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The Priest-King Role of the Messiah

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The book of Daniel is generally regarded as a prophetic book. Many focus on the symbolic beasts and on the role of the antichrist. Liberal authors, who deny the Danielic authorship, devote their time to establishing the presumed second century B.C. background of the material, neglecting to understand the fundamental purpose of the document. It seems that in one way or another the central Person and His ministry, as portrayed in the prophecy, have been passed over in this scientific era or have been relegated to a second or third place of importance.

However, nothing is more important in this prophetic book than the role filled by the Messiah, the principal Person in its visions. He gives sense to Daniel's stories and prophecies. It is in the light of the great controversy between Christ and Satan that all the prophecies and stories of the Bible have to be seen, and especially those of Daniel in the OT and Revelation—its counterpart—in the NT.

The Royal Priest Foretold

Several prophecies, outside the book of Daniel, foretell the priestly roles of the Son of God. Three biblical examples form the background to what is portrayed in a special way in Daniel's prophecies. One antedates Daniel by half a millennium; another precedes the prophet by two centuries; and a third is enacted and spoken a few years after the fall of Babylon.

1. Psalm 110:1, 4. Here David respectfully calls his messianic descendant, "My Lord,"* and observes that He would one day sit at the right hand of God

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

upon His throne (vs. 1). His mission would also include a royal priesthood similar to that which the prince-priest Melchisedek

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

filled in ancient times (vs. 4). Jesus and the apostles cite this Psalm to demonstrate the superiority of the promised Messiah over against any royal and priestly prefigurative institutions of the old dispensation.¹

This forecast of a messianic, royal-priest is also prominent in the prophecy of Daniel 7. The Son of Man appears in the heavenly court at the “time of the end,” just as the high priest appeared in the Most Holy Place at the end of the religious year to obtain the decision “in favor of the saints of the Most High” (Dan 7:22) and to receive all “authority, glory and sovereign power” over “all peoples, nations and men of every language” of this world (vs. 14; cf. Rev 5:12-13; 11:15-19).

2. Isaiah 53. This passage depicts the sufferings of the Lord's Servant more than 700 years before its fulfillment. The Servant of the Lord suffers for His people, bears their sins (vss. 2-9), dies as a guilt offering (vs. 10), thereby enabling Him to undertake a ministry of justification (vs. 11) similar to that which the priests performed for repentant sinners who sought atonement for sin when they brought their sin and guilt offerings to the sanctuary (Lev 4:31, 35, etc.).² All this will reappear in the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27—in relation to the death of the Messiah Prince and the termination of sin.

This prophecy (Isa 53) also describes the power of the Servant as a warrior prince. “I will give him a portion among the great and he will divide the spoils with the *strong* [*ašûmîm*]” (vs. 12). As a warrior prince the Messiah shares the spoils of battle with “the strong,” a term that is used at times to describe princes/kings who prevail in battle.³ However, in this instance, these “strong” or powerful princes may refer to heavenly beings (compare Joel 2:11 where the same term is employed to describe the angels who engage in the last battle at the end of the world).⁴ This also appears in a definite form in the last prophecies of Daniel,—more specifically with those passages which describe angelic battle against the evil

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

powers represented by worldly empires and the last intervention of Michael at the end of the world (Dan 10:13, 21: 12:1).

3. Zechariah 6:9-13. The prophet Zechariah enacts a prophecy in which certain messianic features of a future king descending from David are symbolically applied to his contemporary, the high priest Joshua.⁵ Not only is the messianic title, the “Branch,” applied to the typical priesthood of Joshua (Zech 3:8; 6:12), but the priest himself is crowned as a king (vs. 11).⁶ The functions of a king (represented by Zerubbabel, the current ruler) and of a high priest (represented by Joshua) are applied in this passage to the promised Messiah.⁷ A modern author writes: “The symbolic coronation and the enigmatic term ‘Branch’ referred to a future leader, who would fulfill to perfection the offices of priest and king, and build the future Temple with all appropriate splendor (Hag 2:6-9). In this way the priestly and royal offices will be unified.”⁸

The Messiah's double role is also depicted in Hebrews 7 and in the book of Revelation. In the latter book, a kingly and priestly role is attributed to “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.” The name that Jesus receives par excellence in this last book of the Bible is that of “Lamb.” As a confirmation of His kingdom, the Lamb receives the *book of the covenant* granted to a king during the ceremonies of investiture (Rev 5).⁹ We must not forget that He is the “prince of the covenant” in Daniel's visions (Dan 11:22).

The Priestly-Royal Character of God's Covenant People

Characteristic of the prophecies of Daniel is a similar priestly-royal character of the people of the “covenant” (see Dan 9:27; 11:22, 32). Although they suffer tribulation in this world by the kingdom of the “little horn,” they are promised a share in God's eternal kingdom at the end together with their heavenly prince (Dan 7:14, 18, 22, 27)). This fact brings us back to the origins of Israel, when God established an official covenant with His people. In words that reveal the conditionality of the covenant the Lord said to them through Moses: “If they obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. . . . [Y]ou will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:5-6).

Just as Aaron, his sons and descendants, were priests for God's

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

people (Exod 28:1, Num 8:6, 14, 19; 18:1-7; 1 Chr 23:13), so the people of Israel—as a whole—were to be a royal priesthood for God to the world,—to mediate between God and humanity (Exod 19:4-6; Deut 14:1-2; 26:16-19; Isa 61:6). This is the same purpose God has today for the people of the new covenant, over whom the Son of God exerts an equivalent priesthood to that which Aaron and his sons performed. The Lord grants to the church—first in a spiritual dimension, and then literally at the end—the double priestly and royal function that He accorded to the people of Israel (1 Pet 2:9-10, Dan 7:14, 18, 22, 27; Rev 1:6; 2:26-27; 5:9-10; 7:14-15; 20:6; 22:5).

All this biblical background has to be taken into account when we read the prophecies of Daniel, if we want to find the plot or plan of the great controversy between the holy seed of the woman and the perverse seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15). These two seeds—engaged in battle—are represented by the people of the covenant on the one hand and by the empires that try to destroy them on the other. The chosen nation, paradoxically, should keep itself as a nation separate from the world and at the same time should be a “light for the nations.” In the midst of the crisis that appears in the Daniel context, a heavenly Prince comes to help His people, mediates in their behalf before God, and grants them the everlasting kingdom. This prince is the central Person of the book. To discover His double priestly and kingly roles in relation to His people and the world, is to find the divine plan for human redemption.

The Heavenly Prince: Titles and Functions

In the literary heart of Daniel (chap. 8) two titles are applied to the heavenly Prince: “Prince of the Army” (*šar-haššābaʿ*) and “Prince of princes” (*šar-šārîm*). The first title is the equivalent to the well-known name of God appearing in the OT as: “*YHWH šebāʾôt*,” commonly translated “Lord of hosts” (KJV) or “the Lord Almighty” (NIV). The literal meaning of the phrase is “the Eternal [One] of the armies” (cf. Jer 29:4, 8, 17, 25).

Prince of the Army (Dan 8:11). The expression, “prince of the army” (Dan 8:11) appears early on in Scripture to designate a heavenly Being who appeared before Joshua as he prayed and contemplated Israel's conquest of Canaan and the approaching

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

battle for the walled-city of Jericho. Looking up, Joshua “saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand” (Josh 5:13). Approaching the warrior, Joshua asked, “Are you one of ours?” or “One who is for us?” As the Hebrew text stands, the stranger's reply begins with a “No” (*lō*), but other readings (such as the Greek Septuagint) read, “And he said *to him* (*lō*), giving the sense, “He told him.”

The Warrior now discloses His true identity, describing Himself as the “Prince of the army of the Eternal [One]” (*śar-šebā’ YHWH*, vs. 14). Only here and in Daniel is this title applied to persons like Abner and Joab who were titled “prince of the army” of their respective kings, Saul and David. Obviously, in Joshua and Daniel this “Prince of the Army” is the One who is in charge of the army of the Eternal God. Just as the “Angel of the Lord” in other biblical accounts and prophecies is presented as being equivalent to Yahweh,¹⁰ just so this heavenly Prince is a divine Being—not simply a “man” or an “angel.” His deity is confirmed by the reaction of Joshua who “fell facedown to the ground” and removed his sandals in obedience to the Prince's command (vs. 15; cf. Exod 3:5; Acts 7:33).

Prince of Princes (Dan 8:25). An additional confirmation of the heavenly origin of the “Prince of the Army” may be seen in the title by which the angel interpreter describes Him in the explicative section of the prophecy: *śar-śārîm*, the “Prince of Princes.” This title is not attributed to any other prince in the Bible. The Hebrew Bible employs the expression only here in Daniel 8:25.

Similar titles in the Priesthood. At this point it will be profitable to note similar titles that were used in the Israelite priesthood and kingdom. In regard to the priests we observe they are called “princes of the sanctuary,” “princes of God” (1 Chr 24:5; Isa 43:28). Leaders among the priests were termed, “princes of the priests” (2 Chr 36:14; Ezra 22:28[27], *nāsî*). The high priest was, of course, considered greater still. He was literally designated “the great priest that is anointed” (Num 35:25; cf. Lev 21:10; 8:12).

Although the priests in the typical system are never designated by some of the combinations that Daniel and other prophets make with the term “prince,” that term can and was related to a priestly function.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

At this juncture, it is important to consider the fact that Daniel qualifies this heavenly prince in his last chapter as “the great prince” (*haššar haggāgôl*, Dan 12:1).

If the priests who operated under the typical high priest were called “princes,” it is obvious that the high priest was considered a “prince of the priests,” something comparable to “prince of princes.” Should we be surprised, then, to find (in the vision of Daniel) this heavenly prince discharging a *tāmîd*, that is, a “continuous” ministry which was generally performed by the common priests? (Dan 8:11). Since we are dealing with a heavenly prince, His sanctuary would be also the heavenly one. Likewise, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary that is performed at the end of His “continuous” (*tāmîd*) intercessory ministry must be of equal value to that which was carried out in the earthly sanctuary on the Day of Atonement as the conclusion of the regular services of the year (Lev 16). In actuality, of course, the heavenly priest's antitypical ministry is the true reality of which the earthly rites are only a role-playing “shadow.”

Similar titles in the Kingdom. Another term equivalent to “Prince of princes” is found in the civil and military organization of the Israelite kingdom. David named certain persons to be “head” (*rôš*) of all princes of the armies (*šārê haššabā’ôt*, 1 Chr 27:3). This expression is similar to “Lord of kings” (Dan 2:47), a title applied to God Himself. The fact that in Daniel's book the “Prince of princes” is also the “Prince of the army” of the Lord indicates His role is not restricted to that of a High Priest. It has also to do with functions related with royal rule.¹¹ Actually, the vision given to Daniel is of a heavenly prince Who surpasses all earthly representations. According to what we find in the rest of the book the qualities of both king and priest center in His Person.

Now, we ask a question. May we find these two characteristics in Onias, the priest killed by Antiochus Epiphanes in Maccabean times? Was Onias remembered in the history of Israel and in the NT as a heavenly prince, as a person as extraordinary and elevated as the heavenly prince Daniel depicts? The answer is an obvious “no.”

The only inspired application of these titles is found in the NT. These expressions are equivalent to that which Peter employed to

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

describe Jesus, such as “the chief Shepherd” (*archipoimenos*, 1 Pet 5:4). Paul depicts the enthronement of Jesus as God’s right hand in the heavenly sanctuary, the substance of which is drawn from the title, “Prince of princes,” found in the book of Daniel. God “exerted in Christ” His divine power, the apostle says:

when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, *far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.* And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church (Eph 1:20-22, emphasis added).

By virtue of His victory at the cross of Calvary, God exalted His Son “to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11).

Prince Messiah (*māšīaḥ nāgīd*, Dan 9:25, 26). The angel Gabriel is sent to Daniel to help him understand the time for the final cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary within which the heavenly priest, the Messiah, will exercise His *tāmīd* or “continuous” priestly ministry. Gabriel does so by implying the inauguration of the new covenant under the coming of the Messiah—His atoning death and priesthood (cf. Dan 9:24-27; Jer 31:31-34; Heb 9:20-27; Luke 22:20).

Since the troubled prophet could not take his eyes off his hope of a restored Temple (sanctuary) in Jerusalem after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity (cf. Dan 9:1-19; Jer 25:12; 29:10), Gabriel gave him a glimpse of its destiny. Unfortunately, the rebuilt temple and city would be eventually destroyed as a consequence of a later national rebellion against their messianic Prince (*nāgīd*, vs. 26).

The “Prince Messiah” would be put to death, but this would not be the end. His would be no ordinary death. On the contrary, His death would atone for sin and would bring in everlasting righteousness (Dan 9:24, 26; cf. Heb 9:26). Furthermore, in connection with His atoning death, Gabriel foretold the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary, implying the beginning of the Messiah’s priestly ministry.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Now, if we examine the fulfillment of the time element in the prophecy of Daniel (Dan 9:24; 25 cf. Gal 4:4; Mark 1:15), we are led to the appearing of the promised Messiah in the first century A.D. On that occasion, the typical sanctuary—terminated by God (Matt 27:50-51; Luke 23:45) and finally destroyed (Matt 24:1-2)—was the temple in Jerusalem. The sanctuary that was inaugurated (Dan 9:24), in exchange as it were, was the heavenly temple (cf. Rev 15:5). The only atonement which could give the death blow to sin and rebellion was that which the promised Prince accomplished when He died on the cross bearing the sins of the world (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2). In this manner Prince Messiah prepared Himself to begin His heavenly, priestly ministry.

What does the term “Messiah” mean? In the OT the Hebrew word is transliterated into English as “Messiah.” Since the term means “anointed” person, the NT Bible writers use the equivalent Greek word for this meaning which translates into English as “Christ.” Thus, we may address this heavenly Being as “Prince Messiah” or “Prince Christ.” The anointing of the Messiah at His baptism by the Holy Spirit and His enthronement at the right hand of God in the heavenly sanctuary are themes the apostles repeatedly touch on (Matt 3:16; Acts 2:33; 10:38, etc.).

“Prince,” the other term in this title (Prince Messiah) is *nāgîd*, not *śar* as in Daniel 8. This difference, it has recently been suggested,¹² was deliberate on the part of the Bible writer. A careful study of the two prophecies (Dan 8, 9) suggests that *śar* (chap. 8) pertains to the *heavenly* mission of the Prince of the people of God, whereas in His *earthly* mission (Dan 9:25-26; 11:22) He is identified by the term *nāgîd*. An additional confirmation of this contrast is the fact that *nāgîd* is never used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to a heavenly “prince.”

What are the contexts in which *nāgîd* is used in the Hebrew Bible? Like *śar*, *nāgîd* is also employed to designate kings¹³ and priests¹⁴ who are anointed to carry out their respective tasks. Since kings as well as priests were anointed, there is nothing unusual in describing them as princes. Thus, it would not be strange in this context to find not only similar titles and similar priestly and kingly functions ascribed to the heavenly Prince.

At this juncture it may be helpful to consider the prophetic

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

passage of Isaiah 55:4. In this prediction the Lord announces the coming of the Messiah, the Son of David, whom God will set up as a “Prince” (*nāgîd*) and “Legislator” (*mešawweh*)¹⁵ of the peoples. In other words, the foretold “Prince” will have a rank equivalent to one who legislates, or who teaches the law. This is exactly the role fulfilled by the Prince Messiah of Daniel 9. In the last prophetic week of the 70-week prophecy the Messiah has a mission to “confirm the covenant to many.”

Prince of the Covenant (Dan 11:22). In Daniel's last line of prophecy the promised Messiah is designated the “Prince of the covenant” (*nāgîd berît*, Dan 11:22). This descriptive expression is in total agreement with the aforementioned messianic prophecy of Isaiah. The Messiah is obviously connected in Daniel 11:30-33 with the people of *the new covenant*. In this sense, the promised Davidic-prince will not only function in priestly service (as in Dan 8-9), but will also function like a second Moses who mediated in the establishment of the earlier covenant (Exod 19-20; Deut 9:9-11; 10:1-5; cf. Deut 18:15; Matt 5-7; Heb 3:1-6; 8:6).

Michael, One of the principal Princes (Dan 10:13). In Daniel 10 we come back to the use of the term *šar* (prince) in a context of a battle between good and evil angels.¹⁶ “The prince of this world” (John 12:31)—called in other places *Satan*, the “adversary” (Zech 3:1)—is represented by the “prince of Persia,” just as in Isaiah 14 he is represented by the king of Babylon. This evil angel actually tries to keep the people of God in permanent exile so they cannot return to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. But *Michael*, whose name means: “Who is like God?” comes to help the angel Gabriel struggle against the opposing Satanic influence of the prince of Persia (Dan 10:13). This struggle against the prince of Persia was apparently repeated more than once (cf. Dan 10:20).

Who is this personage who assisted Gabriel in this supernatural battle? The Hebrew reads: “Michael, one of the head princes.”¹⁷ Doubtlessly, Michael is represented here as struggling in behalf of His people in His role as the “Prince of the Army” of the Lord. The fact that He prevails against the “prince of Persia” implies He is also the “Prince of princes.” The other princes were princes of or over the nations who, as in other visions, symbolize

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

the forces of opposing, evil angels (Dan 10:13 = “the kings of Persia and vs. 20 = of Greece).

“Michael, Your Prince” (Dan 10:21). Joshua came to realize that the heavenly “prince of the army” who faced him with a drawn sword was “One of ours, or “One Who is for us.” Now the angel interpreter tells Daniel that “Michael,” a Being “Who is like God” and Who fights for His people is indeed “your Prince.”

Daniel and his people in Babylonian exile had to look beyond the princes of this world and the evil spiritual forces which attempted to control them (cf. Eph 6:10-12). The focus of God's people had to be on *their* Prince who was superior to all other princes, supernatural or earthly. Although we do not understand fully the nature of the supernatural battle between the angelic forces of good and evil, it is encouraging to know that the Prince of Israel is also the “Prince of Princes,” and He will prevail.

The *archangel*, that is to say, *Prince* Michael, is identified in the NT with Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Thess 4:16). Jude saw Michael contending with the devil (vs. 9; cf. Heb 2:14). A little later on, the apostle John was shown in vision a wider panorama of this war between the angels (Rev 12:7-9). John's vision shows that the struggle begun in heaven continues on in our earth. But we may be assured that no other supernatural prince or angel can overcome our heavenly Prince, because no created intelligence in God's universe can equal Him in power and might.

Michael: the Great Prince Who Stands for Your People (Dan 12:1).

Noting Gabriel's direct reference to “the time of the end; (*‘ēt qeš*, Dan 11:40) when in heaven the Court is set up (cf. Dan 8:14, 17, 19; 7:9-14), Daniel sees Michael, the heavenly Prince, *standing* in the tribunal to redeem His people (Dan 12:1; cf. 7:18, 22, 27). He is qualified inasmuch as He is “the great prince” (*haššar haggādōl*), an expression equivalent to that of the “high priest” who was designated “the great priest who [is] anointed” (*hakkōhēn haggādōl ašer māšah*, Num 35:25; cf. Lev 21:10; 8:12).

The act of “standing up” (*‘amad*) is typical of persons appearing before a court (Num 27:2; Josh 20:4; Rev 20:12). This is not only the usual position of a petitioner or of an accused person, but also that of the accuser (Deut 19:17), and even that of a mediator or defender of the accused (Rev 5:6). Moses, for example, “stood in the

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

breach before him [God], to keep his wrath from destroying” the people (Ps 106:23). Joshua, the high priest in the time of the prophet Zechariah, is seen in vision interceding for his people in the heavenly court while “*standing* before the angel of the Lord.” At the same time the prophet also sees “Satan *standing* at his right side to accuse” the priest (Zech 3:1, emphasis added).¹⁸

Although the verb *amad* literally means “to stand up,” it is often used metaphorically with a wide range of nuances. For example, the verb in certain contexts may mean “to resist” (2 Kngs 10:4), “to remain” (Eccl 2:9), “to defend” or “to protect” (Esth 8:22), “to stop” (Josh 10:13), etc. This is the reason why a number of writers prefer to translate this verb in Daniel 12:1 with the expression “to protect” or “to defend.” They construe that Michael stands up to protect His people from the onslaughts of the king of the North.

However, in Daniel's larger setting Michael's standing up is related to the session of the heavenly tribunal, the eschatological judgment as presented in Daniel 7-8 when the names of those who are written in the book of life are considered (Dan 12:1). In other words, Michael's standing up in behalf of His people in Daniel 12:1 could be considered not only as the conclusion of this session, but also as a kind of recapitulation or summary of what he has been doing during the whole “time of the end” (Dan 11:40-12:1). One of the NT equivalents to Michael's stand in behalf of His people may be summarized in the words of Jesus to the church in “Sardis.” “He who overcomes will. . . be dressed in white. I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels” (Rev 3:5).¹⁹

Son of God (Dan 3:25, NKJV). What Michael will do at the end of the world by interposing Himself between the world powers and His people, He did at the time of Daniel to support the three Hebrew worthies in the blazing furnace. The prince of this world, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, had to acknowledge that the fourth Person who appeared among them was “the Son of God” (*bar elāhîn*, Aramaic).

It is beyond the scope of our study to examine the expression, “Son of God,” in depth. We can agree, however, on one point: the equivalent Hebrew Plural form for “God,” *elōhîm*, when it desig-

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

nates the God of Israel, is to be translated in the singular (God, not Gods). The Hebrew Bible employs the singular as well as the plural forms of this word, but always in a monotheistic sense. As an example of the plural form with a singular sense, note Genesis 6:2, 4, *benē hā'elōhîm* ("sons of God"), a reference to the holy seed of the woman referred to in Genesis 3:15. Consequently, the translation of Daniel 3:25 depends on how the translator understands the expression—whether the phrase should express the uninstructed, pagan mind of the king (polytheistic plural) or the sanctified Israelite mind (monotheistic singular).²⁰

The readers of the book of Daniel, being mostly Israelites, would easily understand the expression, "Son of God," in the singular. The fourth Personage could be no other than the heavenly Prince Who commanded the hosts of Israel. He was, in the expressions of Joshua and Daniel, "One of ours," or "One for us." As the Ambassador of the heavenly kingdom, He reveals Himself now as God's Son, the Deity Himself with divine power and authority (cf. Col 2:9), demonstrating that He fulfills what He promises. He intervenes to save His people when His people stand for Him no matter how terrible the trouble may be (cf. Matt 10:32-33; Rev 3:5).

Son of Man (Dan 7:13, NKJV). We come now to the last, but no less important title: "Son of Man," or literally, "like a son of man" (Dan 7:13). This is a complementary expression to that of "Michael," a term which means (as we have already noted): "Who is *like God*?" In other words, the heavenly Being in the Book of Daniel is comparable to God and man because He has both natures. In the vision of Daniel 7 He appears at the time of the end in the preadvent judgment before His Father and before the angelic hosts to intercede in behalf of His oppressed people on earth. Standing before the heavenly Court, He stands in behalf of all His genuine believers who are written in the book of life (Dan 7:22; 12:1). According to the stories and visions of Daniel our heavenly Prince is a perfect Mediator between God and man. He presents Himself before the kingdoms of this world as the Son of God, the highest representative of the Deity, before a human court. On the other hand before the Ancient of Days or Most High and His angels seated in session, our Prince is not ashamed to identify Himself with our humanity. The Son of Man is our highest representative before the

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

heavenly Court. And Daniel sees towards the end of his vision that our Intercessor is able to obtain for His genuine followers a sentence “in favor of the saints of the Most High,” so they—like Him (Dan 7:13-14)—may “possess the kingdom” (Dan 7:22, 26-27).

To that time and final judgment Jesus referred when He told His disciples He would appear for them in the Court of heaven. He would testify in behalf of His faithful ones, and against them who deny Him (Matt 10:32-33; Rev: 5).

Significance of “The Man Clothed in Linen” (Dan 10:5-7)

Over working-garments of linen (*bad*, the attire of the high priest on the Day of Atonement, Lev 16:4, 23, 32), our heavenly Prince is seen by Daniel in his last vision as having “a belt of the finest gold around his waist” (Dan 10:5-6; cf. Rev 1:13). This is apparently a reference to the belt or girdle that linked the ephod of the high priest to his body (Exod 28:8; Lev 8:7).²¹ The golden belt could also signify His kingship as well as His priesthood. It cannot be inferred from His clothing in this snapshot that the Prince is in the process of His Day of Atonement ministry, because He is depicted near the Tigris River and not in the heavenly sanctuary (Dan 10:4).²² Anyway, His attire points to the time of the end (Dan 12:5-9), when the sanctuary had to be cleansed (Dan 8:14).

Just when Cyrus, the Persian King who had granted the freedom predicted by Isaiah for the people of God (Isa 44:28; 45:13; Ezra 1:1-4), was being urged to change his mind towards the returned exiles (cf. Dan 10:1, 13), this heavenly Prince is once more presented as the true Royalty—as the One “Who stands up” for God's people (Dan 12:1). The *attire* of “the man dressed in linen,” whom we identify with the heavenly Prince (Dan 10:5-6), is presented in the context of the “time of the end” when the sanctuary is to be cleansed after the “continuous-*tāmîd*” ministry He has performed in the Holy Place (Dan 8:11, 13-14, 17, 19; 12:5-9). Since He presents Himself in the working garments of the high priest on the Day of Atonement, it is obvious that He is the heavenly High Priest in charge of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary at that time.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Heavenly Royal-Priestly Ministry: Three Steps

Just as the earthly sanctuary (building/priesthood) was anointed at the time of its inauguration, so—according to Daniel's prophecy—the Prince Messiah and His sanctuary were to be anointed and inaugurated by His death (Dan 9). Just as the priests performed a daily *tamid* during the year, so the Prince of the Army was to perform a “continuous” ministry in behalf of His oppressed people on earth (Dan 8). Finally, just as the high priest in the OT appeared in the Most Holy Place at the end of the year to cleanse the sanctuary and vindicated in this manner the name of Him Who dwelt there, so the heavenly Prince is shown to Daniel clothed in the working garments of the high priest at the “time of the end,” standing for His people (Dan 12:1) and prepared to do a similar work (Dan 10:5-6; 12:5-9).

In other words we have in the visions of Daniel a complete picture of the heavenly ministry of our royal Priest. The fulfillment of these visions is, therefore, to be expected in connection with the sanctuary of the New Covenant, the heavenly one (Heb 8:1-6, 13; 9:15, etc.) Daniel understood this heavenly dimension of the sanctuary, for he saw that the minister of that sanctuary was the heavenly Prince, the Angel of the covenant. Consequently, His sanctuary had to be the heavenly one. There, because of the permanent value of the blood that He shed at the outer altar, as it were, the “Prince of the shepherds” continuously intercedes within the heavenly sanctuary (1 Pet 5:4; Heb 13:20; 9:12, 13, 23-26, etc.).

Conclusion

The message from the visions of Daniel is that we have a heavenly Prince Who is *for us*. He was “for us” 2,000 years ago during His earthly ministry and during His priestly *tamid ministry* in the Holy Place after His ascension. Today, He is pleading our case before the heavenly Court in the Most Holy Place, and He will continue to be “for us” as His people pass through their final tribulations. The Lord will show to a world in rebellion and to His church that He is Michael, the great Prince who stands for His people.

How can we doubt the true intentions of Jesus, our heavenly Prince, for us? What more could He do to strengthen our trust in

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

Him? His love is steady. No one may move Him from His determination to redeem us. “He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep,” says the psalmist (Ps 121:4). “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion,” affirms the apostle Paul (Phil 1:6). He “is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8). Will we trust Him?

Endnotes

* Biblical citations are from the NIV, unless otherwise noted.

1 Matt 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:23-35; Heb 1:13; 5:6; 6:20; 7; 10:12-13; 1 Pet 3:22, etc.

2 The priests, however, did not forgive sin. Rather, they performed the rite of atonement. Forgiveness was something carried out between God and the sinner. See A. Treiyer, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment. From the Pentateuch to Revelation* (Creation Enterprises International, Siloam Springs, 1992), p. 160.

3 The plural *‘ašûmîm*, “strong,” “powerful,” is applied to the princes or kings of powerful nations (Deut 4:38; 7:1; 9:1; 11:23). The strength of such nations is measured by their powerful armies (Joel 1:6; 2:2, 5; Dan 11:25). God would make His people more powerful than the other nations, granting them the support of the heavenly army (Gen 18:18; Num 14:12; Deut 9:14, etc.).

4 In relation to the “Day of the Eternal” at the end of the world the armies of angels will reveal themselves as “very powerful,” to the point no other army will resist them (Joel 2:11). On that day the Lord will make His remnant a powerful nation, and He will reign forever over His people (Mic 4:7; see vs. 3; Rev 21:24, 26).

5 Jer 23:5; 33:15 (*šemaḥ*); Isa 11:1 (*nēser*, “shoot”), see Isa 53:2. J. G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1972), p. 135: “Already in Jeremiah’s usage the term combines priestly and kingly functions.” See Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-18.

6 The fact that the Messianic title, “Branch,” was applied to Joshua, a symbolic high priest—the same title given to the future Davidic king, and crowned with a crown never worn by a high priest—has led many critics to emend the text and to apply the crowning to the symbolic king of that time, Zerubbabel. See J. G. Baldwin, pp. 133-137; also “*šemaḥ* as a Technical Term in the Prophets,” in VT 14 (1964): 93-97. But “it is best to allow the text to stand, and to regard Joshua as the one who was crowned,” Baldwin, p. 134.

7 Baldwin, p. 135: “His hearers had been prepared for the Branch to fulfill priestly and kingly functions and therefore would realize that both Joshua and Zerubbabel contributed to the work of the coming Branch, while neither alone adequately represented him.”

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137. According to Baldwin, “nowhere else in the Old Testament is it made so plain that the coming Davidic king will also be a priest. It is for this reason that the passage has occasioned so much questioning,” *ibid.*, p. 137. The fact that Zechariah sees the crowning of the high priest Joshua, and his identification as the promised “Branch,” led the interpreters of Qumran to

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

develop the hope of a Messiah who would come from Aaron and who would have the preeminence over the Messiah of Israel. See references in S. Amsler, *Zacharie 1-8* (Delachaus & Niestlé, 1981), p. 110. Amsler seems to find in these passages of Zechariah the notion also of a king-priest that is taken up again in the Epistle to the Hebrews and applied to Jesus, *ibid.* See also D. Nam, *The "Throne of God" Motif in the Hebrew Bible* (Doctoral dissertation, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1989), pp. 306-309. Another significant prophecy is that of Isa 53, where the Lord's Servant fulfills both the priestly and kingly role.

9 It is significant that both the Levitical priests and the future kings were to function as guardians of the law, and to be themselves in submission to its requirements (Priests: Deut 31:9-13, 24-26; Neh 8:2-3, 7-8; Kings: Deut 17:18-20; 2 Kgs 11:12; 2 Chr 23:11; 2 Kgs 23:1-3; cf. 1 Chr 29:19). In this sense, both institutions had to some degree a shared role.

10 Zech 3:2; Mal 3:1; Gen 16:7-13; 18:17, 20, 22, 26, 33; Judg 6:11, 23; 13:13, 22, etc.

11 The term *šābā'*, "army," was also used to designate the priestly order of the Levites (Num 4:3, 23, 30; 8:24-25). See A. M. Rodriguez, "Significance of the Cultic Language in Daniel 8:9-14," in *Symposium on Daniel* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), p. 531.

12 William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1982), pp. 44-53.

13 1 Sam 25:30; 2 Sam 6:21; 1 Kgs 1:35; 14:7; 16:2; 1 Chr 5:2; 11:2; 17:7; 29:22, etc.

14 1 Chr 9:11, 20; 12:27; 2 Chr 31:13; 35:8b; Neh 11:11; Jer 20:1, etc.

15 *Mešawweh* "legislator," comes from the root *sawah*, which conveys the idea of "setting over," "appointing," "determining," "decreeing." The term *mišwah*, "commandment, precept," also comes from that root.

16 Against F. Michaéli, *Le livre de Daniel* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959), p. 666 n. vs. 13, who interprets the "prince of the kingdom" as being "the angel in charge of the kingdom of Persia," we may say that this angel is an usurper, that is, not designated by God but as being the spiritual counterpart of the king of this world. We may say the same thing of P. de Menasce, *Daniel* (Bible de Jérusalem, Cerf. Paris, 1978), 1315, n. vs. 13, who thinks that "the Prince of Persia appears [in Dan 10:13] as being one of the protector Angels of the Israel enemy nations," and thinks that this is a "mysterious conflict between the angels."

17 The Greek text renders Dan 10:13: "I left him there, with the prince of the kings of Persia." In this case, Michael would be one of the princes who was in command of the princes engaged in battle.

18 Amsler, pp. 80-81: The role of Satan "does not consist here in pushing men to do evil (cf. 1 Kgs 22:21; 1 Chr 21:1), but in denouncing the sin which could escape God's watching (cf. Job 1:6ff; 2:1ff). His presence in the heavenly court should not cause us any surprise: he looks for banishing far from the Eternal those who are unworthy. Like in a process in the tribunal, the adversary tries to make the judge to acknowledge the well founded of his complaint; on the opposite case, the adversary is the one who is confused. . . , and the accused is rehabilitated."

19 See E. G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 254.

20 The king already knew something about the God of Israel. In Nebuchadnezzar's presence Daniel and his three friends had referred to the God of heaven as being One (Dan 2:28, 45; 3:17), and the king himself referred to the God of the Hebrews also in singular (Dan 2:47).

TREIYER: THE PRIEST-KING ROLE OF THE MESSIAH

21 This point may serve as additional evidence to prove that some of the outer garments of the High Priest (or all), were used over the lesser ones of simple linen. See A. R. Treiyer, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment. From the Pentateuch to Revelation* (Siloam Springs: Creation Enterprises International, 1992), pp. 77-103, 324-327. Because the divine prince appears in his permanent service of intercession in Dan 8, He is not represented there with the typical garments of the Day of Atonement as in the final vision which concludes not only the book, but also the whole role of the heavenly prince (cf. Dan 10:5-6; 12:6-10 = simple linen [*bad*]).

22 The Tigris lay east of Babylon, and the place where Daniel saw the vision was near its entrance into the Persian Gulf, near Susa, the Persian capital.