

PREMILLENNIALISM: JESUS CHRIST—PRIEST and KING

In our previous three articles we have shown from the teaching of Jesus' apostles, Paul and Peter, and Jesus himself, that the entirety of Old Testament prophecy concerning Christ is now fulfilled. They were fulfilled in Jesus' sacrificial death and subsequent victorious resurrection from the dead. To dispute this, one must be willing to fly in the face of clear statements from Jesus Christ and his apostles.

There is one Old Testament prophecy, however, that bears so significantly on premillennial theory that it deserves special notice. We speak of Zechariah's prophecy recorded at chapter 6, verses 12 and 13. Zechariah's mention of the "Man whose name is the Branch" is an obvious reference to the Christ. He would come and "build the temple of the LORD," not the physical one in Jerusalem, but the spiritual one provided for in his New Covenant (Ephesians 2:21-22). And, he would "sit and rule on His throne; So shall He be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Zechariah's prophecy called for the Christ to be both priest and king at the same time. Thus, God's peace for man requires the simultaneous functioning of both offices: a kingly reign and an atoning priesthood.

If you are wondering how this impacts premillennial theory, here it is. Premillennialism insists that Jesus does not yet reign on the throne God promised him and will not until his second coming. If this is true, then neither is he a priest, per Zechariah's prophecy. Further, since the purpose of priesthood is to offer sacrifice, and since Jesus' offering was to be his own blood, then it would have to follow that, although he shed his blood on the cross, he has not yet offered it to God for the atonement of our sins since he is not yet a priest. So, no atonement, no forgiveness! No forgiveness, no salvation! No salvation, no gospel (good news) for mankind!

Thankfully, the writer of The Epistle to the HEBREWS settles the matter with clarity and, yes, with good news. Jesus Christ serves as a priest in the heavens (Hebrews 4:14). Therefore, according to Zechariah, he must be reigning also on a heavenly throne. That this was to be the case was prophesied by David and later affirmed by the apostle Peter (Psalms 110:1; Acts 2:33-36).

Thus, Jesus now reigns in heaven serving also as High Priest having offered his blood to atone for our sins. In contrast to premillennial theory, this is indeed good news.

—Jerry F. Bassett