

PREFACE

In our last session we looked at the Messiah as Prophet. Later in this class we will look at the Messiah as reigning King. In the middle of the title of this class, however, is what I consider the most important—and fascinating—role of the Christ: that of Priest. For it is in this role that Christ Jesus makes the other roles effective for us.

Christ is the anointed Prophet, and Christ is the anointed King. Both important, of course; I would not diminish them in the least. But remove Christ as anointed *Priest*, and the other two—indeed, *all* the various roles of the Messiah—become ineffective, dare I say meaningless.

The priest—specifically, the *high* priest—stands as the vital intermediary between man and God.

- As we have seen, the prophet's role is the reverse of the priest's: As happened at Mount Sinai, mere man cannot bear to hear the Lord God's voice firsthand; he requires the intermediary of the prophet. The Messiah—Christ Jesus, incarnate God—has and always will serve in that role.
- As we will see, the king's role is to rule the people. Every anointed king rules *at the pleasure of God*, and some rule *in the name of God*, but only *the* Messiah rules *as God*.

But just imagine for a moment: What would either of these offices of the Messiah mean if the role of priest were removed? The high priest stands between man and God to offer atonement for the sins of man. Without the office of priest, *there would be no relationship with God at all!* And the other two offices of prophet and king would mean nothing. If blood has not been shed, if there is no sacrifice for sin, there is nothing left for man but to suffer the wrath of God and the misery of hell for all eternity. What good is a prophet, what good is a king, when that is our end?

So this is an important moment in our study. Christ as our High Priest makes everything else possible.

1 SAMUEL 2

We discover the Messiah as priest *typified* as early as Genesis 14; we'll get to that later. But the first, and perhaps key OT *prophecy* for Messiah as priest is found in 1 Samuel. And once more we have a prophecy that—some scholars contend—has immediate, near-future, and far-future application.

Read 1 Samuel 2:35-36.

The setting here is the revelation of the egregious sins of the priest Eli's two reprobate sons—also "priests." We needn't waste time on them; God will get rid of them shortly. But these facts set up the prophecy in our two verses. Not only were his sons worthless, but Eli was a pretty sad example of a father—hence, a sad example of a priest (1 Timothy 3:5)—winking at their transgressions and, in the words of a prophet who brought the condemning word of the Lord to Eli, honoring his sons above Yahweh (v29).

From v22 to the end of Chapter Two we have the Lord God pronouncing judgment on Eli and his sons, telling them in so many words, *You blew it and the jig's up. I have someone better in mind for the priesthood.* Then He declares, in v35:

"But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always."

Immediate Fulfillment

Let's first look at the interpretation put forward by many commentators, that this prophecy has several fulfillments. So the immediate application of vv35-36 is to the one God has in mind to replace Eli—that little boy of Hannah's, dedicated to the Lord: Samuel, who would be both prophet and priest. He would be faithful, whereas Eli's house was not.

Near-future Fulfillment

But the prophecy's fulfillment does not stop there. It could also be applied to the later Zadok, the faithful priest who stuck by King David, and his son, Solomon. Thus, "he will walk before My anointed always" refers to Zadok serving the never-ending line and throne of David.

Far-future Fulfillment

The obvious far-future fulfillment—and the application with the least number of problems—is found in the Messiah. The anointed One, very Son of God, will have no problem doing, as the Lord says, "according to what is in My heart and in My soul."

and I will build him an enduring house

The Lord God will build for this faithful priest an enduring, or sure house. "House" applied to the first two fulfillments is easy enough: it refers to the priestly line, or family. But if Christ is the final fulfillment of the house of David, and if He is the once and final high priest, what can "house" mean here? [\[keep a finger here\]](#)

Read John 10:27-30.

[Back to 1 Samuel.](#)

"and I [[the Lord God/the Father](#)] will build him [[will give to Christ His followers](#)] an enduring [[that cannot be snatched out of the Father's hand](#)] house [[church](#)]"

So the Messiah's "house" is the church. But now we have a problem. Verse 35 ends with

and he will walk before My anointed always.

The obvious way to understand this is that "he"—in this interpretation, the Messiah—"will walk before My anointed always." But wait a minute; the Messiah *is* the anointed. Uh-oh. How can the Messiah walk before the Messiah always?

Now, the little that I understand NT Greek, I understand OT Hebrew far less. So I cannot personally vouch for the following interpretation. Though it comes from a respected, often-quoted authority, it is, admittedly an outlier [\[every popular version of our Bible translates this "he"\]](#). But the proposed solution makes sense to me. Here is how Walter C. Kaiser resolves this:

If the Messiah is that “faithful priest,” who then is this one “who will minister before my anointed one [my Messiah] always?” (ISA 2:35d). Most conclude that this eliminates the faithful priest from being identified with the Messiah, since it is usually taken that he is the one who “will minister [lit., will walk] before my anointed one always [lit., all the days].” However, James Smith points out what no one else seems to have grasped:

The immediate antecedent of the verb walk is the noun house. It is the house of the faithful priest which is under the supervision of the anointed one, the Messiah. The idea of the walking house is already in verse 30 **[Read v30]**. The faithful Priest and the Anointed One (Messiah) in verse 35 are one and the same person. The Messiah’s house is the New Testament royal priesthood (I Peter 2:9).

That, we believe, is the correct solution. More accurately, then, verse 35 should read:

I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and *it* will minister before my anointed one always, [emphasis mine (Kaiser)]

That is, the priesthood of believers, the church, will minister/serve/walk before the Messiah forever. And this removes the problem we have in v35 for reading this as a messianic prophecy. And v36 is the Lord’s way of saying that “Eli’s house, once fattened on priestly perquisites” [and ill-gotten gain] will soon be begging for scraps at the house of this new faithful priest.

ZECARIAH 3

It will take us several sessions to develop the Messiah as high priest. In this session we will just be examining the OT prophecies, and in our next session we will begin with its fascinating, mind-blowing fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

We have already looked at Messiah as “the Branch” **[or sprout, or shoot]** in Zechariah 6, and He is so named here in Zechariah 3. This time, however, our focus is on the priesthood.

Read Zechariah 3:8-10.

In Zechariah 3 the Lord is using the very real high priest, Joshua **[“Jeshua” in Ezra]**, and the people around him, to typify the future priest/king Messiah. The text itself identifies them as such:

NASB: who are a symbol
NKJV: a wondrous sign
NIV: who are men symbolic of things to come
ESV: men who are a sign

There is a lot going on in this passage, but we will just briefly look at the prophecy of “My servant the Branch” removing “the iniquity of that land in one day.” There is a poetic synergy at work here:

- The one speaking is “the angel of the Lord” (v6)—no doubt here, as elsewhere in the OT, a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ;
- The one the angel is speaking to is named Joshua—or, in Greek, Jesus;
- The prophecy being spoken refers to Christ coming as high priest to, in one moment, remove [\[atone for\]](#) the sin of the world!

PSALM 110

Psalm 110 is an incredible prophecy of the ruling, conquering, victorious Messiah who is also a priest. In this session I am going to do it a gross injustice, but we will be revisiting it later. For right now I want to just point out a couple of things.

Perhaps in no other psalm is the superscription as important as in this one. These superscriptions are as inspired as the text that follows. In fact, while in most of our Bibles they are set apart in a different font, implying they are somehow added in later, in the earliest manuscripts they were flowed right into the text.

This psalm begins (as do many others) “A Psalm of David,” but in this psalm that application is of critical importance. For right at the beginning of v1 it is important that we know who is speaking. David opens the psalm with reference to two Lords.

Read Psalm 110:1.

The LORD says to my Lord:

The first LORD is easy enough—

LORD = *yhwh* = from <H1961> (hayah); (the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God :- Jehovah, the Lord. Compare <H3050> (Yahh), <H3069> (Yehovih).

—and the second Lord is also the familiar—

Lord = *adonai* = an emphatic form of <H113> ('adown); the Lord (used as a proper name of God only) :- (my) Lord.

—but what is different here (and why the superscription is so important) is the obvious question, *Who is speaking?* Here we have one Lord speaking to another Lord. If King David is doing the speaking, who is this second Lord? Certainly the *king* would not have an earthly lord over him. Yahweh, certainly, but no one else. In Matthew 22 Jesus Himself identifies this second Lord.

Read Matthew 22:41-46.

So what we have in v1 is King David prophesying, *Jehovah God says to His Son, who is my Lord [who would not be on earth for almost another 1,000 years], “You, my Son, take Your place on My right until I subdue all Your enemies.”* Then in v4 Yahweh declares something else about David’s son and Lord.

Read v4.

So, in Psalm 110, the Messiah, who is God’s Son, will “rule in the midst of [His] enemies” as king, but will also be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. In our next session we will begin looking at how these prophecies play out in the NT.