

A Messianic Priest-King

Key Verse: “[They] said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.”
—***John 19:3***

Selected Scriptures:
Jeremiah 23:5,6;
Zechariah 6:9-15;
John 19:1-5

IN TODAY’S LESSON, WE see Jesus standing before Pilate. After being scourged by the Roman governor, the soldiers placed a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head, and put on him a purple robe. Then, with derision, they spoke the words of our Key Verse. Pilate had found no fault in him, certainly nothing worthy of death. To him, Jesus was entitled to continue living. Indeed, as spoken later by the apostles, “Christ . . . did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.”—I Pet. 2:21,22; Heb. 7:26

Jesus was Christ—the anointed one, “the son of David.” (Matt 1:1) Christ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah. We read further in Mark 1:1 that Jesus was “the Son of God.” In Luke’s gospel is recorded the angel Gabriel’s proclamation that Jesus would be born. “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”—Luke 1:32,33

Returning to the setting of our lesson, Pilate’s simple

response to the Jewish religious leaders gathered against Jesus was: “Behold the man.” (John 19:5) They defiantly replied to Pilate, saying, “Crucify him, crucify him.” (vs. 6) This mockery of God’s justice soon came to an end as recorded in the words, “They crucified him.” (vs. 18) The religious leaders of Israel had completely rejected, and even caused the death of, their rightful king—the long-awaited Messiah.

In Zechariah 6:12, the prophet records these words: “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; . . . and he shall build the temple of the LORD.” The term “Branch” points to Christ, and is used several times in the Scriptures. In Isaiah 4:2, Jesus is prophetically referred to as the “Branch of the LORD.” He is also referred to as a “Branch” growing out of the root of Jesse, David’s father (Isa. 11:1), and a “righteous Branch.” (Jer. 23:5) Jesus was rightful heir to Israel’s throne, because he was a direct descendent through the kingly line of David, and also because he was God’s representative to his people.

Messiah’s humiliation, obedience unto death, and subsequent exaltation is shown in many scriptures (see Isa. 52:13-15; Isa. 53; Phil. 2:5-11). His perfection as the “son of man,” even unto death, made it possible for him to be the “last Adam” (Heb. 2:6-9; I Cor. 15:45,47), and the rightful “heir of all things.” (Heb. 1:2) The concept of a Priest-King is brought to our attention by connecting various scriptures. “Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he [God] . . . said unto him, . . . Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” (Heb. 5:5,6) The name Melchisedec means “my king is righteous.” The priest-king originally given this name is mentioned in Genesis 14:18, as well as by Paul in Hebrews 7:1-4, and is shown to be a picture of Christ as High Priest and King. (see also Zech. 6:12,13) Soon he will be revealed to all mankind as the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”—I Tim. 6:15 ■