

Ambassadors of Christ Jesus the King

Studio Session 111
Sam Soleyn
05/15/2007

This series is entitled ambassadors of Christ and I would like to examine this question from three separate angles. The first is the constitution of power, in short if you're going to be an ambassador, you have to represent someone else. So we want to look at the One who has sent you and to see whether or not He has the requisite authority to send you. Then I would like for us to look at the delegation of authority; as between having the authority to send you and your going, how are you a legitimate representative of the One who has sent you? And then the third issue that I wish to discuss in this series is how you in fact move within this power; so the administration of power. So again the three basic headings under which I wish to discuss being ambassadors of Christ is the constitution of power, the delegation of power, and the administration of power.

The word 'kingdom' is the word 'basilica' and it means 'a foundation or a basis of power and rule'. That raises the threshold question: As a believer in Jesus Christ, what is the authority that Jesus has by which you are empowered to act on His behalf? Because this is an important question. If Jesus sends you and there is anyone who is opposing you, and indeed we know that we are firmly opposed, then the question becomes does Jesus actually have the authority to guarantee that you will succeed?

Now these are questions that the average believer typically does not occupy himself or herself because we've grown up in more or less a Christian culture. And in Christian culture, especially in the west, in Western Europe, the United States, and former colonies out of great Britain and places where missionary activities have produced a considerable following of Christian doctrines; there is the tendency to assume that because the culture supports the assumption that you have a sufficient authority, that maybe you do. But one of the things we're noticing now is how the world around us is changing. This in fact is a time, the 21st century, is a time in which there is a conflict of powers. And specifically this conflict of powers is taking place along the lines of religious polarization.

I recently visited in the country of Turkey, which is a Muslim country. And in that time I had some opportunity to engage people from the Arab world and from the Muslim world.

It's fascinating what their perspective is; they do not see this war in Afghanistan and Iraq as being a war to prevent terrorism, they in fact see it as a religious war. A war between Islam, on the one hand, and the Christian west, as they perceive it, on the other hand and principally the United States. In their idea of what this looks like, Islam is fully engaged in the country of Turkey because it's an Islamic country. They have 70 million people, of which less than five thousand people claim to be believers in Christ. The rest of the population, by in large, go to mosks every week and pray the five times a day. These are the practices of an Islamic country. In their minds there is no difference between a population that is Islamic and a religion that is Islamic. So their perception of the west is a population that is Christian and just like the population of a Muslim nation is Muslim. So they view the activities of the United States as essentially the activities as it relates to the Christian world view.

Now in their view this is a war with the consequences of whether or not Islam will succeed over Christianity. Their view is that this is a jihadist call to engage the forces that would in their minds overthrow Islam and produce a change in their societies. So where as we in the west are extremely naive, people in other portions of the world; their naivety allows them also to think of this as a kind of conflict of powers. It calls us then to revisit the question: When Jesus sent us with the great commission, "Go into all the world and preach the good news (or the gospel) to every creature." Did He anticipate a time when in numerous other countries in the world we would be opposed by 1.2 to 1.5 billion Muslims? Or as the case might be, in the country of India, 1.2 billion Hindus. Or as the case might be in Southeast Asia, an equal number of Buddhists. The fact is, the Christian faith, in order to fulfill the mandate of Jesus Christ, must have power.

Now at this juncture and because this broadcast is being heard in various countries of the world, let me quickly point out; the intention of the true Christian faith is not to wage war against anyone to bring them into the kingdom of God. The intention of the Christian faith is to demonstrate the love of God by various means, including, demonstrations of power in the miraculous, to aid and comfort and help who need help from God; Jesus claims to be the One from God. So in Him one is expected to find all of the attributes and characteristics of God; one is apt to find love and kindness, mercy and compassion, grace and goodness. This has not always been the message presented by those who come in the name of Christ and quite often, as I've outlined earlier on, countries in the Arabic and Islamic world countries and in the Hindu and Buddhist world, have been more used to some views of the Christian faith that have been associated with conquest of territories and the subjugation of peoples, sometimes by force of arms. But this has never been a presentation of the gospel as Jesus intended to. In fact, quite often in the history of the Christian faith, martyrs, people who are willing to die for their faith, was more the norm. This certainly was true at the inception of the Christian faith when the Roman Empire solidly opposed people who believed in Jesus.

So once and again, the question has arisen. Apart from the historic development of Christianity through that particular paradigm of the church and the state aligned together to present a form of what I call 'churchianity', a model that evolved out of the Roman Empire and spread with the growth of the Roman Empire itself. As new countries were colonized by these European nations that were part of the holy Roman Empire, this same model of the church and the state together has largely dominated the picture.

And so there has never been, and when I referred earlier on to a Christian culture, there's not been since some 1700 years, an adequate presentation of the model of Christ and His church, what He came to say and who He actually is. In fact, this has been very much couched in this model of the church and the state where the fortunes of the state and specifically the conquering abilities of the state, aided and projected that view of the Christian faith.

But this is the hour when all of those old norms are breaking down, this is a time when all those particular forms are ending, this is a time when the true Christian faith is emerging out of the dying form of 'churchianity', the form that annexed the powers of the state for the benefit of the church. So we must revisit these foundations then and ask the questions that were once asked and are continuously relevant in this discussion. Does Jesus in fact have the authority to send us, and will He protect us, and is His authority sufficient to accomplish the task? So are we then ambassadors of a kingdom whose sufficiency is that those who go to present Christ are fully capable and fully empowered to do all that He has sent us to do?

It raises the threshold question: Who is Jesus and why would He claim to have such authority? To examine this question I would like for us to revisit the gospel as it was first preached on the day of Pentecost. To this end, I would like for us to look at the book of Acts chapter 2 and the following reading from Acts the second chapter. This is the gospel as it was first preached. Now as I start reading I will have to pause and fill in the background. Here we go, Acts the second chapter, the day of Pentecost is the context of this. Verse 22, Peter, who stands up and preaches this gospel says, "Men of Israel listen to this," and he goes on to make that point to Israel, "Brothers I will tell you confidently of the patriarch David," and so on. But as he addresses Israel, the men of Israel, he says, "I wish to speak to you about this Jesus of Nazareth."

What's fascinating is in this chapter, Acts 2, we have the first presentation of the gospel but nothing has been so misunderstood or nothing has been so neglected as what was actually said. Depending on who you ask, based upon their religious background, if you ask them, "What is Acts 2 about?" They will say something to the effect of, "Acts 2 is the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit falls upon the apostles and they began to preach a message of the gospel of Jesus Christ announcing that Jesus had died for the sins of mankind. Whereas those elements are contained within this message, it is

astonishing how different from that the actual message that they preached was. We began with the assertion, "Men of Israel," because this is a message to the Jews and the reason I restate the obvious is to make this point: The Jews have some idea of what Jesus claimed to be or at least what He needed to claim to be.

So I like for us to step back from Acts chapter 2 and take a look at some 53 days before Acts chapter 2. You say, "53, that's an odd selection of days." Well 53 days before Acts chapter 2 is the day that Jesus goes on trial and subsequently is killed. Now, the first of these episodes, 53 days before Acts chapter 2, sees Jesus being brought forth to be tried and His case is being presented in all of the four gospels but in the book of Mark this story begins to unfold. Peter, of course, denies that he knows Christ. That's on the occasion when Jesus is arrested and taken before the Sanhedrin. In the Sanhedrin, the counsel, the Jewish counsel of elders, have empanelled a hasty trial in which to convict Jesus. The record of this is found in Mark the 14th chapter.

Now when Jesus is hastily tried, the witness's begin to testify and they were contradicting each other; so the trial was not going according to plan. So the high priest now asks Jesus, "Well tell us who You are? Are You," and then he quotes this particular statement. Verse 16, the high priest asks Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the blessed One?" Then verse 62 Jesus replies, "I am and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." After which the high priest tears his clothes and says, "We don't have any further need for witness's, His own mouth has testified against Him."

Now you might have missed exactly what's going on. But as between the high priest and Jesus, there is an exchange that is a term of art. Now this is the high priest of Israel, so you might assume that the high priest was aware of what the questions were that should be asked. The high priest asks Him this question, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Now I said this is a term of art because here the high priest is quoting the second Psalm and Jesus responds when the high priest says it, "I am and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming with the clouds of heaven." This too is a specific response; this is a response that says, "I am the Messiah." Both of these things; the high priests question and Jesus' response are rooted in scripture and they are rooted in messianic scriptures.

So what I want to do is show you, that from the scriptures, from the second Psalm, the answer to this question. Why would the high priest ask Him, "Are You the Son of the Blessed One, are You the anointed One?" Why would Jesus respond, "I am sitting at the right hand of the Father. I will be seen sitting at the right hand of the Father."? Because this begins that whole progression which leaves an unanswered question that must now be answered on the day of Pentecost. And this is the answer that is being given in Acts chapter 2 by Peter and the others. So let's first find out, what was the question to which

Jesus was responding, what was the high priest question, what was Jesus responding. We will note that at the end of the crucifixion of Jesus and His subsequent death, His resurrection, and His ascension to heaven; He Himself answers no more this question. So His followers must answer the question and that's what Acts chapter 2 is about. All of this we will begin to lay a hold of the answer to this question: Does Jesus have the authority to send you? Cause that was the question.

Now let us look at the second Psalm. Obviously we shall not be able to conclude all of this in one session, so it will naturally spill over into subsequent messages. In the second Psalm this arises. Here is the second Psalm, "Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against the Anointed One." Remember the high priest asked the question, "Are You the Anointed One, are You the Son of the Holy One?" Here is where the high priest was getting his question from.

Now he goes on to say, "The One enthroned in the heavens laughs, He's scoffs at them and then He rebukes them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath saying, 'I have installed My King on Zion My Holy hill'." Then the exchange, "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord." And then the response, "You are My Son, today I have become Your Father." Note that the high priest asked two questions: Are You the Anointed One and are You the Son of the Blessed One? the second Psalm refers to both the kings of the earth coming against the Lord and coming against the Anointed One. And you will note also that the second Psalm says, "You are My Son, this day have I begotten You." If somehow we could tie these two things to the high priests question, "Are You the Anointed One, are You the Son of the Blessed One?" Then we will be able to say that the high priest was asking Jesus if He were the Anointed King, if He were the King. Because the Anointed One and the Son of the Blessed One have been presented here in the second Psalm in the following language, "I have installed My King."

Now let me run ahead of myself here for a moment and permit me to come back and fill in this gap. I would like to suggest to you that Acts chapter 2 is a statement about Jesus as the King. And the first time that the gospel was preached, it was not the gospel of salvation, it was the gospel of the King. How germane is this question, the kingship of Jesus? In the interest of time I will work to set this up and I will come back for a discussion of the second Psalm. How germane is the question of whether or not Jesus is the King? The answers quite simply this: If He is the King, then His kingship, His authority to be the King; has been established by the Almighty God who anointed Him and called Him the Anointed One. If indeed He has this authority, then and if by some device He is able to delegate this authority to you, then the same authority that He has, as King, is the authority that you will have when you go to represent His interest in the earth.

This would leave a raft of unanswered questions like, "Well then how then how is delegation made to me and how am I part of the administration of His authority?" But at the core of this is the answer to the question posed: Does Jesus have the authority to send anybody to represent Him? And in the world today, with all manner of conflicts going on, is this kind of authority that which would make the difference between the success of the gospel and another outcome. It is unmistakable that these are the geritical questions. Before you can speak about anyone being an ambassador, you must develop the foundation of the ambassadors authority. Because the ambassador does not go to represent himself, the ambassador goes to represent another.

In this particular case we're claiming that Jesus says He has all authority in heaven and on earth. This authority was disputed at the time of His crucifixion; He died without the issue being resolved. But on the day of Pentecost, after He had been raised from the dead earlier, more than 50 days earlier; after He has spoken for forty days, ascended to heaven, now His disciples are going out and they're saying, He is the King." So in the forty days that ensued, that followed His crucifixion, the question of who He was remained unfulfilled.

When the high priest asked Jesus, "Are You the Anointed One, are You the Son of the Blessed One?" And when Jesus replied by saying, 'According to the fulfillment of scripture, I am.' Then the high priest said, 'We don't have any need further for witness's because we reject His claim that He is the Anointed One, we reject the claim that He is the King.' But they couldn't crucify Jesus. What I have gone back to do is to show you that question is seminally foundationed in the second Psalm. We haven't developed the second Psalm yet, but it was a term of art between Jesus and the high priest. So when the high priest asked Jesus, "Are You the Son of the Blessed One, are You the Anointed One?" He was saying, "Are You the King?" Jesus' response was to say, "I am." The high priest says, "We have no further need of witness's, for we reject the idea that He could possibly be the King.' So they crucified Him, they asked the Romans to crucify Him and the Romans said in a writing made on the top of the cross, the Roman Pilate said, "The accusation against this man is this, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'." The Jews were offended, they said, "We don't want that accusation." To which Pilate replied, "I have said what I have said." This, I promise you, is highly prophetic. We'll continue this discussion the next time, so stay with us. I'm Sam Soleyn, God bless you. Bye bye.