

A Chronicle of Redemption

Chapter 36: Christ Our Priest and King

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CHAPTER 36: CHRIST OUR PRIEST AND KING Haggai; Zechariah

If you have His Word, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Haggai 1, if you can find it. Feel free to use the table of contents if needed. Haggai is the second shortest book in the whole Old Testament.

So, last week, we saw Daniel and his buddies living in the middle of exile in Babylon. It was about 70 years until the Babylonians were shockingly, under the sovereignty of God, taken over by King Cyrus of Persia. What happened is, soon after he took over, King Cyrus issued a decree that any of the Israelites, any of God's people, who wanted to go back to Jerusalem could do so. Some of them, not all of them, but some of them settled into where they were. However, some of them said, "We're going back." About 50,000 strong, most estimate, which was a far cry from the three million who had once entered into the Promised Land. So, this relatively meager group comes back and settles into an isolated land in the middle of Jerusalem, far from the splendor of Solomon's kingdom. They were under Persian rule, so they were confined to the area that the Persian government restricted them to.

We find them struggling to subsist in this land, setting the stage for the restoration of God's people in Jerusalem to the prophets of Haggai and Zechariah. These guys were contemporaries, basically, prophesying at the exact same time. Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament. Zechariah is the longest of the Old Testament Minor Prophets and a pretty difficult, complex book. One Old Testament scholar said, "Zechariah is especially difficult to read." You know when an Old Testament scholar is having a hard time reading, that doesn't bode well for the rest of us.

Restoration for God's People in Jerusalem...

There's some complex stuff in here, so what I want to do is I want to show you three major themes that kind of rise to the top in these two books. I want to show you the Word to God's people, the temple in the middle of God's people and the leaders of God's people. What I want you to see is how this picture in Haggai and Zechariah's day was pointing to a much greater picture in a coming day, to the redemption of God's people in Jesus, which brings these stories, these texts that are sitting in our laps right now, right into our lives because we find ourselves as a part of this story in the future.

What I want us to do is I want us to read Haggai, and then we're going to move to Zechariah in a moment. Haggai actually dated his prophecies, and so most scholars date his second prophecy to September 21, 520 BC. I invite you to read with me.

Haggai 1:

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD." Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD. You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, declares the LORD." And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

The Word to God's people ...

All right, the word to God's people in these books, Haggai and Zechariah, first and foremost, is what we have seen in all these other prophets; the continual message resounding from their lips, "Repent of sin; turn from your sin." Now, the basic sin that Haggai and Zechariah are highlighting is the people's refusal to work to rebuild the temple. What they had done is, when they originally had come back to Jerusalem, they had started work on the temple, but it didn't last very long. They became frightened about some different things, distracted by some other things and instead, began to give their attention, their time, and their resources to building their own houses and getting their own lives settled down and ignoring the temple that was lying in ruins over here.

What Haggai is saying, and what we just read was, "Rebuild the temple. You need to build this. Turn from yourselves and start work on your temple again." The very first words out of Zechariah's mouth in Zechariah 1:3 are, "Return to the Lord", and he is talking about the rebuilding of the temple and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. He says, "Repent of your sin in the fear of God." You saw this in verse 12. People feared the Lord. I want you to

see the relationship and the link between fear of God and obedience to God that, when we have a proper respect, reverence, awe, and holy fear of God, will evoke obedience to God.

So, repent of sin in the fear of God and by the Spirit of God. We see an emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the presence of God all over Haggai and Zechariah. Here in verses 13 and 14, God gives His promise of His presence, "I am with you." It says in verse 14, "*And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel...and the spirit of Joshua...and the spirit of all the remnant of the people...*" The picture was the Lord was bringing this about inside out; He was stirring it up within them. That is how repentance works in the fear of God by the Spirit of God. So, Haggai and Zechariah are saying, "Repent of your sin in the fear of God by the Spirit of God and renew your strength."

It had been 15, 16 years since they had worked on the temple, and they said, "It's time to renew your strength for the rebuilding of God's temple." This is exactly what happened, what we read about just a second ago. The people of God, in response to Haggai's prophecy, immediately began work on the temple. Within three something, maybe four years, after Haggai and Zechariah had said this, the temple had been rebuilt. How about we just pause and, in our hearts, just give it up for the people of God. They finally obeyed. They have done what the Lord told them to do. Is that not a breath of fresh air? They did it. They worked, and soon thereafter, the temple had been rebuilt. The fear of God by the Spirit of God, what could only happen by the Spirit of God. It's why, Zechariah 4, probably one of the most famous verses in Zechariah says, "*Not by your might or by your power, but by my Spirit says the LORD*", and they were able to do it.

Why was building the temple of the Lord so important? Think about this, especially in light of what we've been looking over the last couple of weeks. Think back to Ezekiel. Remember in Ezekiel 1, he was in exile and Ezekiel sees a vision of the glory of God, the omnipresent God whose glory is not confined to one location. Ezekiel is in exile, and he sees the glory of God. Ezekiel 11, God says to His people, "I am a sanctuary in your midst. My presence is not just about this building back in Jerusalem; my presence is within you in the middle of exile." At the end of Ezekiel, chapters 40 to 48, Ezekiel left us with this vision of a temple that is far greater than human hands can ever build. So, why was it so important for them to rebuild this temple then after all we had seen and what God had taught them?

The temple among God's people ...

This is where I want you to see the significance of the temple among God's people. The temple was a picture of God's presence with His people. This is the way God designed it, that His presence would be clear among His people in a visible way through this temple. By not rebuilding the temple, the people were showing isolation from the presence of God.

I have to be careful here, the meaning/application of this text is not meant for us to go and build great big buildings for God. That has been the justification for palatial, million dollar church buildings that miss the whole point of what Scripture is teaching. What we have to do, though, is put ourselves in the shoes of these Old Testament hearers for whom the temple was a visible picture of the presence of God, and God had designed it that way. What they had done is they spent time in their own houses...nice, even luxurious houses and ignored that which represented the presence of God. It was the exact opposite of what was quoted in Psalm 63, "*Oh God you are my God, earnestly I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my body longs for you.*" The people had become complacent apart from the presence of God, content apart from the presence of God.

They need to rebuild the temple because it was a picture of God's presence; it was a picture of God's promises. God had promised in His covenant to dwell with His people. The temple

was a part of the promises to God in the land where the people lived, so they were ignoring God's Word. The temple was a picture of God's peace. The temple was a visible sign of God in harmony with His people. As a result, this temple that was lying in ruins was a picture of disharmony between the people and God; a decaying temple was a picture of a decaying relationship with God which is what we find out in Haggai 2. They were impure apart from God; they were not clean before God.

Ultimately, though, the temple was a picture of God's purpose, and this was most important. It is what we saw in Ezekiel when God said to His people, "I'm going to restore you, not for your sake; I'm going to restore you for my sake." This is the ultimate reason why they needed to rebuild the temple, because the temple was intended by God to be a declaration to all surrounding nations of His glory in the middle of His people. When the surrounding nations looked at a temple broken down in the middle of the people of God, they did not think highly of their God, so the picture was a people who had become indifferent to the glory of God and how He was perceived by the nations around them. So, for the sake of God's glory and for the sake of peace with God, in light of the promises of God, as a picture of the presence of God, Haggai and Zechariah are calling the people to rebuild this temple.

The leaders of God's people ...

Now, Haggai and Zechariah are speaking to all the people, but there are two leaders that come to the forefront. One is Joshua, the high priest. He is mentioned here in verse 1, "*Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.*" The high priest was the head of the whole sacrificial system and, as such, he was responsible for the cleanliness of God's people. Responsible for their ritual cleanliness for their purity before God. Haggai 2:14 says they were not pure before God; they were not clean before God, and they needed to be clean.

So, Joshua plays a huge role in these two books as well as, second, Zerubbabel who is the governor/king. The reason I want to emphasize governor/king is because, in the book here, he is referenced here in Haggai 1:1 as the governor. There's a deeper picture going on here. In fact, hold your place in Haggai 1, and turn back with me to 1 Chronicles 3. I want to remind you of all these genealogies. This person begot this person, and this person begot this person; this man was the son of this person, who was the son of this person. I want to show you why that is important in the Bible.

In 1 Chronicles 3, I want you to see the genealogy of David. What this is the story of the family of David. 1 Chronicles 3:1 says, "*These are the sons of David...*", and it begins to list their names. Go down to 1 Chronicles 3:17. It says, "*...and the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son...*" The picture here are the sons of David in exile. Then, you keep going and verse 19 says, "*And the sons of Pedaiah: Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel...*", and then it begins to list their names. So, circle "Zerubbabel" right here and put a little note off the side that says "Haggai and Zechariah" so you know, the next time you come to 1 Chronicles 3 in your Bible, Zerubbabel is going to play an important part in Haggai and Zechariah.

Here is why this is important: Zerubbabel is appointed the governor over the people of God here in Jerusalem at the time of Haggai and Zechariah, but the reality is, he is from the line of King David. He is not king at this point because they are under the rule of a Persian government and a Persian king, but the reality is, Zerubbabel is of the kingly line among the people of God, which is important because the king was responsible for the construction of God's temple.

Way back in the early parts of the Old Testament with the tabernacle, God entrusted this responsibility to Moses, and then when it comes to the building of the temple, and King David wants to do it, and God says, "No, I am going to give this responsibility to your son, Solomon.", and Solomon is the one who builds the temple. If you go to Zechariah 4:8-9, and God says, "*The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it.*"

So, this is the broad picture of Haggai and Zechariah. You see them with the word of the Lord in their mouths calling people to repent and build the temple because the temple is a picture of the presence of God and the promises of God, the peace of God and the purpose of God. Leading the way in that are Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the king/governor, from the kingly line. So, that's the overview.

Redemption for God's People in Jesus...

Now, I want to show you how these prophets on the pages of redemptive history are pointing us to something much greater than rebuilding a temple with bricks and mortar and wood. There are some incredible promises of God's redemption to come in Jesus in these prophets. So, turn over with me now to Zechariah 3. We're passing over, even as we flip the pages, pointers to Christ in Haggai. We just don't have time to look at it all. I would like you to look at Zechariah 3 with me, because Zechariah has been called the most Messianic book in all the Old Testament. It is just pointing to Christ all over the place. It is filled with references to Jesus' first coming and His second coming. It is quoted more than any other Old Testament book in the crucifixion, the passion of Jesus, and then you get to the book of Revelation, and there are allusions and references and quotations to Zechariah all over the place. In fact, we're not going to have time to turn to all the places in the New Testament where Zechariah is quoted, so what I am going to try to do along the way is point out to you verses in Zechariah that are quoted in the New Testament. You can kind of make notes, or make lines in your Bible so you know this is pointing to the New Testament where we see this coming about in Jesus.

The leader of God's people ...

So, I want to show you a portrait of Christ in the time of Haggai and Zechariah. I want to show you Christ as the coming leader of God's people and the coming temple among God's people. He is bringing the Word to God's people, including every single one of us. We will start with Jesus as the leader of God's people. I want to show you how Zechariah is pointing us to Jesus as the coming priest. Christ our priest. Look at Zechariah 3 with me. Read through this story. This is one of the visions that Zechariah had. Imagine this:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by. And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house

and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree."

All right, so right here, we have a divine tribunal, basically, a divine court taking place. You've got Joshua, the high priest, standing there with filthy garments on. Then, you have Satan, the accuser, accusing Joshua in his sin. So, what the Lord does is, first, He shuts Satan up, and then He speaks to Joshua, and He gives him new garments, and He talks about covering the iniquity of His sin. He begins talking to the priest about walking in His ways and keeping His charge, and God giving the priest access to His heavenly counsel. He gives him free reign, and then He says, "From among the priests among you, Joshua, I will bring my servant the Branch." Circle "branch" right there and make a little note to the side and write down Jeremiah 23:5 and Isaiah 11:1. There are numerous places where we see "branch" referenced, but those are two prominent ones in the Old Testament prophets that we've already seen, where Jeremiah has talked about a branch from the line of David. Think of a family tree or a branch coming from the line of David. Isaiah 11:1 says the same thing. It talks about an anointed one who will come from the line of David. It is what is being pointed to here, and what God says is, "I will bring forward this Branch, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day." That's quite a statement.

For years, day after day, year after year, generation after generation, these priests had offered sacrifices to atone for the people's sins and God, speaking to Joshua the high priest, talks about one who will come from His line and in a single day cover all sin. How is that possible? Well, He will live sinlessly. God is talking about a priest who will walk in His ways, keep His charge, have clean garments and total access to the heavenly council. He would be pure before God. He will remove iniquity how? He will live sinlessly, and He will die sacrificially.

You said, "Where do you get that?" Follow with me. Go with me to Zechariah 12:10. How will He atone for and remove the iniquity of sin in a single day? Go to Zechariah 12:10. Here in Zechariah 12, we're in the middle of God talking about how He's going to save His people and how He's going to draw them to Himself. Listen to what He says. How is God going to draw people to Himself? Zechariah 12:10, "*And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.*" Circle or underline, "*Him whom they have pierced.*" Put a little note to the side that says John 19:37. When a soldier takes a spear and pierces it through the side of Jesus, John said this happened to fulfill what was written by the prophet. "They will look on me, on him whom they have pierced." Who is me? This is the Lord speaking about the Lord being pierced.

Go farther down to Zechariah 13:7, "*Awake, O sword...*" This is just language that mirrors Isaiah 53:10, when it says, "The Lord will crush him." Here it says, "*Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,' declares the LORD of hosts. 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.'"* Underline, "*strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.*" Put a little note out to the side that says Matthew 26:31. Right before Jesus goes to the cross, He turns to His disciples, and He says, "It will be fulfilled what the prophet said, 'The shepherd will be

struck and the sheep will be scattered.” Peter says, “No, Lord I would never scatter from you.” That is when Jesus predicts Peter’s three-fold denial. Indeed, all of those whom Jesus came to save as their shepherd would scatter from Him, and He would be struck so that the iniquity of the people of God would be covered.

Look right in the middle of this. This is one of the most beautiful verses in all of Zechariah. Zechariah 13:1, “*On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.*” Don’t miss it. A fountain of mercy is open to cover sins. What is the fountain? It is the side of the one who is pierced. It is the shepherd who is struck. Jesus will take responsibility for cleansing God’s people, even those who kill Him. This is unfathomable mercy and unimaginable grace. Think about it. The very reality that, unbeknownst to them, those who pierce the Savior’s side are providing for their own cleansing from sin so that, to every man and woman, a fountain of forgiveness is opened wide, and this fountain does not flow from the neck of a sacrificial animal, but it flows from the side of a pierced Savior.

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. That dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day, and there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away. Dear dying lamb, thy precious blood will never, ever lose its power until the ransomed church of God is saved to sin no more. Ever since, by faith, I saw the stream thy flowing wounds supplied, redeeming love has been my theme and shall be till I die. Your sin, all of our sin, is covered in a single day.

Jesus the coming priest. Note the difference: He does not merely offer a sacrifice for the people’s sins, but He is the sacrifice for the people’s sins. Jesus, our coming priest and Jesus our coming King. Here’s the deal: even in Zechariah 3, the prophecies are focused on the high priest here, but the language is kingly. It uses terms like “the Branch”, “the line of David”, “the king”. The reality is, these were two separate lines in the Old Testament. There is a priestly line and a kingly line, but what we are seeing is a merging together of these pictures.

Go to Zechariah 6, and let me show you even clearer. In Zechariah 6:9, here again, Joshua the high priest is front and center, but check this out. Zechariah 6:9:

And the word of the LORD came to me: “Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah. Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. And say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’”

Do you see what’s going on here? This is taking a vision of a kingly crown being put on the head of the priest. These are two totally separate offices in the Old Testament being brought together here. The branch represents the kingly line. This is the priest being crowned as king, and he will build the temple. Who is responsible for building the temple? The king is responsible for building the temple, so why is this vision about the priest building the temple? Because the priest and the king are overlapping. Even in verse 13, it

says, *"It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne.*

Now, follow this: in the temple, the throne room of God was the Holy of Holies. It was a place where the mercy seat was and atonement cover, and once a year, the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies to offer sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. He would go in with bells on to make sure he was still moving around, with a rope tied to his leg so they pulled him out if he fell over dead. He would go in and get out as quick as possible. He's in and out.

So, this prophecy is about a priest who will go into the throne room and sit down. You don't sit down if you're a priest. You don't sit on the throne of God unless you are God. Write this down, Hebrew 10:11-12. *"Every priest stands daily at his service, offering sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God."* Hebrews 1:3 says, *"After making purification for sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."* This priest is a king. What we're seeing here in Zechariah is this picture of priest and king coming together.

It gets even better. Go to Zechariah 9:9. Is this not incredible? You do not write this kind of script unless you are God. Listen to this. In 520 BC, Zechariah says:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Does any of this sound familiar? Circle verse 9. Write down on the side Matthew 21:4-5. Jesus told His disciples, *"Go into the village. You'll find a donkey tied and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me." And this took place what was spoken by the prophets. 'Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey..."* Isn't that so cool? The disciples, they are going to get the donkey, and they're like, "Are we sure it's going to be there?" Of course it will be there because, 500-plus years ago, God said the donkey was going to be there; this is a sure thing. "What do we do if the guy won't let us take the donkey? We're going to tell him that the Lord of hosts declared five centuries ago to give us the donkey." Sure enough, there's a donkey with a colt just sitting there ordained by God. They say, "All right, let's take that back."

This is awesome, and then, bring it back, and Jesus comes riding into the very city of Jerusalem. They have been told 500-plus years before, "Rejoice, shout aloud daughter of Jerusalem. Your king is coming to you!" Jerusalem had failed king after failed king, and Zechariah says, "Be happy! Shout aloud! Rejoice! This king is coming, and He will be righteous, not wicked not like all of these other kings. He will be righteous, and He will be victorious bringing salvation. He will be gentle, humble, and not arrogant or pushy. He will be unique."

He will bring peace to the nations. Verse 10, *"he shall speak peace to the nations."* Write down beside there Luke 19:38. This is Luke's account of Jesus coming into the city of Jerusalem. The reason I encourage you to write down Luke 19:38 there is because, in Luke's account, when Jesus comes in riding on the donkey, which by the way is significant, it was not uncommon for a king to be on a donkey. The issue was if the king were at war,

then the king would not be on a donkey, the king would be on a war horse. When it was peacetime, the king would be on a donkey. So Jesus, the king, comes into the city of Jerusalem as a picture of peace, and Luke records the crowds that are bowing down with palm branches. "Hosanna, Lord save us. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

As Jesus comes into the city, He stops, and He looks over the city, and He weeps. He says in Luke 19:42, *"Would that you...had known on this day the things that make for peace!"* They had no idea that, in their rebellion against Him in days to come, they would experience the only way for peace to occur between God and man, and that is in the sacrifice of His Son. That Jesus would be making a way for them to have peace with God and peace with each other, because as we are reconciled to God, we are reconciled to each other.

He shall bring peace to the nations, and He will possess power over all nations. His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. This is where this text becomes eternally important for your life where you are sitting at this moment. What does Zechariah and Haggai have to do with you and me? The reality is that this king, who was prophesied and promised 2,500 years ago, who came 2,000 years ago, is king over your life where you are sitting at this moment. He reigns over you. He rules over you. You say, "I don't know if Jesus is my king." His kingship is not in question. The only question is whether or not you have submitted your life to His kingship and that question determines your life for all of eternity. Everything in eternity hinges on that.

This is where all of us find ourselves on a level plane. The strongest, smartest, richest, most talented of us are all under the rule and the authority of Jesus the king. All of our lives are intended to surrender to His kingship.

The question is will we surrender now, or will we surrender when it is too late? This is the humbling reality; He possesses power over all nations. Every president, every prime minister, every dictator, every single one of them is under the kingship of Jesus Christ, and He holds them in His hands. He is king who possesses power over all nations. Jesus takes responsibility as king for ruling God's people, even those who defy Him.

The temple among God's people ...

You say, "Well, I thought the responsibility of the king was to construct the temple." This is where it gets even better. Jesus is not just a temple builder, He is a temple bearer. In His coming, we see the temple among God's people. I want you to turn with me over just a few pages to the right, and you'll come to Matthew 1, the first page in the New Testament. I want to show you this book. Matthew was written with a specific Jewish audience in mind. From the very first verse to the very last verse in the book of Matthew, what he is intending to do is show that Jesus is the king of the Jews and the king of all nations.

So, he says in the very beginning, *"This is the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."* He goes all the way back to the father of the people of God, Abraham, and the son of David, the kingly line. What he does is he begins to go down the line. You get down to verse 12, *"After the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel."*

So, here's Zerubbabel. Make a little note in Haggai and Zechariah. He's back. The picture is Jesus, who is coming, verse 17, *"So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations...to the Christ fourteen generations."* You get to verse 21, *"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet..."* Matthew quotes from Isaiah, *"The virgin shall*

conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' which means, 'God with us.'"

Realize what is going on here. Jesus is God with us. He reveals the very presence of God with us. Jesus is literally physically the embodiment of God's dwelling with His people, which is so important because back in Haggai, he talked about the glory of the temple to come would be far greater than the glory of the temple before, and the reality is, as the temple is being rebuilt, people are weeping because people are realizing that this is nowhere close to Solomon's temple and the glory of Solomon's temple. So, how can God be saying through His prophets, "Well, the glory will be even greater than the temple before", when it doesn't look like it? Clearly the prophets are reporting to something else when God will reveal His glory in the face of Christ, to use Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4. John says, "We beheld the glory of the one and only in Christ."

He is the revelation of the presence of God. He is the temple. He fulfills the promises of God. You go through Matthew, and you see the end of Matthew 1, Isaiah quoted. You see references all over the place, even Zechariah 9:2. Then, you see Matthew 2:6 where Micah is quoted, and in verse 15, Hosea is quoted, and in verse 18, Jeremiah is quoted. In Matthew 3:2, Isaiah is quoted again. It's like Matthew is just piling it on. This prophet is saying this and this prophet is saying that, and Jesus is proving the faithfulness of God. Look at Jesus and see the promises of God in person.

He reveals the presence of God, fulfills the promise of God, and brings the peace of God. You get to the end of Matthew 3, and you see Jesus being baptized and heaven opens. The Spirit of God is descending on Jesus like a dove. This a picture of peace represented there, and a voice booms from heaven and says, "*This is my Son with whom I love, with whom I am well pleased.*" Jesus is exhibiting the favor of God, and it is clear if man wants to be at peace with God, then they must come through Jesus.

He brings the peace of God, and ultimately, He accomplishes the purpose of God. Right after that, in Matthew 4:15-16, Matthew quotes from Isaiah yet again and says, "*Galilee of the Gentiles - the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.*" Jesus has come to be a declaration and glory to God to the Jewish people and to all peoples. Jesus is the epitome of that which is foreshadowed in the temple.

The Word to God's people ...

He is the leader of God's people and the temple among God's people, which brings us to the Word to God's people then and today through Christ. What are the first words He speaks to the people around Him? In light of all the Old Testament history we've seen, repent and return to the Lord. You get to Matthew 4:17, and it says, "*From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*" The divine priestly king, the very temple of God in the flesh, is looking to them, then, and us today, and He says, "Flee from your sin! Repent, turn away from your sin. Repent in the fear of God's holiness. The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God is at hand. It is near. Turn and don't waste any more time. Flee from your sin in the fear of God's holiness and by the power of God's Spirit, not by your own might or by your own power, but by the Spirit of God." Oh, God, stir up in our hearts a spirit of repentance that runs from any resemblances of temptation and sin in our lives.

The message from Christ is clear: Flee from your sin and follow after your Savior. The very next words come in Matthew 4:19, "*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" Repent, turn to Christ and follow Him. Repent, and there is no need to build a temple. We are

building a kingdom. Jesus says, "I am going to make you fishers of men." Flee from your sin. Follow after your Savior for the advancement of God's kingdom to the ends of the earth. Tell everybody in Birmingham and in all nations that Christ our priest and Christ our king has died on the cross and reigns on high.

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