

“What it Means to be Reformed”; Session #79, Solus Christus - “Christ’s Intercession – The Comfort of His People”, prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall For the Adult Sunday School Class on June 26th, 2016.

I. Christ’s Intercession is seen “In His answering all the bills of indictment which are brought in against them.”

Zechariah 3: 1-9 – “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.” “And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan!’” “The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!” “Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” “Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.” “Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’” “And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.’” “And I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’” “So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him.” “And the Angel of the Lord stood by.” “Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.’” “Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.” “For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes.” “Behold, I will engrave its inscription,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.’”

The picture that is given to us in verses 1-5 is of Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord (who is the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ). Joshua is clothed in filthy rags which is representative of the sins which he and others in the priesthood had committed in marrying foreign women. This God has expressly forbade them to do. Satan, therefore, is at his right hand to oppose his being able to minister to the Lord at all. He is disqualified because of his sins. But even though it was true that he had fallen into this sin, and it had polluted and defiled his spirit and made filthy his garments, still Christ was right there to intercede for him still. We can apply it in this way to the New Testament believer who through Christ has been made a priest, to minister the sacrifices of praise and worship and service unto God. The believer in our Lord Jesus Christ is not only forgiven of all of their sins as they confess them, but Christ also intercedes daily for them in relation to all the service to God and sincere worship and obedience that they would render to Him. The filthy garments of sin are removed and Joshua was clothed with fresh garments. The believer will be able to stand against the accusations and wiles of the devil if they are clothed by Christ Himself with the garments of salvation and put on the whole armor of God. In Joshua’s case, his filthy garments are taken away and his iniquity is removed from him, and Christ clothes him with rich robes; the robes of His perfect righteousness, and “the garment of internal holiness, the new man consisting of the various graces of the spirit, which is put on as a garment, and makes believers all glorious within.” (quoted part from John Gill)

Thomas Boston says: “Many times a believer is brought in as an arraigned criminal before the divine tribunal, where Satan appears as the accuser, brings in the charge of sin, pleads the righteousness of the law, solicits for judgment upon his accusations, and for the execution of the curse due to the crime.” “The justice of God calls for vengeance, and conscience thunders out

nothing but hell and wrath.” “Now while the believer is in these dismal circumstances, Christ steps in and answers the charge.” “He pleads the efficacy of His merit against the greatness of the believing sinner’s crimes, and His satisfaction to justice by the death of the cross against all the demands and challenges of the law.” “And thus the sentence of condemnation due unto the sinner for his sin is averted, and a sentence of absolution (a freeing from blame or guilt; release from consequences, obligations, or penalties) is pronounced, upon the merit and plea of this powerful intercessor.”

II. Christ’s Intercession applies to having communion and helping His dear Church through all of her generations, in all of her trials and difficulties.

Romans 8: 34-37 – “Who is he who condemns?” “It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” “Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” “As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’” “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

John Owen says on Hebrews 7: 24: “**Obs. 4.** The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, as unchangeably exercised in his own person, is a principal part of the glory of that office. — His discharge of this office for the church in his own person, throughout all generations, is the glory of it.

1. Hereon depends the church’s *preservation and stability*. There is neither a ceasing nor any the least intermission of that care and providence, of that interposition with God on its behalf which are required thereunto. Our high priest is continually ready to appear and put in for us on all occasions. And his abiding forever manifests the continuance of the same care and love for us that he ever had. The same love wherewith, as our high priest, he laid down his life for us, doth still continue in him. And every one may with the same confidence go unto him with all their concerns, as poor, diseased, and distempered persons went unto him when he was upon earth; when he never showed greater displeasure than unto those who forbade any to come unto him, whatever their pretenses were.

2. Hereon depend the *union and communion of the church* with itself in all successive generations. For whereas he is their head and high priest, in whom they all center as unto their union and communion, and hath all their graces and duties in his hand, to present them unto God, they have a relation unto each other, and a concernment in one another. We that are alive in this generation have communion with all those that died in the faith before us; as shall be declared, if God will, on Hebrews 12:22-24. And they were concerned in us, as we are also in the generations that are to come. For all the prayers of the church from first to last are lodged in the hand of the same high priest, who abides forever; and he returns the prayers of one generation unto another. We enjoy the fruits of the prayers, obedience, and blood of those that went before us; and if we are faithful in our generation, serving the will of God, those shall enjoy the fruits of ours who shall come after us. Our joint interest in this our abiding priest gives a line of communication unto all believers, in all generations. And,

3. The *consolation of the church* also depends hereon. Do we meet with troubles, trials, difficulties, temptations, and distresses? hath not the church done so in former ages? What do we think of those days wherein prisons, tortures, swords, and flames, were the portion of the church all the world over? But did any of them miscarry? was any one true believer lost forever? and did not the whole church prove victorious in the end? Did not Satan rage and the world gnash their teeth to see themselves conquered and their power broken, by the faith, patience,

and suffering, of them whom they hated and despised? And was it by their own wisdom and courage that they were so preserved? did they overcome merely by their own blood? or were they delivered by their own power? No; but all their preservation and success, their deliverance and eternal salvation, depended merely on the care and power of their merciful high priest. It was through his blood, “the blood of the Lamb,” or the efficacy of his sacrifice, that they “overcame” their adversaries, Revelation 12:11. By the same blood were “their robes washed, and made white,” Revelation 7:14. From thence had they their righteousness in all their sufferings. And by him had the church its triumphant issue out of all its trials. Now, is he not the same that he ever was, vested with the same office? and hath he not the same qualifications of love, compassion, care, and power, for the discharge of it, as he always had? Whence, then, can any just cause of despondence in any trials or temptations arise? We have the same high priest to take care of us, to assist and help us, as they had, who were all of them finally victorious.”

III. It is a major part of Christ’s intercession that every believer be kept from stumbling and presented faultless before the throne on the last day.

Jude 20-25 – “But you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.” “Now to Him who able to keep you from stumbling, and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever, Amen.”