

Post-Exile Prophets: Zechariah

**KING & PRIEST**

Saturday, July 5

Reading: Psalms 110

**Psalm 110:4** *The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind: "You are a Priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."*

Chances are you don't know a lot about Melchizedek. Guess what - neither do I! He appears suddenly in Genesis 14, blesses Abraham and just as suddenly vanishes from the historical record. All we are told is that he was the king of Salem (Israel's future capital of Jerusalem 1000+ years later) and a priest of God Most High.

In Psalm 110, Melchizedek appears again. This is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. Jesus quotes verse 1 when debating with the religious leaders over His identity as Messiah (Matthew 22:41-46). Peter also used this verse to prove Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 2:32-36). The author of Hebrews uses it in the same way (Hebrews 1:7-13). In verse 6, this Person is said to be "a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 5-10 preaches from this verse to show that Jesus is the final High Priest.

In the surrounding nations, it was common for a king to also serve as priest. Not so in Israel. The offices of king and priest were separated. A king was forbidden from entering the Temple to offer the sacrifices and incense before the Lord. In fact, when King Uzziah tried to do so God struck him with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). However, the Person in Psalm 110 is both King (110:1-3) and Priest (110:4-7).

Jesus could not have been a priest in the line of Aaron for He was from the wrong tribe. Priests in the Temple had to be from the tribe of Levi, not Judah as our Lord was. Thus, Jesus is part of a different order of priests represented by Melchizedek. His very name tells us much about the character of Jesus Christ. Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" and he was king of Salem which means "peace." Righteousness and peace describe Who Jesus is and what He bought for us by His sacrifice on the cross.

So the psalm begins with proclaiming a King who is more than man because He is seated at the right hand of God. He is the God-man. But He is also the eternal Priest. But unlike the priests descended from Aaron who repeatedly offered animal sacrifices, Jesus offered Himself as the final sacrifice to redeem us from our sins (Hebrews 7-8).

There are many deep truths we could discuss from this image of Christ as King and Priest. But we will summarize in this way: As the Eternal King, Jesus is in complete control. Though His enemies may seem to thrive for a time, they will become the footstool under His feet.

As our Great High Priest, we can have confidence in our salvation. The old sacrifices only served to remind people of their sins for they had to be repeated over and over again. But Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice frees us from guilt and allows us to serve Him with joy and thanksgiving.

I find it interesting that 1 Peter 1:9 uses these terms to refer to believers. We are "a royal priesthood." If we are representatives of Christ, we should imitate what He did. We cannot redeem people from sins, but we can sacrifice to point others to the One who can. We are His royal ambassadors - proclaiming the kingdom of God to a lost world.