - These persons will twist scripture all around to try to get away from what it clearly says about the cross.

TRANS> Or thirdly, those who reject Jesus as God’s anointed are saying:

- 3) “Who are you to tell me how to live my life!”
 - They won’t have Christ as their king...

- They may be willing look to Him for forgiveness, but they will not have him to rule over them...
 - They want a salvation that will give them escape from punishment, but they refuse a salvation that will give them a new heart that loves God.
 - They will even tell you that they reject God's law—and God's law is the law of Christ...
 - He confirmed it over and over...
 - He came in order to redeem a people zealous of good works...
 - a people who are given a new heart to serve God.

Conclusion:

And so what about you?

- Have you received Christ, the anointed one that God sent to be prophet, priest, and king?
 - Are you willing to look to Him as God's revelation from heaven and to receive His Word?
 - Are you willing to trust in Him as your only Saviour?
 - Are you willing to obey Him as your king and depend upon Him to set you free from sin and Satan?
- He is God's anointed one...
 - There is no one else to rely upon.