

Lent - Midweek 5
Text: Zechariah 6:9-13 (NIV)
Theme: The Kingly Priest

Sermon
Feb, Mar 2026

Dear Disciples of Jesus,

Introduction: The pastor couldn't believe it. He didn't really expect to win. It was more of an effort to comment on the way things were being run than a serious attempt to be elected. But he won! Now, in addition to shepherding his flock, counseling his members, and preaching and teaching, he would also serve as mayor of his small town. Suddenly, he had not one but two very important jobs. How would he manage the duties of both, especially if they conflicted?

Our text from Zechariah this week is about an Old Testament priest being crowned as a king. Does that sound like a confusion of church and state? The Lord had actually forbidden such a dual role. In one memorable incident, King Uzziah had entered the temple to offer incense, a duty reserved for the priests. When the king raged against the priests who were pleading with him to stop, leprosy broke out on his forehead. (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

Yet the Lord can always make an exception to his own rules. That is what we see as the high priest Joshua receives the royal crown. In holding both offices, Joshua serves as a picture of Christ. Jesus is our Kingly Priest. Let's listen to the coronation ceremony, as described by the Holy Week Prophet in Zechariah 6:9-13:

The word of the LORD came to me: "Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jozadak. Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.'"

1. Jesus Priest and King

A. It may have seemed strange to Zechariah to combine the authority of the spiritual realm with the authority of the political realm. All kinds of things could go haywire. Wasn't it better to have a separation of power? But he knew better than to question the Lord. If the Almighty had decided that a priest could sit on the throne as king and there would be harmony between the two offices, then it must be okay.

1. But there was little harmony between church and state at the time of Jesus. The high priest's office was held by Annas until the Romans deposed him in favor of his son-in-law Caiaphas. There was harmony between the high priests: they were united in contempt for the Romans, who held political power, and for Jesus, who was a threat to their spiritual power.

Annas and Caiaphas had led the Sanhedrin to convict Jesus of blasphemy. That was easy. The hard part was convincing Pontius Pilate to authorize the death penalty for a blasphemer.

2. Pilate had no love for the Jewish leadership, but they had to cooperate to maintain peace in Palestine. The Roman governor had the power to free Jesus or crucify him. Convinced of the prisoner's innocence, Pilate tried to release him. When the crowd demanded the release of Barabbas instead, Pilate ordered that his soldiers flog Jesus, putting horrible, bloody stripes on his back. Jesus, now dressed as a king and having begun to shed his own blood as a priestly sacrifice, was presented again to the mob.

B. When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" (John 19:5) Did you catch the echo from Zechariah? He wrote, "*Here is the man* [Joshua] whose name is *the Branch*, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD." Now Pilate announced, "Here is the man!" Yes, here is the man who would fulfill Zechariah's prophecy, the man who was foreshadowed by Joshua the priest, who was also crowned king.

1. YET the priests had CONDEMNED *the* High Priest whom every priest foreshadowed. The governor and his goons mocked and ridiculed *the* King of all kings, treating him as a cartoon figure. How could they have so completely missed who he was?

2. True, Jesus didn't look very priestly or kingly as he stood on Pilate's porch, beaten and bloody, crowned with thorns. Perhaps that is why so many on that day, and so many in our day, dismissed him. He appears helpless, naive, weak, and UNFIT to serve as either a political or spiritual leader.

C. Is that why we often imagine that we control our lives and fail to yield to the King's commands? Is that why we often discount the magnitude of his sacrifice and balk at the cost of any sacrifice he asks us to make for him? Perhaps it would help to trade places with him, even for a moment, to appreciate the soul-crushing weight that he took on for us.

1. Now you recognize him! You recall the pictures painted by the prophets: the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, the son of man in Daniel, the priest-king in Zechariah. You watch in awed silence, admiring this man who looks so pitiful yet looms so powerful. What other king is strong enough to submit to death for his subjects' freedom? What other priest is so aware of the damning consequences of original sin that he would offer his own blood as the only sufficient ransom price?

2. This Great High Priest submitted to the corrupt priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas so that he could become the once-for-all sacrifice that sinful priests could never offer. This King of all kings submitted to the injustice of a temporal ruler so that he could rule our hearts in eternal peace. He held his tongue before cruel soldiers so that he could fight the battle against sin and hell for us.

2. Jesus The Branch

A. This man is given the curious title of *the Branch*, a name he is also given in Isaiah chapter 11. There he emerges from the stump of Jesse, the once-great royal dynasty of David. New life would appear where it appeared there had been only a dead end.

1. He would also branch out to extend God's kingdom to the nations. Zechariah wrote: **He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.** (Zechariah 9:10)

2. Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds. “Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade” (Mark 4:32). The branches of that kingdom now reach all nations, providing all sinners a place to perch, protected by our perfect Priest and Prince of peace.

B. The Branch would also rebuild the temple of the Lord. The returned exiles may have hoped that their temple, left in ruins by the Babylonian invaders, would finally be rebuilt. Perhaps it would even surpass its former glory. If nothing else, it would send this message: *Israel. Is. Back.*

1. The Lord had something else in mind, as he had with David. That king had hoped to build the original temple, a privilege granted instead to his son Solomon. Nevertheless, Nathan was sent to David to announce an even greater blessing:

“I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: When your days are over and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.” (1 Chronicles 17:10-14)

2. Jesus—the Branch—would build that house for David. The physical temple was rebuilt in the days of Joshua the high priest, but that temple would again be destroyed, never to be rebuilt. The temple built by Jesus would never be destroyed. It is not built with brick and mortar but with living stones. As those stones are incorporated in the temple, they become kingly priests.

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like *living stones*, are being built into a *spiritual house* to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. You are a chosen people, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, God’s special

possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:4-5,9, emphasis added)

C. Joshua must have presented an impressive figure, clothed in the garments of both the high priest and the king of Israel. He foreshadowed an even more impressive figure who would combine those two offices and carry them out in perfect harmony.

“It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.”

Conclusion: A pastor serving simultaneously in political office raises questions about potential conflicts between church and state and how he can devote the time each position deserves.

But when your pastor is Jesus, no one minds that he’s also King. And when your King is Jesus, he’s also the best pastor. No conflicts.

As our PRIEST, who offered himself on the altar of the cross, he daily intercedes for us, pleading the merits of his once-for-all sacrifice. As our KING, who charged into battle to redeem us from Satan, death, and hell, he rules all things for the good of his church. The BRANCHES of his temple spread ever wider. There is harmony between his offices; there is harmony between forgiven sinners and our holy God.

HERE IS THE MAN: the Great High Priest, the King of kings, the Branch, your Savior.

In the name of our kingly Priest, dear friends. Amen.