

Last Sunday '09
Christ the King Sunday
Zechariah 6:11-15a
November 22, 2009

Zechariah joins in one man the offices of Priest and King and even of Prophet. David, 500 years earlier, did something similar. The Holy Spirit directed David to compare the future Savior with Melchizedek, the king/priest who blessed Abraham. And David said the future Savior would hold those offices forever. On this last Sunday of the church year, called Christ the King Sunday, these words, to our comfort and encouragement, the Prophet Zechariah teaches us who that Savior is and some of the ways God would bless people everywhere by Him.

So, as The LORD Almighty said, “Behold the Man – A Priest on His Throne.” “Behold the Man.” In the time of Zechariah, quite literally on that day, the man was the High Priest at the time. But you need to know something. In chapter three the LORD – I Am – said to the High Priest, “You, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring My Servant, the Branch.”

Note, first, that the High Priest’s name is Joshua. That’s a Hebrew name. It’s the very same name as Jesus in Greek. Jesus is the way the Greek speakers said Joshua. The New Testament is written in Greek, so Jesus is how we are used to saying the Savior’s name. Had the New Testament Scripture been written in Hebrew, as the Old Testament had, we would be used to Joshua as the Savior’s name.

Behold, the man named Joshua, a symbol of the future, the High Priest, who that day had a brand new crown of gold placed on his head, who that day was seated on a throne.

This is a visual prophecy of Jesus, our Savior. Jesus is the eternal High Priest. Jesus is the King over all forever. In Jesus the offices of King and Priest were permanently united. Into each of these two offices, Old Testament Priests and Kings were anointed. That’s where the title Christ, the Anointed One, came from. Here Jesus Christ, High Priest and King, was presented to Old Testament people about 500 years before His birth.

“Behold the Man.” Those words immediately reminded me of a couple of verses from our precious New Testament Scriptures. You heard one of them already today. There stood Jesus, bloodied, beaten, bruised, wearing what some mocking Roman soldiers had put on Him, a crown – of thorns – and a soldier’s cape, and holding a staff, His “scepter.” Here is the Man. And the crowd started shouting their rhythmic “Crucify! Crucify!” And that’s what they did. Jesus went to the cross with that identifying notice above His head – This is the King of the Jews.

And what was the work of an Old Testament Priest? He served as a mediator between the LORD and Israel. One of the most important things the priest did as a mediator was to offer animal sacrifices for the people to the LORD God in order to atone for the sins of the people, this redeeming, buying, their freedom from sin and its punishment. And what

was Jesus going on that cross, which identified Jesus as King? He was offering Himself as the holy, eternal, divine sacrifice of atonement to redeem us and the whole world of sinners from our sin and its punishment.

Here is the Man, true man so that He could both live and die on behalf of the world, on our behalf.

He is here called the Branch. You noted that God called Him that in chapter 3, also. Isaiah called Him Branch, too, in chapters 4 and 11, so did Jeremiah in chapters 23 and 33. And the future Savior is called Little Shoot, also. In Isaiah, He is pictured as unexpectedly, surprisingly sprouting up from the stump of Jesse, David's father. It was just a stump. The long line of kings from David had long ended. The family was no longer notable, much as it had been before David, an ordinary family from a very small village called Bethlehem. But that Branch would grow greatly and bear wonderful fruit.

Here Zechariah says The Branch would branch out. Oh, and how! Zechariah talks of people coming from far away. Indeed, from all the nations, languages and peoples and cultures.

Here is the Man. I also thought of the place where the Apostle Paul wrote, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man, Christ Jesus.

He is the Servant/King who did battle with our enemies of sin, death, satan and hell. He defeated them for us by His life and death. And then He reigned and still reigns.

It almost doesn't seem, in one way, that Zechariah's picture of our King quite fits. I mean we see Jesus crowned with thorns, bloodied and dying on a cross. Here it is a multi-layered crown of gold and in Zechariah, He is said to be clothed with majesty. Yet, that, too, is a true visual of Jesus. He did not remain the suffering Servant. He clothed Himself with majesty when He raised Himself from the dead, ascended into heaven and now shares the throne of heaven with the Father. When He comes again to judge the living and the dead, judgment being another function of a king in those days, He will come down, as we hear in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and St. Paul, with power and great glory – great majesty. The marks in His hands, feet, and side will be glorious.

This is a Builder/King. What would He build? Would it be a palace, great fortresses, a glimmering capitol, great public buildings? No! He would build a temple.

And what a temple! The people around 500 had just built a new temple, to replace the one Solomon built, the one the Babylonians destroyed. The new one disappointed the people old enough to remember Solomon's. But the temple Anointed One, Christ/Messiah, would build would be far more wonderful than Solomon's. Peter and Paul speak to it as a temple built of living people. Every believer in the Christ, the King/Priest, the Redeemer of all, from near and far would, as living stone, be built into the temple. They, then, would themselves build the temple. Zechariah stressed that the majestic Priest/King would Himself build the temple of the Lord, yet privilege the people

also to build in it. We do that when we share Jesus and His Word with the world. God will use that to keep adding the living stones until the temple is done and is in heaven.

Who spoke these words? The LORD almighty did. Who spoke them? The One sent by the LORD Almighty. Both are true. God the Father sent God the Son, who with the Spirit is the one, true God.

That crown was thereafter placed somewhere into the temple building as a memorial not only to the men who supplied the gold for the crown, but especially to help people remember this great portrait of the promised Savior.

You are His temple. Jesus is and will be your King and Priest forever. He is the LORD! Oh, and He is the Prophet of all the prophets, too. A prophet delivers God's Word. Well, the LORD, Himself, spoke these words before Zechariah wrote them. Jesus is our Prophet, Priest and King. Put together that means Jesus Christ is our Savior. Here is the Man! Amen.