

The Original Meaning of Zion

by George Warnock

The sermon explores the original meaning of Zion as a place of God's presence and the establishment of a Royal Priesthood through David's example.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5:6

Topics: "Royal Priesthood", "Zion"

Description

George Warnock explores the original meaning of Zion, emphasizing its historical significance as a stronghold and the spiritual implications of David's actions in establishing a royal priesthood there. He highlights how David, though not a priest by lineage, exercised priestly prerogatives, such as partaking of holy bread and wearing priestly garments, symbolizing a deeper communion with God. Warnock draws parallels between David's access to God and the New Testament concept of the priesthood of all believers, urging the church to prioritize priestly ministry over the pursuit of power. The sermon underscores the importance of humility and faith in approaching God, as exemplified by David's desire to dwell in God's presence. Ultimately, Warnock calls for a return to the foundational principles of priesthood before establishing authority in the church.

Transcript

Zion was a small mountain ridge in the southern part of Jerusalem with valleys below on the east and west, and therefore a natural fortress in itself, and in a strong defensible position. And so when David and his men came against the city in the early part of his reign, he was confronted with the scoffing of the Jebusites who had taken control of this area. Now Jerusalem is believed to have been the "Salem" over which Melchizedek ruled as king-priest many hundreds of years earlier, in the days of Abraham. The word "Salem" means "peace," but the land is now occupied by the Jebusites. Jebus means "trodden down"--the City of Peace is now "trodden down." The city that was once ruled over by a king-priest under God is now in the hands of one of the abominable nations of Canaan which Israel failed to drive out. They had been subdued, but as we mentioned before, the "subdued" became the "subduer." And now David comes against the Jebusites with his band of men, much to the contempt of the Jebusites. They considered themselves to be very secure in their lofty heights, and they scoffed at David. "Even the blind and the lame will drive you away" they scoffed (2 Sam. 5:6). But David and his men ascended the difficult, rocky watercourse that came from Zion, and came upon the Jebusites with a surprise attack and captured the hill for himself. Here he set up his own fortress, and called it the City of David. From here on his kingdom became continually greater. "And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel,

and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake" (2 Sam. 5:12).

A Royal Priesthood On Mount Zion

Now when the Ark was brought back to Jerusalem, David pitched a Tent for it here on Mount Zion and prepared a place for the ark in the middle of the Tent (2 Sam. 6:17). This is just about all we know about the structure of the Tabernacle of David... no dimensions... no explanation as to how it was made... the kind of fabric that was used... no mention of candlestick, altar of incense, brazen laver, brazen altar, cedar boards or staves. God purposely ignored all this, for He was in the process of establishing a "Home" in Man, and these things were quite insignificant. True, when the Temple of Solomon was built, there was the utmost extravagance in gold, and silver, and precious stones, and carvings, and tapestry, and the like. But Zion in its original meaning has taken on eternal significance as the place of a Royal Priesthood, where man comes into God's presence in priestly communion, and then has the ability to go forth unto the nations with royal power and authority.

David was not really a priest, not by birth and lineage. He was of the tribe of Judah, not from the tribe of Levi. Yet as a forerunner of his greater Son who would reign as a King-Priest on David's throne, we find even David exercising many priestly prerogatives, making him to be a fitting type of the Messiah Who is Prophet, Priest, and King. Let us consider some of these priestly prerogatives.

He Partook Of Priestly Bread And Weapons

When David was fleeing from Saul he came to Ahimelech the priest, and asked for bread and a sword. The priest was somewhat fearful, but reluctantly gave him "holy bread" and the sword of Goliath, that somehow had been confiscated from David many years before. The food was strictly "priestly bread," yet David and his men ate of it; and this act was cited by the Lord as something commendable, even though it was admittedly "unlawful." (See Matt. 12:34.) The sword of Goliath at that time was "wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod"--and this was a priestly garment. (See 1 Sam. 21:6-9.) The sword with which he had slain Goliath had been preserved for him in the house of God. It wasn't really lost, but perhaps it often seemed that way to David. If we are walking with God, let us not fear when we notice former aspects of power and authority slipping away from our grasp. Be quick to let them go. Perhaps the Lord sees that we are not really prepared to use them as we ought, and they will mean much more to us when the time comes for God to restore them.

He Wore Priestly Garments

We mentioned before how David had laid aside his royal garments of power, and went forth dancing before the Lord when the ark returned, clothed upon with the humble garments of the priesthood. He wore a robe of linen and an ephod. This is what caused his wife Michal to look upon him with disdain. He was a great king. What a humiliating thing to see him dressed up like a humble priest, and dancing before the Lord!

He Had Priestly Access To God

This was most astounding of all. The ark of God which for hundreds of years could only be visited by the high priest--and that only once in the year--was now set up in a "prepared place" in the middle of the Tent of David on Mount Zion, the place of his citadel and kingdom. He was "afraid of God" when God smote Uzzah dead for his error, but now he pitches a tent for the ark in his own backyard, that he might dwell

with God all the days of his life:

"One thing have I desired of the LORD,

That will I seek after;

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD

All the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of the LORD,

And to inquire in his temple" (Ps. 27:4).

We may wonder at this when we consider how drastically God dealt with others for intruding into the priesthood. In later years a certain king by the name of Uzziah (also a very good king) went into the temple to offer up incense, and God smote him with leprosy right there in the sight of the priests. But Uzziah was performing a ritual out of the pride of his heart; whereas David was acting in faith, under God's guidance and direction, and God was pleased to dwell with David in the same house.

The New Testament has much to say concerning the priesthood of the believer and our heritage as "kings and priests unto God." But here on Mount Zion we have a foretaste of New Testament priestly access into God's presence. As we cultivate priestly ministry we come into a place of communion with God. In kingly ministry we have power with men. That is why we must concentrate on priestly ministry. And that is why God always establishes a priesthood in the earth before He establishes a kingdom. Man would always reverse this order, and in so doing he brings chaos and devastation into the midst of God's heritage. Oh, that God would eradicate that inherent lust for power and authority from the hearts of His people... and especially from the hearts of those in ministry!

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