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Psalm 110 and Covenantal Faithfulness in the Eschatological Role of a Faithful Priest

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ABSTRACT

The eschatological role of a faithful priest is first mentioned in a prophecy from Samuel: “I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind” (1 Sam 2:35*a*, English Standard Version). Remarkably, the two oracles in Psalm 110, based on the structure and progressive development of priestly covenants associated with the prophecy of a faithful priest, have the nature and function of the priesthood in the Old Testament. The “priest” mentioned in Psalm 110: 4*b* refers to a priest-king like Melchizedek, but the “priest” in 1 Samuel 2:35*a* refers to the line of Aaron. This dissertation will develop a biblical-theological rationale to explore the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 through the context of selected passages fulfilled in part and entirety in the eschatological kingdom.

The role of a faithful priest applies the tone of Yahweh’s faithfulness to the future ministry of a priest-king in the line of David. It is an ethical imperative rooted in the law of God. Although some disobedient and unfaithful descendants of Aaron, like Elides, fell short in their duties (1 Sam 2:17–22), the Levitical priesthood remains inextinguishable under God’s mandate. Psalm 110:4 echoes the same sequential essence of priesthood prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35*a*, yet still points to a similar role of a faithful priest by changing the order of the priestly line. This same priestly responsibility of the Levitical priesthood is also applied in the context of Psalm 110 to shape the union of the priesthood and kingship. The concept of merging the two offices eliminates the confusion of mingling the roles of priests and kings in the eschatological kingdom.

The trajectory of developing the big picture of a priest-king Messiah in Psalm 110 is God’s providential plan that the Anointed One is both priest and king. This underscores the same expectation promised for a faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35*a*. This psalm is the capstone of the prophetic prediction of God’s covenantal faithfulness in priesthood and kingship found in Psalm 110. It underscores Christ’s high priest status, which oversees priestly responsibilities that Yahweh promised faithful priests in the new covenant relationship. Thus, the universal role of one future Davidic king becoming a designee as an ultimate priest-king will end the power play between the priests and the kings. The coming Davidic descendant with the functional ability of the priestly order will have authority over the Levitical priests as a high priest (Ezek 40–43). Millennial priests in the line of Zadok, Aaron’s descendant, will faithfully serve the Messiah by performing ministerial duties in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	Ancient Near East
BAGD	W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
CBC	<i>Cambridge Bible Commentary</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
DtrH	Deuteronomic History
EBC	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
GNT	Good News Translation
GTJ	Grace Theological Journal
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IB	<i>Interpreter's Bible</i>
IBHS	B. Waltke and M. O'Connor, <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i>
ICC	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies

JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSHJ	Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus
LEB	Lexham English Bible
LSB	Legacy Standard Bible
LXX	Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NAU	New American Standard Bible Updated (1995)
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	W. A. VanGemenen (ed.), <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
OTE	Old Testament Essays
SBLDS	<i>SBL Dissertation Series</i>
TBW	The Biblical World
TJ	Trinity Journal
TJLBTS	The Journal of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
TMSJ	The Master's Seminary Journal
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TS	Theological Studies
TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The biblical idea of kingship is explicitly related to God's divine order for human government in terms of the Adamic dominion over God's creation. God created man in His image to become His representative, similar to ancient kings who erected stelae with their images serving as the boundary markers within their domain (Gen 1:26–31; Ps 8:4–5). The priesthood embodies God's redemptive plan for the salvation of humanity (Gen 3:15). The philosophy of kingship and priesthood has been investigated and debated in biblical scholarship for centuries. Thus, King Solomon, ascribed as “the wisest of all men” in the Jewish tradition,¹ once said in Qohelet² that “there is nothing new under the Sun” (Eccl 1:9*b*, English Standard Version). About a thousand years before Christ, the psalmist revealed the reality of the dual role of a priest-king in Psalm 110, the New Testament's most quoted Scripture.³ Specifically, Psalm 110:4 points to one of the future Davidic descendants as a priest-king according to the order of Melchizedek. Analyzing the union of kingship and priesthood (Ps 110) and the partial or entire fulfillment of a promised faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35) has been an ongoing debate in biblical

¹ David Berger, *Cultures in Collision and Conversation: Essays in the Intellectual History of the Jews* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011), 218. Berger notes that the midrash equates Solomon's wisdom with mastery of the Torah because “in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the Rabbis and traditionalist commentators routinely identified wisdom with Torah.”

² Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 2. Longman assumes King Solomon as the author of the Qohelet because the verbal root *qhl* is used in reference to Solomon assembling people to hear his speech for the dedication of the newly constructed temple in 1 Kings 8:1–2, 14, 22, 55. Additionally, Roland E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 86, ProQuest Ebook Central. Murphy alludes to the *qhl*, which has the meaning of congregation or assembly tied to Solomon's authorship.

³ Jason Byassee, *Psalms 101–150*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2018), 75. For example, see Mark 12:36–37; 14:62; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25–37; Eph 1:20–22; Heb 2:6–8; 3:1; 4:14; 10:23.

scholarship. This study delves into the future priestly and kingly functions of the Davidic Messiah and includes the participation of a faithful descendant of the Aaronic house in the coming Millennial Kingdom. Thus, the ultimate messianic priest-king and the faithful priest will fulfill God's intended purpose of covenantal kingship and priesthood, which promises to bless and redeem all humanity.

Thesis

The prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 110 reveals the new ministry of the Davidic priest-king Messiah by underscoring God's covenantal faithfulness in both the institutions of Davidic kingship and Levitical priesthood.

Statement of Intent

This dissertation will be developed over six chapters: an introduction, a canonical-linguistic and theological inquiry, the prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 110, the Messiah's superiority over the Levitical priesthood, a covenantal faithfulness in priesthood and kingship, and a conclusion. The introductory chapter consists of the trajectory of developing the dual role of the priest-king in the Old Testament canon. The second chapter focuses on analyzing the scholarship on the topic of Psalm 110 and the eschatological role of a faithful priest based on the canonical-linguistic and theological inquiry into the Levitical priesthood and priest-king Messiah. The third chapter focuses on how the Davidic priest-king Messiah fulfills Psalm 110 through the biblical-theological rationale of the priesthood. It also discusses why Psalm 110 should be interpreted through the premillennial, progressive covenantal, and historical grammatical lenses. The fourth chapter encompasses the failures of the unfaithful Levitical priests and their forfeiture of Yahweh's covenant via an exegetical analysis of selected verses in

the Torah and the Prophets. Additionally, this chapter highlights Psalm 110 to examine the continual impact of Old Testament priesthood blessings on the future priest-king promised in the line of the Davidic Dynasty. The fifth chapter emphasizes the coming Millennial Kingdom and temple as the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises and covenants through the ultimate Davidic priest-king Messiah. The concluding chapter amplifies Christ's priest-king status and directs the role of a faithful priest as an Aaronic descendant ministering to the priest-king and Messiah in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

The proposed research will fill the gap between Yahweh's promise of raising a faithful priest and installing a new order of royal priesthood through the line of David by analyzing the context of selected biblical passages.⁴ King David's lineage produces a priest-king Messiah which explains the most sacred task of the priest's unequivocal role to be transformed from the corruptible to incorruptible nature of a faithful priest. The line of Zadok, a faithful priest, will serve the Messiah, the Lord of lords and King of kings, in the coming Millennial Kingdom.⁵

Nature and Scope of the Role of a Faithful Priest

The eschatological role of a faithful priest is directly involved with the study of Old Testament priesthood to relate with Yahweh's appointment of a coming priest-king prophesied in Psalm 110. It was widely understood that the Messiah would come from the line of Judah (Gen 49:10), but not from the tribe of Levi. Several issues emerge from reviewing the role of Yahweh-ordained Levitical order and priestly covenants in the context of the two oracles mentioned in Psalm 110, which posits a priest-king as a semi-divine position to be inferred as the Messiah.

⁴ Deuteronomy 10:8; 33:8–11; Numbers 18:18–24; Psalm 110; Malachi 1:2; 4–14.

⁵ Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 175.

The psalmist infers the meaning of royal priesthood beyond Levitical order. This particular “priest” mentioned in Psalm 110:4b is in order of priest-king Melchizedek and is related to the Davidic Messiah. Tremper Longman III explains the word anointed associated with Psalm 110: “Not every royal psalm uses the word anointed. However, the very concept of ‘king’ implies anointing because this was the ritual that demonstrated God’s choice and empowerment ... the king is connected not to the native Israelite priestly line of Aaron but rather to the patriarchal-period priest Melchizedek.”⁶ It is essential to understand the role of priesthood Psalm 110 and how it applies to the New Testament and today’s theological setting.⁷ Thus, this proposed study will fill the gap in understanding the dual roles of the coming priest-king Jesus Christ, who will fulfill both responsibilities without vacating the duties of a faithful priest in Aaron’s lineage.

Procedure of Study

This study will use the historical-grammatical method to discover the meaning of the biblical text dictated by the principles of grammar and the facts of history to extract the eschatological role of a faithful priesthood.⁸ Utilizing this method, this study focuses on the dual role of a priest-king Messiah in Psalm 110. In terms of priesthood, this analysis refers to the concept of the founding principles of the Old Testament priesthood highlighting the necessity of priestly faithfulness in the kingdom. In addition, this study deals with the eschatological concept

⁶ Tremper Longman III, “Messiah,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 469.

⁷ Longman III further clarifies the word anointed used to describe Christ’s high priest in the New Testament that Psalm 110 is “distinguished by the multiplicity of citations in the NT (Matt 22:41–45 par.; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:3; 5:6; 7:17, 21) as well as by its unique combination of the royal and priestly roles, both anointed offices.... It begins with a divine oracle to the effect that God tells the king to take a position of honor at his right hand” (Ibid.).

⁸ Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 100. According to Gentry and Wellum, the historical-grammatical method explores the authorial intent of the Scripture.

of the unique roles of the priest-king Messiah and the Levitical priesthood in the Millennial Kingdom. The biblical-theological views of premillennialism and progressive covenantalism are applied to understand the relations between the covenants and prophecies.⁹ Thus, Psalm 110 must be interpreted through the historical-grammatical, premillennial, and progressive covenantal lenses.

The Meaning of the Term Priest

Although the meaning of the term priest varies with different interpretations, its functionality is related to Yahweh's appointed priest according to the Old Testament priesthood (Ps 110:4b). Jacob Hoftizer and Karel Jongeling traced the source of the Hebrew term כֹּהֵן which they claim has derived from the native Aramaic term for priest כַּמַּר.¹⁰ In contrast, Noam Mizrahi contends, "The assumption of an Aramaic borrowing into Hebrew is implausible in our case from the point of view of Aramaic itself."¹¹ Similarly, Richard Henshaw studied the root of the Hebrew term כֹּהֵן which "appears in almost all Semitic languages, although not all have the same meaning. An exception is Ugaritic, where it appears with much the same definition as in Hebrew."¹² Therefore, the Central Semitic languages share the common root but do not have the same meaning. Robert Kugler contends that the term's meaning is still disputed since the root is also related to the Akkadian verb, *kanu*, "to bend down, to reverence."¹³ However, this is the

⁹ Premillennialism and progressive covenantalism will be discussed extensively later.

¹⁰ Jacob Hoftizer and Karel Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (Liden: Brill, 1995), 1:515–16.

¹¹ Noam Mizrahi, "The History and Linguistic Background of Two Hebrew Titles for the High Priest," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 4 (2011): 694.

¹² Richard A. Henshaw, "Priesthood, Israelite Duties, History and Development," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996), 1082.

¹³ Robert Kugler, "Priest and Levites," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, vol. 4 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009), 597.

only term that the Old Testament uses for both Israel and ancient Near Eastern priests in Genesis 41:45; 47:22, 1 Samuel 5:5; 6:2, and Jeremiah 48:7; 49:3. The term priest in the Old Testament can refer to either Israelite or ANE priest, but this term used explicitly in Psalm 110:4b has both messianic and prophetic significance in relation to Israelite usage.

The role of a priest may be seen as someone who maintains a relationship with the living Yahweh and recognizes His people as Israelites. The term priest has a personal and a communal dimension that is found in various contexts: the covenant, the temple, worship, and every facet of daily life (Exod 19:6; Lev 13–15; 16:1–9; 21:10; Num 3: 10–13; Deut 18:1–8). Priests served as the guardians and servants of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, central to the Old Testament religion.¹⁴ Yahweh dictated all the priests' actions as they served His people. Henry King asserts that the messianic meaning attached to the language used in Psalm 110 “cannot be applied to any earthly king or ruler without the greatest exaggeration.”¹⁵ The specific usage of the term priest (כֹּהֵן) in Psalms 110:4b carries the tone of the higher office, which holds the paramount meaning above and beyond the context of the earthly priests. Thus, the meaning of the term priest is directly related to the functionality of Yahweh's priesthood ordained in the Old Testament.

The Ancient Near Eastern Usage

The ANE priests act as mediators and represent the divine being to his subjects and, in turn, the subjects to their deities.¹⁶ Significantly, the priests are closely involved with religious duties and political affairs in general. Gerald A. Klingbeil states, “Unlike in the context of the

¹⁴ Peter. C. Craigie, “Priests and Levites,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 2, ed. Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1754.

¹⁵ Henry Melville King, *The Messiah in the Psalms* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 2009), 5.

¹⁶ Kugler, “Priest and Levites,” 597–98.

Old Testament, priests in the ancient Near East were in most cases closely associated with royalty or local leadership.”¹⁷ The Israelite priests are deeply devoted to Yahweh’s purposes as instruments rather than man’s affairs in general (Exod 19:16). Thus, the ANE priests take on the role of leadership in both civil and religious affairs of their devotees in general.

Decades before Moses took fellow Israelites out of Egypt, he first encountered the ANE usage of the priest through his father-in-law Jethro, a Midianite priest (Exod 2:16). Most significantly, the burning bush incident at Mt. Sinai was geographically attached to the vicinity of the Midianites as mentioned: “Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian” (Exod 3:1a, ESV). Thus, Moses’s brief encounter with Jethro happened because of his paternal relationship to understand his experience with ANE practices. However, Exodus and Numbers do not specify the function and the role of the Midianite priests in a legitimate view, except for Moses’s seeking counsel from Jethro (Exod 18).

Moshe Weinfeld discusses the possible ties between the priestly tradition of the Hebrews and the Midianites/Qenites worshipping the same deity at Mount Sinai/Horeb in Exodus 2–4, 18. He posits that Yahweh revealed Himself at Sinai, Seir, Paran, and Teman (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:4–5; Hab 3:3).¹⁸ However, there are unfavorable incidents in the Torah dealing with Balaam and other Midianites. In contrast to Weinfeld’s speculation, Yahweh condemned Balaam for his false practice, which revealed that ANE usage is not congruent with Yahweh’s instructions (Num 22; 25:1–18; 31:16; Rev 2:14; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11).

¹⁷ Gerald A. Klingbeil, “Priests in the Ancient Near East,” in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer et al., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 355.

¹⁸ However, Moses never mentioned the connection between his Levitical background and the Midianite priesthood. He coincidentally met Jethro through Jethro’s daughter rather than deliberately allying with priestly traditions (Exod 2:16–22). Moshe Weinfeld, “The Traditions about Moses and Jethro at the Mount of God / המסורות על משה ויתרו בהר האלהים,” *Tarbiz* (1987): 449–60.

The Israelite Usage

Like other human beings, the Israelite priest is subject to a sinful nature. However, Israelite particular usage of the term priest is not only related to the religious rites and performances but also conveys a more profound meaning tied with a unique distinction. The priest acts as a servant, a vehicle that Yahweh has chosen for Himself to serve His people and represent Him. Israelite usage of priestly duties differs from civil and national affairs, as well as international issues. Buist M. Fanning supports a priestly function for Israel's kings,

Some antecedents may be found, for instance, in the Old Testament examples of a priestly function for Israel's king, offering prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the people (e.g., 2 Sam. 6:12–13; 24:21–25; 1 Kgs. 3:4; 8:22–53, 62–64; 12:32–33; Ezek. 45:17–46:17). Subsequent to this, there developed in intertestamental Judaism an expectation that the future Messiah would exercise a priestly role.¹⁹

Israel as “a holy nation or a kingdom of priests” encompasses purifying the inner aspect rather than establishing the lineage and the hierarchy in the priestly system. However, Martha Himmelfarb contends, “The idea of Israel as a holy people is of course a central biblical theme. But the notion that all Israelites are equally holy, as ‘a kingdom of priests’ implies, is more problematic.”²⁰ Himmelfarb observes a repercussion of Korah's demand in Numbers 16:3 to render a notion of fulfilling a kingdom priestly role. Her view supports the idea of Isaiah's prophecy of the nation of Israel serving the other nations as a priest in Isaiah 61:5–6 after returning from the Babylonian exile.²¹

Himmelfarb sees the entire nation as holy, not just referring to priests who do not represent all Israelites. Korah, another Levite, protested the hierarchy in the priesthood rather

¹⁹ Buist M. Fanning, “A Theology of Hebrews,” in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1994), 388–89.

²⁰ Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1.

²¹ Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism*, 1–3.

than objecting to the institution of the priesthood and Yahweh's given authority to Moses and Aaron based on Numbers 16–17. If this is the case, it is controversial to ponder whether the Israelites still need priests. Himmelfarb bases her argument on the discovery of DSS and sectarian writings during Second Temple Judaism, triggering the Christian movement to emphasize salvation through Abrahamic spiritual lineage rather than temple-based Judaism with the need for priests.

Similarities and Dissimilarities between ANE and Israelite Usages

The ANE usage of the term priest is similar to the Israelite usage and commonly deals with impurities. Klingbeil observes: “Priests were involved in various ritual activities and had to live according to strict purity rules. These purity rules apparently also involved moral dimensions, as can be seen from an inscription in the temple of Edfu admonishing the priests serving in the temple.”²² Thus, this practice is not comparable to holiness described in the book of Leviticus. However, it can correlate to God's holiness required in the Israelite priests in order to prevent corruption in the worship system. According to John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, the ANE tablets containing *maqlu*, *shurpu*, *rimki*, and *namburbu* texts written in Akkadian are beneficial in understanding sacrifices, rituals, and instructions for priests and dealing with pollution.²³ Walton sees ANE usage of holiness as related to the cultic status in contrast to Israelite usage. He further observes that “in Israel ‘holiness’ is an encompassing term

²² Klingbeil, “Priests in the Ancient Near East,” 356.

²³ John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 25. Malachi and Nehemiah are on the same page dealing with polluted priests regarding “cause and effect” scenarios since they are imperfect (Mal 2:8; Neh 13:23–27). The value of purity is highly upheld in the temple worship system to prevent from defiling the holy sacrifices. The study *vis-à-vis* inscriptions and written texts engaged in various contexts of ANE show that the ancestors of the Israelites culturally shared common practices with their foreign neighbors. However, the Israelite priests must purify themselves before proceeding to the sacrificial work (Lev 14:5, 50; 15:5; Ezek 36:25).

related to divine identity, not an individual attribute. The closest reflection of this in Mesopotamia is reflected in the use of the determinative *dingir* to designate something as being within the constellation of the divine.”²⁴ Yahweh separated the Levitical priests from common Israelites to serving Him in His holy temple. Thus, the central message of Leviticus portrays the holiness of Yahweh. It demands that all His subjects become holy, especially the priests serving in the tabernacle resembling the royal court (Exod 12:35–36; 25:3–7).

Despite competing views regarding ANE and Israelite priests, the Bible has unique characteristics to reveal Yahweh’s distinctiveness. The Israelites were specifically chosen to stand out among the nations for Yahweh’s specific purpose (Deut 7:7–8; 9:6). Although other nations like ANE people were not chosen, they share the common humanity with the Israelites. Analyzing the similarities between the biblical texts and the ANE texts, John Oswalt contends, “The Old Testament depicts God’s interactions with humans in the arena of unique, nonrepeatable events of time and space. Clearly, in its conflicts with the alternative worldview and its claim to the exclusive validity of its understanding of reality, the Bible contends that these interactions actually occurred as they are depicted.”²⁵ Both ANE and Israelite usages share the same cultural milieu among the nations. However, the readers should not be overwhelmed with their similarities since Israelite beliefs make their priests distinct from the ANE priests. Samuel Sandmel warned the people not to explore too intensely and uncover what is not intended in the similarities and dissimilarities between the Israelite and ANE practices. When underlining the comparisons between Scriptures and ANE resources, one needs to recognize how the world saw itself, what ideology these ANE peoples possessed, and how that is divergent from

²⁴ John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 70.

²⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Bible among the Myths* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2009), 111.

Israelite beliefs. It is necessary to consider the Israelites' monotheistic values and distinct relationships with their God.²⁶ Thus, Yahweh set the priests apart for Himself as a heritage; "The Lord is his [Levites] inheritance, as the Lord your God said to him [Aaron]" (Deut 10:9, ESV).

The Significant Role of Priests before Monarchy

The ancient traditions consider most patriarchs like Adam, Cain, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah in antediluvian times as priests according to their priestly acts.²⁷ They had direct access to Yahweh since mediators were not required.²⁸ Additionally, several biblical passages have proven that Yahweh appeared and spoke directly to men like Abraham, and Moses without any mediators (Gen 18; Exod 6:2–3). In addition, these men primarily functioned as priests offering sacrifices before the institution of the priesthood. There are also isolated instances of priestly functions and sacrificing activities related to the individually known patriarchs in Genesis prior to Levitical priesthood. The patriarchs, not known as legitimate priests in the order of Mosaic laws, functioned as priests. Before Mosaic laws were given at Mt. Sinai, the existence of Hebrew priests was mentioned in Exodus 19:22, "Even the priests, who approach the Lord, must consecrate themselves so that the Lord does not break out against them." According to T. D. Alexander, "The priests mentioned here ... are those who performed priestly functions prior to the appointment of Aaron and his sons."²⁹ Thus, priestly functions were performed under certain

²⁶ Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81, no. 1 (March 1962): 1–7.

²⁷ For instance, God spoke to Adam and Eve (Gen 3). Their offspring, Cain and Abel, performed priestly activities by giving sacrifices to the LORD (4:3–5). Similarly, Noah did so after the flood (8:21).

²⁸ After the Mosaic laws were given at Sinai, Levitical priests served as mediators between Yahweh and His people (Lev 8–10).

²⁹ T. D. Alexander, "Exodus," in *New Bible Commentary: 21 Century Edition*, ed. D. A Carson et al., Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 106.

patriarchs and unidentified Hebrew priests until the Mosaic laws were given to establish the institution of the Levitical priesthood.

The Priesthood in the Days of Moses

Although Moses followed Yahweh's instructions to perform priestly activities (Exod 28:1), priesthood in ANE religions is all about the relationship between the people and the deities they worship. The involvement of the ANE priest in religious duties deeply reflects the disposition of binding relationships between the devotees and their respective deities. Walton's inquiry into ANE texts reveals that priests served to regulate relationships, and ritual texts solved problems between humans and their deities. For instance, the *shurpu* texts discuss purification, the *bit-rimki* texts are concerned with royal ablutions, and the *namburba* are involved with incantations.³⁰ However, Moses introduced a different kind of priesthood attached to the tabernacle to convene the meeting place between Yahweh and the Israelites. Moses's priesthood characterization is attached to the Aaronic priesthood and the tabernacle.

Moses and his brother Aaron performed priestly functions before installing the Levitical priesthood through the Aaronic lineage in the wilderness (Exod 24:1; 9; 28:1–3; 29:1; 24:7–8; 32:1–6; Num 7:1). When Deuteronomy 4:44 (ESV) introduces a speech with the phrase, “וְזֵאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מֹשֶׁה” or “This is the law that Moses set,” it significantly marks the notion that Moses is the author and someone who is also actively involved with a priestly function for the Israelites. Exodus 18 and 19 indicate that Moses plays a mediator-priest role between Yahweh and the Israelites as he spoke back and forth with Yahweh whenever the people needed him. However, the introductory statement in Deuteronomy 4 removes the sense of Moses's role as an

³⁰ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 37.

ongoing mediator between Yahweh and the people. With the Levitical laws of the Aaronic lineage, Yahweh's ordained priesthood continues to represent Moses's instructions and teachings, even functioning as a replacement of Moses himself. Since the Levitical priesthood and Mosaic laws were inseparable, people would continually receive Moses's figurative presence and administration so long as they retained the laws in general under the guidance of the priests.

The Aaronic priesthood and the tabernacle were closely related in the days of Moses. The Aaronic lineage will be in charge of the tabernacle under Yahweh's perpetual covenant.

Weinfeld states, "God, who possesses, as it were, a human form, has need of a house or a tabernacle."³¹ Yahweh chose the Aaronic priesthood to draw near to the Holy of Holies while the rest of the Levites serve outside the tabernacle. Wherever the tabernacle exists, people are in need of priests to make sacrificial offerings. Yahweh would accept offerings through Aaronites' service. However, Moses applies the same Levitical call of holiness to all Israelites. In Deuteronomy 6:4–5, Moses, like a high priest, instructs the Israelites to submit not just the inner being like the entrails (heart, kidneys, and lungs) but also all their belongings (livestock, jewels, trades, and enslaved people) in their life of worship. Thus, Moses explicitly includes these resources in the figurative and literal interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:5.³²

³¹ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 191.

³² Daniel I. Block, *The Gospel According to Moses* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 294. Moses and Jesus both served and functioned in the priesthood's mediating role to satisfy the Levitical laws required by Yahweh. Moses sets an example like Jesus's farewell prayer or high priestly prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus said, "All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them" (John 17:10, ESV). Literally, "καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σὰ ἐστὶν καὶ τὰ σὰ ἐμὰ, καὶ δεδόξασμαι ἐν αὐτοῖς" (John 17:10, GNT) should be translated as, "All My things are Thine and Thy things are Mine." In addition, πάντα is used as the neuter gender to complement "all" or "everything" in a similar context comparable with John 6:37–40. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 159.

There is a relationship between the ANE and Israelite priesthood that clarifies how Yahweh intended the Levitical priesthood to operate in the Old Testament. John Walton observes the two types of symbiosis between the worship systems of ANE's temple and Israelites' tabernacle. In an ANE context, the temple has the cosmic role of becoming the centerpiece of the function and identity of the community and the principal mechanism for divine-human relationships. This relationship can be understood within the framework of the Great Symbiosis. The gods' needs are similar to human needs, such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, etc. The ritual to fulfill their needs is a must so that the gods remain among them. In contrast, Israelites' tabernacle shared similar aspects; for instance, the Great Symbiosis was substituted by a Covenant Symbiosis. The Covenant Symbiosis provided the same benefits to the Israelites that the Great Symbiosis provided to others: promises of blessing in forms such as protection and provision (covenant blessings and curses).³³ Regarding ANE priests, Klingbeil also avers: "Their service (including feeding, cleaning, clothing, anointing, protecting, honoring, and other rites) to the deity, represented by the statue, determined future blessings or curses for the people and the royal house."³⁴ However, Walton notes that the difference in these two worship systems is apparent in what the symbiosis provides for the deity. Instead of meeting divine needs, the tabernacle and its rituals were designed to ensure that Israel maintained the holiness of sacred space by attending to breaches or lapses in their adherence to the covenant stipulations.³⁵ Thus, there are similarities and dissimilarities in terms of their services and benefits.

³³ John H. Walton, "The Temple in Context," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer et al., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 349–67.

³⁴ Klingbeil, "Priests in the Ancient Near East," 360.

³⁵ Walton, "The Temple in Context," 367.

Levitical Priesthood through Aaron

The Hebrew terms כֹהֵן, *kōhēn*, [ko'(h)en] ‘priest,’ and כֹהֲנִים, *kōhānīm* ‘priests’ can be referred to Aaron or Aaronites who drew near to Yahweh on behalf of all Israelites in sacred matters of prayer and sacrifice (Exod 40:13; 28:1, 3, 4, 41; 40:15; Lev 7:35; Num 3:4). Thus, the Aaronic priesthood can hold the single or plural usage of כֹהֵן, *kōhēn*, [ko'(h)en], ‘priest,’ or pl. כֹהֲנִים, *kōhānīm* ‘priests’.³⁶ Yahweh appointed Aaron and his sons to the office of priest. Aaron and his descendants, along with the Levites, represent Yahweh as the Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament. Only the direct descendants of Aaron could become high priests, whom Yahweh ordained and anointed, taking the role of one high priest at a time. Thus, the rest of the Levites were to be their assistants (Exod 29:9, 44; Num 3:10; 18:1–7). Aaronic priesthood is Yahweh’s exclusive grant to the lineage of Aaron, while the rest of the Levites are to serve under the Aaronic administration as delegates.

The Old Testament elucidates the high-priestly role of Aaronic priesthood, which is involved with offering sacrifices and serving as a mediator between Israelites and Yahweh (Exod 29:10; Lev 9:22–24). Thus, the intercessory prayers and offering of sacrifices made for Israelites and gentiles alike, both in the Old and New Testament, are accepted only with the priestly function of the Levitical priesthood through Aaron. Correspondingly, the New Testament also adopts the spiritual aspect of the Aaronic priestly function. For example, prayers and supplications made by believers through their high priest Jesus Christ also symbolize the Aaronic priestly functions. Significantly, the author of Hebrews clarifies this unique perspective of Yahweh’s divine revelation to Moses through the function of Old Testament Levitical sacrifices

³⁶ The Hebrew word for the Aaronic high priest is the same as the common expression ‘the priest,’ which implies ‘the officiating priest’. For example, Leviticus 1:11 (ESV) consists of the Hebrew phrasal words כֹהֵן אֶהְיֶה, as ‘Aaron’s sons the priests’. In addition, Leviticus 8:2 (ESV) specifically mentions אֶת־אֹהֵרֶן וְאֶת־כִּהֲנֹן, or ‘Aaron and his sons’.

(Heb 7:11–19). This Aaronic priesthood foreshadows Yahweh’s ordained plan of Christ’s sacrificial atonement for all humanity.

Priesthood through Eleazar the Priest

Yahweh ordained the lineage of Aaron for the office of the high priest through the anointing ceremony. The ceremony inaugurated this specific lineage to function as the supreme administrator of the whole tabernacle worship system (Exod 28, 29; Lev 6, 8; Num 3, 8, 16, 18, 25). At the same time, the rest of the Levites were scattered all over the Land of Israel to serve Yahweh’s people as priests. During the time of King David, there were two acting high priests due to the two known worship locations (2 Sam 6:17; 1 Chr 16:1, 39; 21:29). Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, and Ahimelech, a descendant of Ithamar were given opportunities to serve as priests under King David’s reign (2 Sam 8:17; 1 Chr 24:2b). However, the descendants of Ithamar were no longer prominent in the priestly ministry when King Solomon’s displacement of Abiathar (1 Kgs 2:26–34) fulfilled the prophecy of judgment upon Eli’s household (1 Sam 2:27–36).³⁷ As a result, more references related to Eleazar are seen than Ithamar in the Old

³⁷ Solomon installed Zadok, Eleazar’s descendant, in the high priest’s office as mentioned in 1 Kings 2:27, ESV: “So Solomon expelled Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, thus fulfilling the word of the Lord that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.” According to Albright, the battle of Ebenezer and the destruction of Shiloh took place around 1050 B.C. W. F. Albright, “New Israelite and Pre-Israelite Sites: The Spring Trip of 1929,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 35 (Oct 1929): 4. The Philistines desecrated the tabernacle and decimated the Israelite communities at Shiloh. They also took the Ark of the Covenant with them but later returned it to Israel (1 Sam 4–6). Daniel Bodi asserts, “A major Philistine victory over the Israelites resulted in the capture of the ark of the covenant, the death of Eli, and the transfer of the priesthood from Shiloh (1 Sam 4).” Daniel Bodi, “The Story of Samuel, Saul, and David,” in *Ancient Israel’s History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Richard S. Hess (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 190. Thus, the end of Shiloh marks the new breaking point for a priest like Samuel, not in the Aaronic priesthood order, to assume leadership in the tabernacle worship system in Israel for the first time. Psalm 99:6 records Samuel as a priest: “Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called upon his name. They called to the Lord, and he answered them” (ESV). Thus, this study will connect Zadok the faithful priest with his ancestor Eleazar. Additionally, the genealogy of Zadok will also be traced later in this research.

Testament.³⁸ Thus, the legitimate transfer of Zadokian priesthood in the eschatological kingdom of the millennial epoch will testify to the “Priesthood through Eleazar” (Ezek 44:15).

The Priesthood in the Days of Judges to Monarchy

Deuteronomy 17:8–13; 33:10 declares that the Levitical priests could serve as judges and teachers of Yahweh’s laws throughout the land. Accordingly, in the time of the book of Judges, the Levitical priesthood served as civil administrators and overseers of the entire land. The priests were in charge of representing the laws. Many Midianites, Moabites, and Ammonites were weakened during that time of being overseen by the priests. The judges subduing their enemies is justifiable as reparational acts to fulfill the Mosaic laws.

During the time of Judges, there was a vacuum in the Israelites’ leadership and corruption among the Levitical priests (Judg 17:1–21:25), which eventually led to the necessity of a new leadership. Judges 21:25 (ESV) states, “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” As a result, brutalities and retaliations were concurrent. Even the Benjamites were almost entirely decimated because of tribal alliance’s forces in response to the one brazen act of the Levite (Judg 19:24). On top of all indecencies, the most notable scene from the time of Judges occurred as the sons of Eli, the judge and high priest, failed miserably as their morality went bankrupt. They defiled the holy sacrifices and insulted the Torah devotees and the priestly duties at the tabernacle. The outrageous and disrespectful acts of Eli’s sons are exclusively remembered as horrible contributions to history and articulations of the rampant atrocities perpetrated by the Israelites as a nation. Since these priests were out of control and did

³⁸ Exodus 6:23, 25; 28:1; Leviticus 10:6, 12, 16; Numbers 3:2, 4, 32; 4:16; 16:37, 39; 19:3, 4; 20:26, 28; 25:7, 11; 26:1, 3, 60, 63; 27:2, 19, 21–22; 31:6, 12–13, 21, 26, 29, 31, 41, 51, 54; 32:2, 28; 34:17; Deuteronomy 10:6; Joshua 14:1; 17:4; 19:51; 21:1; 22:13, 31–32; 24:33; Judges 20:28; 1 Chronicles 6:3–4, 50; 9:20; 24:1–6; Ezra 7:5.

not become the keepers of the laws, they portrayed grave offense and disloyalty to Yahweh's ultimate service. Thus, Yahweh's promise of raising up a future faithful and righteous priest was prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35a.

The Prophecy of a Faithful Priest

The prophecy of a faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35a can easily be mingled with a prophecy of the coming Messiah as a prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15–19.³⁹ However, the distinguishable duties of priests and Levites described in Numbers 18 do not apply directly to both prophecies. Messiah is to reign to provide rulership in the kingdom, while the priests serve the commoners, the magistrates, and the royal descendants alike. The priests faithfully serve Yahweh by fulfilling their duties (2 Chron 13:11). Thus, the forthcoming prophet and faithful priest cannot be separated from the attributes entitled to the coming Messiah. In addition, the nature of his duties is identical to the qualities of the priest-king prescribed in Psalms 110.

When the time came to choose the successor for the Davidic throne, factions arose in the royal family as Adonijah, the fourth son of David, wanted to usurp the throne. Bathsheba, David's fourth wife, favored her son Solomon as a successor (1 Kgs 1:1–32). David's choice of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:33) caused turbulent times in the kingdom, so loyalty became pivotal for Abiatha and Zadok, the two priests, in order to make wise decisions to choose sides. Abiatha betrayed King David by siding with Adonijah, not Solomon, making the wrong decision out of political motivation (1 Kgs 1:7, 19, 25; 2:22). Ironically, Abiatha's disloyalty eventually ended the priestly succession of Eli's family as prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:27–36. Zadok, a patrilineal

³⁹ Deuteronomy 18:15–19 prophesied that Yahweh would deliver a prophet like Moses to Israel to proclaim His revealed word to the Israelites. This was eventually fulfilled in the ultimate prophet, Jesus Christ, reflected and proclaimed in the New Testament (John 1:45; 5:46; 12:49–50). The apostle Peter also applies this prophecy to Jesus Christ in Acts 3:22.

descendant of Eleazar, was known as a faithful and righteous priest following the Aaronic legacy serving before King David; subsequently, King Solomon appointed him again as a high priest (1 Kgs 2:35). James Hamilton contends, “Before we look more closely at 1 Samuel 2:35, we should consider 1 Kings 2:27 ... the fulfillment spoken of in 1 Kings 2:27 pertains specifically to ‘the house of Eli’ . . . [and] brings to fulfillment the prophecy against the house of Eli, the parts of the prophecy that pertain to the whole house of Aaron await fulfillment, for the Zadokite line is part of the Aaronic house.”⁴⁰ Hence, Hamilton believes that the prophecy of a faithful priest mentioned in 1 Samuel 2:35a is partially fulfilled through 1 Kings 2:27.⁴¹

The Torah does not allow the combination of priests and kings (Num 3:10, 38 and 16:40) even though some Israelite kings tried to usurp the functions of priests from time to time. For example, King Saul was rebuked by Prophet Samuel for the sacrifices that he made after the battle with the Amalekites. Likewise, King Uzziah contracted leprosy after crossing the boundary between kings and priests, later dying with a bad reputation in history (2 Kgs 15:5, 2 Chr 26:19–21). However, King David, a man after Yahweh’s own heart, was anointed in the same way the priests were consecrated (1 Sam 16). The whole paradigm shifted in the Davidic kingship since Yahweh made the covenant with David (2 Sam 7:8–29), similar to the priestly covenant made with Phinehas, a descendant of the Aaronic priesthood (Num 25:13). These two covenants have a perpetual effect of continuing Davidic and Phinehas’s houses with a shared ministry in the coming Millennial Kingdom because of Psalm 110’s fulfillment.

The Torah designated Levites alone for the priestly function and Judahites for the kingship. However, the priesthood specifically belongs to the Aaronic lineage. Thus, the

⁴⁰ James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible’s Promise-Shaped Patterns* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 75.

⁴¹ Ibid.

eschatological role of the faithful priest mentioned in 1 Samuel 2:35*a* is based on the future Aaronic descendant, who will minister to the priest-king Messiah prophesized in Psalms 110:4*b* in the Millennial Kingdom. The requirement of a faithful priest is initially prophesied due to the unfaithfulness within Eli's family, but the subsequent generations of priests failed even after post-exilic periods, especially visible in Malachi.

Identifying Jesus as a priest-king Messiah prophesied in Psalm 110 requires one to take the required faithfulness of the priests at face value and to analyze the duties of the Levitical priesthood in the Pentateuchal, historical, and prophetic books. Based on the Pentateuchal studies, it is understood the Messiah would come from the line of Judah but not from the line of Levi, as mentioned in Genesis 49:10. However, David's prophecy in Psalm 110 describes a need for change in the Old Testament priesthood with a new law and order. The proper exegesis will highlight the holistic perspective of the Aaronic lineage as Levitical priests. This perspective highlights the role of a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35*a*) as the shared responsibility between the priests and the Levites: ministering to the priest-king Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, this research, "Psalm 110 and covenantal faithfulness in the eschatological role a Faithful Priest" will delve into Christ's kingship in kingdom relationship initiated not only in Genesis but also in Torah as a whole. With respect to the Prophets and the Psalter, this research will analyze the duties and failures of the Levitical priesthood to expose their unfaithfulness with historical-grammatical method. This method is applied to reveal Christ's faithfulness in Yahweh's promised priesthood from the Psalter's standpoint in Psalm 110.

CHAPTER 2: CANONICAL-LINGUISTIC AND THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Psalm 110 is Yahweh's direct utterance revealed to King David, designated as the Psalm of David. As the passage would indicate, it prophesies the future priest-king later fulfilled in Christ. This psalm can be interpreted in the historical, canonical, linguistic, and theological context. For instance, the term priest in the Old Testament is usually associated with the Levitical priesthood. However, in Psalm 110:4,¹ Yahweh appointed a new priesthood. The priest in this specific text does not refer to the Aaronic lineage under the Levitical priesthood. This new order of priesthood is recognized as a type of Melchizedekian priest-king, and it is rooted in the anointed Davidic kingly legacy under Yahweh's divine order (Ps 110). Jesus Christ Himself believes in the teachings of the Torah (Luke 24:44),² the Psalter, and the Prophets. Jesus's belief has intertextual elements to show the trajectory of Yahweh's plan for redemptive history. Thus, the priest-king analogy, covenantal relations, and prophetic fulfillments all find their part in the textual orchestra bringing unity and harmony to Psalm 110's eschatological messianism. Psalm 110 is logically associated with Jesus's priest-king status in terms of Yahweh's ongoing

¹ "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (ESV).

² The Hebrew word תּוֹרָה 'torah' stands for a feminine noun denoting law, instruction, and direction. The definition of 'law' primarily points to *the law of the Priests' code*. The phrasal word תּוֹרַת יְהוָה, the scroll or book (פֶּסֶק) implies a law or instructions of Yahweh as mentioned in Ezra 7:10; Nehemiah 9:3; 1 Chronicles 16:40; 2 Chronicles 12:1; 17:9; 31:3, 4; 34:14; 35:26 ψ [Psalm]19:8; 119:1. Brown, Driver, & Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English*, 436. The law refers to the book of the Torah as Walter Kaiser mentions, "The five books of the Psalter contain an intentional structure that embraces three foundational entry points into the continuing message of this book: the law, the Messiah, and his creational sovereignty over all persons and things." Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Structure of the Book of Psalms," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 693, no. 174 (Jan 2017), 12.

faithfulness in the essence of priesthood. This psalm has become a vantage point to explore the mutual faithfulness between Yahweh and the priests.

The eternal priesthood spotlights the pivotal point of covenantal faithfulness between Yahweh and the Old Testament priesthood, and this logic is embedded in כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם, “a priest forever” (Ps 110:4a). Christ is a new type of Melchizedekian priest-king according to Psalm 110:4b. Hamilton asserts that Melchizedek typified Jesus’s priest-king role because Psalm 110:4 indicates “a non-Levitical priest whose ministry comes with a new covenant in distinction to the old.”³ Hamilton’s assertion reflects the logic of Hebrews to distinguish Christ’s unique role from that of other priests in the Bible, such as the Levitical ones. However, Fred L. Horton contends, “The nature of this priesthood, however, is rather difficult to define.... Nowhere in the Old Testament, apart from Ps cx. 4, is the king described as a כֹהֵן.”⁴ Additionally, scholars like William Brown assert that there remain more questions than answers to understand Christ’s new priesthood in biblical and theological unity.⁵ For instance, David R. Anderson addresses the traditional stance of the overarching principle of Old Testament priesthood. He explains the implausibility of an Israelite king having the office of a priest, “Lacking more objective evidence of an early king-priest office in the monarchy of Israel, the traditional understanding of a priesthood completely limited to the Aaronic line is preferred.”⁶ Consequently, Psalm 110 reflects the messianic themes in Deuteronomy and the Torah as a whole through the fulfillment

³ Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible’s Promise-Shaped Patterns*, 64.

⁴ Fred L. Horton Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle To The Hebrews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45.

⁵ William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 17.

⁶ David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 57–58.

of prophecies.⁷ In this research, the eschatological role of a faithful priest will break new ground to dissuade people's theories that do not correspond to the Scriptures. This chapter will explore the covenantal motif, which underscores the theme of faithfulness in the ministry of the priesthood.

Interpretive Issues

There are interpretive issues regarding the kingship and priesthood related to Yahweh's promise of raising a faithful priest, such as the identity of a promised priest and the distinction between the Levites and the priests. Psalm 110 reveals the combined relationship between the kingship and priesthood based on the prophecy of King David, who was identified as one of the future Davidic descendants. This is also the first revelation regarding the new order of priesthood, unlike the traditional Levitical line. Additionally, Psalm 110 is recognized as one of the royal psalms, and it corresponds with other messianic prophecies and psalms. Since the new order of priesthood is announced in Psalm 110:4, it is necessary to consider whether to change the law or the covenant. The analysis of the distinction between the Levites and the priests is required to investigate further how the new role of the future Aaronic descendants will fit in the coming Millennial Kingdom under the rule of the new priest-king.

The Identity-Crisis of a Promised Priest in 1 Samuel 2:35

The concealed identity of the faithful priest that Yahweh promised in 1 Samuel 2:35 prompts a particular issue in connecting the Messiah with the royal priestly ideology in Psalm 110:4. Mary Evans states, "For Christians there is, of course, a further underlying meaning in

⁷ Simon Chi-Chung Cheung, *Wisdom Intoned a Reappraisal of the Genre 'Wisdom Psalms'* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 224.

this prophecy; the most *faithful priest* and the true *anointed one* (35) is understood to be Jesus himself.”⁸ In addition, she sums up the majority of scholars’ view of identifying Zadok, Samuel, or Jesus Christ as the faithful priest.⁹ For instance, Ralph Klein asserts, “[1 Sam 2:35] announces the establishment of a faithful priest, who is not to be Samuel, as one might expect, but is clearly Zadok ... [who] will conform their lives to Yahweh’s heart.”¹⁰ Klein affirms Zadok as the faithful priest. However, Daniel Diffey refutes the fulfillment of the promised priest in the person of Zadok, “The identification of the faithful priest as Zadok is likewise difficult.... The books of Samuel offer a better explanation ... to identify this promise with a particular person: David.”¹¹ Robert Polzin and Lyle Eslinger assert that the Prophet Samuel is the faithful priest prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35.¹² There is another kind of identity crisis related to a faithful priest that can have further implications. Karl Deenick proposes two separate priest-kings in 1 Samuel 2:35 by saying, “This is often seen as an indication that the priesthood and the kingship will co-exist in two distinct persons.”¹³ Analyzing these scholars’ various views, the essential focus has been shifted from the faithful priest’s role to his identity. The Scripture should be the main focus in analyzing the function and identity of the faithful priest instead of scholars’ crises. Specifically, Psalm 110:4b has the priestly overtone that underscores the phrase “the priest forever” and solves the mystery of identifying the promised priest.

⁸ Mary J. Evans, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series: 1 & 2 Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 25.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ralph W. Klein, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Samuel* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 27.

¹¹ Daniel S. Diffey, “David and the Fulfillment of 1 Samuel 2:35: Faithful Priest, Sure House, and a Man after God’s Own Heart,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (January 1, 2013), 100–01.

¹² Robert Polzin and Lyle Eslinger assert that the Prophet Samuel is the faithful priest prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35. Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 42–44. Lyle M. Eslinger, *The Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12*. Bible and Literature Series, 10 (Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1985), 138–40.

¹³ Karl Deenick, “Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35,” *WTJ* 73, no. 2 (Fall 2011), 325.

Davidic Authorship of Psalm 110

The title and the first verse of Psalm 110 indicate that King David himself wrote this psalm during his reign. Leslie Allen supports the Davidic authorship as she asserts, “David as אֲדֹנָי is most appropriate,”¹⁴ although the complexity of its authorship caused the question to arise whether “the psalm title אֲדֹנָי describes the subject matter or the addressee (for David), or refers to an aspect other than authorship.”¹⁵ Not only does the title claim the aspect of David’s authorship, but also the first verse refers to David’s own words. Bateman indicates that “it seems preferable to hold that David spoke Psalm 110 to an earthly lord, that is, and earthly king of his lifetime.”¹⁶ Thus, both the title and the first verse of Psalm 110 trace how David himself delivered Yahweh’s prophecy as a spokesperson. Remarkably, the phrase “Yahweh says” (נֹאֵם יְהוָה) marks a divine initiative used in the oracle of prophecy.¹⁷ John Hilber asserts, “A model of cultic prophecy remains the best explanation for the origin of psalms containing first person divine speech.”¹⁸ This similar phrase usage is seen in Genesis 22:16 (Abraham), Numbers 14:28 (Moses), and 1 Samuel 2:27, 30 (Man of God) before King David. Additionally, Michael Snearly notes that in Psalm 110, “Yahweh does the speaking ... holding in abeyance the text-critical and translational challenges of this psalm, the structure is straightforward.”¹⁹ Thus, the first-person divine speech

¹⁴ Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 2nd Rev ed., WBC 21 (Mexico City: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 79.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Psalms 110 and the New Testament,” *BSac* 149, no. 596 (Oct-Dec 1992): 447–48.

¹⁷ Psalm 110:1a (ESV), “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’”

¹⁸ John W. Hilber, “Cultic prophecy in the Psalms in the light of Assyrian prophetic sources,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 56, no. 1 (2005): 145.

¹⁹ Michael K. Snearly, *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 122. David Rudolph and Joel Willitts, in New Testament perspective, explain the figurative interpretation of Psalm 110, “Jesus rules forever. The idea of an eternal rule in the New Testament emerges from the promise of an eternal line of kings or deliverance figures (2 Sam 7:12–16; 1 Kgs 8:25; Isa 9:6–7 [9:5–6 MT]; Pss 110:4; 132:12; Mic 4:7 with 5:1–4 [4:14–5:3 MT] portrays God’s regal rule; esp. Dan 7:14). Second Temple Judaism also reflected this idea (*Pss. Sol.* 17, 4; 1 *En.* 49:1; 62.14; 4Q174[=4QFlor] 1.11; 2 *Bar.* 73

in Psalm 110 matters in the structure since David himself is both the deliverer and the recipient of the prophetic message.

Psalm 110's literary context of prophecy plays a significant role in understanding the nature of David's psalm. For instance, its prophetic nature influenced the early church father John Chrysostom, who saw himself as a member of King David's audience and listener to Yahweh's spoken voice. He applies the word *prophetai* to all Old Testament composers in the Creed of 381: "he has spoken through the inspired authors."²⁰ Psalm 110, in its literary context, exposes King David as Yahweh's spokesperson like Moses or Joshua,²¹ a messenger like a prophet. King David delivers Yahweh's utterances to the people in his days and subsequent generations to listen and follow regardless of historical and cultural backgrounds. Christian Frevel asserts, "On the one hand, the author of Hebrews has recognized the Psalter as a book wherein God speaks, while on the other hand he has identified it as a book that is attributed to David.... It seems quite possible to understand the ἐν Δαυὶδ in Heb 4:7 as 'in David' and not 'through David' that is denoting particularly or merely the book of Psalms."²² Thus, the prophetic nature of Psalm 110 presupposes the Davidic authorship to rule out all possibilities of rejecting David's or Yahweh's own words.

[early second century]].” David Rudolph & Joel Willitts, *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: Its Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 170.

²⁰ Robert Charles Hill, *St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on the Psalms* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), 31.

²¹ Many kings in history failed to carry out a responsibility given by Yahweh, but David acts as Yahweh's messenger with a commitment to judging the people with covenant love and justice, accepting the great moral demands, and being a guardian of the temple, the center of the national worship [Keith R. Crim, *The Royal Psalms* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 2007), 111].

²² Christian Frevel, “σήμερον—Understanding Psalm 95 within, and without, Hebrews,” in *Psalms and Hebrews Studies in Reception*, ed. Drik J. Human and Gert Jacobus Steyn (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 186.

Scholars such as Allen, Bateman, and Hilber support the idea that the title and the first verse of Psalm 110 bring attention to Davidic authorship. This objectively reinforces Jesus's claim of Davidic authorship in the Gospels (Luke 20:41–44). The New Testament unpacks the meaning of the Old Testament as Jesus references the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110 in the Gospel of Mark 12:37a by saying, “David himself calls him Lord.” The apostle Peter does the same in Acts 2:34–35 (ESV) by quoting directly from Psalm 110 alluding to Davidic authorship, “[David] himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Thus, both the scholars and the Scriptures refer to the prophetic nature of Psalm 110 to support its Davidic authorship.

Psalm 110 as the Royal Psalm

Psalm 110 is recognized as one of the royal psalms like Psalms 93–99.²³ Psalm 110 possesses unique properties that describe the duties of the returning king in terms of eschatological and messianic fulfillments. Thus, Psalm 110 can have more implications than other royal psalms in the Psalter. Hermann Gunkel is credited for dividing the forms and structures of the Psalter such as poetry, songs, royal and messianic psalms.²⁴ However, Chan KamYau contends that “analyzing Psalm 110 as a royal psalm from a genre perspective is not smooth sailing ... though it contains some descriptive elements of the enthronement festivals.”²⁵ Gunkel classifies the Psalter in terms of types and genres.²⁶ KamYau's view contradicts Gunkel's

²³ Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 83.

²⁴ Scott R. A. Starbuck, *Court Oracles in the Psalms: The So-Called Royal Psalms in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context*, SBLDS 172 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 1999), 2.

²⁵ Chan Alan KamYau, “A Literary and Discourse Analysis of Psalm 110,” in *Melchizedek Passages in the Bible: A Case Study for Inner-Biblical and Inter-Biblical Interpretation* (Warsaw, Poland: De Gruyter Open Poland, 2016), 98.

²⁶ Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 16.

approach to the Psalter from genre perspective based on ANE's social and religious traditions. Thus, Gunkel's analysis of Psalm 110 as a royal psalm lacks emphasis on Torah-centered teachings as James Mays points out, "They are psalms in which the instruction of the Lord is the central organizing topic and is viewed as the primary reality in the relation of mortals to God."²⁷ Particularly, Gunkel's classification of Psalm 110 as the royal psalm diminishes the role of the kingship embedded in Yahweh's messianic promises (Gen 3:15; Deut 18:15) later to be fulfilled by a coming priest-king Messiah (Ps 110). Thus, Gunkel's work introduces the wrong interpretation of Psalm 110 to detach the priest-king analogy from the Torah-centric and prophetic nature of Psalm 110 in the Psalter.

Psalm 110 significantly underscores the priest-king analogy of a coming messiah to describe the future Davidic son's kingly and priestly activities. Gignilliat mentions that "[Gunkel's] influence on Old Testament studies is such that one cannot engage the scholarly literature on the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and, to a lesser extent, the Prophets without encountering his name as a major interlocutor."²⁸ Psalm 110 is a prophecy about a divinely appointed messianic priest-king. It points to the conquering aspect of the future Davidic son. Iosif Zhakevich asserts that the Messiah is the supreme king (Ps 110).²⁹ Remarkably, the specific role of Yahweh's new promised priest (Ps 110:4a) is to administer justice and implement accountability between the two offices of kingship and priesthood. Thus, Gunkel's categorical analysis of Psalm 110 as a royal psalm is not agreeable. Yahweh's promises of raising up the

²⁷ James Luther Mays, "The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106, no. 1 (March 1987): 3.

²⁸ Mark S. Gignilliat, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 79.

²⁹ Iosif J. Zhakevich, "The Supremacy of the King-Priest," *The Master's Seminary Blog* (January 29, 2019), accessed March 26, 2024, <https://blog.tms.edu/supremacy-king-priest>.

Messiah and a faithful priest are fulfilled as a prophetic significance in Psalm 110, not on account of a royal psalm classification.

A Change of Law/Covenant in the Priesthood

The Psalter begins by depicting the image of a faithful or righteous person who follows the Torah daily (Ps 1). Robert Cole observes the similar literary context between Psalm 110 and Psalm 1 that highlights the importance of the Law.³⁰ This particular context reflects Mosaic instructions for the relationship between Israel's kingship and Levitical supervision under the Law: "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests" (Deut 17:18, ESV). The Law is the foundation on which the monarchy is founded; Yahweh is the King of Israel, and the Levitical priests and the Israelite monarchs operate under the law.

The law foreshadows the type of Yahweh's operational guidelines in His kingdom to all humanity as if the Levitical priests were the administrators of the Israelite nation. Daniel Block carefully observes the impact of Levitical priesthood in Psalm 110. He further explains, "Psalm 110 attaches priestly prerogatives to the monarchy ... without compromising the Aaronide-Davide distinction."³¹ However, Karl Deenick contends that the promised priest in 1 Sam 2:35 is neither a Levitical priest nor any Davidic descendant. His argument is based on the logic of Hebrews that satisfies the sole method of New Testament interpretation as no Judahite priest "has ever served at the altar (Heb 7:13–14).... The only way someone from the tribe of Judah could be appointed is if the law covenant could be put aside.... Thus, neither David nor any of

³⁰ Robert L. Cole, *Psalms 1–2: Gateway to the Psalter*, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Phoenix: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 7–45.

³¹ Daniel I. Block, "My Servant David: Ancient Israel's Vision of the Messiah," in *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 43.

his descendants could function as another kind of priest until something was done about the Mosaic covenant, and it could not be put aside without death (Heb 9:16–17).”³² Deenick dictates his viewpoint based on the hereditary succession of the Levitical and Judahite lineages without paying much attention to the divine appointment of a new priesthood in Psalm 110:4. In contrast, Israel Knohl suggests requiring a change of the Law since the Melchizedekian kingship is neither limited nor restrained by the Torah’s imposed restrictions on Israel’s kingship.³³ Thus, a new order of Melchizedekian priesthood takes place in Psalm 110 to signal a change of law or covenant.

The Old Testament priesthood was built on the law associated with Levitical priesthood. The new order of priesthood requires a new law, “For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well” (Heb 7:12, ESV). The new priesthood or Christ’s priesthood does not follow the same protocol as the Levitical priesthood. Eugene Merrill contends, “The Melchizedek-David-Jesus priesthood is a straight-line extension that operates outside of and superior to that of Aaron and the nation of Israel.”³⁴ The duties of the Levitical priesthood are outlined in the law, and the order of Old Testament priesthood is in the order of the Aaronic lineage. King states, “The Messiah is proclaimed a perpetual priest, under the immutable oath of the Almighty, whose might is that of a sacrificial love, who is to bear the sins of the world and to make atonement for human guilt; a kingly priest and a priestly king, the only supreme Pontiff of penitent and believing souls.”³⁵ However, Psalm 110, as a royal psalm, is

³² Deenick, “Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35,” 337.

³³ Israel Knohl, “Melchizedek: A Model for the Union of Kingship and Priesthood in the Hebrew Bible, 11QMelchizedek, and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 259.

³⁴ Eugene H. Merrill, “Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif,” *BSac* 150, no. 597 (Jan 1993): 59.

³⁵ King, *The Messiah in the Psalms*, 69.

more integrated with typological means that highlight Melchizedekian priesthood and messianic prophecy in a new perspective. Thus, Christ's priesthood is not after the order of Aaron as He replaces the old priesthood. Melchizedek was a priest-king without genealogy; the order of Melchizedek was a type rather than a genealogical order (Heb 7:11–19).

The everlasting priestly covenant made through Phinehas, Aaron's descendant in Numbers 25:10–13, was shifted to be congruent with the promise of a new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31:10–12. The new paradigm shift occurred, changing the physical lineage requirement for appointing a new high priest and bypassing the law. In Psalm 110:4b, the prophecy of a new priest reveals a change of law, which reflects the new order of non-genealogical affiliation. Melchizedek, without human genealogy, is still believed to be a human priest-king. Psalm 110 is all about the Messiah who is the priest-king like the Melchizedek mentioned in Genesis 14:19, neither related to the Levitical Priesthood nor of Aaronite lineage. However, Jesus as the king-priest Messiah has fulfilled what the Levitical priesthood anticipated.

Psalm 110:4 hints at a new era of Old Testament priesthood to reconcile the eschatological role of a faithful priest prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35a. It is significant that Abraham, a patriarchal priest of the family, acknowledged that his status is lower than Melchizedek's status of a priest-king. Kevin Vanhoozer asserts, "Melchizedek remains for Hebrews a human figure; what is said represents a Christological-typological reading of the canonical texts of Gen 14 and Ps 110 ... this priesthood preceded Levi's and ... the historical figure of Abraham encountered and acknowledged it."³⁶ Hence, the Melchizedekian priesthood

³⁶ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2008) 193.

of Christ is superior to all other priesthoods in Old Testament history because of the promise of spiritual blessings through Abraham (Gen 12).

The prophecy of priest-king Messiahship through King David (Ps 110) pointed to the priestly function of Christ. Psalm 110's prophecy was fulfilled and ended the old covenant in Christ's sacrificial atonement, which was superior to what the descendants of the Levitical priesthood could accomplish (Matt 5:17–19). The entirety of Psalm 110 will be in effect only when Yahweh's promise of a faithful priest through the Aaronic lineage becomes realized in eschatology. Due to Zadok's faithfulness to the Davidic dynasty in the Old Testament, Psalm 110's prophecy of Christ's priesthood in a new order and a new covenant will be fulfilled under one condition. That is a shared responsibility between the Messiah of a solitary Davidic descendant and Zadokian priests of Aaronic lineage in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

Distinction between the Levites and the Priests

The Levites are the descendants of Levi, the third of the six sons of Jacob and Leah, the founder of the Israelite tribe of Levi who later became the great-grandfather of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. The Levitical priests are known as the descendants of Aaron, and the ordained high priests consecrated for mediating between Yahweh and the people since the time of the wilderness journey. In addition, all the high priests could only come through Aaron's lineage. Since Aaron's descendants also belong to the tribe of Levi, there is often confusion about distinguishing the Levites and the priests. However, their different roles in the tabernacle worship system make the terms 'Levites' and 'priests' more significant to be understood as distinctive. According to BDB, the phrasal word of “הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם”³⁷ can be interpreted as ‘the

³⁷ Deuteronomy 17:9, 18; 18:1; 24:8; 27:9; Jeremiah 33:18; Joshua 3:3; 8:33; Ezekiel 43:19; 44:15.

priests, the Levites,’ or ‘the Levitical priests’.³⁸ Thus, the phrase ‘Levitical priests’ does not mean all Levites are priests. This phrase delves into the nature of Levitical priesthood, representing all Levitical priests who are in the line of one Levite, Aaron and his descendants.

There is a distinction in using the terms of Levites and priests to differentiate their respective roles. Raymond Abba contends, “Far from using the terms ‘priest’ and ‘Levite’ indiscriminately, [a] Deuteronomist reserves the term ‘Levite’ for a subordinate order of cultic official.”³⁹ Abba identifies the distinction of their roles. However, a Deuteronomistic scholar like Dennis Olson argues, “The Aaronic priesthood apparently played little role in much of the preexilic and exilic literature ... the figure of Aaron and the Aaronite priesthood apparently emerged as the preeminent priestly group in the Second Temple or postexilic period in charge of worship and rituals in the Jerusalem temple.”⁴⁰ It is unnecessary to agree with a Deuteronomist. Little information is known on how to articulate the role of Aaron or Aaronite priests mentioned in Deuteronomistic history or the prophetic books. Olson is less than satisfying on this argument. Jack Lundbom asserts, “In P material (Numbers and Leviticus) and later in the postexilic period, the Levites are made subordinate to priests descending from Aaron.”⁴¹ Thus, Levites and priests are not fundamentally synonymous terms. However, in the context of this research, the phrasal terminology of “Aaronic priesthood” would only denote Aaron’s household and his subsequent generations to be regarded as Yahweh’s chosen priesthood. The rest of Levites, such as judges,

³⁸ Brown, Driver, & Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English*, 1895.

³⁹ Raymond Abba, “Priests and Levites in Ezekiel,” *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978): 1.

⁴⁰ Dennis T. Olson, “AARON High Priest (Elsewhere in the Old Testament Negative and Nonpriestly Portrayals New Testament Character: A Summary),” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996), 1213.

⁴¹ Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 535.

musicians, guardians, temple officials, gate keepers, and craftsmen function to share responsibility in the worship system.

Theological Issues

Psalm 110 is built on a massive biblical-theological foundation. The canonical harmony between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110 delves into the Psalter’s priest-king messianic analogy. The narratives of 1–2 Samuel highlight the typological connections between David and Abraham, and David and Melchizedek, to determine why the Messiah would need to be a priest of the Melchizedekian order. Kingship, priesthood, covenant, sonship, and conquest all find their part in the textual orchestra bringing unity and harmony to David’s eschatological messianism. Yahweh established the eternal covenant of David that will be fulfilled in Jesus Christ to demand that the sovereign ruler of the eternal kingdom will come. Yahweh’s revelation in Psalm 110 makes the union of kingship and priesthood in Jesus Christ feasible through progressive fulfillments of prophecies and covenants. Any other views including Jewish messianic view of Psalm 110 do not cover the superiority of Christ’s priestly kingship.

Conflation of King and Priest in Messianic Role

Psalm 110 clarifies that a messiah can be both a king and a priest. However, Deborah Rooke proposes a theory to derail the messianic figure: “Monarch can fulfill priestly duties because of the nature of his kingship, but equally because of the nature of his priesthood the high priest cannot be a king, nor should he ever be confused with a messianic figure.”⁴² Apparently, she bases her theory on ANE’s practices. Klingbeil supports her claim, “Except for city-states in

⁴² Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 208.

northern Syria, where a limited kingship was complemented by the leadership of tribal elders, royalty was generally closely associated with the priesthood, and the king or queen often was involved in a high-priestly role.”⁴³ She argues that like ANE kings, Israelite kings can also fulfill the priestly duties according to their own will and not in terms of the nature of kingship. For Israelite kings are not sanctioned to take priestly duties since the Torah forbids the conflation of kingly and priestly roles. There are several instances in the history of the Old Testament when Israelite kings like King Saul⁴⁴ and King Uzziah performed the priestly functions (2 Kgs 15:5, 2 Chr 26:19–21) while the priests were available. However, both of them were condemned by Yahweh as King Saul lost his throne and his dynasty; King Uzziah became a leper and died at an earlier age. Unlike ANE kings, the Israelite kings serve like vassal kings under Yahweh. Rooke’s argument supports neither Yahweh’s appointment of a new priesthood nor a Melchizedekian priest-king.

The true nature of Israelite kingship is different from Rooke’s theory. Psalm 110:4 announced a new kind of priest without requiring physical lineage whose role was already established as a Davidic monarch (Ps 110:1). Contrary to her claim, the new high priest (Ps 110:4b) is a divinely appointed king who can perform priestly duties. Thus, the conflation of priest and king in a messianic role is possible. Christ’s priesthood and kingship is like

⁴³ Klingbeil, “Priests in the Ancient Near East,” 360.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Majors, “Saul as a King-Priest,” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 59–78. Majors argues that Saul became the king-priest at the time of being appointed as the monarch (1 Sam 9–11), similar to the custom of surrounding nations. His priestly performance was also revealed at the Banquet in 9:22–27. Majors points out the possibility of the kingly and priestly function conflated in one person through this argument. However, he does not mention the interdependence between Samuel and King Saul. He fails to mention how Saul’s priestly activities abruptly ended his relationship with Samuel, and deviated from Yahweh’s covenant. After the death of Samuel, the vacuum of co-operative leadership of a priest and king completely incapacitated Saul’s ability to function as the head of the nation. Saul sought a medium to get counsel from the deceased Samuel since the interdependence between the prophet and the king was unavoidable. It is significant to recognize Majors’s argument of seeing Israelites’ first king in status of the king-priest. However, the self-appointed priest-king without Yahweh’s appointment led King Saul ultimately failed to hold on to his kingdom.

Melchizedek; Christ did not become Melchizedek but became a model of Melchizedek. Adrian Giorgiov argues that Melchizedek was a “divinely established priesthood. Melchizedek was a non-Levitical priest. In his time, Levi was not born yet. The Levitical priesthood was established by human act (Exodus 28:1), although at the divine order, while there is no information about the establishment of Melchizedek’s priesthood.”⁴⁵ Giorgiov’s argument concerning the Davidic Messiah’s role (Ps 110:4; Gen 14:18; Mat. 1; John 1:1, 14; Heb 5:6–10; 6:20; 7:1–24; Gal. 3:8) highlights Yahweh’s covenantal promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3). Psalm 110 clarifies the role of the Davidic Messiah who can be both a king and a priest like Melchizedek. According to Alan Stibbs, “The combination of these two offices was to be a distinguishing characteristic of the Messiah.”⁴⁶ New Testament authors quoted Psalm 110 as the legitimate reason to highlight the conflation of the kingship and the priestly role of Messiah (Mark 12:36, 14:62, Luke 20 41–44, 1 Cor 15:25, Heb 5:1–6, 6:20, 7:4–7, 7:17–24).

Mortal or Immortal Messiah

The messianic psalms (Ps 2, 18, 21, 45, 72, and 89) describe the nature of Yahweh’s anointed or chosen one as the King above all kings. The content of these Psalms reflects prayers for the king’s wisdom, long life, or triumph in battle. Some are prophetic, pointing to the ideal future king, the Messiah, or the King of kings. However, Jesus typifies a Melchizedekian priest-king who was mortal. According to Hahn, “Melchizedek was not immortal but remained a priest for the duration of his life.”⁴⁷ Psalm 110:4b describes the mortal nature of Jesus’s priesthood

⁴⁵ Adrian Giorgiov, “Melchizedek, The Priest Who Derived His Pattern from the Preexistent Christ,” *Perichoresis: The Theological Journal of Emanuel University* 21, no. 1 (2023): 72.

⁴⁶ Alan Stibbs, “The Epistle of the Hebrews,” in *The New Bible Commentary*, 1st ed., ed. F. Davidson et al. (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1953), 1100.

⁴⁷ Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises*, 303.

since the phrase “in the order of” is similarly used to designate the order of the human priestly line. Most significantly, the final statement in the last verse of Psalm 110:7a, “He will drink from the brook by the way,” vividly expresses His human nature. The Davidic Messiah experienced physical exhaustion and thirst after the battle that required him to have a drink of water from the brook. Unlike the ANE beliefs,⁴⁸ Jesus testifies to His mortal human nature of a priest-king Messiah on the cross when he bore humanity’s sins and died as Yahweh commanded. Jason DeRouchie affirms, “Christ fulfills the Old Testament.... Peter agrees that Isaiah’s words directly predict the [suffering] Messiah: ‘He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree’ (1 Pet 2:24 ESV; cf. Isa 53:5).”⁴⁹ Because the Levitical priesthood functioned with animals, which were vulnerable to physical death, Jesus had to be mortal as required under the law. Jesus’s death on the cross completed the sacrificial duties of the Levitical priesthood under the law.

Psalm 110:4b also describes the immortal nature of Jesus’s priesthood since the phrase “You are a priest forever.” In addition, the Hebrew word “forever” in Psalm 23:6 also has a significant meaning of eternal life after death. This phrase has eternal significance of Jesus’s priesthood that eliminates the hereditary succession of the priesthood. Likewise, Jesus’s self-claim of sameness with Yahweh renders the idea that the Messiah is also immortal (John 10:30). Although His mortal nature is seen in the New Testament as the God-incarnate, John’s Gospel

⁴⁸ John H. Walton and Victor H. Matthews, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Genesis–Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 20. According to Walton and Matthews, there are serpent-shaped deities among the gods of the ancient Near East. In their iconography and literature, the serpent has been correlated with immortality, similar to the conversation between the Serpent and Eve in the Genesis account. One of the serpent’s characteristics is ‘cunning,’ which has good and bad implications (Prov 12:23; Job 5:12), although the serpent is identified with the Devil and Satan (Rev 12:9; 20:2). Thus, the author agrees with Walton and Matthews’s analysis of analogous discussions about immortality between the Serpent and Eve (Gen 3:1–24). Robert Ignatius Letellier, *Creation, Sin and Reconciliation* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 88. Letellier claims that one of the ANE’s primitive stories based on the Phoenicians suggests the possibility of immortality in light of the serpents’ longevity by casting their skins off to renew their youthful appearance forever.

⁴⁹ Jason S. DeRouchie, “Redemptive-Historical Approach,” in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 188.

testifies that Jesus was with the Father from the beginning of the epoch (John 1:1–3; 5:25–27). However, the immortal essence of the Messiah was mentioned in the Old Testament. For instance, Job anticipates the redeemer’s resurrection, which unveils the Messiah’s immortality (Job 19:25–27). Jesus’s resurrection was foretold in “the Scriptures.”⁵⁰ Paul uses the phrase “according to the Scriptures” in 1 Corinthians 15:4 in reference to Jesus’s words in Luke 24:45–46, “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead’” (ESV). The apostle Paul’s statement (1 Cor 15:4) has the same theological weight as when Jesus references His own immortality in the Old Testament. Herald Gandhi connects God’s “holy one” (Ps 16:10) with the promise of the Messiah’s resurrection (Ps 22), saying that “the Old Testament does testify to the Messiah’s resurrection on the third day. The New Testament writers read the Old Testament Scriptures legitimately, in accordance with their authorial meaning.”⁵¹ Thus, Christ’s resurrection reveals the fuller meaning of the Scripture on account of His immortal nature embedded in His pre-existence as a resurrected Messiah (1 Tim 6:14–16).

The Anticipation of a New Priestly Order

The anticipation of a new priestly order in the Old Testament is seen through the New Testament. This new priesthood in Psalm 110 develops the continuity of covenantal blessings attached to the Law in the Old Testament. Roy Gane explains, “The purpose of the Old Testament law is not merely to control humans by listing required and prohibited behaviors with

⁵⁰ The Old Testament is considered as “the Scriptures” before all the books of the New Testament were compiled. John Goldingay states, “In the New Testament, the works we call ‘the Old Testament’ are simply ‘the Scriptures.’” John Goldingay, “First Testament Approach,” in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Brian J. Tabb et. al (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2022), 21.

⁵¹ Herald Gandhi, “The Resurrection: ‘According to the Scriptures’?” in *The Master’s Seminary Blog*, July 31, 2018, <https://blog.tms.edu/resurrection-according-to-scriptures>.

penalties for violations. Rather, the purpose is to teach God's covenant people how they can enjoy the life, the good, and the blessing that He promises to those who love Him and walk in His ways (Deut 30:16, New King James Version)."⁵² Many New Testament writers make many direct quotes from the Psalter.⁵³ They all have the same view grounded in the Old Testament's prophecies in the Psalter. The prophetic nature of Psalm 110 highlighting a priest-king is not strange to the New Testament writers. Thus, affirming Jesus as a priest-king prophesied in this psalm makes sense in anticipating a new priestly order to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Yahweh made the covenant with King David in light of a covenant of salt [בְּרִית מֶלַח] (2 Chr 13:5), which is also parallel to Yahweh's covenant for the Aaronic priesthood (Num 18:19). Willem VanGemeren relates this covenant to the Davidic descendant perceived to be the priest-king, "The psalmist speaks of the promise of God pertaining to David and his dynasty. The promise pertains to the covenant between the Lord (אֱלֹהִים) and the one in authority over the people of God, the Davidic king. His authority is by divine grant."⁵⁴ Thus, the eschatological role of a priest-king in Psalm 110 in the line of Melchizedek is completely distinct from the role of a faithful priest that belongs to the line of Aaron in 1 Samuel 2:35a.

The Priestly Role of the King

The portrayal of Jesus in the New Testament as a kind and loving priest can conflict with the perspective of a king as a tyrant in ancient times. However, the logic of combining priest and king was acceptable to people living in the time of King David. In Deuteronomy 18:15–22,

⁵² Roy E. Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 18.

⁵³ Psalm 4:4 is quoted in Ephesians 4:26; Psalm 2:7 is quoted in Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5, and Psalm 2:8–9 is quoted in Revelation 2:26–27; 12:5; 19:15, etc.

⁵⁴ Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," vol. 4 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 814.

Moses predicts someone with the figure of himself but more significant and influential than him. Similarly, Prophet Samuel, in the Old Testament, plays a vital role because the role of the Messiah's priest-king necessitated the connection with the prophet throughout the First and Second Temple periods.⁵⁵ The Israelite priests consisting of the Levites and ordained priests in the Levitical order are merely instrumental means that Yahweh charges to care for His people. In the New Testament, Peter reiterates Moses's prediction to identify Jesus as the coming priest-king. Peter said that failing to listen to Jesus, the prophet figure like Moses, would result in judgment from Yahweh (Acts 3:23). The priest-king analogy was developed since the time of Moses. Thus, this logic relates Christ's priestly role in the New Testament to the function of the priest-king in Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 contains the structure of literary composition parallel to the writings related to messianic agenda in the Gospels. The Synoptic writers identified Jesus as the Jewish Messiah in the same mode. They revealed the role of Jesus's messianism through the ministry of His followers and disciples, and they ignited the spirit of loving the lost, which advanced the good news throughout the known world. Among the Synoptics, Matthew and Luke portray Jesus as the King of the Jews and claim Jesus is for the Jews. Raymond Brown acknowledges that the author of John's Gospel also acknowledges Jesus as the King fifteen times as promised in the Old Testament.⁵⁶ Jesus's kingship also fulfilled the priestly duties of the Levitical priesthood. Thus,

⁵⁵ Steven L. McKenzie, *Introduction to the Historical Books: Strategies for Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 73. According to McKenzie, Samuel was a transitional leader between the Israelite monarchy and the judges's rule. The prophet Samuel established a pattern of Yahweh's kingship so that Israelite kings could prioritize the Torah's instructions (Duet 17) in rulership. As a result of Samuel's leadership, King David outshined in Yahweh's kingship. "As an outworking of David's heart, the king prioritizes God's rule. When Jerusalem becomes the capital of David's kingdom (2 Sam 5:1–10)." Andrew T. Abernethy and Gregory Goswell, *God's Messiah in the Old Testament: Expectations of a Coming King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), 58.

⁵⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 226–29.

the crucifixion clarifies the priestly role of Jesus's kingship, which is "not of this world" (John 18:36, ESV). Brown further simplifies Jesus's kingship by saying: "In stressing the reign/role of Jesus as *basileus* and in applying the parabolic language to Jesus himself (rather to "reign of God"), John brings out more clearly than do the Synoptics the role of Jesus in the *basileia tou theou*."⁵⁷ Rather than corresponding to the lost sheep stories in the Synoptics, John's wordplay identifies Jesus as a model shepherd (John 10) exactly like Yahweh portrayed in Psalm 23. While the Synoptics are talking around the *basileia*, the kingdom of God (Matt 21:43) to resemble the vineyard, John focuses on the person of Jesus by indicating that Jesus is the vine. The apostle John's literary style in his Gospel is closely associated with theological metaphors such as the wine and bread, water and spirit.⁵⁸ Thus, the Johannine Jesus is far more convincing to reveal the nature of priestly ministry reflected in Jesus's kingship role.

Yahweh's direct involvement in the Old Testament priesthood dictates the philosophy of kingship in Psalm 110. The priestly servitude rendered to Yahweh and leadership over the Israelites (Deut 18:1–8) applies to the priestly role of the king. Donatella Scaiola asserts, "The theme of the kingship of God interweaves as well with the theme of power, of he who really owns it, and on the necessity of choosing who to serve."⁵⁹ The unfaithful priests in the Old Testament were reprimanded when they violated their allegiance to Yahweh; for example, Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron, were instantly put to death because of their strange-fire offering (Lev 10:1–2). The priests are not allowed to enter the presence of Yahweh, known as the 'holy of holies,' except for a high priest who can only enter once a year on the day of the

⁵⁷ Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 227–29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Donatella Scaiola, "The End of the Psalter," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Leuven, 2010), 707.

atonement. Since Yahweh is the king, He alone has absolute rulership and authority. Thus, the priestly role of the king, a coming priest-king Messiah, will be far superior to all the Old Testament high priests that Yahweh consecrated, according to Psalm 110.

The High-Priestly Christology of Hebrews

The author of Hebrews manifests the continuity between the Old and New Testament through Christ's priesthood as a result of divine appointment. The book of Hebrews approves the centrality of Yahweh's sovereignty. George Guthrie notes,

The Father speaks to the Son in the chain quotation [Hebrews] 1:5–13, the Son speaks the words of Ps. 22:22 to the Father at [Hebrews] 2:12, and the Spirit speaks to the people of God through Ps 95:7–11; [Hebrews] 3:7–11.... God the Father speaks the words of proclamation to the Son through Ps 2:7 and 110:4 ([Hebrews] 5:5–6, and then continues to speak in the following chapters), the Son speaks the words of Ps 40:6–8 to the Father ([Hebrews] 10:5–10), and the Holy Spirit speaks of the new covenant at Jer 31:31–34.⁶⁰

Guthrie offers a dynamic scenario of Yahweh's action as primarily presupposed and referenced in the Old Testament. He discusses Yahweh as the leading actor and speaker straight from the first words in Hebrews. Hebrews 1:1–4 emphasizes the interrelationship between theology and Christology in the Scriptures.

The author of Hebrews presents Yahweh's inspiration in an active scene with the frequent use of the specific verb λέγω, 'I say, speak'. Specifically, in Hebrews 8:8, 13, the author employs the term καινός, 'new' to reflect the new covenant as mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31.⁶¹ Guthrie states, "The word speaks to the unfolding of narrative accounts of God's working in the world. If God initiates a new covenant, it must mean that the first covenant, in some sense, was

⁶⁰ George H Guthrie, "Divine Action in the Jewish Scriptures according to Hebrews," in *Divine Action in Hebrews and the Ongoing Priesthood of Jesus*, ed. Gareth Lee Cockerill et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 137.

⁶¹ Ibid., 133–37.

doomed to obsolescence (8:13).”⁶² This underscores the significance of manifesting divine action in the history of redemption through a Christological argument.

Melchizedek is the pattern or the model of the future coming priest-king Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The author of Hebrews explicitly mentions that Jesus’s priesthood is in the order of Melchizedek (Heb 6:17,18; 7:21; Ps 132:11), who is the antitype of the priest-king and the outgrowth of David’s reflection on Genesis 14:18–19. Melchizedek was “a priest on his throne” (Zech 6:13) as a king of righteousness and king of peace. The Melchizedek tradition mentioned in Psalm 110 is the pre-Israelite concept related to the priest-king, which is associated with the site of the Jebusites⁶³ for the Canaanites’ cultic rituals.⁶⁴ Jesus is the antitype of Melchizedek mentioned in Genesis 14:18–19 according to Hebrews 5:6. Köstenberger states,

In the OT, it is the tribe of Levi—constituting the Levitical priesthood—that is appointed to furnish priests for Israel (cf. Num. 8; Deut. 18:1–8). Yet here, the author astutely picks up on the reference to an eternal priesthood not after Levitical priesthood but after a different pattern or order—namely, that of Melchizedek.⁶⁵

Hebrews 5:14–5:10; 7:1–28; and 10 covers the concept of high-priestly Christology to explain and separate the two priesthoods ordained by Yahweh. Hebrews 5:1–4 indicates that the order of the Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament typifies Jesus’s work for the believers. In addition,

⁶² Guthrie, “Divine Action in the Jewish Scriptures according to Hebrews,” 135.

⁶³ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel: Teach the Text Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 9. Jebusites were the Canaanites who were the former occupants of Jerusalem until David conquered and turned it into his capital. These Canaanites in the time of the priest-king Melchizedek were known to worship the most high god “EL” (the Supreme God), who is the etymological equivalent to Israel’s Yahweh. The term ‘EL’ does not associate with Israel, but ‘Yahweh’ has a covenantal significance and can be used as the God of Israel. Thus, the sameness of ‘EL’ as the true living God compared to Yahweh is still debatable. Christians interpret the way it is mentioned in Genesis 14 as our patriarch Abraham accepted and paid homage to this mysterious priest-king, which is based on Abraham’s recognition of Melchizedek to be his fellow believer in a one true and living God. Yahweh is the covenantal name used by the nation of Israel.

⁶⁴ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Livonia, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 102–27.

⁶⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Handbook on Hebrews through Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), 22.

the order of Melchizedek in Hebrews 5:6 is a different kind of priestly order established outside the tribe of Levi and the Aaronic order for the Levitical priesthood. Thus, Yahweh ordained Christ in His current status as a high priest in the same manner the Levite priests are ordained. Christ, a new high priest in charge, does the same functions required by the Aaronic priesthood for the sake of Yahweh's people in their needs.

The superiority of Christ's priesthood matters most over the Levitical laws in the Torah and all the priestly functions in the past, present, and future. His sacrificial works were superior and better than the Levitical ones (Heb 7:27) since He did not apply any animal sacrifices. In addition, Christ's priesthood is heavenly since the Levitical priesthood represents only the earthly priesthood foreshadowing what Christ would do later on the cross. Moreover, His priesthood in Psalm 110 is like the Melchizedekian priesthood without genealogy and heredity. Thus, His priesthood is superior to Melchizedek, the earthly priest-king for a particular time, not a perpetual priest.

Peaceful or Conquering Priest-King

Psalm 110:1 tells the story of the conquering priest-king, but it becomes the *Sitz im Leben* for many scholars to connect this Psalm with the New Testament's appearance of Christ as a peaceful king. Scholars like Richard Purcell resolve this *crux* by claiming that warfare and priesthood were integrated within the role of the king in the ancient Near East.⁶⁶ There are many facets of understanding Jewish Messianic views in Midrashim (an ancient commentary version of Hebrew Tanakh, attached to the biblical text). For instance, Rivka Ulmer conveys a specific explanation of Messiah Ephraim who is a descendant of Jacob through adoption according to

⁶⁶ Richard Anthony Purcell, "The King as Priest? Royal Imagery in Psalm 110 and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography," *JBL* 139, no. 2 (2020): 275–300.

Genesis 48:5. In the Jewish interpretation, Ephraimite Messiah has warlike characteristics.⁶⁷ She attempts to examine the messianic contours which may be applied to reconsider the different characteristics between Jesus and Ephraimite Messiah.

Some dramatic events in the Old Testament present Yahweh as a judgmental being who authorizes severe punishments. Yahweh destroyed all the earth's inhabitants by flood (Gen 6:17). Similarly, the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged with fire and brimstone descended from the sky (Gen 19). Yahweh also sent plagues on Egypt as punishment for what they had done to the Israelites. However, Jesus comes in the New Testament and offers a different approach with love and compassion, offering humankind forgiveness.⁶⁸ From the time of Balaam's prophecy to the resurrection of Jesus, as testified by the apostle Peter in Acts 2:14–41, the priestly function of Jesus culminates the third element of the Abrahamic covenant, which is to become the blessing to all nations (Gen 12:1–3). Jesus's disciples later carried out the Great Commission found in Matthew 28 and recommissioned in Acts 1:8, restating the “ends of the earth” reflected in the Psalter and some prophetic texts. In addition, Luke sees and portrays Jesus and His kingdom differently than Matthew, Mark, and John. However, Luke emphasizes Jesus's kingdom encompasses not only the Jews but all humanities. Interestingly, Luke's Gospel ended with the rejection of Jesus by his Jewish people in the native land. Thus, Luke-Acts includes the nature of salvific kingship linked with proclaiming Christ to the earth's ends.

Psalms 110 is Yahweh's direct utterance revealed to King David, designated as the Psalm of David, prophesizing that the future priest-king is the fulfillment in Christ. The mortal kings and priests did not last due to the destruction of the kingdoms and temples in history which

⁶⁷ Rivka Ulmer, “The Contours of the Messiah in *Pesiqta Rabbati*,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 106, no. 2 (April 2013): 115–44.

⁶⁸ For example, see John 3:16–17.

necessitates a far more superior king and priest. R. E. O. White states, “With the cessation of the Jewish monarchy, the notion of the divinely appointed kingship centered in the coming Messiah. Jesus cited the opening words of this psalm to disassociate himself from this militaristic conception.”⁶⁹ Initially, Jesus did not portray Himself as a militaristic Messiah during His earthly ministry to avoid people’s misconceptions over the messianic expectation. Eventually, Jesus will become a conquering king by subduing all the enemies when His messianic reign began on earth. Therefore, T. Ernest Wilson writes as follows:

The reign of Messiah will commence with a judgement, first on the united armies surrounding Jerusalem at the battle of Armageddon, and then on the living nations, the survivors of the great tribulation (Matthew 25:3–46). Those who have accepted the messengers and the gospel of the kingdom during tribulation days will go into the kingdom, but those who have rejected it will go into everlasting punishment which was prepared for the devil and his angels.⁷⁰

With different perspectives, White and Wilson describe the progression of Jesus’s role from the peaceful to the conquering stage. Jesus claimed His identity as a priest-king Messiah declared and appointed by Yahweh. The book of Acts extends the Gospel of Luke by reaching out to the whole world as Jesus’s priestly ministry. Additionally, the works/acts of the apostles represented Christ’s peaceful kingship activities to advance the kingdom. The message of the kingdom of God and the Gospels eventually reached Rome, the center of the Roman empire (the known world) beyond Jerusalem. Thus, the title “The Psalm of David” has a compelling tone to declare Yahweh’s new era of establishing His kingdom, unlike any other nations that have ever existed through a decisive outright victory of the conquering priest-king Messiah over all the enemies.

⁶⁹ R. E. O. White, “Psalms,” in *Baker Commentary on the Bible Based on the NIV*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 393. Jesus’s quotation of Psalm 110 can be seen in Matthew 26:63–64; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 1:32.

⁷⁰ T. Ernest Wilson, *The Messianic Psalms* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc. 1978), 153.

Qumran's Messianism and the Teacher of Righteousness

The Qumran community⁷¹ held a different position than the Davidic prophecy of one priest-king Messiah in Psalm 110, and believed there would be two Messiahs: a royal Messiah representing Israel's rulership and a priestly Messiah who keeps the temple worship system.⁷² In addition to the view of two Messiahs, their Community Rule (1QS⁷³ 9:11) mentions another Messiah referenced as a singular "Messiah of Aaron and Israel,"⁷⁴ supporting a faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35a as a coming Messiah. However, the priest or "Messiah of Aaron" takes precedence over the "Messiah of Israel."⁷⁵ Thus, Qumranites' view does not align with the eschatological role of a faithful priest as the Aaronic lineage in light of 1 Samuel 2:35a, who will serve and minister to the priest-king Messiah prophesied in Psalms 110.

The Qumranites' view of a royal Messiah identifies the coming messiah as Davidic. Robert Knapp asserts, "Psalms of Solomon mentioned a specifically political messiah in the mould of King David. This would be a messiah who was descended from David and who would re-establish the Jewish kingdom."⁷⁶ N. A. Dahl observes that the early Jewish literature along with the Qumran library do not describe substantial messianic expectations. Dahl states: "All

⁷¹ C. D. Elledge, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 228–39. The Qumran Community, residing at the edge of the Dead Sea, was well acquainted with the known Roman historians like Pliny the Elder and Josephus in late antiquity. Although the Qumran community faded due to the Roman destruction and earthquake, they are still remembered for their contributions to the corpus of DSS and hope for different kinds of Messiah.

⁷² Derek S. Dodson and Katherine E. Smith, *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds: A Reader in Historical and Literary Contexts* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018), 191.

⁷³ The Community Rule discovered at Qumran Cave 1, also known as the Manual of Discipline, is designated 1QS, of which 'Q1' stands for Qumran Cave 1, and 'S' stands for 'Serekh,' which means 'rule'. Elledge, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," 234.

⁷⁴ Dodson and Smith, *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds*, 191.

⁷⁵ Al Wolters, "The Messiah in the Qumran Documents," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanly E. Porter (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 75.

⁷⁶ Robert Knapp, *The Dawn of Christianity: People and Gods in a Time of Magic and Miracles* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 121.

four Gospels presuppose that the term ‘the Anointed One’ was in common use.”⁷⁷ Thus, the Qumranites’ messianic expectations contradict the Gospels’ proclamation, which underscores the eschatological nature of the messianic kingdom. However, their view on acknowledging a Davidic descendant as a messiah is noteworthy. Knapp argues the importance of Qumranites’ contribution: “If we did not have the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, we would thus have virtually no idea of a future messiah from the house of King David who would appear to carry out Yahweh’s wishes for the Jewish nation.”⁷⁸ Qumranites’ view of the royal Messiah is highly motivated by the reality of the first-century Jews’ struggle to overthrow Roman rule. The Jews believed that the days of Messiah would bring their hopes and expectations by delivering them from their enemies rather than the person of the messiah.⁷⁹ This messianic figure of political deliverance from foreign enemies is someone like King David. Thus, their divergent messianic expectations⁸⁰ related to royal messianism are based on their patriotic and nationalistic ideologies to enjoy peace and prosperity.

The Qumran priestly messianism is related to restoring the true priesthood under the law. Thus, the Qumran community was led by the priest in anonymity who is known as “the teacher of righteousness.”⁸¹ The Qumranites held their own community standards drawn by their leader to follow the strict rules particularly designed for the priests in the Levitical system of worship

⁷⁷ N. A. Dahl, “Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 383.

⁷⁸ Knapp, *The Dawn of Christianity*, 122.

⁷⁹ Shailer Mathews, “The Jewish Messianic Expectation in the Time of Jesus,” *The Biblical World* 12, no. 6 (December 1898): 437–43.

⁸⁰ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Chicago, IL: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 425. For instance, Rabbi Akiba claimed Simon Bar Kokhba as the Messiah, who led the second Jewish revolt in AD 132–35. The Sadducees have their own view of Messiah as the one who does the work of restoration.

⁸¹ Michael A. Rydelnik, “The Teacher of Righteousness: A Messianic Interpretation of Joel 2:23,” *BSac* 176 (April–June 2019): 164–73.

from the Torah. The purity or holiness of the priests is their number one priority in practicing their way of life, although they were not involved with sacrificial activities in their community.⁸² Ed Condra argues that Qumran's priestly messianism resulted from the Hasmonean priests, who claimed to be priest-kings but failed to fulfill their priestly duties.⁸³ Similarly, Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald support Condra's argument by pointing out the Qumranites' opposition to Hasmonean priests. There are various positions on identifying the leader of the Qumran community. Scholars such as Andre Dupont-Sommer and Michael Wise argue that the teacher of righteousness is a messiah who preceded Jesus.⁸⁴ In contrast, Alvar Ellegård posits that the teacher of righteousness arrived as the precursor to Jesus about 150 years before the written Gospels.⁸⁵ Ellegård assumes the word 'Damascus' from "the Damascus Document"⁸⁶ appears to be used symbolically, referring to exile. Thus, Ellegård interprets this as evidence that the Damascus mentioned in the book of Acts is Qumran. Paul was on his way to Qumran instead of Damascus when he had a vision of Jesus (Acts 9).⁸⁷ Dupont-Sommer, Wise, and Ellegård's interpretations do not align with Paul's messianic view. In addition, Qumran's messianism based on the teacher of righteousness is not the same as the New Testament's messianic view. R. Glenn Wooden claims, "We need to be clear that the New Testament writers were not connected

⁸² C. D. Elledge, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," 228–39.

⁸³ Ed Condra, *Salvation for the Righteous Revealed: Jesus amid Covenantal and Messianic Expectations in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 204.

⁸⁴ John J. Collins, "A Messiah before Jesus," in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 16–17.

⁸⁵ Alvar Ellegård, *Jesus—One Hundred Years Before Christ* (London, UK: Century Press, 1999), 285–314.

⁸⁶ According to Ellegård, "Damascus Document" supports his theory since the document states that the Essenes moved to Damascus outside Jerusalem.

⁸⁷ Ellegård, *Jesus—One Hundred Years Before Christ*, 123.

to the Qumran community in a genetic way.”⁸⁸ Thus, the Qumran’s messianism and the teacher of righteousness do not align with Yahweh’s appointed eschatological priest-king Messiah (Ps 110), which reveals Yahweh’s faithfulness in fulfilling the Law and Old Testament covenants.

Terrien’s Interpretation of David’s First Oracle in Psalm 110

The superiority of the priest-king as the King above all kings is first prophesied in Psalm 110, and later Christ Himself proclaimed that He fulfilled that prophecy. Matthew 22:41–23:39 and Mark 12:35–44 mentioned that Christ is recognized as the Lord of King David by directly quoting Psalm 110. Samuel Terrien asserts:

The expression ‘oracle of the Lord,’ spoken at the beginning of [verse 1], is found only here in the Hebrew Bible. It appears in Deutero-Isaiah at the end of a whole poem (Isa 56:8; cf. Num 24:3, 4, 15, 16). In this psalm it introduces, in solemn tone, a declaration, possibly of parapsychic nature, a literary gem of only five words. The psalmist sings as a prophet, and repeats a message from God to a human sovereign. The whole sequence following presupposes that the sovereign is new, and the word ‘Zion’ indicates that he will be king of Judah.⁸⁹

Terrien’s interpretation of Psalm 110’s first oracle points to the messianic idea in Judaism and hope for the salvation of the Jews as he stresses the word ‘Zion’. His interpretation is in agreement with Christ’s statement regarding the salvation, which comes from the Jews (John 4:22). Similarly, the Old Testament prophecies, the apocryphal writings (about 500 BC to AD 70), the Talmudic writings by Jewish sages of medieval times, and Hasidic Lubavitchers on the Messianic hope in Judaism have been the consistent testimony of Jews and Judaism, which, in large part, anticipates the coming of the Messiah.⁹⁰ The first oracle found in Psalm 110 supports

⁸⁸ R. Glenn Wooden, “Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 118.

⁸⁹ Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 752.

⁹⁰ Roy H. Schoeman, *Salvation is from the Jews* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2003), 73.

Christ's kingship tied to the Davidic throne in light of Jewish messianic hopes and dreams.

Whenever the word 'Zion' is stressed, there is a relationship between the priest-king Melchizedek and the conquering eschatological priest-king (Gen 14; Ps 2:1–11; 110:4–5).

Regarding the usage of 'Zion,' J. J. M. Roberts observes the significant motif of the word Zion:

"Zion is Yahweh's holy mountain and thus, by implication, that Yahweh would protect it."⁹¹

Thus, Terrien's interpretation linking King David's first oracle to the Jewish Messianic expectation based on the word 'Zion' supports the glorious universality of priest-king.

During the Second Temple period, the term Messiah is only used by John's Gospel to accentuate how Jesus matches Jewish messianic hope. D. A. Carson suggests a distinct delineation of John 4:26, "Jesus should unambiguously declare himself to be the Messiah to a Samaritan, but not to his own people. For many Jews, the title 'Messiah' carried so much political and military baggage."⁹² John's Gospel is the only one that emerges wittingly to proclaim Jesus's true identity apart from the kingdom of God motif. It is naturally acceptable that John was already aware, or in full knowledge of the prior-existence and circulation of the three Gospels. Thus, it is assumable that John wanted to go another ... direction of writing his gospel differently than Matthew, Mark, and Luke. However, one thing should be kept in mind that John himself was Jesus's beloved disciple who walked alongside other gospel authors like Matthew. Thus, John's revelation of Jesus's messianic identity (John 4:26) is a result of his close association with Jesus differently than the Synoptics. John, being a part of Jesus's inner circle, knew that Jesus was the Messiah.

⁹¹ J. J. M. Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 323.

⁹² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Co., 1991), 227.

Arnold's pro-Davidic assertion supports Terrien's view:

Jesus comes to establish the kingdom of God, as David established and built the kingdom of God in old Israel. what we mean in our confession of Jesus as the Christ is to affirm the messianic expectations of 1–2 Samuel, their interpretation in Israel's Scriptures, and the Christological development of these expectations in the pages of the New Testament.⁹³

Terrien made apparent all the literal and theological implications that Jesus culminates the Jewish messianic hopes behind the books of Samuel. Many Jews during Second Temple Judaism were politically motivated as they believed that when the Messiah came, he would deliver them from their enemies and reinstate Israel for the sake of establishing Yahweh's kingdom among the nations. In the apocryphal writings, 1 Maccabees reveals the eschatological kingdom of Messiah on earth. The book of Enoch 40:1–6 describes the Son of Man as Messiah. Psalms of the Pharisees 17:23–51 regards the Messiah as a Davidic King, Yahweh's vassal king. The book of Jubilees entails the messianic leadership expelling the Romans from Palestine and restoring the kingdom of God as the hope of the Zealot party.⁹⁴ Terrien's interpretation of King David's first oracle in Psalm 110:1–3 is considerably messianic in light of Jewish expectation but not assertive in prophetic nature to magnify the characteristic of Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Terrien's interpretation supported the contributions of most apocryphal literature in the Second Temple period.

The Eschatological Role of a Faithful Priest/Priesthood

The Old Testament priesthood is embedded in the existence of the Levitical priesthood in the history of ancient Israel. The prophecy of Yahweh's new priesthood (Ps 110:4a) to a Davidic

⁹³ Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 652.

⁹⁴ Mathews, "The Jewish Messianic Expectation in the Time of Jesus," 437–43.

son becoming a priest-king is similar to the prophecy of raising a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35a). This underlines the historical significance of the Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament. The existence of the Levitical priesthood connects the role of a faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35a and the new ministry of a priest-king in Psalm 110. Additionally, the function of the Levitical priesthood related to the priest-king in Psalm 110 is fulfilled in Christ. According to Tremper Longman, the verbal form of the term *Messiah* is *māšah*, and the noun (or adjective) *māšīah* usually refers to consecration rituals. In the Torah, this term refers to priests consecrated for Yahweh's cultic work. However, in the Psalter, the reference is made to Israelite kings to reflect the custom and usage of the narratives of Samuel-Kings.⁹⁵ Most of the time in the Old Testament, however, the term Christ/Messiah is used as a substantivized noun to reflect the Greek and Hebrew words for Yahweh's anointed one, especially denoting Jesus Christ.⁹⁶ Thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest in this research delves into God's covenantal faithfulness in the Levitical priesthood to align with the messianic role of the Davidic priest-king analogy in Psalm 110.

The priest-king in Psalm 110 is a divinely appointed priest who will fulfill priestly and kingly duties of Yahweh's instructions in the Torah. However, the priest-king concept is still an ongoing debate among scholars as Allen notes, "The unique reference to the king's role as *khn*, 'priest,' raises the controversial issue of Israelite sacral or sacerdotal kingship."⁹⁷ The role of this research is not to solve the mystery of a priest-king as Allen stated but to inform the scholarship to reveal the faithfulness in Yahweh's priesthood. The essential role of the Levitical priesthood is

⁹⁵ Tremper Longman III, "The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley Porter et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 231.

⁹⁶ Marvin C Pate, *Handbook for New Testament Exegesis: Interpreting Revelation and other Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2016), 234.

⁹⁷ Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 116.

crucial to understand Yahweh's faithfulness. The unfaithfulness of the Levitical priests is the most visible in the book of Malachi in terms of their observance of the priestly covenant and noncompliance with Mosaic laws. Malachi's observation of unfaithful Levitical priests in his time will further spotlight the faithful duties required of Yahweh's new promised priest in Psalm 110:4.

Scholars such as Julius Wellhausen, Hermann Gunkel, Deborah Rookie, Gillis Gerleman, Sigmund Mowinckel, and Walther Eichrodt disregard the biblical theology of the Old Testament priesthood associated with the Levites and priests. Additionally, these scholars present Psalm 110 in the post-exilic setting to neglect the essential role of the Levitical priesthood rooted in Israel's history.⁹⁸ Bruce Waltke refutes the critical scholars' theories:

These scholars give primacy to its inferential historical use as part of the coronation ritual for David's non-supernatural sons or for a post-exilic priest ... re-interprets the original intention of the psalm. According to them, an exclusively human son of David during Israel's pre-exilic monarchy is the lord and priest-king celebrated in the psalm, and it uses courtly hyperbole, not necessarily substantial prophecy. Most deny Davidic authorship, and some deny the psalm's unity.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Wellhausen denied the distinction between Levites and priests, which was established in the Torah during the pre-exilic times long before the prophet Malachi. Likewise, Wellhausen treated the role of Zadokian priests mentioned in Ezekiel in the same way as the role of Christian clergy without Levitical heritage; this interpretation can be understood as the transfer of priestly authority from person to person not merited by blood; see Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, trans. J. S. Black and Allan Menzies (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1994), vii, 367–68, 425. Gunkel's categorical analysis of Psalm 110 as a royal psalm lessens unique properties that describe the duties of the messianic priest-king in terms of eschatological and messianic fulfillment; see the section "Psalm 110 as the Royal Psalm." Deborah Rookie denies the plausibility of conflating king and priest in a messianic role. See Rooke, "Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy," 208. Gillis Gerleman suggests that Psalm 110 was written in the Maccabean period (141 BC); see Gillis Gerleman, "Psalm 110," *VT* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 1981): 1–19. Likewise, Sigmund Mowinckel asserts, "The conception of the king held in Israel was fundamentally the same as in the rest of the ancient East"; see Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Dearborn, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 50. Walther Eichrodt asserts that "royal psalms such as Pss. 2; 45; 72; 110 present features of the court style and the king-mythology of the ancient Near East which could only have percolated into Israel from her heathen environment"; see Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker (London: SCM Press, 1961), 125. These scholars jeopardize the authorial intent of Psalm 110 to derail the whole essence of a priest-king. The Levitical priesthood directs historical and theological perspectives to highlight Yahweh's purpose for the existence of the Israel's religion.

⁹⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, "Psalm 110: An Exegetical and Canonical Approach," in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*, ed. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 63.

Waltke explains the authorial intent of Psalm 110:1–3. These scholars jeopardize the nature of the ultimate priest-king, fully characterized and materialized in the human Jesus Christ, fulfilling the Old Testament’s priestly and messianic expectations. Thus, the role of this research is to inform the scholarship to reveal the faithfulness in Yahweh’s priesthood. The authorial intent of Psalm 110 is crucial to understand the requirement of faithfulness in Yahweh’s ministry. These scholars’ views marginalized the biblical theology of the Old Testament priesthood associated with the Levites and priests to discover covenantal significance in Yahweh’s priestly ministry. Thus, these scholars neglected the theme of connecting the faithfulness of Yahweh to His own people and His appointed priests.

The covenantal faithfulness is highlighted in the divine oath (Ps 110:4a), and thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest is a novelty in biblical research. Little is known or traceable in the history of biblical scholarship that emphasizes faithfulness in the priestly ministry of the priest-king Messiah. For instance, Matthew Emadi in his book, *Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical Theology*, states, “The goal of this book is not to develop a biblical theology of the priesthood but to consider how the union of priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 fits in the canonical context of the Bible.”¹⁰⁰ He draws the Scripture’s redemptive-creation storyline and Psalm 110’s royal priesthood analogy together from a biblical-theological perspective. However, his lack of analysis in the Levitical priests’ unfaithfulness in their ministry weakens the significance of the priest-king analogy in Psalm 110. Additionally, Jared Compton in his book, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, analyses how the author of Hebrews argues for Christ’s fulfillment of Psalm 110 through His humanity, suffering, and resurrection.¹⁰¹ Using

¹⁰⁰ Matthew Emadi, *ROYAL PRIEST: Psalm 110 in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022), xxiv.

¹⁰¹ Jared Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 12.

the logic of Hebrews, he analyzes Psalm 110 and identifies the superiority of Christ's high priest without acknowledging Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness in the past Levitical priesthood. Thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest further connects the past role of Levitical priesthood to a new priestly ministry of a priest-king in Psalm 110.

The eschatological role of a faithful priest delves into the authorial intent of Psalm 110, which reveals the prophetic and covenantal significance of kingship and priesthood in Yahweh's covenants. The authorial intent of Psalm 110 plays a significant role in the Psalter to understand the nature of David's psalm. Barry Webb articulates well-intended meanings that any original authors might have for the text, "Any formulation of authorial purpose would have to emerge from a consideration of the object and formal characteristics of the text as a whole, and would take account of the fact that an author may conceivably have more than one purpose, not all equally in view in any one paragraph or section."¹⁰² Focusing on the authorial purpose could bring up a sound theological interpretation based on its literary context. Psalm 110's structure includes two divine oracles: verses 1–3 consist of the first oracle, which is to declare the king, and verses 4–7 belong to the second oracle of an oath of the priest. Both oracles are based on the historical narrative in 2 Samuel 7:8–16, in which Yahweh delivers His message through the prophet. The Hebrew word *דָּבָרָאִי*, 'the order,' in Psalm 110:4b is also debatable to be completely understood as just referring to the physical lineage alone or not. Thus, the theological rationale based on typological and antitypical identifications is required to understand Jesus as a type of Melchizedek or Melchizedek as a type of Christ.

¹⁰² Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 29.

A new approach will help consider how this prophecy has changed the Old Testament priesthood's course into a new priestly ministry. This approach clarifies the prophecies of "a faithful priest" in 1 Samuel 2:35*a* and "a priest forever" in Psalm 110:4*b*, which are being fulfilled. There will be a shared responsibility between a faithful priest of Aaronic lineage (1 Sam 2:35*a*) and the priest-king of Jesus Christ (Ps 110:4*b*). Bringing these two prophecies together with the essential role of priests' faithfulness required by Yahweh is novel for this research. The role of a faithful priest extracted from both prophecies aligns with the Hebrew tradition's understanding of the books of Joshua through Kings as 'Earlier or Former Prophets'. The Hebrew prophets are involved with Yahweh's history-making by fulfilling the Torah portion from the prophecy of the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) to be later fulfilled in Jesus as the priest-king of Davidic prophecy (Ps 110). Yahweh accomplishes His promise of a redemptive plan through the works of Hebrew prophets. Indeed, it will eventually bridge Psalm 110's prophecy and New Testament's proclamation of Jesus as a king for the Millennial Kingdom. The eschatological role of a faithful priest/priesthood binds both the role of the Levitical priesthood and the fulfillment of messianic prophecies in the ministry of king-priest Christ.

Scholars like Wellhausen, Gunkel, Mowinckel, Gerleman, and Eichrodt discredit the earlier writing and establishment of the priest-king analogy in Psalm 110. From the critical-historical standpoint, they directly or indirectly proposed different views to discredit Yahweh's faithfulness in establishing and maintaining the Levitical priesthood in Israelite history. These scholars do not biblically interpret the history of the Old Testament priesthood based on covenantal faithfulness. Their critical scholarship does not connect Jesus and the priest-king Messiah. Their views diminish the Old Testament concept of the priesthood from Jesus's role as Messiah. Thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest in this research explains both God's

covenantal faithfulness in the Levitical priesthood and the Davidic kingship through the fulfillment of the Davidic prophecy in Psalm 110. The unfaithfulness in the line of Levitical priesthood has caused changes in the order of priesthood and their responsibilities; thus, the requirement of faithfulness in the ministry of priesthood is demonstrated through God's covenantal faithfulness in history. New research is required to connect Yahweh's faithfulness to His people and the ministry of the faithful priesthood. It is a novelty to approach faithfulness as the premise to unfold the prophecy of a priest-king in Psalm 110.

CHAPTER 3: PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT OF PSALM 110

Psalm 110 prophesies the Messiah, who is the non-Levitical priest, in the order of Melchizedek (Gen14:19). However, Christ's role as the priest-king not only fulfilled Psalm 110's prophecy but also what the Levitical priesthood anticipated. Christ's priesthood pertains to the sacrificial works that the Levitical priesthood was obliged to accomplish in Yahweh's worship system. Yahweh introduced the priestly ideology and appointed the Aaronic household to represent His holiness. The inception of priest-king delves into Israel's incompetent spiritual and national leaders and reveals Christ's messianic identity that ultimately fulfills the Davidic prophecy in Psalm 110. This research underscores the legitimacy of Christ's accomplished works and priest-king duties in the coming Millennial Kingdom. Psalms 110 lists a set of qualifications required to become a priest-king. Levites do not meet those requirements. David's prophecy describes a need for change in the Levitical priesthood with a new law and order. Apart from Jesus of Nazareth, no one can take the role of that vacancy. Jesus Christ, whom historical King David proclaimed as Lord (Ps 110:1), is the only viable person to be a priest-king to oversee all the priestly functions outlined in the Levitical order. The prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 110 in Christ affirms God's covenantal faithfulness in the Old Testament priesthood and kingship to sustain an everlasting relationship between Yahweh and His people.

Different interpretive methods have been utilized in the past to analyze the dual role of a priest-king described in Psalm 110 for centuries. For instance, the *munus triplex*, or the three Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king, is frequently used in the Reformed Tradition to describe the work of Christ. In Israel, these positions were allocated to one solitary person,

although each person held a divine appointment to his position.¹ Scholars like Julius Wellhausen and Hermann Gunkel, in the twentieth century, reconstruct the history of Israelite priesthood and kingship.² Their views lessen the prophetic and covenantal significance of the priestly and kingly functions that belong to the future Davidic Messiah. Similarly, the recent scholarship of Psalm 110 is overwhelmed with arguments based on the royal priesthood analogy and the justification given by the author of Hebrews. For instance, although Emadi and Compton used the logic related to the royal priesthood and Hebrews in their recent biblical scholarship, they show little interest in arguing the role of covenantal obligation in the priesthood.³ The further emphasis of the covenantal faithfulness required of a priest can clarify a new kind of priesthood that fulfills Yahweh's promise. Thus, this chapter analyzes biblical scholarship that neglects the essential role of the Levitical priesthood rooted in Israel's history.

The Dual Role of the Priest-King

The dual role of Christ as a priest-king in Psalm 110 has been marked as the underlying principle to shape the foundation on which Yahweh will establish His future kingdom. Bruce Waltke observes that there is still a gap in modern scholarship, which is the New Testament writers' distortion of the authorial intent of the psalmists.⁴ He disagrees that New Testament writers distorted Psalm 110's authorial intent. In addition, Waltke alerts the modern reader to the

¹ Jonathan Pratt, "Prophets, Priests, and Kings: A Contested Framework for Church Leadership," *Reformed Theological Review* 79, no. 3 (Dec 2020): 186.

² For instance, the utilization of source and form criticism for reinterpreting the priesthood and kingship outside literary and biblical research rejects the essential service of the Levitical priesthood representing Christ's atonement for sins on the cross. The Levitical priesthood directs both historical and theological perspectives to highlight Yahweh's purpose for the existence of Israel's religion.

³ Emadi, *Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical Theology*, xxiv; Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, 12.

⁴ Waltke, "Psalm 110: An Exegetical and Canonical Approach," 63.

weakness of modern scholars who use the New Testament as the sole method of interpreting Psalm 110. Paralleling Waltke's statement, the analysis of Psalm 110 in this research starts from the prophecy given to Samuel from Yahweh. The historical-grammatical method in this research examines the Levitical priests' failures and the fulfillment of Psalm 110 through the Messiah's faithfulness, filling the gap in modern scholarship. Psalm 110 contributes to the formation of biblical theology and Christianity in the first century and beyond. This psalm has theological implications for both the Old and New Testaments. Correspondingly, premillennialists and progressive covenantalists' views further strengthen the relationship between Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness and the eschatological fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in Psalm 110. Most importantly, their biblical-theological rationale is based on the historical and grammatical analysis of the Scriptures to identify Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Psalm 110.

The driving force in the present analysis, the historical-grammatical method, connects Psalms 110 with Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness in the eschatological role of a faithful priest regarding the priest-king and the lineage of Aaron. This method delves into the meaning of the passage as the original author intended and what the original audience understood. Gentry and Wellum explain the importance of extracting the authorial intent buried in the text: "The best way to read Scripture and to draw theological conclusions is to interpret a given text of Scripture in its linguistic-historical, literary, redemptive-historical, and canonical context."⁵ This method allows the explanation of the nature of the priest-king not only through historical, biblical, and canonical lenses but also through the progressive fulfillment of prophecies and covenants.

Psalm 110 bypasses the requirement that a priest must come from the tribe of Levi and posits a priest-king as a semi-divine position to be inferred as the Messiah. From the historical

⁵ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 100.

aspect of this methodology, the origin of the priesthood in the history of the Levites is critical to bridge the gap between the functions of Levites and priests during the days of exile and the functions of Jesus as a priest-king according to Psalm 110. For instance, critical scholars such as Gerleman and Eichrodt lessen the important role of Levitical priesthood in Israel's history by reinventing their own hypothesis as a post-exilic development.⁶ Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness in the eschatological role of a faithful priest directs the historical-grammatical investigation to review the essential role of the Levitical priesthood associated with Christ's atonement. Thus, this method affirms that the Levitical priesthood was developed in the time of Moses, as opposed to critical scholars' views. Grammatically, the terms associated with priestly functions before and after the exile incorporate the exact nature of the system as ordained by Yahweh in the Torah. This methodology will eventually spotlight the essential role of a faithful priesthood through God's covenantal faithfulness in future priestly and kingly functions of the Davidic Messiah without neglecting the participation of the Levitical priestly line. This concept of faithfulness is essential in appointing Zadokite priests from the time of Solomon to Ezekiel, who are later affirmed as the Levitical priests ministering to Jesus the priest-king Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, the historical and grammatical understanding of Psalm 110 fills the gap in understanding the dual roles of the coming priest-king Messiah, who is overseeing both responsibilities without vacating the duties of a faithful priest in Aaron's lineage.

Psalm 110 describes a new ministry of the Davidic priest-king Messiah that fulfills Yahweh's promises regarding kingship and priesthood. The Old Testament priesthood is embedded in the existence of the Levitical priesthood in the history of ancient Israel. The prophecy of Yahweh's new priesthood (Ps 110:4a) to a Davidic son becoming a priest-king is

⁶ Gerleman, "Psalm 110," 1–19; Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 125.

similar to the prophecy of raising up a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35a). This specifically underlines a historical prospect of Yahweh's messianic priest-king prophesied in Psalm 110. However, various interpretations in the past are inundated with the overemphasis on history rather than theology.

Theological Significance of Kingship and Priesthood

Yahweh's kingdom promise is the primary theme of Psalm 110 based on historical King David and Melchizedek. However, the historical reconstruction has damaged the image of Psalm 110's priesthood. For instance, the critical interpretations⁷ to alter the historical background of this psalm and reconstruct the Levites' origins have had repercussions on contemporary biblical scholarship. Nelson asserts that the scholarly literature in this century has focused primarily on the issues of historical reconstruction to minimize the theology of priesthood to allude that, "the Bible has taken a backseat to its history."⁸ The overemphasis of the history and strife among the Levitical priests does not address the main issues related to Yahweh's original purpose for

⁷ Scholars such as Julius Wellhausen, Hans-Joachim Kraus and Bernard Duhm have critically lessened the importance of the priest-king analogy and the fulfillment of Davidic prophecy in Psalm 110 through historical and theological arguments. Their critical views diminish the role of Levitical priesthood in the aspect of ministering to the priest-king in the Millennial Kingdom. Henry King points out that Wellhausen's late date of Genesis 14 contradicts the revelation of the priest-king Messiah in the order of Melchizedek in Psalm 110 by stating, "Wellhausen assigns still another reason for the late date of the psalm [110], which needs only a moment's consideration. [Wellhausen] says: 'The comparison with Melchizedek brings the date of the psalm very low, because the narrative in Gen. 14 is of extremely late origin. Such conclusion will have little weight with those who utterly disbelieve his premise, especially, as we have seen, since the whole New Testament is arrayed against it'" (King, *The Messiah in the Psalms*, 68). Wellhausen reconstructs the Levitical priesthood as a post-exilic cultic institution, which was progressively developed without Yahweh's commands (Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 129–135); Kraus supports Wellhausen's theory of Psalm 110's late date composition corresponding to the time of the Maccabees. Additionally, he believes that the psalmist likely copied some literary elements from Rameses's papyrus in Egyptian archives, such as enthronement (v. 1), investiture (v. 2), homage (v. 3), installment of a priest (v. 4), and victory over the enemies (vv. 5–7). Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 346. For Duhm, the first oracle of Psalm 110 was redacted for political interest because the Maccabees legitimized their priest-king status in light of the Melchizedekian tradition and attempted to wipe out the Zadokite lineage. Bernard Duhm, *Die Psalmen: Erklärt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922), 400.

⁸ Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), ix.

instituting the Levitical priesthood. Thus, Peter Leithart notes, “Though occluded in the Old Testament text, the *real* history of Israel’s priesthood and hence of Israel’s religion, is one of continual strife between various self-interested priestly families and between temple priests jealous of their privileges and country Levites seeking a piece of the sacrificial pie.”⁹

Consequently, the biblical scholarship has been particularly focused on the conflict and strife between the Levites and the history of the Old Testament priesthood. Therefore, a focus on the history highlights the fallen nature of humanity in contrast to the theology which illumines the holiness of God intended for the priesthood.

The scholarship that entirely focuses on the literary genre of the Psalter also distracts from the theological significance of Yahweh’s kingship and priesthood in Psalm 110. For instance, Walther Eichrodt asserts that “royal psalms such as Pss. 2; 45; 72; 110 present features of the courtstyle and the king-mythology of the ancient Near East which could only have percolated into Israel from her heathen environment.”¹⁰ J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays allude to the nature of psalms as, “examples of how to communicate our deepest emotions and needs to God.”¹¹ These scholars prioritize their research of the writers’ feelings and emotions in the Psalter based on the classifications (hymns, penitential, wisdom, royal, messianic, imprecatory, and lament) made by Herman Gunkel.¹² These classifications could mitigate the impact of both the Torah and the Old Testament prophecies in Psalm 110. Unlike these critical approaches, Psalm 110 reveals Yahweh’s appointment of a new priest through the Hebrew phrase, עֶלְי־דָבָרָתִי

⁹ Peter J. Leithart, “Attendants of Yahweh’s House: Priesthood in the Old Testament,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 85, no. 24 (September 1, 1999): 4.

¹⁰ Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker (London: SCM Press, 1961), 1: 125.

¹¹ J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 363.

¹² Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, 16.

מֶלֶכ־יִצְדָק, ‘after the order of Melchizedek’ (Ps 110:4b), which is significant because it points to the new order of priesthood. Indeed, the priest-king in Psalm 110 is divinely appointed. This psalm has historical-theological significance: (1) historically, it was assumably written during the Davidic-Solomonic reign of the pre-exilic era (2) theologically, King David and Solomon served as Yahweh’s vassal kings obeying Torah’s instructions under the supervision of the Levitical priests. The theocratic values in the Israelite monarchy in the pre-exilic times have the historical-theological foundation of the priesthood. Thus, the fulfillment of Psalm 110 through the Davidic priest-king Messiah’s eternal and faithful ministry reveals intertextual references in the Old and New Testaments.

The Development of Covenant Fulfillment in the Biblical Canon

This research presupposes the biblical inerrancy¹³ and the continuity of the canon¹⁴ to inform the priestly role of the Davidic Messiah in fulfillment of Psalm 110. The historical essence of the Old Testament priesthood is embedded in the two prophecies regarding the promised priests in 1 Samuel 2:35 and Psalm 110. This includes specific references to the faithful priest, pointing to Christ’s priestly and kingly functions as well as Aaron’s lineage as a faithful priest ministering to the priest-king. These two priests are different in terms of their respective roles, yet they both have a shared responsibility in eschatology. To investigate this

¹³ Paul D. Feinberg suggests that the most common terms associated with inerrancy are inspiration, infallibility, infallibility, and without error. Paul D. Feinberg, “The Meaning of Inerrancy,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 287.

¹⁴ Brevard Childs sees a canonical approach as “interpreting the biblical text in relation to a community of faith and practice for whom it served a particular theological role as possessing divine authority.” Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 74. The New Testament writers like Mark, Luke, and Paul believed that the prophecy about the priest-king in Psalm 110 is none other than their Lord, Christ Himself (Mark 12:36; 14:62, Luke 20 41–44; 1 Cor 15:25, Heb 5:1–6, 6:20; 7:4–7, 17–24). The apostles and early Christians in the first century acknowledged that Christ’s sacrificial atonement on the cross has embodied the Old Testament’s Levitical atonement for sins.

relationship of fulfillment, one must accept the presupposition that Yahweh works in Israelite history not only by making covenants but also by revealing prophecies to the faithful patriarchs. Yahweh's prophecies and covenants are firmly rooted in the character of God revealed in the Scriptures through human authorship apart from man's own intuition.¹⁵

Yahweh's promises are unfolded through the covenantal relations that ultimately result in the Davidic covenant. In terms of priesthood, Psalm 110's Davidic prophecy is all about a priest who is related to Melchizedek, not related to the Levitical order. However, that priest is related to the Davidic descendant. This is a prophecy but is also related to the covenantal framework of the priesthood developed over a period. Through the progressive development of covenant fulfillment, the priest-king in Psalm 110 is anti-typologically understood as Israel, son, priest, prophet, king, David, Melchizedek, etcetera regarding lesser or greater degrees of comparison.¹⁶ To correlate the prophetic books and the books of Samuels and Kings, the Psalter vividly portrays the Messiah as a faithful son of Yahweh who brings fulfillment of a new covenant as a storyline of a Davidic son, the hope of the nation, in Psalm 110. This son will stand as another David, not only as a conqueror/redeemer but as a priest who will carry the eternal priesthood. According to Arnold, the relationship between Jesus and the faithful priests was established in 1–2 Samuel.¹⁷ Jesus and the faithful priest are not identical, but a relationship exists between them. Thus, the fulfillment of Psalm 110 reveals the incompetence of the Levitical priesthood of the old covenant in demise yet affirms their faithful remnant to continue the Levitical service under the new covenant.

¹⁵ For instance, see 2 Sam 23:2; Isa 34:16; Jer 25:13, cf. 30:2, 36:1–32; Eccl 12:11.

¹⁶ Hamilton, *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns*, 69–72, 163–790.

¹⁷ Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*, 652.

The historicity of the Levitical priesthood points to the unified nature of the canon, as Christ's priestly function was foretold in Psalm 110. The apostles and early Christians in the first century acknowledged that Christ's sacrificial atonement on the cross embodied and fulfilled the Old Testament's Levitical atonement for sins. The apostles believed in the unity of the Scripture within the canon to affirm the existence of the Levitical priesthood in the Torah and the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110.¹⁸ For instance, the apostle Paul upheld the divine inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, saying, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16a, ESV). When Paul mentioned all Scripture in this verse, he alluded to the Old Testament. Thus, one has to start with the presupposition that the Old Testament is inerrant, and the priesthood was developed from the time of Moses. The blood atonement required by the Levitical priesthood (Lev 17:11) points toward Christ's finished work on the cross (John 19:30; Heb 9:22), a high priest sacrificing Himself as a lamb, and marks the crucifixion as the pinnacle of Yahweh's covenantal redemption, reflecting the unity of the canon.¹⁹ Thus, the concept of priesthood is presupposed in the prophecy of Psalm 110 and connects all covenants to one person who can be appointed as a priest-king. This concept is ultimately fulfilled in Christ. However, many Psalms and Old Testament prophetic texts do not exclusively identify Christ as the priest-king. Murphy warns of the fallacy of the Christocentric approach in every text of the Old Testament, including the Psalter.²⁰ Yahweh's promised kingdom in the Old Testament will be fulfilled in the

¹⁸ For example, see Exod 29:36–37; Lev 16:19–30; 30:10; Ps 2:7–8; 110:1, 4; Mark 12:36; Acts 2:34; Rom 1:1–6; Col 1:15–20; Heb 1:2–4; 2 Pet 1:9.

¹⁹ For example, see John 19:28–30. In verse 30 (ESV), [Jesus] said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." This was an act or decision based on the completion of his mission given to Him by His Father. The Greek word *tetelestai* "finished" is in the perfect tense from the root word *teleo*, which means "to finish or complete."

²⁰ Bryan Murphy, "From Old Testament Text to Sermon," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 142.

Millennial Kingdom through the priest-king prophesied in Psalm 110. Thus, this psalm reflects the theological positions held by premillennialists and progressive covenantalists.

The Literal Fulfillment of Psalm 110 in the Millennial Kingdom

The priest-king analogy in Psalm 110 has eschatological significance, which aligns with the view of premillennialism. Premillennialists believe Jesus will gather all Christians by means of the rapture.²¹ Christ's death on the cross as a sacrificial atonement has fulfilled the duties of the Levitical priesthood outlined in the Old Testament. At present, Christ is performing high-priestly duties in heaven (Heb 8:1; 9:11, 24) to fulfill the needs of believers on earth. According to Michael J. Vlach, the Millennial Kingdom is eschatological and will begin immediately after Christ's second coming. Satan's activities will be abolished due to his millennial confinement in the bottomless abyss. The saints will reign with Christ over the nations in the kingdom.²² Christ will gather the church, His bride; thus, the rapture will take place before the era of the Millennial Kingdom (1 Thess 4:16–17; Rev 19:14). Thus, Christ will perform His high-priestly duties at the literal millennial temple at His second coming.

The new covenant and the Davidic covenant are intertwined in fulfilling Yahweh's promise in Psalm 110. The nation of Israel is entitled to these two covenants. Additionally, both Israel and the Christian church can receive benefits from the new covenant (Jer 31:31, 37). Premillennialists hold the distinction between ethnic Israel and the church. Yahweh's promises for ethnic Israel are separate from the present church.²³ Jeffrey Khoo points out this distinction

²¹ Jeffrey Khoo, "Dispensational Premillennialism in Reformed Theology: The Contribution of J. O. Buswell to the Millennial Debate," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 4 (Dec 2001): 709.

²² Michael J. Vlach, "The Kingdom of God and the Millennium," *TMSJ* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2012), 226.

²³ Stephen J. Wellum, "Dispensational or Covenantal? Promise and Progress of Salvation in Christ," in *Desiring God* (February 21, 2023), <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/dispensational-or-covenantal>.

clarifies that the church has not replaced Israel.²⁴ Thus, premillennialists acknowledge that Israel and the church are separate in God's plan. Wellum affirms, "*Israel* refers to an ethnic, national people, and the *church* is *never* the transformed eschatological Israel in God's plan.... God has promised national Israel, first in the Abrahamic covenant and then reaffirmed by the prophets, the possession of the promised land under Christ's rule, which still awaits its fulfillment in the premillennial return of Christ and the eternal state."²⁵ The promise of the new covenant ties with the Davidic covenant. The new covenant is post-Davidic but reveals the fulfillment of Psalm 110's prophecy regarding premillennialism.

Amillennarians believe that the Millennial Kingdom began at Christ's first coming. However, it is a spiritual kingdom and is currently active, but it will end at Christ's second coming. The church and the Christians are already in the nonliteral millennial age under Christ's heavenly reign. Simultaneously, Satan is still active in deceiving believers to go astray although he has limited power. This view indicates that the Millennial Kingdom is in a precarious place because of Satan's influence while Christ is ruling.²⁶ In contrast, the premillennialists believe in the literal fulfillment of the rapture for the church to usher in the coming restoration of Israel in terms of their salvation and ethnicity. Postmillennarians believe,

The millennium is fulfilled spiritually now between the two comings of Christ ... Satan is restrained in his ability to deceive the nations, but he is still active. When the gospel has triumphed over all areas then Jesus will return. The world will get better and better and then Jesus comes again. Then the eternal state will be ushered in.²⁷

²⁴ Khoo, "Dispensational Premillennialism in Reformed Theology: The Contribution of J. O. Buswell to the Millennial Debate," 708.

²⁵ Wellum, "Dispensational or Covenantal? Promise and Progress of Salvation in Christ," n.p.

²⁶ Vlach, "The Kingdom of God and the Millennium," 226.

²⁷ Ibid.

However, they combine the doctrine of the rapture with Christ's second coming at the end of the age. Thus, they hold scant attention to the rapture.²⁸ Both amillenarians and postmillenarians spiritualize the aspect of the Millennial Kingdom as a current reality not eschatological. Additionally, they express similar ideas of nonliteral kingdom and repudiate the aspect of rapture that prompts Christ's second coming. They have denied the restoration of Israel since their views reflect only the role of the church and the Christians.²⁹ Thus, amillenarian and postmillenarians' contrasted views minimize the eschatological fulfillment of Psalm 110.

Premillennialists' belief in rapture fully supports the fulfillment of Psalm 110 in eschatology through Christ's return. Their position has more biblical facts to solve these problems than the other positions held by postmillennialists and amillennialists in this century. For instance, amillennialists do not accept the premillennialists' position of connoting the fact the Davidic covenant does not have a conclusive impact to fulfill the millennial prophecy. Amillennialists often attempt to deny the Old Testament's interpretation of a premillennial eschatology.³⁰ According to Lamar Eugene Cooper, the premillennialists interpret the battle between Christ and Satan as literal, which will later become a grand climax in history. After defeating Satan victoriously, Christ will establish His earthly kingdom for a thousand-year reign.³¹ The premillennial approach is more consistent and favorable to apply to the passages in Ezekiel 37–48 as apocalyptic. Thus, postmillennial and amillennial views are inadequate to give more reliable answers to complex issues related to the coming millennium kingdom and temple.

²⁸ John F. Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1964), 112–13.

²⁹ In contrast, premillennialists' view encompasses both Israel and the church because of their belief in the rapture.

³⁰ Walvoord, *The Nations, Israel, and the Church in Prophecy*, 83.

³¹ Lamar Eugene Cooper, Sr., *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture NIV Text* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 329.

The Davidic covenant is mentioned twice in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17, but it is confirmed in Psalm 89. These are Yahweh's promises and are not to be interpreted spiritually as the Christian church or Yahweh's heavenly reign. It refers to a literal earthly kingdom.³² Jon Levenson asserts that the notion of Mt. Zion in Ezekiel's vision in chapters 40–48 describes Christ's kingship as a God-human ruler. These chapters also indicate the revitalization of the ideal political state.³³ Thus, Ezekiel's prophecy best suits the view of premillennialists to explain the relationship between the coming kingdom and the reign of the priest-king Messiah.

At Christ's first coming, He planned to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). However, at His second coming, He will set up the kingdom as described in Ezekiel's visions. In doing so, Ezekiel's vision and premillennialism are in tune with King David's prophecy announcing that one of the future Davidic descendants will become a priest-king (Ps 110). Yahweh made a perpetual covenant with David to sustain his dynasty (2 Sam 7:11). In verse 13, Yahweh promised that one of the Davidic future descendants would fulfill Yahweh's promise of the eschatological temple and the kingdom. The Davidic covenant is the means to reinstate the Davidic rulership and reinforces the messianic connotation of the priest-king prophesied in Psalm 110. Kaiser asserts, "Psalm 110, then, is a direct and specific messianic psalm ... 'My Lord' is a King-Priest, who has a throne appointed by God, a priestly office that no one else has yet fully occupied, which is to be filled by the King-Priest in perpetuity, with a kingdom and sphere of service ... Only the Messiah fits that description."³⁴ Yahweh's declaration of a new order of non-Levitical priesthood (Ps 110:4a) qualifies the Davidic descendant to undertake the

³² Walvoord, *The Nations, Israel, and the Church in Prophecy*, 85.

³³ Jon Douglas Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 57.

³⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 96.

most sacred task of mediatorial status, a faithful priesthood. Ezekiel's prophecy supports the perpetual priestly covenant associated with Phinehas to include the duties of his descendants, Zadokian priests ministering to the priest-king Messiah in the millennial age (1 Sam 2:35a).

Yahweh's worship in the Old Testament is directly involved with the functionality of the priesthood. The plural usage of 'priests' in the Torah does not represent multiple high priests. Still, it acknowledges the legality of the high-priestly function of the Aaronic household simultaneously involved in the same sacrificial activities as the high priest. Premillennialists believe that the prophecy of the "priest forever" mentioned in Psalm 110:4b is similar to Phinehas's priestly covenant as it carries the same tone of faithfulness required of the priest. They see Zadokian priests as the descendants of Phinehas with whom Yahweh made a perpetual priestly covenant (Num 25:11). For instance, Irvin Busenitz notes the overtone of the Yahweh's unbreakable promise to Phinehas that "in the Priestly Covenant, God promised the perpetual priesthood of the line of Phinehas that carries all the way through to serving in the LORD's earthly millennial temple."³⁵ Thus, premillennialists understand the promised faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35a) refers to the future lineage of Phinehas who will minister to the priest-king Messiah.

Premillennialists propose the separate identity and shared responsibility between the Davidic Messiah (Ps 110) and the promised priest (1 Sam 2:35). Although premillennialists do not specify the singular or plural usage of the term, Christ's priesthood in Psalm 110 clarifies the Torah's designation of one solitary high priest who oversees the Zadokian priests in the coming Millennial Kingdom. Thus, premillennialists anticipate Christ's second coming as a returning king fulfilling Yahweh's kingdom promise in the Davidic covenant. In addition, they support

³⁵ Irvin A. Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 182.

Ezekiel's visions of the Millennial Kingdom and temple in Ezekiel 40–48.³⁶ Ezekiel's visions describe a future millennial temple and Jerusalem, which will be significant during the thousand-year reign of the Davidic Messiah. Thus, Psalm 110's prophecy of the priest-king Messiah is tied with both kingly and priestly responsibilities for the eschatological kingdom with the premillennial view.

The Restoration and Fulfillment under Christ's Reign

The approach of progressive covenantalism understands the eschatological fulfillment of Yahweh's promises concerning the restoration of Israel found in the Old Testament. In Israelite history, the Levitical priesthood was ordained in the Pentateuch. Thus, "a faithful priest according to my will" in 1 Samuel 2:35a refers to a Levite but not to someone else outside the tribe of Levi. In addition, this verse is a prophecy that has a tone of covenantal significance to be fulfilled in the future Millennial Kingdom. Simultaneously, Psalm 110 affirms Christ's ability to be faithful in both priestly and kingly duties, which are depicted in biblical covenants.

The Levitical priesthood and Christ's priestly function are covenantally related in the unified canon. However, Gentry and Wellum argue, "We contend that in order to grasp the unfolding nature of the biblical covenants we must see that all of the covenants, including the various covenant mediators, find their ultimate *telos* and antitypical fulfillment in Christ and him

³⁶ Yahweh sent a prophet, Ezekiel, who received visions from the Lord about the destruction of the holy city and the future temple. Ezekiel's visions prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed, and the inhabitants would perish. However, he exhorts those who felt hopeless in Babylon after hearing about the destruction of Jerusalem, the Holy City that they believed would never be destroyed again. Ezekiel 40–48 promises a new temple in Jerusalem if these passages are read literally. The house of Israel is the recipient of the temple, the holy city of Jerusalem, and the land. The glory will return to the temple to visually represent Yahweh's presence. According to Ezekiel's visions, the coming new temple will bring back Yahweh's glory. Ezekiel 48:35 vividly indicates Yahweh's presence, יהוה שם, "The LORD is There" (ESV). Matthew 1:23 alludes to Christ's presence on the earth as equally as Ἐμμανουήλ, 'God with us'. Correspondingly, the priest-king Jesus will be living with His people in the new Jerusalem (Rev 19:13, 20:4–6).

alone.”³⁷ Both scholars, from the New Testament perspective, see Jesus as the one who fulfills and mediates the covenants. Gentry and Wellum left out the Old Testament’s concept of priests’ faithfulness that matters to their responsibilities. Progressive covenantalism does not provide an adequate argument from the priesthood perspective from Psalm 110. The eternal priesthood in Psalm 110:4a spotlights the requirement of covenantal faithfulness as duties related to the tribe of Levi within the framework of the Old Testament priesthood. The methodology in this research highlights Jesus’s fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood with which the Levitical priests were once entrusted.

The eschatological role of a faithful priesthood in Psalm 110 further clarifies the progressive development of Yahweh’s covenants in Israelite history. Progressive covenantalists emphasize that covenantal obligations were based on the faithfulness of Yahweh, which was revealed in both the redemptive-historical perspective and inter-covenantal truth. Their perspectives must start from the Old Testament’s standpoint related to the poor performance of the Levitical priesthood. The priests broke Yahweh’s covenant by their unfaithfulness. Stephen Wellum and Brent Parker observe that the author of Hebrews argues about the relationship between the covenant law and the priesthood that “the law covenant is an integrated whole grounded in the priesthood (Heb 7:11).”³⁸ Wellum and Brent Parker’s argument primarily focuses on the logic of Hebrews. It satisfies the sole method of New Testament interpretation. Their method is not satisfactory to draw a conclusion of Yahweh’s faithfulness in the priestly covenant. Both scholars neither refer to nor trace the Levitical priesthood’s historical failures from Judges to Malachi. In this research, the historical-grammatical method is applied to exegete

³⁷ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 120.

³⁸ Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course Between Dispensational and Covenantal Theologies* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 219.

the relevant texts from the book of Malachi to conclude the cause and effect of priests' failures in the Old Testament even before reaching the argument found in the book of Hebrews. This method further strengthens progressive covenantalists' theological positions that agree with eschatological role of a faithful priest.

The prophetic nature of Psalm 110 indicates that David is one of the Old Testament prophets. His prophecy marks the climax in the NT writers' belief that Yahweh's promise will be fulfilled through the Davidic Messiah. Progressive covenantal scholars Gentry, Wellum, and Parker propose the theological assumption that the Old Testament progressively reveals the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises. However, they neglected the idea that Jesus took the priestly role as promised in Psalm 110. Yet, Jesus's priestly role in Psalm 110 adds to the idea of a faithful priest who fulfills Yahweh's promises in light of prophetic significance. The New Testament sees Jesus as a prophet like Moses, who also performed priestly duties in the Torah.³⁹ When the priests and the people drifted away from the covenantal obligations, the prophets emerged to warn them as watchmen from the tower (Isa 21:6; Ezek 33:7). The prophets were sent to deliver a message from Yahweh to fix the covenantal unfaithfulness and restore the people back to His promises (Deut 24:1–4; Jer 3:6–13). This restoration led to the progressive development of covenantal fulfillment. 1 Samuel 2:35*a* and Psalm 110:4*b* are the two prophecies involved in the covenant-keeping role of Yahweh to raise up a faithful priest. Jesus fulfilled the covenantal promise that the Levitical priesthood forfeited.

Progressive covenantalists biblically and theologically interpret the progressive revelation of Yahweh's one redemptive plan from Adam to Jesus in terms of Genesis through the covenants (Gen 12:1–3, 7; 15:8; 17:5; 22:16–18; 26:3–5) in the Old Testament. They see Israel and the

³⁹ For example, see the "priestly role of the king" section in Chapter 2.

church as one people but with two distinct identities based on the entire canon (Isa 51:2–8; Gal 3:6–9, 16–19, 26–29; 4:4–7; Heb 11:8). They anticipate the expansion of ‘the seed of Abraham’ to include those redeemed from ethnic Israel and the nations during the eschatological age of the Messiah.⁴⁰ It is agreeable with their view to acknowledge both believing Israelites and gentiles ‘in Christ’ to shape the ‘oneness’ or ‘one people’. Their view can be differentiated from both the ‘the sameness of church and Israel’ held in covenant and replacement theology. Progressive covenantalists see the church as the community that belongs to the new covenant’s promise. Psalm 110’s new priesthood universally includes both Israelites and gentiles with the same equal footing under the new covenant. With this new covenant, the church is rooted in the promises to *Israel*, inaugurated by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Similarly, Jesus Christ also initiated Yahweh’s kingdom at His first coming. Yet, He will fulfill it entirely in His second coming.

All repentant and forgiven Israelites and gentiles are incorporated into Christ to become Yahweh’s one people as ‘the redeemed’. They are under the law of Yahweh’s new high priest in the order of priest-king Melchizedek (Ps 110:4). Progressive covenantalists neither specify the works of the Law nor the works of grace to differentiate the salvation for Israelites and gentiles in the New Testament. They believe that the salvation is *Sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone). The priest-king Messiah prophesied in Psalm 110 is the Christ who fulfills Yahweh’s redemptive program to save Israel and all humanity. They are distinct yet one people under the new covenant. However, many Christians held the church as Israel during the first three centuries of the Christian era under the teachings of church fathers Chrysostom and Justin Martyr, who viewed the Christian church as the true spiritual Israel.⁴¹ However, John Walvoord contends:

⁴⁰ Wellum and Parker, *Progressive Covenantalism*, 9.

⁴¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 274.

It may be observed first that if this passage [Gal 6:15–16] does use the term ‘Israel of God’ for the church, it is the only passage in the entire New Testament where there is no evidence in the text for such a conclusion.... Paul is stating that anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, who walks by this rule is worthy of his benediction, but especially is this so for the Israel of God, i.e., Israelites who are the godly remnant of this age, that is believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴²

There are always faithful Israelites considered the remnant of this age, Old Testament saints or true Israel, even while they are part of national Israel. Jesus considered Himself and others to be the true Israel to underscore the continuity of faithful Abrahamic descendants from the Old Testament to the New Testament.⁴³ Thus, Galatians 6:16 does not equate the church to the literal nation of Israel, and the church is never called ‘Israel of God’.

The church neither replaces nor equates ethnic Israel contrary to the beliefs of ‘replacement theology’.⁴⁴ Yahweh has a plan for Israel, which is separate from all other nations. Walvoord notes, “Not only is the nation Israel contrasted to the church, but spiritual Israel is contrasted to gentile Christians who are in the body of Christ.... Spiritual Israelites never become gentiles, and gentile Christians never become Israelites.”⁴⁵ The church cannot fulfill that plan. Israel was chosen for a unique purpose and program. His promises in the Old Testament are not fulfilled through the church. There is a distinction between Jewish and gentile believers because Paul deals with the Jews separately later in Romans 9, 10, and 11 for their future redemption and restoration. It is agreeable with progressive covenantalists regarding Yahweh’s covenant-keeping role in providing the channel of salvation through a

⁴² John F. Walvoord, *The Nations, Israel and the Church in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 59.

⁴³ For example, Jesus recognized Zacchaeus as the son of Abraham through faith (Luke 19:9).

⁴⁴ *Replacement Theology* “is the view that the church is the new or true Israel that has permanently replaced or superseded Israel as the people of God.” Michael J. Vlach, “The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism,” (PhD dissertation at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC, 2004), p. xv.

⁴⁵ Walvoord, *The Nations, Israel and the Church in Prophecy*, 58.

redemptive-historical perspective. However, they failed to analyze the failure of the Adamic priesthood. As a result, they missed Yahweh's intended purpose in establishing the essential role of the Levitical priesthood. In addition, progressive covenantalists neglect the Levitical priests' incompetence that led the nation to exile and corrupted the Yahweh worship system in the Old Testament. This lessens the impact of a new covenant rooted in the Davidic covenant. Thus, the grammatical, historical, and literal understanding of the selected scriptures in the coming chapter will fill the gap in understanding the dual roles of the coming priest-king Messiah, who is overseeing kingly and priestly responsibilities (Ps 110).

Paul himself is a Jewish believer and does not see Jewish Christians as separate within the Galatian church in faith. However, the apostle Paul states in Romans 1:16 to prioritize the Jews' salvation by saying, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (ESV). The phrase "the Israel of God" in Galatians 6:16 refers to empirical Israel, which denotes the Israel seen by Yahweh as the true Israel. W. D. Davies believes this phrase refers to all Jewish people.⁴⁶ Thus, there is no continuity between the Christian church and the older Israel to equate Jewish and gentile Christians. Yahweh has an end-time plan for the literal nation of Israel. Most significantly, the prophets condemned the idolatrous kings and Israelites with the pronouncement of Yahweh's judgment. This national predicament consequently led the people to be forced into exile. However, the faithful or true Israel and the prophets look beyond this judgment with hope for the future restoration of the nation.

The essence of ethnic Israel will be visible in the coming Millennial Kingdom since the priest-king Christ Himself is ethnically Jewish and tied to the Davidic dynasty. In Matthew 10:5–

⁴⁶ W. D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," *New Testament Studies* 24, no.1 (October 1977): 4–39.

6, Christ sent out His disciples, and He gave this specific instruction to them by saying, “Do not go on the road to the Gentiles, and do not enter into a city of the Samaritans, but go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (LEB). The writers of both the Old and New Testament are Jews, except Luke⁴⁷, who is even known to later become a proselyte Jew. According to progressive dispensationalism, the specific role of ethnic Israel will be actualized in terms of ethnicity, nation, and territory.⁴⁸ Due to distinct identities, the role of the church and ethnic Israel will also be distinguishable in the Millennial Kingdom. However, their relationship will be harmonious due to submission under one federal headship of the priest-king Christ. The church itself will also stand distinctly from national Israel. In addition, the gentile Christians will be distinct from the physical descendants of Abraham except for sharing faith in Christ, the promised Messiah, who is the true seed of Abraham. The Messianic Jews do not expect salvation from any other source except from Christ. Thus, they will not have a different belief system in the Millennial Kingdom since they are not separated from one gospel and Yahweh’s people. Progressive covenantalism sees Israel as the pivotal theme for understanding the fulfillment of the promises concerning the restoration of Israel found in the Old Testament prophets.

Progressive covenantalism is essential to unfold Yahweh’s faithfulness to His promises and understand the future redemption of Israel through a new covenant. According to Stephen Wellum and Brent Parker, “‘Progressive covenantalism’ seeks first to analyze the relationship between Israel and Israel’s Messiah—Jesus Christ—and then to address the relationship between

⁴⁷ Robert Wayne Stacy, “Colossians 4:11 and the Ethnic Identity of Luke,” *The Journal of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary* 2, no. 1 (Spring, 2015): 1–15. Luke’s gentile ethnicity can be verified due to Paul’s statement made in Colossians 4:10–11.

⁴⁸ Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 124–25.

Christ and the church before making theological conclusions.”⁴⁹ Wellum and Parker also agree with the view of progressive dispensationalism that supports the significant fulfillment of the new covenant to reflect the Davidic Messiah who will deliver Israel from the nations (Ps 110:5–6). John Barton affirms that the conquering nature of the future Davidic Messiah (Ps 110) reflects the old dominion of his ancestor, “The king would be, like David of old, an anointed king.”⁵⁰ The apostle Paul sees the nation of Israel bridges the gap between the teachings of Old Testament prophets and the new covenant in Romans 11:1–17: the continuing theological significance of Israel (vv. 1–6) and the repentance of an elect remnant (vv. 7–10). Paul denotes the future restoration of Israel in terms of “their acceptance” (v. 15) from unbelief instead of “their foolishness.”⁵¹ Progressive covenantalism considers apostle Paul’s teachings in fulfillment of Yahweh’s promises of restoring Israel’s identity as a distinct ethnic nation through the redemptive Messiah. Thus, it best explains the distinction between the church and Israel. Thus, both progressive covenantalism and dispensationalism agree with the specific role of ethnic Israel in fulfilling the new covenant through the conqueror Davidic Messiah.

Yahweh established the Davidic covenant as eternal, which is similar to the perpetual priestly covenant with Phinehas (Num 25:6–13). Yahweh’s prophecies and covenants revealed through the patriarchs in the Old Testament are firmly rooted in the Scriptures (2 Sam 23:2; Isa 34:16; Jer 25:13; 30:2, 36:1–32; Eccl 12:11) apart from man’s own intuition. Christ and the faithful priest are not identical, but a relationship exists between them;⁵² a shared responsibility of priestly ministry between Christ and a faithful priest in eschatology will be established in

⁴⁹ Wellum and Parker, *Progressive Covenantalism*, 43.

⁵⁰ John Barton, *A History of the Bible: The Story of the World’s Most Influential Book* (New York: Viking, 2019), 97.

⁵¹ Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, 251.

⁵² Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*, 652.

terms of fulfilling the prophecy of Psalm 110. Progressive covenantalism sees the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:11–13) as the key to fulfill Yahweh’s promise of establishing the messianic kingdom through one of his descendants. Thus, the connection between the two prophecies of 1 Samuel and Psalm 110 will be established concerning the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in the Millennial Kingdom.

Psalm 110’s Davidic prophecy is about a priest related to Melchizedek, not the Levitical order. However, that priest is related to the Davidic descendant. This is a prophecy but is also developed within the covenantal framework of Yahweh’s priesthood. To investigate Levitical priesthood as a progressive development from the time of Moses until Christ’s work on the cross, one must accept the presupposition that Yahweh works in Israelite history by revealing prophecies and making covenants. Thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest in this study will direct the historical-grammatical investigation to review the Levitical priests’ faithfulness in Israelite history. This logic will provide more biblical evidence to connect Christ’s eternal priesthood with the remnant of the faithful Levitical priestly line in eschatology.

Yahweh’s Hope and Purpose in the Priesthood

Yahweh set the Levitical priesthood apart since the time of the wilderness (Num 3:45–48 and 18:21–24), reflecting Yahweh’s unbreakable covenant with the Levites. Reinhard Achenbach asserts that Israelite worship at the Second Temple during the postexilic period still reflects monotheistic belief recognizing Yahweh as the sole divine and universal king even without the presence of Judean monarchy.⁵³ The prophetic books, from Joshua to Malachi, maintain the Levites as the official ministering body within the temple worship system to

⁵³ Reinhard Achenbach, “Theocratic Reworking in the Pentateuch,” in *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Jaeyoung Jeon and Loui C. Jonker (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2021), 53.

participate in worthy priestly ordinances. Accordingly, Phinehas's priestly covenant (Num 25:11) is often synonymously used as the covenant of Levi (Mal 2:4). Thus, Malachi's condemnation of the disloyal priests based on the Phinehas or priestly covenant happened during and after the exile; this contradicts the late development of the Levitical institution in the post-exilic times. In addition, Malachi witnessed the priesthood's corruption (Mal 2:1–9) through their unfaithfulness.

Levites belong to the administration's legislative branch, the Aaronic house, outlined in Deuteronomy 12:5, 9; 16:18; 19:16–18. Yahweh initially intended for the Aaronic priesthood to bridge the gap in the relationship between Israelites and His divine rulership. The incompetent Levitical priesthood paved the way for the faithful Aaronic descendants to serve under the rulership of one of the Davidic descendants, who will become the priest-king. The legitimacy of the Old Testament priesthood matters because Christ's function as a king-priest is to administer justice and implement accountability between the two offices of kingship and priesthood. Thus, "Psalm 110 and Covenantal Faithfulness in the Eschatological Role of a Faithful Priest" supports the historical King David and how Psalm 110 portrays Christ's kingly and priestly duties that the Levitical priesthood did not accomplish. Phinehas's priestly covenant⁵⁴ is often synonymously used as the covenant of Levi in Malachi, one of the prophetic books (Mal 2:4). The historical-grammatical method makes it clear the faithfulness of the tribe of Levi caused Yahweh to grant the right and privilege of the priesthood (Mal 1:6–14) since 'Levi' was used as the generic term

⁵⁴ Yahweh established the Davidic covenant as eternal, which is similar to the perpetual priestly covenant with Phinehas (Num 25:6–13). The prophetic books still maintain the Levites as the official ministering body within the temple to worthily participate in the priestly ordinances. Yahweh set them apart since the time of the wilderness (Num 3:45–48 and 18:21–24), reflecting Yahweh's unbreakable covenant with the Levites. The prophecy of the "priest forever" mentioned in Psalm 110:4b is similar to Phinehas's priestly covenant but carries the same tone of faithfulness required of the priest. Busenitz states, "In the Priestly Covenant, God promised the perpetual priesthood of the line of Phinehas that carries all the way through to serving in the LORD's earthly millennial temple." Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," 182.

for a priest in the book of Malachi. After the exile, Prophet Malachi witnessed the priesthood's corruption through their unfaithfulness to Phinehas's covenant that Yahweh made with the tribe of Levi (Mal 2:1–9). Thus, this historical-grammatical method will highlight the faithfulness embedded in the history of the priesthood's development in the Old Testament.

Levi was used as the generic term for a priest in the book of Malachi. Malachi 1:6–14; 2:4–7 points back to the historical development of Yahweh's priestly covenant that was in the faithfulness of the tribe of Levi that caused Yahweh to grant the right and privilege of the priesthood during the wilderness journey (Num 3:12; 25:11–12). Thus, some selected passages in Malachi will be explored in coming chapter to examine the faithfulness embedded in the history of the priesthood's development in the Old Testament.⁵⁵ From the historical aspect of this methodology, the origin of the priesthood in the history of the Levites is critical to understanding Yahweh's purpose in His priesthood. The book of Malachi exposes the faithfulness required of priesthood as the result of the priests' failure during the days of exile. Grammatically, the terms associated with priestly functions before and after the exile incorporate the exact nature of the system as ordained by Yahweh in the Torah. Thus, the historical-grammatical method significantly examines the eschatological role of a faithful priest in terms of faithfulness. This concept of faithfulness is essential in appointing Zadokite priests from the time of Solomon to Ezekiel, who are later affirmed as the Levitical priests ministering to Jesus the priest-king Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

Summary

⁵⁵ The continual unfaithfulness of Levitical priests that broke Yahweh's covenant is observed in the book of Malachi.

The concept of priesthood is presupposed in the prophecy of Psalm 110 and connects all covenants to one person who can be appointed as a priest-king. This concept is ultimately fulfilled in Christ. However, many Psalms and Old Testament prophetic texts do not exclusively identify Christ as the priest-king. Murphy warns of the fallacy of the Christocentric approach in every text of the Old Testament, including the Psalter.⁵⁶ Thus, the dual role of Christ as a priest-king in Psalm 110 has been marked as the underlying principle to shape the foundation on which Yahweh will establish His future kingdom.

The future reign of the priest-king prophesied in Psalm 110 points to Yahweh's plan of establishing the kingdom through a series of covenants and promises. The future Millennial Kingdom will include the remnant of Israel.⁵⁷ The entire fulfillment of the Davidic covenant will occur when Christ rules from the throne in earthly Jerusalem. The Old Testament prophets anticipated the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises to the nation of Israel. Although Christ has already fulfilled Psalm 110 and secured His position, He will return to fulfill all the prophecies in His second coming. Christ fulfilled the priestly function as a new covenant in forgiving sins (Jer 31:31–34; Heb 8). Christ's atonement brought forgiveness for sins foreshadowed in the Levitical priesthood, which is tied to the old and new covenants.⁵⁸ Christ's death accomplished the duties of Levitical priesthood to establish the new covenant that requires Yahweh's law to be written upon people's hearts. Thus, the methodology used in this search is a new approach that interprets Psalm 110 through premillennial, progressive covenantal, and historical grammatical lenses. The

⁵⁶ Bryan Murphy, "From Old Testament Text to Sermon," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 142.

⁵⁷ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Press, 2003), 439.

⁵⁸ 2 Corinthians 3 and Romans 8 and 11 highlight the new covenant's demands for a transformed heart and a new spirit.

prophetic and covenantal aspects of Yahweh's kingdom in Psalm 110 correlate with their theological interpretations. This approach delves into the fulfillment of Psalm 110 through the Davidic priest-king Messiah's eternal and faithful ministry, rooted in historical redemptive, kingdom perspective, and intertextual references in the Old and New Testaments.

The progressive development of Yahweh's covenants in Old Testament history is related to the tribe of Levi and the Old Testament priesthood. The premise of the eschatological role of a faithful priest can be discovered from biblical inerrancy and theological presuppositions. Psalm 110 describes a future Davidic son to be identified with Jewish messianic anticipation. Connecting Psalm 110 and the New Testament, Arnold mentions that the New Testament Christology was developed from the messianic expectations of 1–2 Samuel.⁵⁹ Thus, this research delves into the foundational elements of the Old Priesthood that dictates Yahweh's covenants and prophecies to connect Jesus with the two prophecies (Ps 110 and 1 Sam 2:35). This research will also underline the role of the Messiah, who is both a priest and king that will later be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

The Levitical priesthood is the foundation of the entire old covenant. Yahweh's holiness and judgment of sin would not be understood without the existence of the Levitical institution in the Torah.⁶⁰ The prophets' anticipation of a faithful priest in the Old Testament is essential in the tabernacle and sacrificial system. The word Levi was used as the generic term for a priest in the book of Malachi. Malachi 1:6–14; 2:4–7 points back to the historical development of Yahweh's priestly covenant that was in the faithfulness of the tribe of Levi that caused Yahweh to grant the

⁵⁹ Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*, 652.

⁶⁰ Busenitz states, "In the Mosaic Covenant, God revealed His holiness and the heinousness of sin. The daily sacrifices provided a constant reminder of the need for the shedding of blood for the remission of sin, for the propitiating of God's wrath." Busenitz, "Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant," 182.

right and privilege of the priesthood during the wilderness journey (Num 3:12; 25:11–12). Thus, some selected passages in Malachi will be explored to examine the faithfulness embedded in the history of the priesthood's development in the Old Testament. From the historical aspect of this methodology, the origin of the priesthood in the history of the Levites is critical to understanding Yahweh's purpose in His priesthood. Unfaithful Levitical priests in the time of Malachi broke Yahweh's covenant (Mal 2:5–6). These disobedient priests diminish the significance of covenantal faithfulness that keeps Yahweh's holiness in priestly fictions of the Aaronic priesthood.

The Torah's priestly instructions demand priests' faithfulness with respect to the Torah. The eschatological role of a faithful priest in this research further emphasizes the aspect of faithful priesthood intertextually and intra-canonically to strengthen the fulfillment of the eschatological priest-king in Psalm 110. In the New Testament time, Christ, apostles, and early church fathers see Psalm 110 as pivotal in fulfilling the Torah, Psalms, and Prophets. With respect to the Law and the Prophets, this research analyzes the duties and failures of the Levitical priesthood to expose their unfaithfulness with the historical-grammatical method. A similar method is applied to reveal Christ's faithfulness in Yahweh's promised priesthood from the Psalter's standpoint in Psalm 110. Psalm 110 prophesies the Messiah, who is the non-Levitical priest, in the order of Melchizedek (Gen14:19). However, Christ's role as the priest-king not only fulfilled Psalm 110's prophecy but also to what the Levitical priesthood pointed. Christ's priesthood pertains to the sacrificial works that the Levitical priesthood was obliged to accomplish in Yahweh's worship system. Yahweh introduced the priestly ideology and appointed the Aaronic household to represent His holiness. Thus, the following exegesis will

underscore the legitimacy of Christ's accomplished works and priest-king duties in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

CHAPTER 4: MESSIAH SUPERIORITY OVER LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

Psalm 110 explains a new kind of priestly ministry that differs from the Levitical priests' limitations. This priesthood possesses messianic rulership unlike any other priests performed in Israelite history. The priest-king Messiah (Ps 110:4) superseded the Levitical priesthood due to His perfect and faithful priesthood. In this chapter, the failures of the Levitical priests and their forfeiture of Yahweh's covenant are analyzed through an exegesis of selected texts in the Torah and the Prophets. As a result, the Levitical priesthood has a limited role in fulfilling Psalm 110. In contrast, Psalm 110 describes the priest-king Messiah, who shares Yahweh's throne and fulfills all the kingdom promises. His role has a far greater responsibility than the Levitical priesthood. Thus, Psalm 110 reveals the new ministry of the priest-king's accountability by highlighting Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness in the institutions of Davidic kingship and the Levitical priesthood. Christ's superiority over the Levitical priesthood best illustrates and reflects the fulfillment of Psalm 110's messianic prophecy.

As highlighted in the Torah, Yahweh demands faithfulness from His priests and individuals in the priestly ministry. Moses emphasizes this covenant, noting its significance in defining the roles of the Levitical priesthood (Deut 10:8). Nevertheless, the Levitical priests like the Elides failed as spiritual leaders in strengthening the people's faith (1 Sam 2:17–22). Subsequently, most Davidic kings, such as Manasseh and Amon, failed as Yahweh's covenantal leaders. The contours of the rise and fall of the Davidic monarchy are traceable in the history of Israel. The destruction of Jerusalem, the demise of the Davidic throne and the Israelites' exile

into slavery showed the spiritual failures of the nation.¹ The destruction of the temple and Jerusalem may have impacted the spiritual wellbeing of Israelites. While exploring the fall of Jerusalem, Sonja Ammann notes that the trauma that may have engulfed the Israelites following the Babylonian conquest and pillage of Jerusalem may have had devastating consequences on their faith.² Nonetheless, the Prophet Jeremiah predicted the hope for reestablishing the Israelite nation in terms of two pillars: the temple and the Davidic monarchy (Jer 22:26–30; 23:3–6; 30:9; 33:15, 17–26). Based on Jeremiah 33:17–18, “A Davidic king with a Torah heart will match a new people with the same.”³ Analyzing Jeremiah’s writings, Johanna Erzberger asserts that the Davidic line of leadership will never remain without a successor, and the priesthood of Israel will be ensured.⁴ Despite the failures of leaders in Israel, the prophecy and teachings of Jeremiah provided hope to the Israelites for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Priests and kings are an important aspect of God’s direct leadership. Psalm 110 illustrates the necessity of a priest and a king in establishing God’s kingdom with the temple and the Davidic monarchy. It highlights God’s promise to King David: one of his future descendants would become a priest and a king who would continue to sit on David’s throne and to reign over Yahweh’s everlasting kingdom. Additionally, any faithful one of the Levitical priests will continue their legitimate role as priests until the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (Num 25:12–13). Therefore, the kingdom of God is anchored on the role priests and kings play in

¹ “Remember them, O my God, because they have desecrated the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites” (Neh 13:29, ESV).

² Sonja Ammann, “The Fall of Jerusalem: Cultural Trauma as a Process,” *Open Theology* 8, no. 1 (2022): 362–71.

³ Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 194, accessed February 22, 2023, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴ Johanna Erzberger, “Kingship and Priesthood – Reloaded (Jer 33:14–26),” in *Transforming Authority*, ed. Katharina Pyschny and Sarah Schulz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 47–58.

leadership; hence, God promises a descendant from the Davidic monarchy will become both a king and priest.

The Duties of the Priests

In Deuteronomy, the Levitical priests are instructed on how to live under the covenant of Yahweh. The tasks assigned to Moses and Aaron indicate their duties as priests of Yahweh for the children of Israel (Deut 10:10). The historical narrative of Deuteronomy 10 is related to Aaron's oversight of the golden calf incidence (9:16–21) and Yahweh's anger (9:20) along the journey in the wilderness. These two events are specifically related to the faithfulness required of the tribe of Levi (Deut 10:10–22). The Hebrew phrase *אֶת־שֹׁכֵט הַלֵּוִי*, 'to the tribe of Levi' (Deut 10:8) with the direct object marker *אֶת* indicates the significant role of the tribe of Levi, including Aaron and the rest of Levites, in taking charge of the overall worship system. The priestly functions of the Levites and that of Moses were highlighted to establish and maintain relationship with Yahweh. Thus, Deuteronomy 10:8 outlines the responsibilities of the tribe of Levi rather than disparaging the distinctiveness between the priestly role of Aaronides and the servanthood of Levites.

The Levites are charged with specific duties: "to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD to stand before the LORD to minister to him and to bless in his name" (Deut 10:8, ESV). The sanctuary and the ark mark Yahweh's dwelling place, which is specifically tied to the duties of the Levites (Deut 12:5). These duties describe their spiritual leadership over all Israelites. Hallel Baitner elaborated on Deuteronomy 12:5, noting that Levites as leaders of worship were required to, "no longer sacrifice on the altar, 'but only be ministers in my sanctuary, having

oversight at the gates of the temple, and serving in the temple.’’⁵ Yahweh’s worship system and the Levites’ ministerial role are inseparable. The Levites are also chosen to minister to Yahweh with specific duties related to worship activities. Additionally, they are to confer blessings to the people, similar to Moses’s blessings on themselves (Deut 33:8–11). Overall, the fundamental role of the Levites is to lead and guide people in worship as instructed in the Torah.

The blessings of Moses and the Levites illustrate the important role these individuals play in the temple of God. Moses’s blessings can be considered as a historical narrative since the author of Hebrews hints, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb 13:22, ESV). The author of Hebrews reflects the context of Deuteronomy 33 and remembers Yahweh’s spoken words regarding the spiritual leadership of Moses and the Levites. Peter Craigie asserts that the chapter is a reminder that the blessings of Moses and Levites were not the last spiritual blessing but rather an indication of and a foreshadowing of the victory the Israelites will achieve in their conquest and settlement in the promised land.⁶ The intercessory prayers and blessings performed by Moses (Deut 10:8; 33:8–11) foreshadow the priestly function of Christ, as mentioned in the book of Hebrews 7, 9, and 13. The biblical passages as well as published literature illustrate the significance of divine and priestly blessings held by Levites and Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

⁵ Hallel Baitner, “Levitical Singers in Rabbinic Sources: Echoes of an Ancient Dispute,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 52, no. 2 (December 23, 2021): 230.

⁶ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 391.

The duties of the priests explain why Yahweh set apart the tribe of Levi. Yahweh chose Aaron to become the first anointed high priest through the mediator Moses after the Israelites left Egypt and were living in the desert. Besides leading the worship service, the Aaronic priests had other significant roles. When compared to the other Levites, the Aaronites were chosen and assigned to handle the holiest sacred objects in the temple, perform the most holy rituals and enter the holiest places in the temple to offer sacrifices to the Lord on behalf of the Israelites. The Aaronic priests have a more significant role to play, as Levine states,

In Numbers 18 we find information on the income to which the Levites were entitled and on their obligations to the priests. The Aaronic priests were consecrated, a concept conveyed by the verb, and they donned sacral vestments and distinctive insignia ... in Leviticus 8, such consecration is referred to as *millû 'îm* 'appointment' to a prestigious office.”⁷

Aaron and his lineage were consecrated for perpetual priesthood and all the high priests had to come from this specific line. However, the rest of the Levites had lesser roles and duties since they did not officiate but assisted the Aaronides (Aaronic priests).

Because all the Levites, including the Aaronides and non-priest Levites, were set apart, they shared responsibility for the ministry of Yahweh. Their duties are often associated with the Hebrew word מִשְׁמֶרֶת, which is to guard, watch, charge, and function (Gen 26:5; Exod 12:6, 23, 32–35; Lev 8:35).⁸ The Levites' service described in Numbers 3 is to minister to Yahweh's people. This characteristic is mentioned in verse 6 because the verbal form of the Hebrew word הִקְרַב is Hifil imperative masculine singular. This word means 'bring near' and is a sacrificial term denoting the presentation of an offering to God. The use of the word הִקְרַב (Lev 16:9), “in

⁷ Baruch A. Levine, *The Anchor Bible: Numbers 1–20*, vol. 4A, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 273. Yahweh dedicates the Levites to serving the consecrated Aaronic priests (Lev 8–9). Since the term 'consecrated' is not associated with 'Levites,' the Levites serve the consecrated ones, 'the Aaronic priests'. However, the word 'consecrated' is related to the words 'appointed' and 'anointed'.

⁸ BDB, 606.

connection with the Levites, signifies that they were devoted as an offering to the sanctuary, no longer to be employed in any common offices.”⁹ The overtone of sacrificial offering alludes to the sublime nature of the Levites’ duties since the author of Hebrews reiterates their spiritual role that later culminates in Christ’s priestly duties in the New Testament. Thus, Aaronides and non-priest Levites are important aspects of Yahweh’s ministry.

Although only the Aaronic lineage was set apart for the priesthood, the wholistic meaning of the Levites’ servitude is considered as one unit in Yahweh’s ministry. Thus, all the Levites were under the umbrella of one Levitical priesthood (Num 3:6). All the non-priest Levities were employed to discharge many of the humbler duties of the sanctuary. They were engaged in various offices of great importance to the religious and moral welfare of the people. Not all the Levites were anointed as priests like Aaron and his sons, as denoted in Numbers 3:3. While not all the Levites were anointed as priests like Aaron and his sons, they played a crucial role in serving the Israelites as well as Yahweh.

Service and Ministry

The priests and Levites are responsible for serving and ministering to Yahweh’s people. Yahweh dedicates the Levites to serve the consecrated Aaronic priests (Lev 8–9). The promise of a faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35a encompasses the idea of ministry that belongs to the office of the Levitical priesthood rather than designating that faithful priest as the head of priestly affairs. In Deuteronomy 8:26, the term *וַיַּשְׁלֵחַ* is related to the service of the Levites, which begins with a conjunctive waw to form Piel conjunctive perfect in a third person masculine singular to be

⁹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments Part 1 Genesis–Deuteronomy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 516.

implied as “to attend as a menial worshipper, to contribute to.”¹⁰ However, the privileges attached to the service of the priests were substantial; thus, even the kings wanted to enjoy the benefits of the priests. Regarding the privileged system of the priests, Mitchell Dahood states, “The new king like all early Israelite kings, enjoyed the privileges of a priest; II Sam viii 18; I Kings iii 4. The frequency of the term *khn* in Ugaritic lists of religious classes confutes the last-century view of J. Wellhausen that the Heb *kōhēn* is derived from Ar. *kāhin*, ‘seer, diviner,’ an opinion uncritically accepted by many scholars.”¹¹ The priests who render service by ministering to the people are served by the Levites. However, Dahood’s observation is not satisfactory in pointing out the nature of Hebrew priests. They are different from non-Israelites priests in that rather than exploiting the privileges assigned to priests, they dedicated their time to serving and ministering to Yahweh’s people. Since the duties of priests are mentioned in the sacrificial setting, the Levites serving in the holy place assist the priests in carrying out Yahweh’s commands of offering sacrifices brought by the people.

Some of the privileges assigned to priests emanate from the services they provide. In Numbers, The Aaronides and the Levites depend on the tithes from Yahweh’s people since they are exempt from land ownership (Num 18:20–24). However, the non-priest Levites must pay a tenth of what they receive from the tithes to the Aaronides. Distinguishing between the Aaronides and non-Levites priests, although performing different roles, the priests and Levites are tasked with ministering and serving Yahweh’s people. Despite sharing similar tasks, the duties of other Levites and Aaronic households were distinct due to their entitlements for rendering services. On behalf of Yahweh’s people, both the Aaronites and Levites uniquely

¹⁰ BDB, 715.

¹¹ Mitchell Dahood, S. J., *The Anchor Bible: Psalms III 101–150*, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 117.

served the Israelites. The high priest was the mediator between Yahweh and the Levites who served in the temple and alongside the Aaronides. In the ministry of Yahweh, the Aaronides and the Levites although serving different capacities, were instrumental in Yahweh's worship system.

Qualified Sacrifices

Besides being dedicated to the priests, the Levites were also tasked with helping the priests offer sacrifices to Yahweh. The role of the Levites in serving the priests and offering sacrifices is detailed in Numbers 8:18 and Numbers 25:10. As outlined in Leviticus 8, Deuteronomy 18, and Numbers 25, the duties of Levitical priests were numerous when Yahweh was perceived as the King of Israel. Julius Wellhausen believes that the rituals related to priestly work in Deuteronomy as *P* source materials resulted from postexilic redactions. Thus, his theory supports the narrative portions of *P* source related material to Exodus 6:2–3 as postexilic redactions performed by the priests.¹² Since Wellhausen sees the Levites as belonging to cultic institutions, his view also corresponds to the documentary hypothesis to ascertain Yahweh's ordained religious institutions of the Levitical priesthood. His hypothesis undermines not only the Mosaic authorship of the Torah but also the essence of the sacrificial atonement completed by Jesus Christ on the cross to mediate for sinners and reconcile them with Yahweh.

Levitical priests must keep themselves holy since their service is primarily related to qualified sacrifices. The primary consideration for accepting the priests' sacrifices is based on how they deal with holiness. In Malachi 1:7, the Hebrew word מְגַלֵּל deals with the corrupt priests

¹² Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 1–2, 121–22, 127–28, 131. Levites and priests are not fundamentally synonymous terms to state that all Levites are priests, and all priests are Levites. Since their terms are distinctive, all non-priest Levites could serve the priest-king Messiah alongside the Zadokites of the Aaronic lineage in the coming Millennial Kingdom.

since its verbal form is Pual participle masculine singular from the root word of גָּאַל meaning to defile, pollute, and desecrate. Pual is the passive form of the Piel formation, and this participle can also function as an adjective to be interpreted worthless or vain.¹³ The Hebrew phrase לֶחֶם מְגֻזָּל ‘the defiled food’ that the priests intentionally offered despised the Lord. The value of purity is indispensable, as Hill asserts, “The commitment to revere God with proper worship is rooted in the core values of honor and shame across the biblical world.”¹⁴ Despite the importance of obedience, many of the priests, including the children of Israel, ignored the prophets’ messages of warning, and a broken relationship resulted between Yahweh and the priests. Thus, the successive prophets have warned about the negligent practices of the corrupt priests rather than wiping out the priestly lineage.

The Unfaithfulness of the Priests

The unfaithfulness of the Levitical priests continued even after Israel was exiled from the promised land. In Malachi 1:2, 6, the Israelite’s unfaithfulness led to Yahweh’s judgment, which was executed by the Babylonians who destroyed the Jerusalem temple in 586 BC. Following the destruction of the temple and the subsequent exiling of the Israelites, the Levites’ temple-related responsibilities ceased. Nonetheless, it was imperative the priests remain faithful to their duties and abide by the laws guiding their priestly functions. Even after the nation of Israel reinstituted temple worship after the exile, the priests performed their superficial duties of offering sacrifices on behalf of the Israelites. However, in Malachi 1:7; 2: 9, the priests continually performed

¹³ BDB, 146.

¹⁴ Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 42.

unlawful sacrifices and offerings regarded as the highest form of disgrace or apostasy by the Prophet Malachi.

The failures of priests to honor God and offer worthy sacrifice were also evidenced in the time of Eli and his sons. In 1 Samuel 2:35^a, the circumstances that transpired during the time of Malachi were similar to the failures of Eli and his sons. These failures resulted in Yahweh's promise of raising a faithful priest through the prophet Samuel. In both instances, the priests repeatedly ignored the warnings from the prophets who represented Yahweh before, during, and after the exile. These circumstances led to their failure to remain faithful to Yahweh's ministry. When the priests failed due to their unfaithfulness, the nation of Israel suffered the consequences as the sins went unpunished. Yahweh judged the people because the priests broke the covenant to maintain proper worship.

The priests are to remain loyal to the Levitical laws so long as the covenant nation of Yahweh exists. The promise of raising a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35^a) specifies that the Levitical priestly line is desperately in need of continual and faithful service to Yahweh. In contrast, a prophecy of the priest-king in Psalm 110 prompts a new kind of faithful priest separate from the Levitical lineage. In 1 Samuel 2:35^b (ESV), the specific duty is conveyed: "He shall go in and out before my anointed forever." This clarifies that the role of a faithful priest is to serve and minister to Yahweh's anointed priest-king Messiah designated in Psalm 110.

The most visible example of unfaithfulness in the context of Malachi comes from the priests' disobedience. Malachi formally accuses the priests, who are mediators between Yahweh and His people. The verbal usage of בִּזְיוֹן as a Qal participle masculine plural indicates the priests constantly despise the Lord's name.¹⁵ The Hebrew word יִכְבֵּד used in Malachi 1:6 is an example

¹⁵ Ralph L. Smith, *Malachi*, vol. 32, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 310.

of Piel imperfect third person masculine singular, indicating a repeated action of dishonor and irreverence. The pronominal suffix is missing, but the role of a father is applied to Yahweh. The word כָּבֵד is in a construct form, parallel to fear or reverence in Malachi 1:6. Malachi charges the unfaithful and disobedient priests for their wayward behavior in ministering to Yahweh.

The continued disobedience of the priests evokes God's anger and reprimands, as reported in Malachi. Given His role as master and father, Yahweh confronts the priests and the Israelites with the inevitable conclusion in Malachi 1:6: "Where is my honor ... where is my fear?" (ESV). A son's honor to his father indicates he recognizes his father's distinction in terms of importance and authority.¹⁶ In Proverbs 6:20, the writer extrapolates the significance of sons or children respecting their fathers which is stark contrast to what the priests in the time of Malachi were doing evoking God's reprimand, "my son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." The priests in the time of Malachi dishonor Yahweh in the similar way the son disobeys his father.

Prophet Jeremiah acknowledges Israel as the son in the kinship covenant with God. The relationship between Yahweh as father and Israel as son is well attested in the Old Testament, as seen in the affirmation of Israel as the son (Exod 4:22–23; Deut 14:1) and analogies depicting God as parent and Israel as a child (e.g., Deut 1:31; 8:5; Hos 11:1). According to Tony Merida, "God is the *covenant-keeping* God. Moses described Him as 'my father's God' (Exod 15:2)."¹⁷ Jackson reiterates God's covenant with the children of Israel asserting that "[Yahweh] remembers his promises.... As the Father, he exercises supreme authority and is the ultimate

¹⁶ Mignon R. Jacobs, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017), 184.

¹⁷ Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2014), 90

standard of good—as he gives good gifts to his people.”¹⁸ The priests are required to be consistent with their duties, which include continually obeying Yahweh and maintaining the father-son relationship failure to which a broken relationship may result.

Malachi provides a clear picture of the priests’ unfaithfulness in terms of a son dishonoring his father. The priests’ infidelity directly affects the covenant relationship between Israel and Yahweh. In Israelite society, a son is raised to become like his father. Gesila Uzuoku examined the literary writings in Genesis 20:1–18; 26:1–11 and established that sons were raised to be like their fathers and that if a son failed to be like their father, the family was often disgraced.¹⁹ The combination of בן, son and אב, father in this context raises the issue regarding the social value of ‘ascribed honor’.²⁰ Agreeably, Olwen Bedford and Kuang-Hui Yeh reported that the issue of honor ascribes to the integration of the concepts of son and father, which is associated with social values.²¹

The relationship between a slave and master also underscores the dishonesty of the priests in the relationship of Yahweh and the priests. The position of a master is tantamount to kingship in the time of Malachi; the priests were like slaves who turned against their lord or king. The unfaithfulness of the priests to their duties pollutes the system of ‘honor and shame’ in the society and represents the defilement of Yahweh’s sacred worship. Malachi held the people accountable for their acts. As a result, the unfaithfulness of the priests and Malachi reprimanding

¹⁸ Justin Jackson, “The God Who Acts: Luke’s Presentation of God,” *JETS* 64, no. 1 (2021): 102.

¹⁹ Gesila Uzuoku, “Like Father, Like Son? The Woman as a Bargaining Object in Gen 20:1–18 and Gen 26:1–11,” *OTE* 34, no. 1 (2021): 89–113.

²⁰ Andrew E. Hill, *The Anchor Bible: Malachi* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 174.

²¹ Olwen Bedford and Kuang-Hui Yeh, “Evolution of the Conceptualization of Filial Piety in the Global Context: From Skin to Skeleton,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 12, no. 1 (2021): 1–14.

the people for their defilement is crucial in mitigating the continuity of such acts of unfaithfulness between the people and Yahweh.

The Disrespectful Priests

Spiritual accountability is understood in light of Malachi's accusations against the priests (Mal 1:6–7). The Hebrew word מוֹרָאִי which means 'reverence,' is parallel to 'honor' or 'respect' and is demonstrated by the faithful priests keeping the sacrificial laws (Mal 1:6). The possessive pronouns of כְּבֹד and מוֹרָאִי function as objective genitives and are understood as 'my honor' and 'my reverence,' to be interpreted as 'that are due to me'.²² The genitive functions as the direct object of the essential verbal action, which is the objective genitive.²³ The term to emphasize the idea of a dominant male figure, derived from the fatherhood and the lordship in the ANE society, is used in the Hebrew word וְאֵם-אֲבִיב to express a paradigm for Yahweh's divine authority over Israel.²⁴ The priests' disobedience reflects their defiance of Yahweh's authority, as if disowning the spiritual responsibilities entrusted to them.

The priests offered defiled food on the Lord's table, which is used for sacrificial animals. The priests' sarcasm indicates their disrespectful attitude. William Holladay explains the usage of the Hebrew word שֻׁלְחָן in Malachi 1:7, which is a construct relationship with יִהְיֶה as a table or altar. In addition, this word can denote a table intended for royal or cultic usage.²⁵ In this context, the word שֻׁלְחָן is likely understood as the tables inside the inner court where the sacrificial

²² Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 213.

²³ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *IBHS* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 146.

²⁴ Thomas McComiskey, *The Major Prophets*, "Malachi," vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 1294.

²⁵ William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 372.

animals were slaughtered instead of the table of showbread. Walton, Matthews and Chavalas assert that this similar Hebrew term שֻׁלְחָן is used for tables to slaughter sacrificial animals at the gates of the inner court (Ezek 40:39–43).²⁶ These scholars' assertion is not satisfactory to take the term 'table' as an insignificant term.²⁷ The hypothetical dialogue between the priests and Yahweh regarding the table is unacceptable. Jacobs asserts, "Regarding the presentation of an unacceptable sacrifice, the sarcastic tone highlights the priests' insolence in this practice. If no one else, they ought to know the requirements for evaluating and presenting pleasing sacrifices to Yahweh."²⁸ Malachi's expression of the Lord's table is mentioned for the first time in the Old Testament related to the idea of tables in Psalm 23:5 and Ezekiel 44:16. According to Baldwin, the Hebrew word מִזְבֵּחַ 'may be despised' indicates "the priests would never have said that it was permissible to despise the Lord's table, but Malachi is trying to bring to the surface subconscious attitudes by drawing out the implications of unworthy actions."²⁹ Thus, Malachi points out the priests' disrespectful attitude toward Yahweh's instructions to keep the Lord's table undefiled.

The priests are in the position to serve Yahweh as their governor, which is the same as servants will serve their human governor. The verbal form of הִקְרִיבָהוּ is a Hifil imperative masculine singular with suffix third person, from the root word בָּקַר. The preposition אֶל is used in this verse instead of יְהוָה to underscore the contrast between Yahweh and the governor, who is only a human. According to Hill and Patterson, the term פֶּתָה 'governor' denotes the Persian-

²⁶ Walton, Matthews, and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 810.

²⁷ The apostle Paul considers this term etymologically equivalent with the Lord's table referring to Christ's sacrificial atonement and representing His body and blood (1 Cor 10:21).

²⁸ Jacobs, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, 191.

²⁹ Joyce G Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972), 225.

appointed governor over Judah.³⁰ The relationship between Yahweh's servants as the priests and the government officials designated to serve their governor is contrasted in the particular usages of the phrases 'my altar' (1:7) and 'your governor' (1:8), which "insinuates a confusion of loyalties on the part of Levitical priesthood."³¹ The priests neglected the duties required to please Yahweh. They overlooked their weaknesses but justified themselves through self-inflation. Their total unfaithfulness is outrageous and unacceptable to Yahweh's covenantal terms prescribed in the Torah.

Undutiful Priests

Yahweh's people lost the essence of true worship in the time of the Prophet Malachi. Malachi 1:8–11³² states the problem of self-serving and worthless worship by following the order of ritualism performed by the undutiful priests. Negligence of the priests in their duties is the reason for the corruption of the religious system of ancient Israel (Isa 1:11–15). The priests neglected the formality of offerings and sacrifices required by the Torah (Lev 21:8; 22:22, 24). Thus, Malachi's message is a transitional point from the old worship to the new. The faulty worship brought judgment to the nation due to corrupt sacrifices, sarcasm, and a self-serving attitude.

The priests and those who presented offerings neglected full obedience to Yahweh, giving sacrifices that violated His commands. Yahweh's love and the Israelites' ingratitude are

³⁰ Andrew E. Hill and Richard D. Patterson, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Minor Prophets Hosea-Malachi* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 623.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Several textual variations are observed in verses 6–14 between the MT and the LXX using the different particles, cases, and suffixes. However, the analysis of syntax, rhetorical features, and thematic structure provides vital support to conclude that Malachi is the product of a unified composition with a single mind. See Jonathan Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity: A Study of Inner Biblical Allusion and Exegesis in Malachi* (New York: T&T Clark, 2016), 24–79.

exposed in these verses and were referenced in the particular divine revelations from earlier prophets (Hos 4:4–5:2). All undutiful priests are accountable to Yahweh for their misdeeds and trespasses. Malachi describes Yahweh’s reaction to the priests’ negligence of their duties (Mal 1:10). Yahweh’s rejection is similar to His judgment in depriving their privileges of His fellowship. The noun form of *נֶחֱמָה* ‘delight’ or ‘pleasure’ expresses Yahweh’s disfavor toward the work of the priests: I have no delight in you. This Hebrew noun form *נֶחֱמָה* occurs in several places³³ and in the book of Malachi to refer to the priests. Jacobs hints, “Just as the text equates despised and defiled; the name and the Deity; the altar and the table; so also, Yahweh declares unacceptable the priests and their offering. The fire on the altar is discouraged because of Yahweh’s displeasure.”³⁴ As a result, Yahweh condemned the priests. His verdict disowned the essence of the temple-related worship system. The verbal form of *וַיִּסְגֹּר* is Qal imperfect third person masculine singular, meaning ‘to shut’ or ‘to close’. In addition, *דֶּלֶת* denotes a gate, door, temple door, or great door. The doors mentioned are not the entry doors of the temple itself but the doors between the priests’ court and the temple’s great court. Since the tables for slaughtering the sacrificial animals were in the priests’ court, no sacrifices could be made if these doors were shut. The undutiful priests oversaw Yahweh’s closing of the doors. The Qumran community cites these verses to repudiate the validity of the sacrificial system of the Jerusalem temple.³⁵

Malachi condemned the priests who turned the temple into a cultic center. Yahweh is in charge of the temple, not the priests (1:10–14). The verbal form of *וַיִּצְרֹק* is Hifil imperfect second plural masculine, meaning to kindle fire. The Hebrew word *מִזְבֵּחַ* is in construct relationship

³³ For example, see Gen 34:19; Num 14:8; Deut 21:14; 25:7, 8.

³⁴ Jacobs, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, 199.

³⁵ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 225.

denoting an altar in a prepositional phrase to link with the preceding verb תִּצְיִירוּ so that it could be translated as kindle fire on my altar. The word הִנֵּם means ‘in vain or uselessly to denunciate the priests’ work in preparing the fires on the altar and killing the sacrificial animals as a part of worship. Baldwin notes that priests’ irresponsibility became most visible when Malachi said “that it would be better to shut the doors rather than to perpetuate worthless worship.”³⁶ The priests’ insolent acts turned the temple into a cultic center to devalue Yahweh’s worship system. James Nogalski asserts that Malachi witnessed Yahweh’s people commit the same cultic abuses like their predecessors. The impious priests were not devoted as much as they should when making offerings to Yahweh (1:6–14). This prompted Yahweh to prepare and send a messenger for the day of his coming.³⁷ The priests made people assume that Yahweh accepted their sacrifices to bring blessings upon them. Verse 10 marks the most concrete accusations against the undutiful priests. They were charged because of their unlawful sacrificial practices outside of the temple, which violated the statutes of Deuteronomy 12.³⁸ Thus, the Levitical priests were in a state of apostasy and should have forsaken worship since their acts were unacceptable.

The Covenant Broken

The Aaronic priests administer the whole sacrificial worship system as spiritual leaders and administrators. The rest of the Levites serve and minister to the priestly functions under the Levitical priesthood. Although priests and Levites have different roles, they must practice and fulfill all the sacrificial laws under the covenantal framework. In Malachi 1:11–14, the Prophet Malachi condemned the priests’ failures in their duties as a malediction. He adapts the

³⁶ Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 226.

³⁷ James D. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve and Beyond* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 230.

³⁸ Gordon P. Hugenberger, “Malachi,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 885, Accordance electronic ed.

covenantal terms of cursing and blessings from Deuteronomy 28 to condemn the corrupt priests as they disobey the sacrificial laws by failing to honor and glorify Yahweh's name (Lev 22:17–25; Deut 15:21). Malachi's message carries a command against their failure in the manner of a curse. His oration is exegetical since it usually applies to an ancestral curse on the nation of Israel, particularly to the priests. In this case, his speech sets the tone for covenantal commands to send a judgment.³⁹ The Levitical priests are spiritual leaders, and all the Levites are subject to living under the covenantal framework of Yahweh's assigned duties.

When dealing with a breach of covenant throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh dealt with the nation of Israel corporately because she was called, established, and chosen uniquely.⁴⁰ It is analogous to the Prophet Malachi's denunciation since the priests profaned the covenant, "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal 2:10, ESV). Similar to the circumstances before impending judgment in the book of Malachi, warnings in the book of Hebrews are also given to all believers to keep in line with Yahweh's promises (Heb 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; 12:14–29). Since the term Israel has a nuance reflected in a corporate sense in the Old Testament (Exod 19:5–6; Ps 33:12; 65:4; 106:5; Hag 2:23), the same sense of a corporate responsibility applies to all believers in the New Testament (Acts 13:17; Rom 9:11; 11:28).

Yahweh's honor and justice are to magnify His name, and the contemptible abuses of the priests associated with the corrupt worship would not prevail. Yahweh's covenant people are entitled to acknowledge the greatness of Yahweh (cf. Mal 1:11) above the Persian government. The controversial view of verse 11 can be debated in terms of Yahweh's reign of justice or

³⁹ Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity*, 114.

⁴⁰ Deut 7:6–8; 10:14–15; Isa 5:28; 10:17; 29:6; 30:27; 33:14; 57:18; 59:18; 65:6; 66:6.

Malachi's eschatological language, "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations" (ESV). The metaphorical usage of Yahweh's sovereignty as the sun in light of the king's justice can be correlated to the ANE beliefs found among the Pharaohs and the Hittites. In the ANE beliefs, the sun is equated with the honor and justice of the king's name: "Amun-Re describes the king as the lord of rays ... Shamash, the sun god, who is the god of justice. Thorns symbolized rebels, who are simply poked into the fire (the result of the sun's heat)."⁴¹ The sun is the most powerful object in Yahweh's creation, and no one can stare or stand against the brightness of its power. In the same way, even the priests could not stand against Yahweh's commands when they did not follow His way.

The religious hypocrisy the Levitical priests and people committed in the sense of covenantal unfaithfulness enraged Yahweh. James D. Nogalski avers, "In Malachi, Yahweh's people return to the cultic abuses of the earlier generations by offering less than their best to Yahweh (1:6–14), which prompts Yahweh to send a messenger to prepare for the day of His coming."⁴² The verbal form of נִרְאָה, Niphal participle masculine singular meaning 'to be feared,' is used in Malachi 1:14 instead of יִכָּבֵד in verse 6. Malachi stresses the leverage of fear that Yahweh had among other nations so the people would understand the severity of His judgment. Yahweh utters, "Even the heathen dread Me because of My judgments; what a reproach this is to you, My people, who fear Me not!" (Mal 1:6, ESV). Also, it may be translated, 'shall be feared among,' agreeing with the prophecy of the call of the gentiles.⁴³ Thus, Yahweh's people, the remnant of Israel, should remain faithful to Yahweh despite difficult circumstances.

⁴¹ Walton, Matthews and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 353.

⁴² Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve and Beyond*, 230.

⁴³ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, 737.

Malachi made all his attempts to persuade the Israelites that Yahweh is genuinely Lord. He also revisited the theological truth regarding the greatness and goodness of Yahweh in the opening words of chapter 1, so that people would acknowledge Yahweh's deliverance and sovereignty beyond the borders of Israel. People in the time of Amos did not repent, as they thought Yahweh would not punish them for their sins but would punish the surrounding nations instead. Yahweh despised their wrong attitudes along with their wayward behavior. Barton insists, "Apparent privilege in fact entails responsibility; Israel is even worse than the admittedly ungodly nations whom she presumes to despise."⁴⁴ Even if their neighbors deserved Yahweh's judgment, the priests of Israel were obligated morally to point out other nations' sins.

Malachi accused the priests based on the shared heritage of covenant, which remains fundamental to all Israelites since Yahweh's covenant is the source of potential unity for the subsequent generations (Mal 1:6; 2:4). The idea of covenant related to kinship is noted in Hebrews to point out Christ's role as the firstborn Son of Yahweh, King, and High Priest. However, in the biblical sense of 'covenant,' the author of Hebrews's use of *diathēkē* juxtaposes with the cursing and blessing elements reflected in Deuteronomy 28. Malachi's argument reviews covenant curses on the people as they ignore the covenantal relationship.⁴⁵ Using the Old Testament to interpret New Testament texts can create *Didache* issues. However, the author of Hebrews uses this approach as a framework to make the readers understand the blessings derived from the covenant. William Varner notes, "The Didache's use of Scripture concludes by noting its two direct citations from the Old Testament. The first is a significant citation from Mal 1:11,

⁴⁴ John Barton, *Amos's Oracles Against the Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 36.

⁴⁵ Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 50–55.

14.’⁴⁶ Thus, the judgment of the nation of Israel resulted from the covenantal unfaithfulness of the corrupt priests who caused faulty sacrifices, faulty worship, and negligence of duties. The covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the Israelite nation was broken due to the unfaithfulness of the Levitical priests.

The Union of Kingly and Priestly Duties

Without Psalm 110’s union of a priest and king paradigm shift, it would be impossible to connect the Old and New Testaments. A distinct kind of Israelite kingship in Psalm 110 has revealed what Yahweh envisions for the unity of priesthood and kingship. It indirectly highlights Yahweh’s covenant faithfulness to the people from the time of their patriarchs to subsequent generations. The Davidic kingship widely reflected the prophetic, priestly, and kingly attributes of Christ’s messiahship. The conflict arose between David and Saul in 1 and 2 Samuel, darkening the earlier history of Israelite kingship. Still, it brightened hope for the future, which entirely depends on Yahweh’s providence and faithfulness. Moses and Joshua followed Yahweh’s standards before the reign of King David. Hence, Samuel prepared a perfect seedbed wherein David could grow not only as a potent warrior but also as a godly king who would make the name of Yahweh known forever. David acted as a subordinate king and as a priest who was faithful in his relationship with Yahweh. First and Second Samuel passed the baton of leadership⁴⁷ that manifests Yahweh’s faithfulness to produce the coming victorious priest-king

⁴⁶ William Varner, “The Didache’s Use of the Old and New Testament,” *TMSJ* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 127–51.

⁴⁷ Eli’s household served Yahweh unfaithfully; the prophecy of a faithful priest occurred in the context of 1 Samuel 2. Thus, some scholars suggest Samuel was a faithful priest although his candidacy was disputed due to his lineage tie with the tribe of Levi and his priestly function. Samuel was mentioned as a priest only one time in Psalm 99:6. He anointed Saul, the first king of Israel, in the same protocol of anointing the priest (1 Sam 16:1–13). In King Saul’s failures to comply with Yahweh’s standards, the baton of faithfulness required in the kingship was passed to David, the newly anointed king, who faithfully committed himself to Yahweh in His leadership.

Messiah. Amid chaotic situations observed at the beginning of 1 Samuel, Yahweh establishes a lasting Davidic covenant, which is being fulfilled in Christ's kingship to propose the ultimate ruler of the everlasting kingdom.

Yahweh's Declaration of Kingly Duties

Psalm 110 significantly alludes to Yahweh's declaration of kingly duties using Hebrew poetic language. Alden's composition of the Hebrew chiastic structure in Psalm 110 underlines Yahweh's direct participation in empowering a coming king:

1. A The Lord installs the king
2. B The king is sent out to conquer
3. C The day of power
4. D The Lord swears a solemn oath
5. C¹ The day of wrath
6. B¹ The king goes out to conquer
7. A¹ The Lord installs the king⁴⁸

The chiastic structure of Hebrew parallelism reflects Yahweh's declaration upon the Davidic son's responsibilities. Yahweh's oath of declaration (Ps 110:4) in the center of chiastic structure equally affects what comes before and after verse 4 to underline the kingly duties of a priest-king. This chiasm explicitly points to Yahweh's direct role in the Davidic king's future.

The first verse of Psalm 110 proclaims Yahweh's promise to King David: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool" (ESV). The footstool is considered an analogy to describe the process of conquering others under someone's rulership (Ps 8:6). Silvia Schroer and Thomas Staubli state the following:

The foot, much like the hand, had a symbolic power of its own in Israel: it was associated with subjugation, domination, and the seizure of others' property. To 'tread someone or something under foot' was regarded even then as an act of the greatest humiliation.... In the arts of the Ancient Near East we find throughout the millennia the motif of the ruler who

⁴⁸ Robert L Alden, "Chiastic Psalms (III): A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 101–150," *JETS* 21, no. 3 (Sept 1978): 204.

strides firmly over the enemies of the land and subjugates them, or whole heaps of whose enemies already lie beneath his feet.... Such drastic ideas of subjection and domination are part of the *pathos* of Near Eastern kingship.⁴⁹

The phrase אֶת־אֹיְבֵיךָ לְרֶגְלֶיךָ הָעֹשֶׂה, ‘I make your enemies your footstool’ is an expression taken from the custom of ANE conquerors, paralleling Joshua 10:24 and Judges 1:7 to signify a complete subjugation. Psalm 110 provides insight into how the coming king will subdue all the enemies under his feet like his ancestor David did. Schroer and Staubli further explain the eschatological hope for Christians that their enemies will be crushed under God’s feet, as mentioned in Romans 16:20.⁵⁰ In the book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote about a series of events that would happen to defeat Satan’s forces in the latter days as John received revelations from Yahweh. In addition, he boldly states that Yahweh will defeat all His enemies through Jesus Christ. He vividly mentions that followers of Jesus will suffer persecution, yet Christ will bring them eternal victory in the end (Rev 12:7).

The Hebrew word עַד־אֶעֱשֶׂה, ‘till I make,’ directs Christ’s dominion over His enemies, as commissioned by Yahweh and entrusted with subjugation of all authorities and powers (Matt 28:18; 1 Cor 15:24–28). His authority comes from Yahweh since He was appointed and declared to have jurisdiction over all the land. Messiah is the incarnate savior, Jesus Christ, who can exercise His judgement over all humanity regardless of race and ethnicity. His authority with global power will have no end. The apostle Paul mentions Christ’s supreme authority in 1 Corinthians 15:24, “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power” (ESV). Psalm 110 reflects the character of

⁴⁹ Silvia Schroer and Thomas Staubli, *Body Symbolism in the Bible* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 184.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

the conquering Messiah which will represent a priest-king who will bring ultimate glory and honor to Yahweh.

Psalm 110:2–3 mentions David’s words, but verses 1 and 4 quote Yahweh’s words as “declarations.” The Hebrew phrase *נֹאֵם יְהוָה* in verse 1a can be translated as “A declaration of Yahweh to my Lord” (LEB). However, these words *נֹאֵם יְהוָה* literally mean ‘The Lord says to my Lord’. These words are commonly used in prophetic or other solemn declarations (e.g., Ps 36:1).⁵¹ The Hebrew word *יְהוָה* implies Yahweh, which is the four-letter Hebrew theonym *tetragrammaton* as the Israelites’ covenantal God. The word *אֲדֹנָי*, ‘my Lord,’ is usually used as a proper name of God. However, it refers to David’s superior master or king, and the Jews understood this term to imply the Messiah. Thus, Jesus’s mode of arguing on such an assumption in Matthew 22:44 also proves the Jewish assumption based on their traditions. The phrasal words *שֹׁב לְיָמִינִי*, ‘sit at my right hand,’ signify not only a marking of honor (1 Kgs 2:19), but also denote a participation of power (Ps 45:9; Mark 16:19; Eph 1:20). The Hebrew word *שָׁב*, ‘sit’ refers to the current status or power of the king sitting on the throne (Ps 29:10), rather than signaling the posture, as mentioned in Acts 7:55, 56. Thus, Psalm 110:1–3 best explains Christ’s Davidic kingship, yet the union of His priesthood and kingship is recognized in the type of Melchizedek in verse 4.

Yahweh’s Declaration of Priestly Duties

Psalm 110:4 is a declaration that a future Davidic son, Jesus, would become Yahweh’s faithful priest. The priests belong to Yahweh as they were once set apart for His ministry, and thus, they are to remain faithful to Him so long as the covenant nation of Israel exists. Similarly,

⁵¹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, n.p.

all Israelite kings are Yahweh's as well. Psalm 110:4 echoes the covenant of an everlasting priesthood in Numbers 25, similar to the nature of the Davidic Covenant. However, Psalm 110 is not about David but of his future descendant who is the priest-king like Melchizedek mentioned in Genesis 14. Although Davidic kingship is mentioned, the new order of priesthood is introduced, which is neither related to the Levitical Priesthood nor the Aaronite descendant. Indeed, Christ as the Messiah priest-king fulfilled what the Levitical priesthood looked forward to. In contrast, historical-critical views diminish the spiritual role of the Levitical priesthood in the Israelite history from the time of Moses to Christ. Since Christ's priesthood pertains to the sacrificial works accomplished during His earthly ministry, His role as a priest encompasses one of the two offices of Messiah as a priest-king revealed in Psalm 110.

Psalm 110:4 describes Christ's role of an eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek. The Levitical and Christ's Melchizedekian priesthoods are separate and uniquely different. The word 'Levitical' is derived from the name of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Israel. Moses and Aaron were brothers, Levites. When Aaron and his sons were given the priesthood, they received leadership and administrative responsibility. All the priests would have to come from the house of Aaron. Thus, the Aaronic Priesthood is also known as the Levitical Priesthood. The priests and Levites are rooted in the same tribe, but their roles are distinct; all priests are Levites, but not all the Levites are priests. However, the role of Jesus⁵² as the priest-king encompasses the concepts of Levitical priesthood, Melchizedekian priesthood, and the distinctions between priests and Levites. Jesus's lineage is linked to Davidic kingship and the tribe of Judah. Moreover, His lineage is indirectly tied to the tribe of Levi⁵³ but not to the priesthood according to the holistic

⁵² Jesus possesses priestly and kingly duties, but the Aaronic house has only one priestly duty.

⁵³ John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins through their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth's husband is Zachariah who was a priest serving in the Second Temple. Because of this relationship, Jesus's lineage was related

view of the biblical canon. Jesus fulfilled the role of the Levitical priesthood on the cross, not the Melchizedekian priesthood.

Jesus as the Melchizedekian priest is separate from the Levitical priesthood and Jesus as the Levitical priest. The priest-king aspect of Jesus is manifested in Melchizedek's role as the righteous king of Salem, but the faithfulness aspect of the priest-king is revealed in the characteristics required of the Levitical priesthood. Yahweh's discretionary approach is reflected in Psalms 110:4*b*, in which He declares a new priestly order from the Davidic descendant, becoming a priest-king in the future. In the New Testament, Christ's status is equivalent to Melchizedek (Heb 7:17). In addition, the Hebrew term מֶלְכֵּךְ צֶדֶק in Genesis 14:18 comes from מֶלֶךְ 'king' and צֶדֶק 'rightness and righteousness'. This king of righteousness is identified as the actual person Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:2*b* (ESV): "He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace." However, Melchizedek was not introduced by Christ or His disciples in the New Testament until the author of Hebrews first mentions Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews uses his name as a typological fulfillment⁵⁴ to emphasize the person and work of Jesus Christ that resembles what the priest-king does. Thus, the Jewish messianic expectation is parallel to Christ's priest-king messiahship in Psalm 110:4. Melchizedekian kingship of Christ is also reconcilable in the context of Davidic Messiah. In the New Testament, Matthew records a genealogical account, which emphasizes Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα, 'David the King' (Mat 1:6). Additionally, Paul links Christ's royal messianic identity to King David (Rom 1:2–4). Schreiner notes, "Paul emphasizes that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah

to the tribe of Levi. However, Jesus was neither related to the Levitical priesthood nor priestly functions. Jesus's priesthood is based on the order of Melchizedek. Additionally, Jesus will be a Melchizedekian priest forever.

⁵⁴ Jesus did not become identical to Melchizedek. The eschatological fulfillment as a priest-king Messiah in Psalm 110 reveals that Jesus will perform priestly and kingly functions like Melchizedek.

according to the Scriptures.”⁵⁵ Pauline interpretation of the Davidic Messiah also aligns with Matthew’s ancestral record. Correspondingly, the context of Davidic kingship described in Psalm 110:6 points to the title of the king. David acknowledges that the Messiah is superior to his status. The Messiah’s authority is expressed as equivalent to Davidic dominion with the participation of divine power going against enemies. The use of the Hebrew words *יָדָיו*,⁵⁶ *אֵשׁ*,⁵⁷ and *יָרַח*,⁵⁸ intensify the extent of Christ’s rulership beyond Israel to denote territorial expansion.

How Christ was and is a Perfect Priest

Yahweh declares and appoints a new priesthood in Psalm 110:4 with His divine oath, recognizing Jesus as His appointed one. The Hebrew phrase *וְנִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה*, ‘Yahweh has sworn’ has an eternal or unchangeable promise from Yahweh. He withdrew this kind of similar oath from the descendants of Eli due to their unfaithfulness (1 Sam 2:30). Yahweh’s oath requires the priests’ faithfulness in their ministry. Derek Kidner asserts, “It is a divine oath.... This new priest will never abuse his office, and this priesthood is both older and more perfect (as the New Testament will show) than that of the whole house of Levi.”⁵⁹ This oath is significant in affirming the faithful responsibilities of the new priesthood. A new priest will possess a loyal character to fulfill his obligations. The Gospel of John alludes to Jesus’s dutiful priesthood by saying, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17, ESV). Yahweh declared a new priesthood based on the new covenant that was not

⁵⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Covenant and God’s Purpose for the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 43.

⁵⁶ Meaning to judge or rule and subdue”

⁵⁷ ‘[T]he head,’ which is also used collectively for ‘many heads’ over many lands.

⁵⁸ ‘[W]ound’ is literally, ‘smite’ or ‘crush’ (compare Ps 110:5).

⁵⁹ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 395.

previously made with the Israelite patriarchs. Yahweh's covenants usually have eternal significance and require mutual faithfulness. However, the Israelites were disillusioned with when or how Yahweh would deliver them in times crises. Fruchtenbaum explains that human history is biblically divided in terms of ages or dispensations through Yahweh's covenants. In Exodus 24:1–11, the Mosaic Covenant provided the basis for the law of dispensation affirmed by the Shechinah glory.⁶⁰ Christ's accomplished works in the New Testament describe the fulfillment of the law (Mat 5:17–18). Thus, He testifies the character of a perfect and eternal priest who will faithfully serve Yahweh's people.

Christ's atonement for the sins of all humanity, including the sins of Levites and the Aaronides, represents a priesthood superior to the Levitical priesthood and their functions in the Old Testament. Christ said He would destroy and rebuild the temple to end the mediocre practices due to the corruption of the temple and the priesthood. Most obviously, the temple is in an apostate stage in the time of Christ; thus, Christ denounces the temple by rebuking all the scribes and Pharisees and cleansing the temple in John 2:19–22. He Himself was later represented as the temple and a high priest for His followers. The priest in Psalm 110:4 is none other than Jesus whom Yahweh anointed and appointed to be the eternal priest. The word לעולם 'forever' has its eternal significance to clinch believers' assurance of eternal salvation guaranteed by the eternal priest (Heb 5:6, 9).⁶¹

⁶⁰ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, vol. 1 (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2017), 255.

⁶¹ Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 395.

Christ's Reign in the Eschatological Kingdom

The divine conquering aspect of Christ's victory over His enemies is portrayed in Psalm 110:5–7. Verse 5 continues the description of Messiah's triumph, which began in verse 3. The word יְהוָה, 'the Lord' is rightly accented as the subject to indicate the Messiah's victorious work addressed here is Yahweh's work. The Hebrew usage of the word יְמִינִי, 'at thy right hand' in verse 5 indicates upholding and aiding (Ps 109:31), which is similar to Yahweh's utterance to the Messiah in Psalm 110:1. To reiterate Christ's conquest, this time, Yahweh is noted as the right hand (v. 5), instead of the Messiah (v.1). However, the different positions of 'sit' (v.1) and 'stand' are noticeable here. Yahweh does not fail the Messiah when He is obliged to use His arm against His adversaries.⁶²

The Hebrew phrasal word יְמִינִי 'right hand' in verse 5 denotes the Messiah as a person who participates in Yahweh's might. The right hand is more than a figure of speech; it also symbolizes Yahweh's righteousness, power, authority, judgment, strength, salvation, and glory (Exod 15:6, 12; Ps 2:6; 17:7; 48:10; 80:15–16; 89:13; 98:1; Hab 2:16). In Israelite culture, the phrase, 'right hand' does not only denote a figure of speech. It signifies a person who is above authority. For instance, the context plays a crucial role in dictating the interpretation of the 'right hand' in Jonah 4:11. It does not always refer to a binary choice of good or bad, right or left hand. The context differentiates whether the Ninevites could make the correct decisions or not. The references to persons who "do not know their left from their right" can be seen in Malachi 3:18 (upright or evil), Ezekiel 22:26 (sacred or profane), and Leviticus 27:33 (good or bad). In Jonah 4:11, the perfect conjugation of יָדַע 'discern or to know' is used, which is coreferential with the

⁶² The right hand of the holy one is, at the same time, not inactive, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth" (Num 24:17, NASB).

head of the second clause יָמֵינוּ ‘man or mankind (persons)’. Amy Erickson explains the similarity of ‘right’ and ‘left’ with ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in the ancient Near East and Eastern Mediterranean usage. The typical usage in Jonah 4:11 differs from the Israelite usage to introduce a new kind of expression.⁶³ The “right hand” in verse 5 symbolizes the significance of Yahweh’s power or authority, which rests upon the Messiah. In a biblical context, Kevin Youngblood sees the references to “the right and left” as the Torah’s language regarding Israel’s access to Yahweh’s special revelation, distinguishing Israel between the right and the left. Jonah did not use the covenantal name Yahweh when he delivered the judgment message (Jonah 3). The context brought the issue of accountability to Yahweh to convince the readers that His clemency and justice were extended to the Ninevites since Ninevites did not have access to Yahweh’s special revelation.⁶⁴ The right hand can also be identified as someone’s extent of power. In the case of Psalm 110:5, Christ’s “right hand” symbolizes the extent of Yahweh’s authority.

The use of ‘right hand’ is a cultural nuance related to patriarchal activities in the Old Testament. In the case of patriarchal blessings, Jacob’s right hand is preferred by Joseph to be placed upon Manasseh’s head rather than Ephraim’s (Gen 48:17–20). To be on the right side is to be acknowledged as being in the superior place of honor according to Psalm 45:9. Similarly, the “right hand” in Psalm 110:5 declares Christ’s role in terms of position and honor. The ultimate conquest of the Messiah is the outright revelation among the nations. The universal triumph over all the enemies is portrayed in this verse. Christ is presented as a warrior going against His enemies and sustained by Yahweh. The Hebrew word יָרֵם, ‘strike through’ means

⁶³ Amy Erickson, *Jonah: Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021), 426.

⁶⁴ Kevin J. Youngblood, *Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 182.

‘smite or crush’. In addition, the plural usage מְלָכִים, ‘kings’ conveys not common men, but their rulers, and also all under them (Ps 2:2, 10). The two messianic prophecies Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 are reflected in the Messiah’s eschatological reign over all the nations.

The change of position of Yahweh from the king’s right hand to His left clarifies the use of the language; to ‘sit at the right hand’ is a symbol of honor, and ‘to stand at the right hand’ was a figure of shielding power (Ps 16:8; 121:5). The context of verse 5 indicates the imagery of a battle in a song, which caused the change of expression.⁶⁵ The same word אֹדֶנִי represents Yahweh, who stands at Christ’s right hand. This literary context implies the doctrine of the Trinity meaning that Yahweh, Messiah, and Spirit are equally divine.

Davidic Son in Human Form

Psalm 110:6 sheds light on the future Davidic king who will subdue all enemies under his feet as his ancestor David did. A similar figure is observable in the book of Revelation. The apocalyptic visions of the apostle John foretell a series of events that will reduce Satan’s power in the last days under the reign of the priest-king. Psalm 110:7 vividly describes a humanity of the Davidic Son. The water from the brook refreshed the viable necessity for the Davidic son’s life. Likewise, the future Davidic rulership in a human form is unavoidable in the coming Millennial Kingdom. In the past, the rise and fall of the Davidic Kingdom in the history of Israel indicates the human fragility that could not hold on to the longevity of the nation’s life. When the temple was leveled, the Babylonians took the heir to King David’s throne captive in 586 BC. Both the Davidic kingship and Levitical priesthood could not provide national and spiritual leadership to Yahweh’s people. This verse provides a future hope for the nation through the

⁶⁵ BDB, 411.

revitalization of the Davidic throne. Willem VanGemeran states, “The psalm brings out the effects of God’s acts. The theocratic king enjoys victory because of the God who fights for him ... The king will tire himself out in battle but will be refreshed by a brook along the way of pursuit.”⁶⁶ This verse highlights His human nature in intense physical weariness, similar to what Gideon and his three hundred men experienced, “exhausted, yet pursuing [their enemies]” (Judg 8:4, ESV). Additionally, He shall be refreshed by מְנַחֵם בַּדֶּקֶק, ‘the brook in the way’ and pursue to complete His divine and glorious triumphs. Thus, Psalm 110:7 describes Christ as a human, a Davidic son and conqueror. This portrays the coming human Davidic son who will rebuild the promised kingdom on earth to fulfill Yahweh’s covenants.

It is straightforward to identify the ‘faithful priest’ prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35a as a descendant of the Aaronic house. Nonetheless, it is problematic to posit this faithful priest as the Messiah since the future Davidic son is a priest and king. The ultimate victory is expressed in verse 7b, and the Hebrew verb יִשְׁתֶּה, ‘He will drink’ alludes to a Davidic descendant who will declare himself the conquering king in the battle against his enemies. VanGemeran also notes the nature of a drink not as a result of physical exhaustion by saying, “The royal drink may be ceremonial, as the psalmist expresses his confidence in the Lord in the presence of his troops.”⁶⁷ Paralleling Psalm 2:7, Jesus typifies the King of Israel as Messiah who would be gloriously enthroned. The Luke-Acts account reports that Jesus returned to the heavenly throne room to sit at the right hand of God the Father after Jesus bade His disciples farewell (Acts 13:32, 33). According to George Zemek, Psalm 110’s first oracle (vs. 1–3) pictures Christ’s warlike

⁶⁶ Willem A. VanGemeran, “Psalms,” in *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, vol. 5, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 700.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

kingship (the king-warrior), and the second oracle (vs. 4–7) describes Christ’s warlike priesthood (the priest-warrior).⁶⁸ A warlike kingship is comparable with the Davidic kingship, and a warlike priesthood resembles a Melchizedekian kingship.⁶⁹ Thus, the role of a priest-king, particularly in Psalm 110, combines the two natures of a warrior priest-king.

The Priest-King Role of Messiah

King David looks beyond military triumph toward an era of ‘shalom’ (perfect peace) under Christ.⁷⁰ Jewish tenets, however, do not hint at a perfect, universal peace that would be later displayed in the Millennial Kingdom under the reign of Christ. The Old Testament does not have a satisfactory explanation of the usage of the term Messiah correlated to the equivalent meaning of the New Testament interpretation. The coming Messiah is superhuman based on the conversations between Jesus and the Pharisees in Matthew 22:45–46, “If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions” (ESV). Likewise, Waltke and Houston assert,

We agree that: (1) the psalm is inspired, (2) David is the author, (3) a father is superior to the son, who owes his life to his father, and (4) a lord, by definition, has authority over his slave. Accordingly, David’s Lord must be superhuman in his nature. Jesus Christ uniquely validates these assumptions by His being born son of David and son of God.⁷¹

Thus, the superhuman identity is realized in the Davidic son who is God-incarnate, referring to Jesus in light of the New Testament perspective. Psalm 110 indeed underscores the priest-king role of Messiah.

⁶⁸ George Zemek, *Road Maps for the Psalms: Inductive Preaching Outlines Based on the Hebrew Text* (Valencia, CA: The Master’s Academy International, 2006), n.p.

⁶⁹ In Genesis 14:18–20, a priest-king Melchizedek also appeared at Abraham’s victory and offered wine (drink) and bread at the celebration.

⁷⁰ Terrien, *The Psalms*, 900.

⁷¹ Bruce K. Waltke, and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), 516–17.

Davidic kingship comes close to what Yahweh envisions for the unity of priesthood and kingship directly providing Yahweh's guidance to the people. The priest-king serves as a vassal king under Yahweh as the ultimate ruler. Beyond all the efforts of the leaders before and after King David, Christ is the only one who exemplified Yahweh's appointed one. The Davidic covenant (Ps 89:28–37) will be fulfilled as the coming Davidic line to become the ruler of the Millennial Kingdom. Fruchtenbaum hints, "The purpose of Matthew's Gospel was to show that this Yeshua really was the Messianic Davidic King. This raised the same question among the Jewish people then as it does among Jewish unbelievers to this day: If He was the Messiah, where is the Kingdom?"⁷² The context of Psalm 110:4 reveals the Messiah is Yahweh's faithful priest. Correspondingly, Christ was humble enough to mediate between Yahweh and His people. John 17 reflects Christ as a high priest who accomplished the will of Yahweh.

King David successfully left a legacy of spiritual fruitfulness to all the kings in the history of Israel. As mentioned in Joshua 21:45, "Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass" (ESV). Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr. state, "Psalm 110 is one of the most important texts used to argue for Jesus as the Messiah in the New Testament texts. The risen Christ sits at the right hand of God and fulfills the messianic expectation. King Jesus's gracious messianic rule is cast in terms of justice and faith for those in need as the hallmarks of the reign of God."⁷³ Christ superseded David as a resurrected Lord and Savior. Thus, David's prophecy in Psalm 110 is pivotal in bridging the old and new covenants through the notion that the Messiah is a priest-king.

⁷² Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, 175.

⁷³ Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalms*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 481.

The two primary themes of Psalm 110 are Christ as king and priest. This psalm recounts David's prophecy for his future descendant who will accomplish Yahweh's will on earth. Christ's earthly ancestor, David, sinned, but he confessed and asked Yahweh's forgiveness (2 Sam 12:13, Ps 51:1–2). David asked for Yahweh's intervention in deliverance from his enemies during the crisis. He conquered many enemies to bring peace and blessings to Yahweh's people. David took refuge in Yahweh in times of crisis and peace. He also asked for Yahweh's blessings on behalf of the nation. David practiced Yahweh's will. He served Yahweh as a faithful servant.

Yahweh's promises to the patriarchs through the covenants and expectations of a royal priesthood in the Torah are relevant to the predictions of King David and the Old Testament prophets.⁷⁴ Yahweh, in partnership with Abraham, launched a plan to create a new kingdom. This kingdom represents the theocratic monarchy, which harbors all nations. Walvoord states, "The promise of a kingdom given to Abraham's seed is subsequently narrowed to Isaac and Jacob."⁷⁵ Thus, Jesus proclaims the patriarchal nation in Matthew 8:11, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (ESV). Jesus is the ideal king and faithful priest who will rule with justice and righteousness. His rulership is referenced as *צֶדֶק צְדָקָה צְדָקָה*, 'a righteous branch of David' in Jeremiah 23:5–8; 30:8–9, 21; 33:14–18. Thus, the reign of a priest-king Messiah noted in Psalm 110 best fits Ezekiel's visions for Yahweh's patriarchal promises to Israel and the eschatological Millennial Kingdom (Ezek 40–48).

⁷⁴ See Gen 12:1–3; 17:6; 49:10; Exod 19:6; 2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17.

⁷⁵ Walvoord, *The Nations, Israel and the Church in Prophecy*, 80.

CHAPTER 5: COVENANTAL FAITHFULNESS IN DAVIDIC KINGSHIP AND LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

As emphasized in the Torah, Deuteronomy 7:9a reflects the covenantal faithfulness between God and His people: “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations” (ESV). Likewise, the Psalter testifies covenantal faithfulness to fulfilling Yahweh’s promises regarding priesthood and kingship. David Starling asserts that Psalm 110 appeals to “the covenant of YHWH with the nation, with Abraham, and with David the king ... as the framework within which the faithfulness of YHWH is experienced.”¹ Ezekiel received visions of the coming Millennial Kingdom and temple to reflect the covenantal faithfulness between Yahweh and the house of David (Ezek 40–48).² Additionally, his visions are apocalyptic, unfolding how Yahweh’s covenantal faithfulness has remained consistent throughout history without neglecting the fulfillment of the Davidic and Phinehas’s covenants in

¹ David I. Starling, *Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship: How the Bible Shapes Our Interpretive Habits and Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 33.

² Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll* (Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1989), 141. The Prophet Ezekiel himself can be assumed to be the book’s author and editor. His visions are interrelated within the entire book and support a continuity of the structural elements and motifs. Dean Ulrich attempts to support the accuracy of Ezekiel’s prophetic fulfillments regarding Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction and plunder of Tyre. There are incongruencies between Ezekiel 26 and 29:17–21, and Ulrich tries to analyze the accuracy of Ezekiel’s visions by rejecting the two views based on different historical and theological sources. The first view argues for Ezekiel’s integrity with different layers of historical fulfillment to reflect the traditional view. The second challenges the connection between prophetic accuracy and integrity regarding Nebuchadnezzar’s lootings from Tyre and Egypt. Ulrich points out that these two views contradict Yahweh’s Deuteronomic criterion in Deuteronomy 18: 21–22 and spoken words in Numbers 12:6–8. Ulrich mentions the presence of mythological imagery that could distance the stages of fulfillment and not negate the prophet’s integrity. Thus, Ezekiel’s integrity is not an issue due to the overwhelming literary devices in the prophetic visions. See Dean Ulrich, “Dissonant Prophecy in Ezekiel 26 and 29,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10, no. 1 (2000): 121–41. Block asserts that Ezekiel’s visions “contain no glaring grammatical impossibilities, no demonstrable historical anachronisms, and no real theological contradictions, a holistic approach to the prophetic and literary product is commended.” Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel: Chs 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 372.

the coming Millennial Kingdom. Thus, the prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 110 prompts the new ministry of the priest-king Messiah and the faithful Zadokian priesthood in the Millennial Kingdom, underscoring God's covenantal faithfulness in both the institutions of Davidic kingship and Levitical priesthood.

Ezekiel's visions include reviving a nation by regathering Yahweh's scattered people from dispersed nations. Correspondingly, the Jews existed despite immense opposition from the most significant world empires of human history, like the Greeks and Romans. For instance, the historico-political event of establishing the modern State of Israel on May 14, 1948, foreshadows the continual impact of Yahweh's covenantal blessings and faithfulness upon His people. Making a connection between Ezekiel's prophecy and Yahweh's land promise made to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3), Joseph Blenkinsopp studies the prophet's passionate concern for the land of Israel as the most crucial subject in his visions: "It may be surprising to learn the designation 'the land of Israel' ... occurs for the first time in Ezekiel (40:2; 47:18) and very rarely elsewhere (I Chron. 22:2; II Chron. 2:17), apart from the more restrictive allusion to the Northern Kingdom."³ Blenkinsopp's view is agreeable to a certain extent regarding evidence of the truth and value hidden in Old Testament prophecies regarding Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness. One can also articulate Christ's fulfillment as priest-king Messiah in Psalm 110 by reviewing N.T. Wright, a contemporary scholar's apocalyptic reading of the Pauline letters based on Yahweh's faithfulness. Wright asserts, "The Messiah will thus bring history to its climax, fulfilling the biblical texts regarded in this period as messianic prophecies, and usher in the new world of which prophets and others had spoken. The Messiah will act in all this as Israel's representative,

³ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 152.

like David fighting Goliath on Israel's behalf."⁴ Jesus, as a Jewish Messiah and a conquering priest-king in the context of Psalm 110, is reasonable in restoring David's throne. Thus, Christ fulfills the Davidic covenant to demand that the sovereign ruler of the eternal kingdom will come. Psalm 110 portrays the Davidic Messiah as a conquering priest-king and establishes a strong connection with Ezekiel's Millennial Kingdom vision. This connection is further justified by Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness in Davidic kingship and Levitical priesthood.

Yahweh's Covenant Faithfulness

Yahweh's covenant faithfulness was manifested in David's life although he was both a warrior and poet. Psalm 1 serves as the gateway to observe Yahweh's covenant faithfulness to a blessed man who observes the Torah daily. David was a blessed man like a tree planted by the river to yield all seasoned fruits and be benevolent to all who depend on it. David became like a Deuteronomic king, the law-abiding one, unlike the descendants of Aaron, who did not come close to the Deuteronomic expectations for the priests. He became an example of Yahweh's priest to the people as he was acquainted with the Torah. The writers of the Hebrew Bible portray King David as a model of a priestly monarch, the anointed representative of Yahweh. Whoever abides in the Torah can become a model like David who lives out Yahweh's covenant. Jesus, one of David's descendants, has fulfilled the royal priesthood mentioned in Psalm 110. Yahweh's faithfulness is seen as He restores His own and sustains His people within the covenant throughout the ages.⁵

⁴ N. T. Wright, *Paul* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 43.

⁵ For example, see Ps 31:1; 35:24; 51:14; 65:5; 71:2, 15; 98:2; 143:11; Isa 45:8, 21; 46:13; 51:5, 6, 8; 62:1–2; 63:1, 7; Rom 3:3–5, 25; 15:8.

The kings and priests in the nation of Israel are in the covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The king of Israel is to serve as a vassal king to fulfill the covenantal obligations between Yahweh and His people outlined in the Deuteronomic mandate and the implications in 1 Samuel 8. David served Yahweh and the nation as a faithful king. Like a priest, David models a prayer warrior for mediating between Yahweh and the people. He also seeks frequent counsel from the Prophet Nathan (2 Sam 17:2; 1 Chr 17:1). Simultaneously, Yahweh acknowledges the promise of raising a faithful priest to the Prophet Samuel. To continue the priestly line of Aaron, King David welcomed Abiathra, the last of Eli's house, to serve in his court as a high priest. Among the Levitical priests, Zadok is acknowledged as the faithful priest corresponding to Yahweh's promise in 1 Samuel 2:35*a*. Subsequently, King Solomon promoted the office of Zadok, who descended from Eleazar, the son of Aaron, to become the high priest during his reign (1 Kgs 4:4; 1 Chr 6:4–8).

Yahweh is forever faithful to His covenant priesthood and people. He will take from unfaithful priests the privilege of having the covenant continued in their lineage. No dynasty of priesthood and kingship in the line of Eli and Samuel is traceable in the Old Testament. The priest-king prophecy in Psalm 110 is related to the promise of “a faithful priest” who “shall go in and out before [Yahweh's] anointed forever,” (1 Sam 2:35*b*). This fulfills the tremendous hope of Yahweh's kingdom on earth, as a Levitical priesthood tied with Phinehas's eternal covenant (Num 25:11). Psalm 110:4*a* describes Christ's priesthood as a divine appointment, similar to the perpetual priesthood established with Phinehas and his lineage. All priestly covenants point to Christ because Yahweh maintains His covenant faithfulness based on the cross of Christ (Heb 10:12–14), and He will continue to preserve the faithful descendants of Phinehas.⁶ Christ's

⁶ The legality of the priesthood became questionable from the time of the Maccabees; the office of the high priest was occasionally bargainable or self-appointed rather than following the Mosaic traditions. 1 Maccabees

atonement for sins on the cross represents what the Old Testament priesthood did to mediate between Yahweh and the Israelites, as required by the Levitical laws.

Faithfulness and the Priesthood

One of Yahweh's characteristics mentioned in Exodus 34:6–7 is faithfulness, which highlights the vital relationship between Him and the Israelites. Moses highlighted Yahweh's faithfulness in terms of His steadfast love, mercy, and grace. Since the priests represent the worship system, they should also reflect Yahweh's character trait of faithfulness. The Hebrew word *אֱמֻנָה* translated as faithfulness in ESV has an implied meaning of truth and etymologically shares the same root word for *Amen* to denote kindly and truly.⁷ A similar usage of this word expresses a form of utmost dedication between a servant and his master: *עִמָּדִי תִסְדַּךְ וְאֱמֻנָה אֵלַי* “with me in kindness and faithfulness” (Gen 47:29, New American Standard) or *עִמָּדֶךָ תִסְדַּךְ וְאֱמֻנָה* “kindly and faithfully with you” (Josh 2:14, NAS). The Prophet Samuel is considered the last spiritual figure of the nation who also performed as a priest. He anointed Saul to become the first king of Israel with a ritual similar to how the Aaronic priesthood was first installed. Thus, any Israelite king would always understand the role of faithfulness is embedded in the idea of anointment. However, King Saul later failed as he was unfaithful to Yahweh's commands despite Prophet Samuel's warnings after Saul's conquest of the Amalekites. Thus, obedience and faithfulness are inseparable in Israelite leadership. Samuel later installed David to become the

14:27b–45 tells us Simon Maccabeus nominated himself as a high priest, bypassing genealogical succession. The *Maccabees illegitimately usurped the high priest position*. Simon claimed his position came from *ὁ λαός* ‘the people,’ in verse 35, since Jewish officials installed him. However, Vanderkem contends the use of the term *ὁ λαός*, “A natural question to ask is whether it is possible to determine from the surviving evidence who these people were and what legal or *de facto* authority they possessed (or someone thought they possessed) to take so momentous a step.” James C. Vanderkem, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 274. Unlike the priesthood in the times of the Maccabees, Christ did not appoint himself to become a priest. His priesthood is divinely appointed, and it is neither changeable nor removable. It is an eternal priesthood.

⁷ BDB, 54.

Israelite king after removing disobedient Saul. Despite different challenges and failures, King David tried to obey Yahweh's commands and he was named a "a man after Yahweh's own heart," (1 Sam 13:14). Prophet Samuel established the idea of Yahweh's faithfulness in Israelite kingship similar to His priesthood to maintain their positions of leadership.

Through the leadership of the Prophet Samuel, Yahweh established a lasting Davidic covenant. This covenant is being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the ultimate ruler of the everlasting kingdom that continues. The books of Samuels and Kings hint multiple times that the Israelite kings did not remain faithful to Yahweh's covenant during crisis. They aligned themselves with their pagan neighbors and practiced idolatrous worship. Subsequently, the Davidic dynasty went into exile, and their rulership faded in Israel's history. The prophecy of a faithful priest-king in Psalm 110 does not give a specific name of a Davidic descendant. Yet, it gives hope to Yahweh's people that a future Davidic king would establish his reign, as mentioned in Revelation 21:3–4, referring to Jesus, the son of David. Regardless of Israel's failures through the leadership of unfaithful priests and kings, Yahweh's people will witness their true and living faithful priest-king Messiah one day.

The Aaronic lineage oversaw the sacrificial worship system as priests and administrators. The rest of the Levites served and ministered to the priestly functions as team members. Although priests and Levites have different roles, they must follow all the sacrificial instructions under the law. From Judges to Malachi, the Levitical priests' unfaithfulness was observed due to their undutiful services in Yahweh's worship. However, Yahweh's faithfulness to the priesthood can be observed through Old Testament prophecies.

The prophecy of a new priesthood in Psalm 110:4 concerns the past leadership of Israelite priests over the nation. Old Testament prophets were usually concerned with the national interest

based on their covenantal relationship with Yahweh. For instance, Malachi followed other prophets by using the terms *שִׁמְמָה* and *חֲרָבָה*, which are familiar to traditional curses or judgments against Israel, Edom, and other nations.⁸ Ultimately, bad decisions of their leaders in the aftermath of the corrupt worship caused all the destructive consequences of Yahweh's judgment. As indicated, Malachi condemned the Israelite priests' failures in their duties as a malediction. The sacrificial worship system failed due to the priests' unfaithfulness in their obligations. The priests were condemned, and simultaneously the nation was judged.

Malachi, the last book of the Hebrew canon and Christian Old Testament, has similar prophecies of the faithful priests in 1 Samuel 2:35a and Psalm 110:4b. Robert Alden notes the following:

Malachi's most notable contributions to the OT's corpus of messianic prophecy was his reference to the forerunner. The first allusion is in 3:1. 'My messenger' there cannot be Malachi (cf. Authorship) but rather some Elijah who would announce for the last time in the OT God's terms of repentance (4:5). We have Jesus's authoritative application of this office to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:14; 17:12–13 (cf. Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17).⁹

Despite the unfaithfulness of the Levitical priests and the nation of Israel, Yahweh's faithfulness was promised in the book of Malachi. Malachi's prophecy of the coming of a forerunner like Elijah came true with John the Baptist's appearance before the beginning of Jesus's ministry. The New Testament writers affirmed John the Baptist as the forerunner or precursor of Jesus Christ. Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness to the priesthood and the nation of Israel would be restored through Jesus Christ, whom John the Baptist introduced. Like the prophecy of a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35b) who would serve before the Messiah, John the Baptist served as a faithful priest before Christ.

⁸ Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity*, 35.

⁹ Robert L. Alden, "Malachi," in *Daniel–Minor Prophets*, vol. 7, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank. E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 705.

Yahweh called the priests to represent His nation for a specific purpose: to become the blessings to other nations in light of the Abrahamic covenant (Exod 19; Lev 21; Gen 12:3b). Generally, the people did not receive the covenantal blessings from Yahweh due to the priests' unfaithfulness in their services and ministries. Disputations of corrupt and undutiful priests damaged Yahweh's glory due to their performance of unclean offerings and disqualified sacrifices. Additionally, their moral failures brought down the nation's covenantal blessings. In light of the priests' unfaithfulness, Gibson states, "Malachi's inner-biblical allusion and exegesis work to do two things: they expose the priests' covenant infidelity and they give effect to the covenant curse on the priests."¹⁰ The relationship between Yahweh and His priests in the time of Malachi should remind today's believers that relationship matters in all aspects of life. All are interconnected socially as a family unit, community, church, organization, and nation. The need for one another creates an interdependency of becoming stronger and more effective communities to make contributions to a better future. King David's prophecy in Psalm 110 is being fulfilled through the ministries of the Old Testament prophets Samuel and Malachi regarding a faithful priesthood. Among the most popular messianic prophecies throughout the Old Testament, Psalm 110's messianic prophecy best connects, illustrates, and reflects Yahweh's promise of raising a faithful priesthood through Samuel and Malachi. Psalm 110 serves as the capstone of the progressive fulfillment of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness in the ministry of the Old Testament prophets.

¹⁰ Gibson, *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity*, 107.

Zadok's Faithful Priesthood

Zadok faithfully served during the times of the Davidic dynasty (1 Kgs 2:26–27; 1 Chron 12:28; 16:39; 24:3), and he is identifiable with a faithful priest prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35. The priestly covenant was made with the Aaronic lineage, tied with the hereditary requirement to maintain the priesthood (Num 25:11–13). Because of Zadok's recorded faithfulness alone, the Aaronic lineage will be able to serve continuously in the millennial temple under the priest-king prophesied in Psalm 110. Jesus's priestly performance on the cross is congruent with Yahweh's appointed priest in Psalm 110:1–4. According to Hebrews 10:12–14, "When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified" (ESV). The entire fulfillment in eschatology highlights the shared responsibility between a priest-king Messiah, whom Yahweh declared as a "priest¹¹ forever," and Zadok, a faithful priest¹² of Aaronic lineage,¹³ with whom Yahweh made an oath of eternal priesthood through Phinehas. Ralph Alexander sees Zadokites' continuity of faithful service in the Israelite history, "Zadokite line remained till Antiochus IV, a Gentile, inappropriately appointed Menelaus to the high priesthood in 171 B.C."¹⁴ Psalm 110

¹¹ This particular notion of the term priest is associated with a prophecy of a royal priest, "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" (Zech 6:13, ESV).

¹² The prophecy of a faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35a is widely disputed by scholars whether it is identified with the Prophet Samuel or the Messiah. However, Psalm 110 bridges the gap in their scholarship to identify a faithful priest as Zadok who will minister to Christ in the eschaton.

¹³ Jesus's kingship is undisputed due to His genealogical ties with King David from both sides of His earthly parents. Additionally, His priesthood is not controversial since Yahweh appointed Him in the type of Melchizedekian priesthood without requiring genealogical linkages. Jesus, a descendant of King David, faithfully served and fulfilled Yahweh's expectation of the Old Testament priesthood, which the Levitical priesthood represented.

¹⁴ Ralph Alexander, "Ezekiel," in *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, vol. 6, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 6:976 fn. 15.

best identifies Zadok as the fulfillment of the future Aaronic descendant prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35.

The term זָדוֹק (Zadok) appears thirty-four times in the Old Testament, but it refers to sons of Zadok eighteen times. This term can be used for Zadok or *HaKohen*, along with other spellings or transliterations such as *Tsadoq*, *Šadok*, *Tsedeq*, *Šadoc*, *Zadoq*, *Tzadok*, or *Tsadoq*. The phrasal word זָדוֹק הַכֹּהֵן (implied as a ‘Just or Righteous Priest’) is a Kohen הַכֹּהֵן (priest), a descendant from Eleazar, the son of Aaron.¹⁵ The Zadokites claim their ancestry is tied to the first anointed priest, Aaron. They originally belonged to the Kohathite branch of the Levites, who cared for the holy articles and objects used for ministering in the sanctuary (Num 4:1–20). Most importantly, their ancestor Zadok descended from Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron (1 Chr 6:4–8).¹⁶ Thus, the rejection of Eli’s sons in favor of Samuel is a matter that “goes beyond Samuel and guarantees into the future the holy office whose present bearer is Eli and whose next bearer will be Samuel.”¹⁷ However, 1 Samuel 2:35a exclusively states the nature of ministerial duty that only Aaron’s descendants would carry out under the reign of the Messiah in eschatology. Thus, “the priest” in 1 Samuel 2:35a neither refers to the Prophet Samuel¹⁸ nor the Messiah. Samuel’s sons were as corrupt as Eli’s (1 Sam 8:1–3), so Samuel’s ministry ended with him. In addition, there is no dynasty of priesthood and kingship in the line of Samuel. Likewise,

¹⁵ BDB, 843.

¹⁶ J. Barton Payne, “1, 2 Chronicles,” in *1, 2 Kings, 1, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Esther, Job*, vol. 4, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1992), 4:352.

¹⁷ Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1964), 39.

¹⁸ Samuel was a keen and ardent leader like Moses and Joshua. He was born and raised in the faith community of ancient Israel during the transitional period from Judges to monarchy. His early life was influenced by Eli, a high priest and the ninth judge of Israel, which became an enormous preparation and a good foundation for him to step up and shape a better future for the nation of Israel (1 Sam 2:11, 18). McKenzie asserts, “Samuel is also depicted as the last of the judges who led Israel. He is, therefore, a transitional figure between the era of the judges and that of the monarchy.” McKenzie, *Introduction to the Historical Books*, 73.

the Messiah must be more than just a faithful priest. Corresponding to 1 Samuel 2:35a, the promise of a priest-king line of David is prophesied later in Psalm 110. Thus, the faithful priest in this context does not solely refer to Eli's sons but to the future descendant of Aaron, who will later minister to the Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

Christ's Faithful Priesthood

The Levitical covenant *vis-à-vis* priestly covenant points to what Christ would do in the New Testament. Christ serves and ministers to all the Israelites, His disciples, and followers alike the same way the Old Testament priesthood did. Christ died on the cross as He atoned for the sins of all Jews and the gentiles, regardless of background, including those who were set apart for Yahweh's sacrificial worship system like Levitical priests. In 1 Corinthians 15:3, the apostle Paul states, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures." Although the Levitical priests could only perform the sacrificial atonement for the Israelites, Christ did it for all humanity to have a universal atonement.¹⁹ The apostle John clearly makes the propitiatory statement in 1 John 2:2 "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (ESV). The Zadokite priests will complement the role of Aaronic lineage ministering to the future priest-king Messiah. The faithfulness of Zadok reflects the theme of faithfulness, which is congruent with David's prophecy in Psalm 110. The eternal aspect of priesthood has dominated the character of Christ, which is unfolding not only in this Psalm but also in the coming eschatological kingdom. From the time of wilderness wandering until today, the responsibilities

¹⁹ Many scriptural references concerning the universal sense of Christ's atonement are seen throughout the whole New Testament: Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 23:46; John 1:29, 3:16–17, 5:24; Rom 3:25, 4:25, 5:10; 1 Cor 15:17; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2; Heb 4:14–16.

of priestly intercession as well as the legitimacy of the Old Testament priesthood remain with Aaron and his lineage.

The eschatological concept of priest-king Messiah related to Jesus Christ in Psalm 110 is deeply rooted in the Old Testament messianic prophecy. The duties and functions of Levitical priests, prophets, and kings are connected with each other under one covenant nation. Psalm 110's priest-king fulfillment reflects the Old Testament messianic prophecy. However, Longman contends that the Old Testament does not provide the first century CE with a clear blueprint for the Messiah.²⁰ Since Jesus and His disciples acknowledged the fulfillment of Psalm 110,²¹ Longman's position does not correspond to the correct interpretation of the Old Testament messianic prophecy. According to Michael Rydelnik, today's believers and scholars should be concerned about a growing movement among some evangelicals who distance themselves from interpreting the Old Testament as a messianic book.²² Thus, Rydelnik's position not only refers to Longman but also to many evangelicals who may not see the Old Testament as the reliable source to underscore the messianic prophecy. Jewish messianic expectation involves the role of priests and kings since the prophecy of a priest-king in Psalm 110 longs for a righteous king who will rule according to Yahweh's will and thus bring justice and peace in the end.

²⁰ Longman III, "The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings," 233.

²¹ In Matthew 26:64 Christ quoted Psalm 110:3 when He appeared before the Sanhedrin during the trial: "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven" (ESV). Additionally, in Acts 2:32–36, the apostle Peter declared the fulfillment of Psalm 110 before the crowd by stating, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (KJV).

²² Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010), 1.

The Messianic Priest-King Prophecies

Psalm 110 is the messianic prophecy that is fulfilled in Christ. This psalm provides the messianic context to identify Christ as the Messiah. Goldingay asserts that the usage of this psalm in the New Testament is messianic, “Christian exegesis traditionally took the psalm as a messianic prophecy that Jesus fulfills.”²³ Early Christian traditions reinforced that Christ’s messianic identity is observed in the prophecy of the priest-king Messiah in Psalm 110. Michael Wilcock notes that “to the early church, [Ps 110] was full of treasures; a dozen books of the New Testament quote from it or allude to it, some more than once.”²⁴ In addition, Bateman states that “those who view Psalm 110 as messianic says that the Old Testament author knew and understood that he referred to the Messiah.”²⁵ Bateman affirms the authorial intent of Psalm 110 to describe Christ as the Messiah. This similar concept is also exegetically reconcilable with the Jewish interpretation of the Hebrew term מָשִׁיחַ, ‘messiah’ in the context of the Israelites’ relationship with Yahweh in the Old Testament. The New Testament equates the Hebrew term מָשִׁיחַ with the Greek term Χριστός, which is associated with ‘(the) anointed one’.²⁶ Thus, Christ’s fulfillment of Psalm 110’s prophecy affirms both the Old Testament’s messianic context and New Testament’s Christian traditions.

According to the Torah, the Messiah King would come from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi, as promised in Genesis 49 and Numbers 24:15–19. However, in Ezekiel 21:25–27,

²³ John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 3: 90–150*, ed. Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2008), 299. Richard Clifford also sees New Testament interpreters staged the Old Testament to provide a preliminary context for the New Testament text. Richard Clifford, “Changing Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament,” *Theological Studies Journal* 82, no. 3 (2021): 524.

²⁴ Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms 73–150: Songs for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 163.

²⁵ Herbert W. Bateman, “Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament,” *BSac* 149 (October 1992): 446.

²⁶ Samuel A. Meier, *Themes and Transformations in Old Testament Prophecy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 141.

the Prophet Ezekiel sets Judah's right to kingship as a significant eschatological fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom, having been prophesied in Genesis 49:10. Both the royal crown and the royal scepter can represent the authority of rulership. Fruchtenbaum claims that both kingship and priesthood belong to the Messiah in light of Ezekiel's similar usage of the royal crown for the priesthood: "the exact same phrase is used: 'until he comes whose right it is,' both priesthood and kingship.... Ezekiel's reference to the priestly mire indicates that Messiah will be a priest as well as a king – something that will be discussed further in Psalm 110."²⁷ The eschatological fulfillment regarding the dual roles of Messiah as a priest and king (Gen 49:10; Num 24:15–19) foreshadows Psalm 110's priest-king prophecy. This fulfillment agrees with Ezekiel's usage of the royal crown, which refers to the King Messiah who will reign in the Millennial Kingdom.

Ezekiel envisions Yahweh's promises of a new Millennial Kingdom (Ezek 17:14–24, 37:15–28; 46). The literal interpretation of these passages can connect Ezekiel's prophecy with the Davidic prophecy in Psalm 110 to portray the reign of a priest-king. According to Walvoord, the literal fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy in terms of Christ's rulership along with His administrative body is inevitable in the coming Millennial Kingdom.²⁸ Christ's return to the earth is biblically and theologically warranted.²⁹ Progressive covenantalism proposes Christ's inaugurated reign, which is in the continuity of the Old Testament covenants. Although Christ did not fully initiate the kingdom, the coming of the Spirit (Acts 2) initiated the new covenant. This concept is related to the 'already' and 'not yet' aspects of Christ's kingship, fulfilling the Old Testament messianic hope and kingdom promise.³⁰ Charles Feinberg insists the critical

²⁷ Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology*, 21.

²⁸ Walvoord, *Prophecy in the New Millennium*, 145.

²⁹ See Matt 24:27–39; Jas 5:7; 2 Pet 1:16; 3:4; 1 John 2:28.

³⁰ Russell Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 40.

reading of the last nine chapters of Ezekiel unfolds a literal plan to implement the new kingdom and temple in future times.

Yahweh's glorious plans for the Jews through the prophecy of Ezekiel will eventually be implemented.³¹ Thus, Ezekiel's prophecy of the eschatological kingdom supports the proposal of the premillennialists. Ezekiel's apocalyptic visions and the position of dispensational premillennialism unpack Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness to the nation of Israel. Yahweh will be glorified, and all the nations from all corners of the earth will be blessed through the nation of Israel. Ezekiel 37:11–12, 14, 21–22, 25 refers to political and national Israel by regathering all scattered tribes around the globe. Ezekiel's prophecy best fits in the 'Already/Not Yet' scenario similar to 'Inaugurated Eschatology,'³² which is accepted by dispensationalism and covenantalism.

Although the Jewish State was reestablished in 1948 after a long period of global dispersion, the final regathering of all Israelites will not take place until the second coming of Christ.³³ Walvoord avers, "David their king will be resurrected and they will serve the Lord after being regathered (Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25). Jeremiah 31 is another graphic prophecy concerning their being gathered from all over the world to be under the rule of Jesus Christ in the Millennial Kingdom."³⁴ Thus, the restoration of Israel is about resurrecting their national life so Yahweh would be able to establish His kingdom on earth once again. The modern Jewish State was built on the Zionist movement. Yet, the current government is not necessarily ordained by

³¹ Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 169–212.

³² Christ announced the coming of His kingdom and forbade the overthrowing of existing rulers by force. See Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 31.

³³ For example, see Ezek 20:33–38; 30:5–11; Zech 14:1–6; Rev 16:13–14; 19:15.

³⁴ Walvoord, *Prophecy in the New Millennium*, 64.

Yahweh to fulfill Ezekiel's prophecy in its entirety. However, it reflects the aspect of regathering Yahweh's people back to their roots. Indeed, the socio-political formation of the Jewish people is the precursory moment foreshadowing the literal messianic kingdom.

The Typological Fulfillment

Matthew's Gospel outlines Jesus's genealogy from Abraham to King David in Matthew 1:1–17 to draw the fulfillment of Yahweh's patriarchal promises. In doing so, Yahweh will restore His rule of authority through His 'anointed' one, Jesus Christ. The Abrahamic covenant consists of a land, a nation, and blessings to all nations (Gen 12:1–3). These promises will be brought forth through the redemptive works of the priest-king Christ. Matthew understands that Jesus is David's direct descendant and will sit on Israel's throne. Not only does Jesus have the right to become the king, but he can also perform the priest's redemptive action like Abraham did in the time of the Patriarchs.

The typological fulfillment of Psalm 110 will manifest when the priest-king Messiah conquers all adversaries from every corner of the earth to redeem Yahweh's people. Significantly, Psalm 110: 5–6 signifies that Yahweh's presence at the Messiah's right hand will bring forth the universal conquest to accomplish His redemptive plan. The prophecy of the redemptive priest-king Messiah mentioned in the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus Christ because the New Testament authors typologically interpret Old Testament characters like Abraham and Melchizedek (Ps 110; Col 2:17; Heb 7:15–16; 10:1). The relationship between Abraham and the priest-king Melchizedek (Gen 14) has nuances that portrays the character of Christ's redemptive role as a high priest in the New Testament. King asserts, "The Spirit of the Christ in the New Testament is declared to have been in the prophets ... suggesting,

foreshadowing, predicting, ‘testifying beforehand,’ by type and symbol, event and utterance.”³⁵

Thus, the priest-king Christ will redeem Yahweh’s covenant nation of Israel from all the enemies.

The conquest of a future Davidic descendant described in Psalm 110 typologically points backward to Abraham’s time. The Hebrew term *נִסְּךְ* ‘to smite through, wound severely, shatter’ (Ps 110:5b) is used in a similar context as *נָסַח* ‘to smite,’ which describes Abraham’s defeat of his enemies in the valley of the kings (Gen 14:1–15). The typology is the key to interpreting messianic prophecies that will be fulfilled in the eschatological kingdom. E. Earle Ellis asserts that “typology views the relationship of Old Testament events ... in terms of two principles, historical correspondence and escalation.”³⁶ Abraham’s rescuing efforts of his nephew Lot against the marauders in the valley can typically be compared to Davidic Messiah’s defeat of His enemies. Both events have a similar usage of the term *נִסְּךְ* ‘shatter’ to intensify the dramatic rescue mission. Thus, typology connects Abraham’s event in Genesis 19 and the Davidic Messiah’s conquering moment in Psalm 110.

A similar pattern of rescue and reunification is manifested in the works of Abraham, David, and Christ (Gen 14:1–17;³⁷ 1 Sam 17:37³⁸). In addition, the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants reflect how Yahweh has kept His promises for the people of Israel. These covenants are fulfilled in Christ’s redemptive work. Abraham and David are distinctive, as Yahweh kept His promises to secure their lineage to become priests and kings for the coming Millennial

³⁵ King, *The Messiah in the Psalms*, 178.

³⁶ E. Earle Ellis, “Foreword” to Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvid (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), x.

³⁷ Abraham rescues his nephew Lot from the marauders: Bera, king of Sodom; Birsha, king of Gomorrah; Shinab, king of Admah; Shemeber, king of Zeboiim; and the king of Bela.

³⁸ David rescued his people from the hands of Goliath and the Philistines.

Kingdom. Both acted like warriors during rescue efforts but remained committed to Yahweh's worship, like faithful priests. Likewise, the psalmist mentioned that Christ will serve as a warrior to deliver His people (Ps 110:5–7), but His kingdom will be at peace in the end. Thus, Christ's warlike character typifies Abraham and David, reuniting Yahweh's people by subduing all the enemies to bring the ultimate *shalom*.

Yahweh called Abraham, the first Hebrew patriarch, to initiate the universal salvation plan for all humanity. Abraham's faith was counted as righteous, and he was regarded as a friend of Yahweh (Gen 16:6; Jas. 2:23). Similarly, David is after Yahweh's heart, chosen by grace to pave the way for a future priest-king Messiah, fulfilling Yahweh's plan of restoring the Davidic kingdom. The Abrahamic covenant reflects Yahweh's redemptive plan that Christ accomplished on the cross to rescue all humanity once and for all (Heb 4:15; 7:25; 8:10). Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler state, "Paul describes the whole revelation of our salvation as an outworking, by Christ, of the plan and purpose of the Father. The plan, purpose, intention, mysterious will, and good pleasure of God the Father are all being accomplished by Christ the beloved Son."³⁹ The efficacy of Christ's atoning death demonstrates the faithfulness and obedience of the Son to Yahweh the Father to reflect the relationship within the Trinity.⁴⁰ Thus, Yahweh's redemptive plan is structured through the covenantal framework based on the faithfulness of Abraham and his generations.

The failure of hereditary leadership is observed within the families of Eli and Samuel. However, First and Second Samuel are considered a novella to introduce the characters more thoroughly than the book of Judges. The words, "In those days there was no king in Israel.

³⁹ Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler, *An Introductory Christology: Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2007), 175.

⁴⁰ See Isa 53:10; Acts 2:23; Rom 8:32; Eph 1–8, 12, 14; Col 1:12–14, 16, 20.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg 21:25, ESV), portray the nature of failure in all circumstances, including the characters and their related stories. The *DtrH* compiler proposes that the rejection of Eli’s sons paved the way for the advantage of the Zadokite priesthood in a later addition by using the old material, “There will not be an old man in your house” (1 Sam 2:31*b*, ESV). The latter addition is observed to underscore the rise of Samuel, who belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, as the removal of Levitical Priesthood was due to the sins of Eli’s sons.

The promises of David are being fulfilled in the ‘already-not-yet’ mode. Many difficult circumstances challenged David’s decision to stand for Yahweh as his personal and national God. Nonetheless, David’s stand is unshakable regarding his faith and confidence in Yahweh’s deliverance from all his enemies. Psalm 110 has a larger context of enemies of nations near and far. This psalm underscores the conquests of the returning king and the priesthood of divine declaration. Christ is affirmed as one of the Davidic descendants who will deliver Yahweh’s people from all their adversaries in order to fulfill the Davidic covenant. Keith Crim asserts, “The Royal Psalms, with their reminders of God’s covenant with David and of the character of the reign of the coming king, surely played a leading role in keeping the expectation of the Messiah in the thoughts of the people. This is the expectation which the members of the early church believed had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.”⁴¹ The book of Psalms gave hope to the ancient people of Yahweh in the Old Testament that the king would come and establish his reign, as mentioned in Revelation 21:3–4, referring to Jesus, the son of David. Jesus concludes the book of Revelation by saying, “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev 22:7, ESV).

⁴¹ Crim, *The Royal Psalms*, 127.

The Re-establishment of David's Throne

Psalm 110:1–3 marks the establishment of a theocratic monarchy, although many do not appreciate it. In addition, the validity of reclaiming David's throne in the Old Testament holds considerable significance in interpreting the New Testament since none of the old covenants have ever been revoked. The Psalter unveils a legacy of kingship; Psalms 89 is the review of the Davidic covenant from Yahweh's perspective by announcing the coming king like David to establish a lasting covenant that would bring forth eternal salvation to all humanity. Psalm 110:1 reflects that the Son of David will sit at the right hand of Yahweh. In addition, Yahweh will make all the enemies become the Messiah's footstool. The portrayal of Christ's manner sitting at the right hand means He has accomplished His assigned duties. The connotation of sitting also refers to His involvement in judging activities. Christ will become a king who will judge all nations righteously and justly.

After many warnings of Judah's sins and disobedience, Yahweh allowed Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar to lay a series of sieges on its capital, Jerusalem. This event was so remarkable that Yahweh directly informed Ezekiel,⁴² who lived significantly away from the attack when the final siege began. Ezekiel was already in his prophetic ministry during this turbulent time in the

⁴² Ezekiel wrote his prophetic book from 597 to 570 BC in exile. He was contemporary to other prophets like Jeremiah (627 to 585), Daniel (605 to 530), and the Minor Prophets Joel (596 to 586) and Obadiah (590). Yahweh called Ezekiel to be a prophet not only among captive Jews in Babylon but also to give prophecies concerning all Israel (Ezek 2:3; 3:4). During the time of his captivity, he lived near the river Chebar (1:1; 3:15), located near the city of Nippur in Mesopotamia. Unlike other biblical writers, Ezekiel detailed his direct dialogue with Yahweh at least ninety times. Yahweh even called him the "son of man" by saying, "In the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day'" (Ezek 24:1–2, ESV). This siege occurred in 588 BC. Nebuchadnezzar spent months building forts and trenches around the city to starve the people and weaken the capital. The total destruction of Jerusalem's temple began on Ab 9 in the civil year 3175 (Hebrew Calendar), corresponding to Tuesday, July 17 in 586 BC. It would also be on Ab 9, many years later in AD 70 that the Romans would begin to destroy the temple rebuilt by Herod the Great. The prophet was commanded to lay on his left side for 390 days and then on his right side for 40 days in front of a mockup of Jerusalem being attacked (Ezek 4). This was to signify how long Israel (390 years) and Judah (40 years) were to suffer for their many sins. See Edwin Richard Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 189.

Israelite history from 597 to 570 BC.⁴³ He was trained as a priest but called to become a prophet. Buzi, his father, descended from Zadok,⁴⁴ who descended from Aaron. Ezekiel and Judah's King Jehoiachin were taken captive in Babylon simultaneously by Nebuchadnezzar during his second attack on Jerusalem in 597 BC. The Babylonians replaced Jehoiachin with his uncle Zedekiah, who became their 'puppet king'.⁴⁵

According to Ezekiel's prophecy, the Millennial Kingdom manifests the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. In Luke 1:26–38, the angel Gabriel told Mary her son would reign from David's throne, which did not exist then. Besides, the Jerusalem council in Acts's pivotal moment that James presided over the gentile inclusion. James quotes Amos 9:6–11, alluding to Yahweh's reestablishment of the tabernacle, which is the Revelation's canonical capstone. Most of the millennium content in the book of Revelation comes from Ezekiel. The psalmist and many Old Testament prophets also alluded to its fulfillment.⁴⁶ The Davidic Covenant promises the perpetuity of the throne of David. For instance, in Daniel 2:44 the Prophet Daniel hints, "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever" (ESV). Daniel prophesied the relationship between the Davidic covenant and the returning Davidic ruler. Thus, the reestablishment of the

⁴³ Risa Kohn notes, "Ezekiel lived and prophesied during one of the most traumatic periods in Israelite history.... Scholars have long grappled with the difficulty and complexity of Ezekiel's prophetic message, reaching varied conclusions regarding the unity and authorship of this material. In the early part of this century, much of the book was attributed to later editors; most recent studies, however, have reassigned the majority to the prophet himself." See Risa Levitt Kohn, *New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 1.

⁴⁴ Zadok served as a high priest during the times of King David and Solomon (1 Kgs 1:7). He was faithful to Yahweh and the Davidic dynasty.

⁴⁵ See 2 Sam 8:17, 15:24–29; 2 Kgs 24–25; Ezek 1:1, 3.

⁴⁶ For example, see 2 Sam 7:16; 1 Chr 17:1; Ezek 40–46; Ps 89:28–37; 122:4–5; Jer 30:9; 33:21–22, 26; Amos 9:11.

Davidic throne would only occur in Jerusalem when the promised faithful priest-king fulfills the Davidic covenant.

Christ and His Millennial Kingdom

The house of David is the recipient of the temple, Jerusalem, and the land. The Prophet Ezekiel predicted Yahweh Himself would seek out His ‘lost sheep’ and bring them back to Israel, where He would take care of their needs (Ezek 34:11–31). Paralleling Psalm 110, Ezekiel alludes to the house of David as the heir of the Millennial Kingdom and Yahweh’s appointed kingship in Ezekiel 37:25. Both the Psalmist and Ezekiel’s prophecies alluded to the messianic king who presides over both kingly and priestly duties unlike the ANE kings. Kenneth Barker states,

The king in Israel performed the same functions as ancient Near Eastern kings in general, except that he did not serve as priest. This significant lack in Davidic kingship, along with Israel’s kings’ failures even in the other functions, caused the people to look forward to one who would be the perfect, complete King and would establish the promised, ideal messianic kingdom.”⁴⁷

Thus, the priest-king Christ will fill the gap in overseeing dual responsibilities without vacating the duties of faithful Zadokian priests, Aaron’s lineage. Therefore, Yahweh’s Millennial Kingdom comes with the temple in which Davidic priest-king Christ will take the role of high priest.

The initial establishment of the Aaronic priesthood aims to bridge the gap in the relationship between the divine rulership of Yahweh and the human Israelites. In contrast, the leadership under Elides of the Levitical order and the first monarchical establishment with King Saul were disastrous due to their disobedient acts (1 Sam 2:12–17; 15–31). Yahweh wiped out

⁴⁷ Kenneth L. Barker, “Zechariah,” in *Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, vol. 7, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 665.

Saul's dynasty and transferred the throne to the house of David. This incompetence led to the consequences of the eternal removal of Elides and Saul's descendants from the governing responsibilities. However, the priestly covenant Yahweh made with Phinehas (Num 25:11) would eventually allow Zadokites of the Aaronic lineage to serve under the administration of the priest-king Messiah.

According to Ezekiel 37:16–23, Yahweh will unite the kingdoms of Judah and Israel into one people. The prophet Ezekiel describes the picture of joining the two sticks,⁴⁸ representing the northern Ephraimites of the Northern Kingdom and the Jews of the Southern Kingdom. This passage reflects the reunification of the Davidic Kingdom, which was divided during the time of Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12–14). Christ is the faithful Davidic king who would restore Israel's King of old dominion. Additionally, He will make those willing in the day of His power to walk in His judgments and keep His statutes.

Ezekiel's prophecy reflects another Davidic psalm of unity among all the tribes, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Ps 133:1, ESV). Ezekiel 37:21 refers to the returning exiles conveyed in the preceding verses, emphasizing that the people's sins remain in their hearts. Their persistent sinfulness requires Yahweh to "remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they follow my laws and carefully execute my judgments" (Ezek 37:19, ESV). Thus, only divine intervention can affect the removal of the detestable and idolatrous things. Yahweh's people gradually returned to their homeland. However, the restoration of all Israelites and their spirituality are still yet to be fulfilled before the beginning of the millennial age. The Jews (The tribe of Judah) are prominent among the

⁴⁸ In verses 19–20, Yahweh directed Ezekiel to join two sticks together to represent the union of all the inhabitants in the land to reunite all the tribes of Israel and Judah.

twelve tribes at present. However, all the scattered tribes will reunite to represent one nation when Christ restores the whole nation at His second coming.

Christ and His Millennial Temple

The two major themes in Ezekiel are related to the temple and the sacrificial system (Ezek 40–46). Ezekiel reveals the most complete description of Cherubim and what Yahweh’s millennial temple will look like (Ezek 1:5–24; 41–44). Christopher Wright reflects the original intent of the temple by stating, “The temple was not primarily a place of human worship (though of course it was that), but the place of divine presence, where God ‘caused his name to dwell’.

And, as Moses had so sharply pointed out to God himself, it was the presence of Yahweh their God in the midst of Israel that made them distinctive from the other nations.”⁴⁹ John Whitcomb believes there will be animal sacrifices in the Millennial Temple for the memorial purpose that points backward to what Christ accomplished on the cross. From the very beginning, Levitical animal sacrifices are always intended as a constant warning to Yahweh’s people to serve as a memorial. The restoration of theocracy will reactivate the Old Testament sacrificial system that eventually fulfills the establishment of Yahweh’s kingdom on earth. Since Christ accomplished the sacrificial atonement once and for all on the cross, all the priests will be making sacrifices symbolically (Heb 5:1; 7:25; Lev 9:22). As indicated, it is similar to the Lord’s Supper as a memorial in today’s churches.

Whitcomb discusses three issues: how the nature of Christ’s atonement is related to the animal sacrifices which will be offered in the temple, the efficacy of blood sacrifices in the Old Testament theocracy for believing and unbelieving Israelites, and the comparison of the

⁴⁹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel: A New Heart and a New Spirit*, ed. J. A. Motyer (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 327.

sacrificial system between the old covenant (Levitical sacrificial system) and the new covenant (Ezekiel 40–48) from the thoughts of Hebrews in the New Testament (Heb 5–10). In addition, he postulates the continuity of Yahweh’s covenants from the Mosaic Covenant to Christ’s millennium reign to underscore how the church and Israel will fit in the New Covenant. Thus, the true meaning of the animal sacrifices in the Millennium Temple is applied as a tool that will manifest Yahweh’s ultimate guidance for the nation of Israel.⁵⁰

Yahweh’s reinstitution of the temple includes the entire worship procedure, which is designed to point to Yahweh’s Holiness in the Old Testament. Sacrifices and offerings were never intended to save but to provide pictorial lessons. The Epistle of Hebrews clarifies that sacrifices represent people’s already forgiven sins, but they do not save (Heb 10:1–4, 10).⁵¹ An in-depth analysis of “Jesus Christ once for all” in light of Hebrews 10:10 portrays the actual picture of ‘substitution’ that Jesus did for them. Thus, the sacrifices described in Ezekiel are only memorial in nature (Ezek 43:19–27). Thus, Jesus, as a priestly sacrifice, represents and intercedes for all the people to make the Old Testament sacrifices expiatory and vicarious.⁵²

The future sacrificial activities in the millennial temple will become visible reminders of Christ’s death. Jerry M. Hullinger points out there are exegetical issues in 45:15, 17, and 20 in which Ezekiel refers to these sacrifices as atonement parallel to the Levitical laws. He holds a contradictory view against dispensationalists that the offerings and sacrifices in Ezekiel are not

⁵⁰ John C. Whitcomb, “Christ’s Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (1985): 201–17.

⁵¹ The Jewish believers viewed the sacrifices as retrospective rather than prospective, as in the Old Testament. They willingly participated in temple worship and offered sacrifices in the beginning era of the early Christian movement (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42; 21:26). Only Christ’s sacrifice can take away human sins, not the animal sacrifices. However, the sacrifices helped the believers restore their fellowship with Yahweh since Israelites were saved through faith in the Old Testament times.

⁵² J. I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, and William White, Jr., “Jesus Christ,” in *Nelson Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts: A Comprehensive Fact-Finding Sourcebook on all the People, Places, and Customs of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 528.

memorials. He accepts the efficacy of sacrificial offerings in Ezekiel's temple by not counting Christ's atonement on the cross. He proposes an alternative view that can solve these exegetical problems by suggesting that the animal sacrifices made in the Millennial Temple will primarily remove ceremonial uncleanness and prevent defilement from polluting the temple. In verse 20, he contends the usage of כָּפַר 'to cover over, pacify, make propitiation' is also identically applied in Leviticus to express atonement.⁵³ Sacrifices are required from Genesis to the time of writing these specific verses in order to fulfill or satisfy Yahweh's terms or demands.

Ezekiel's temple is a literal one that has not yet been built and is a prophecy to be fulfilled when all the Israelites are re-gathered in their homeland (Ezek 40–48). However, there is an interpretation of a symbolic temple rather than a literal physical one: "The temple represents heaven, the new heavens and new earth, the church, Christ and His community of believers, or Jesus Himself."⁵⁴ This argument leads to the absence of a literal temple that will no longer require literal sacrificial offerings in the millennial age. This invalidates the requirement of symbolic sacrifices in the literal temple as well. Randall Price refutes the interpretation of the symbolic temple that fails to understand Ezekiel's message.⁵⁵ In addition to Ezekiel's prophecy, a literal reality of temple in Jerusalem is also detailed in Isaiah 2:2–4 and Haggai 2:9. Christ's ultimate sacrifice has completed all the sacrificial requirements (Heb 9:1–10:18). The Millennial Temple belongs to Christ; thus, it will not return to the original Levitical system that uses real animals. Robert Chisholm notes, "Ezekiel's audience would have found it impossible to conceive

⁵³ Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40–48," *BSac* 152, no. 607 (1995): 280–90.

⁵⁴ Mark F. Rooker, "Evidence from Ezekiel," in *The Coming Millennial Kingdom: A Case for Premillennialism*, ed. Donald K. Campbell and Jefferey L. Townsend (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 130.

⁵⁵ Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy: A Definitive Look at Its Past, Present, and Future* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2005), 544.

of a restored covenant community apart from the sacrificial system. Now that the fulfillment of the vision transcends that cultural context, we can expect it to be essentially fulfilled when the Israel of the future celebrates the redemptive work of their savior in their new temple.”⁵⁶

Chisholm satisfactorily denotes a physical temple that evades real animal sacrifices. Thus, the literal temple in the millennial age does not necessarily support the literal view of sacrificial animals.⁵⁷ The presence of a physical temple provides a plausible symbolic interpretation of animal sacrifices.

⁵⁶ Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 285.

⁵⁷ The New Scofield Reference Bible underscores the cultural context of Ezekiel’s audience: “The reference to sacrifices is not to be taken literally, in view of the putting away of such offerings, but is rather to be regarded as a presentation of the worship of redeemed Israel, in her own land and in the millennial temple, using the terms with which the Jews were familiar in Ezekiel’s day.” The New Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford, 1967), 888.

The Faithful Zadokites and Their Duties

After the leadership of Moses and Joshua, Israel's successes and failures are based on their faithfulness. The nation brings success or failure on account of her disobedience. The destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians (722 BC) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians (586) is Yahweh's judgment for breaking His statutes and commandments. Most importantly, the unfaithful priests also went after the idols to enrage Yahweh to bring judgment upon the nation, even during pre-exilic and post-exilic times (2 Kgs 23:1–25; Jer 2:8). Likewise, Ezekiel identified the unfaithful Levitical priests who went astray after the idols (Ezek 44:9–14).

The priestly activities of the Levites existed in the earlier history of Israel, according to Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek 44:10–14). However, Wellhausen's critical approach isolates the Levites from their existence before the exile.⁵⁸ His own historical reconstruction invalidates the history of the Israelite priesthood to overthrow Ezekiel's prophecy of acknowledging the role of the Zadokian priests. Based on Wellhausen's closing remarks in *Prolegomena*, Mark S. Gignilliat points out an example of Wellhausen's reconstruction: "A main tenet of Wellhausen's history is the centralization of the cult, or Israel's formal worshiping life, to Jerusalem."⁵⁹ Wellhausen seeks a diachronic explanation for the Israelite priesthood in a post-exilic cult to dismiss the legitimacy of Levites as priests in pre-exilic times. In contrast to the destructive historical-critical approach, Abba connects the history of the Israelite priesthood from the Mosaic period to the time of the Prophet Ezekiel. He proposes the Prophet Ezekiel was fully

⁵⁸ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 1, 125–30.

⁵⁹ Gignilliat, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism*, 67.

aware of the distinction between the priests and the Levites and their origin.⁶⁰ There is a canonical continuity between Ezekiel's message and the Torah as B. S. Childs asserts that

[O]ne of the most important aspects of Ezekiel's message was its dependence upon the activity of interpretation within the Bible itself ... the prophet's message shows many signs of being influenced by a study of Israel's sacred writings. The impact of authoritative writings is strong throughout the book.⁶¹

As per Abba, this distinction originated long before the exile. Since the Prophet Ezekiel did not initiate this notion of distinction among the Levites, one of the leading arguments of the Priestly Code became unfounded. His view concerning the identity of the non-Zadokite Levites recognizes a division of the Levitical priesthood into two classes from the Deuteronomic time: Aaronic priests entrusted with the service of the inner sanctuary (the tabernacle and later the temple) and the rest of Levites with the assistance of the altar.⁶² Thus, Abba and Childs support the existence of priestly activities of the Levites in the earlier history of Israel.

The demise of the Elide house was prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:27–36, and the rise of Zadokite house would assume the priestly responsibilities of Yahweh's perpetual covenant made through Phinehas (Num 25:13). The remnant Zadokites mentioned in Ezekiel are indeed the descendants of Levi.⁶³ Ezekiel reintroduced them to become the baton of the faithful Levitical priestly line, ordained by Yahweh from the time of Moses. They traced their ancestral link back to Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron. Their presumed survival in Ezekiel's time reflects the significance of Yahweh's perpetual covenants⁶⁴ to the sons of Levi and their ancestor Phinehas.

⁶⁰ Abba, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel," 2–9.

⁶¹ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 364.

⁶² Abba, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel," 2–9.

⁶³ For example, see Gen 46:11; Exod 6:16–25; Num 26:57–60; 1 Chr 5:27–6:38.

⁶⁴ For example, see Num 3:44–48; 18:8–24; 25:10; Deut 10:8; 33:8–11; 1 Sam 2:35; Jer 33:17–22; Neh 13:29; 18:19; Mal 2:4–5.

Their role in the Millennial Kingdom and participation in the temple-related duties will fulfill these covenants. Thus, the presence and assistance of Zadokites to the priest-king Christ will be substantially significant in the Millennial Temple.

The Prophet Ezekiel regarded the Zadokites as the only faithful priestly line⁶⁵ from the Aaronic household from King David's time to the Seleucid Greeks' time. Ralph Alexander traces the timeline of the Zadokites' ministry during the Second Temple period: "Zadokite line remained till Antiochus IV, a Gentile, inappropriately appointed Menelaus to the high priesthood in 171 B.C."⁶⁶ The Seleucids outlawed the Jewish practices and desecrated the Jerusalem temple into a syncretic pagan-Jewish cult site. As a result, the Zadokites' priestly ministry was cut off; however, Ezekiel envisions their revitalized service in the coming temple. Ezekiel 40:46 (ESV) states, "and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who alone among the sons of Levi may come near to the LORD to minister to him." Wellhausen's usage of historical-critical approach discredited the Levitical heritage tied to the Zadokian priests.⁶⁷ However, Ezekiel's prophecy denotes the ancestry of the Zadokian priests who will minister to the priest-king Christ in the millennial temple. Faithfulness is one of Yahweh's characteristics, and the Zadokians are to stand and serve Him as faithful priests. The denial of the Old Testament's historical Levitical priesthood does not correspond to Israel's worship system, which was embedded in the Old Testament texts. There is no classism among the Levitical priests regarding whether they are to be entitled to rights and privileges of

⁶⁵ Zadok's loyalty to David and Solomon was recognized as a faithful service (1 Sam 2:27–36; 1 Kgs 2:27; 2 Sam 8:17; 9:11–13; 15:24–29).

⁶⁶ Alexander, "Ezekiel," 15.

⁶⁷ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 140.

performing sacrificial duties on the account of their Levitical heritage.⁶⁸ Ezekiel has proven that faithfulness is the primary criteria that makes Yahweh's priestly ministry distinct. The faithful priests serving in the millennial temple are Aaron's descendants but are chosen because of their faithful ancestor, Zadok.

Ezekiel emphasized faithfulness in the priestly ministry as he disallowed the unfaithful Levites to perform sacrificial offerings and prevented them from getting close to the most holy things (Ezek 44:11–14). Ezekiel vividly distinguished Zadokites' highest conduct and purity for priestly activities while the rest of Aaronides went astray. Only the Zadokians will have the privilege to minister to Yahweh because of their faithfulness. The Zadokite priests now represent the remnant of the Aaronic line who still possesses Yahweh's ordained priestly responsibility: "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me" (Ezek 44:15). Ezekiel did not create classicism between Levities and priests. Rather, he highlighted the distinctive duties rendered upon the faithful Levitical priests belonging to the Zadokian lineage.

Zadokites tied their genealogy back to the Eleazer, the grandson of Aaron. Ezekiel removed the unfaithful Levites from their assigned duties of getting around the holiest things. However, they were not classified as non-Levitical priests of the cultic officials (Ezek 44:9–14). Christ's reign as the priest-king in the Millennial Kingdom will eventually fulfill the priestly covenants⁶⁹ Yahweh made with Levi and Phinehas without leaving the priestly duties of the Aaronic household. Out of the whole Levitical tribe, only the faithful Zadokites, the descendants

⁶⁸ Peter J. Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House: Priesthood in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 85, no. 24 (September 1, 1999): 3–24.

⁶⁹ For example, Deut 10:8; 33:8–11; Num 3:44–48; 18:8–24; 25:10; 1 Sam 2:35; Jer 33:17–22; Neh 13:29; 18:19; and Mal 2:4–5.

of Phinehas with whom Yahweh made the perpetual covenant, will be granted the priestly duties of ministering to the priest-king Christ. Jesus will reign in the millennium as a priest-king Messiah prophesied in Psalms 110; thus, a faithful priest prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35a is none other than Zadok, who would minister to Christ in the future. Simultaneously, the non-Zadok Levites will still be able to retain their subservient role in service under the Zadokian priests. However, they will not have access to the temple sanctuary. Thus, Ezekiel 43 promises a new temple to be rebuilt during the millennial reign of the priest-king Christ in Jerusalem. The glory will return to this temple to visually represent Yahweh's presence.

Ezekiel introduces the new covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. The returnees will ultimately turn away from idolatry. Their hearts will matter most to Yahweh by replacing new hearts of flesh. Tova Ganzel states that the context between the exiles and the Jerusalemites is controversial. However, as to the future of the exiles, Ezekiel stresses that the exiles will return despite their unrelenting sinfulness. Yahweh will give them a heart of flesh by grace alone, not because of their righteousness and deservedness, to make them follow His statutes. Yahweh will also compel the exiles to eliminate idolatry before their return.⁷⁰ Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross has fulfilled Yahweh's requirement for the old covenant and brought the dawn of the new covenant in the historical and covenantal context (Ps 110; Heb 13:15–16).

⁷⁰ Tova Ganzel, "The Descriptions of the Restoration of Israel in Ezekiel," *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010): 198–203.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The principal duty of the priests was to serve as mediators between Yahweh and the people. The eschatological role of a faithful priest/priesthood as a new approach in this research emphasizes the priests' faithful service to Yahweh and His people. The Old Testament priesthood was first introduced by the Aaronic house whom Yahweh set apart from the tribe of Levi. From the beginning, the essential duties entrusted to the Levitical priests highlight the faithfulness in the priesthood. Members of the tribe of Levi were chosen as priests to share responsibilities with the Aaronic priesthood in Yahweh's worship system in the tabernacle and the temple. However, the failure of the Old Testament priesthood was first seen in the unfaithfulness of Aaronic descendants during the time of Judges. High Priest Eli and his sons miserably failed to provide acceptable sacrifices and offerings to Yahweh. Their unlawful practices caused Yahweh's people to fail in the worship system since they defiled the offerings and harassed the worshippers. When the priesthood family failed, the whole tribe of Levi also suffered consequences as the result of their unfaithfulness.

The spiritual downward repercussions continuously followed from this incident when the subsequent generations of priests failed even during, before, and after the exile, especially most visible in the postexilic Malachi. Yet, amidst these failures, Yahweh's covenantal faithfulness remained unwavering. Despite the shortcomings of the Levitical system, the Zadokian priesthood continued to uphold this faithfulness. It is in this context that the prophesied priest-king Messiah of Psalm 110, identified as Jesus Christ, emerges. He not only fulfills the required faithfulness of the priests but does so in a manner that surpasses the mere performance of duties outlined in the Pentateuchal, historical, and prophetic books. The prophecy of a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35)

belongs to the faithful Zadokian priesthood representing the continual ministry of the Levitical institution as they will minister to the priest-king Messiah (Ps 110:4) in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest reflects the faithful service that belongs to the Old Testament priesthood.

The Hebrew phrase כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם, ‘priest forever’ mentioned in Psalm 110 is concerned with the faithfulness of the priests. The unfaithfulness of the priests in their duties caused Yahweh to bring judgment upon the Israelite nation. Malachi and Ezekiel are distinct examples of prophets who delivered Yahweh’s condemning messages regarding the priests’ unfaithfulness. The people are required to heed the lessons from past idolatrous generations as Jason Gile asserts, “Yahweh commands Ezekiel to make known to Israel the abominations of the ancestors, and the ensuing oracle elaborates on Israel’s history of idolatry.”¹ Ezekiel 3:12 also teaches that the glory of Yahweh is not limited to manifesting Himself in Jerusalem but reigns from His heavenly realm. He is free to execute His authority anywhere in the universe.² This message from Ezekiel underscores Malachi’s teaching regarding the Lord of Hosts. The proclamation affirming the greatness of Yahweh’s name is the theme that carries through Malachi as it represents the divine title of the book, *Yahweh Tseva’ot* (Lord of Hosts).³ Since the Levitical priests have a problem with honor, Malachi speaks in authority like the older prophets using, “Thus said the Lord” formulas to reason his argument by citing what the Lord of Hosts has said.

¹ Jason Gile, *Ezekiel and the World of Deuteronomy* (New York: T&T Clark, 2021), 49.

² Terry R. Clark, *The Rhetoric of Divine Kingship in the Book of Ezekiel* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014), 108.

³ Richard Alan Fuhr and Gary E. Yates, *The Message of the Twelve* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 307–08.

Psalm 110 and a Faithful Priest in Eschatology

Psalm 110 is thematically cohesive, describing a future Davidic king, which connects the entire canon as a messianic psalm. It has a distinctive nature: the form of prophecy, which alludes to the coming Messiah to be fulfilled in eschatology. Its setting is not in a worship context, but it contains a prophecy related to Jesus Christ (Matt 22:43). Both prophetic and messianic approaches are interwoven with eschatological features as James Mays notes, “Reading this psalm as prophecy about the messiah is an approach based on the purpose for which the poem was written. In style and content, it is similar to sayings of the prophets.”⁴ Differing from other royal psalms in poetic and song composition, Psalm 110 is structured into two divine oracles: verses 1–3 consists of the first oracle, which is to declare the king, and verses 4–7 belong to the second oracle, which consists of an oath of the priest. Both oracles are based on the historical narrative in 2 Samuel 7:8–16, in which Yahweh delivers His message through the prophet. King David alludes to the prophecy of the forthcoming priest-king Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus Christ and will come in history as the solitary ruler on the earth.

No dynasty of priesthood and kingship in the line of Eli and Samuel is traceable in the Old Testament. One of the most critical assertions is related to how a shared responsibility will be executed between Yahweh’s appointed priest-king messiah (Ps 110:4) and the “faithful priest” prophesied in Yahweh’s eternal covenant with Phinehas (1 Sam 2:35). Because of this shared responsibility, Yahweh will honor His promise, and the Aaronic lineage will not be left out in the millennium. Additionally, the future Millennial Temple will fulfill the tremendous hope of Yahweh’s kingdom on earth to continue the line of priesthood tied with the priest-king in Psalm

⁴ James L. Mays, *Psalms: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 350.

110. Zadok, a descendant of Phinehas was examined as the faithful priest mentioned in 1 Samuel 2:35. Due to the unwavering service to the Davidic dynasty, Zadok, the faithful priest, will have a shared responsibility under the ministry of the priest-king Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.

The fulfillment of Psalm 110 and 1 Samuel 2:35 is realized in eschatology.

Premillennialists believe Phinehas's priestly covenant will be fulfilled after Jesus's second coming. Premillennialists include both roles of the priest-king Messiah and the Zadokian priests in the coming Millennial Kingdom. Only the priesthood of Jesus prophesied in Psalm 110 is fulfilled on the cross. All priestly covenants point to Christ, as the Old Testament requires a sacrificial system to remove sins. All Old Testament high priests are sinners, and their sins are required to be atoned. Christ's death and resurrection atoned for the sins of all humanity, including all the Levitical priests, once and for all. Christ serves and ministers to all Yahweh's people in a similar way that Old Testament Levitical priesthood was intended to perform.

Levitical Priesthood in the Millennial Temple

The Levitical priesthood is the only relationship Yahweh established in the Old Testament for the sacrificial system. He draws the Aaronic priesthood as the high priest nearest to Him so he can enter the holy of holies once a year on the day of atonement. However, the prophecy of raising a future faithful priest in 1 Samuel 2:35a does not designate a specific priest apart from the Levitical priestly line. This concept is juxtaposed with a new divinely appointed priest outside of the Levitical priesthood (Ps 110:4b). The divine oath associated with the appointment of the priesthood in Psalm 110:4a demands a complete faithfulness from the priest's side. Christ's faithful priesthood highlights the past failure of Levitical priesthood, which prompted the prophecy of a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35). Henry Morris asserts that "a faithful priest was connected with God's judgment on three unfaithful priests: Eli and his sons, Hophni

and Phinehas. All three died on the day the Philistines carried away the Ark of the Covenant. Eventually, the house of Eli perished completely, and Zadok and his descendants became the priests (1 Kgs 2:35).⁵ In addition, Christ's new priesthood in Hebrews 7:17, 21, 24–28 affirms the spiritual priesthood and sacrifices of Christ and His disciples that shall never cease according to the covenant with Levi.⁶ This covenant was broken by the Levitical priests but fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Mal 2:4, 5, 8; Num 25:12, 13).

There will be no literal animal sacrifices in the Millennial Temple, similar to today's rituals of remembrance.⁷ However, there will be metaphorical sacrifices to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ. He died on the cross to replace the blood sacrifice required of the Old Testament Levitical atonement (Lev 17:11). Christ has fulfilled this Old Testament requirement by shedding His blood to atone for the forgiveness of sins, as mentioned in Hebrews 9:22 "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (ESV). The temple-related functions related to the sacrificial activities are resumed but will have a different nuance than the Levitical laws (Ezek 44:4–7; 46:1⁸). Christ's Melchizedekian priesthood is not identical to the Levitical priesthood. Christ, a new high priest, will oversee the sacrificial activities with the Zadokian priests' assistance, the Aaronic lineage (1 Sam 2:35b, Ps 110:4a, Heb 5:1; 7:25; Lev 9:22).

⁵ Henry M. Morris, "A Faithful Priest," *Institute for Creation Research*. Accessed July 20, 2023, <https://www.icr.org/article/faithful-priest/>

⁶ In this research, "covenant of Levi" and "priestly covenant" are used synonymously since the book of Malachi first introduced their similarity.

⁷ The Last Supper is a memorial ritual; prayers of thanksgiving and sacrifices are also rituals equivalent to spiritual sacrifices (Matt 26:17–30; Mark 14:22–24; 1 Cor 11:23–25; Rom 12:21; 1 Pet 2:4–5; Heb 13:15).

⁸ "Thus says the Lord Yahweh: 'The gate of the inner courtyard facing east must be shut on the six of the days for work, but on the day of the Sabbath it must be opened and on the day of the new moon it must be opened'" (LEB).

The Levitical priesthood must uphold the responsibility of conducting and maintaining the order of temple-related sacrifices. However, their significant role has diminished since the destruction of the temple. Although they carry the line of the priesthood ordained through Aaron, their role was no longer required. In John chapter 2, Christ proclaimed He would rebuild the temple. Christ refers to Himself as the living temple. The apostle Paul also describes all believers as belonging to the Temple because they offer themselves as living sacrifices (1 Cor 12; Rom 12). Christ's role as the "(high) priest forever" (Ps 110:4a) has become active since the day of His death and resurrection. The writer of Hebrews mentions Jesus sitting at the right hand of God as a mediating priest on behalf of all believers.

Transferring the authority of the priesthood in the Old Testament is based on heredity and is limited within the Aaronic house. The priesthood can neither be removed nor replaced from the line of Aaron since Yahweh instructed the nation of Israel that the Torah is to be their heart and soul. Jesus, following Psalm 110, acknowledged His kingship as David's prophecy in spoken words. In contrast, His priesthood was only recognized through the conclusive action on the cross that He atoned for all sinners, including the Levitical priests. The essence of the Old Testament priesthood entrusted to the Levitical heritage is unconditional due to Yahweh's appointment. The Levitical duties outlined in the Mosaic law are designed to render perfect service in light of Yahweh's commands in the worship system. However, the priesthood's office of administration rests upon the priests' faithfulness in their duties, and their role became conditional. Faithfulness required from the priests' end is nonnegotiable since their service belongs to Yahweh's anointed ministry.

The book of Hebrews in the context of Christian Judaism underscores its Christological theme since the temple still plays a significant role in the self-identity and zeal of Jewish

Christians.⁹ In addition, its author innovatively introduces a Christological theme because worship of Jesus does not violate monotheism, indicating a notion of continuity in Judaism.¹⁰ Christ's new priesthood supersedes the Levitical priesthood without dismissing the role of the sacrificial system. Kenneth Schenck states, "The Levitical sacrificial system seems in some way to provide a live alternative to the community's faith in Christ. While reliance on Levitical means of atonement is not the focus of the epistle's exhortations, it nonetheless is what the author argues against to bolster their confidence in the effectiveness of Christ's sacrificial death."¹¹ Prayers and supplications symbolize the nature of sacrificial activities in the temple.¹² Thus, Christians in the first century were still involved with the sacrificial activities at the temple to commemorate Christ's accomplished works on the cross (Acts 21:26).

The book of Hebrews has multiple nuances to reflect Jesus's priesthood by mentioning Christology in His preexistent divinity. Eric Mason asserts that Christ's priesthood is associated with divine themes: "The author of Hebrews describes Jesus using numerous titles reflecting different roles or Christological functions. These include 'Christ'; 'Lord'; 'great shepherd'; 'apostle'; or 'forerunner'; 'Son' and 'Son of God'; and 'priest' or 'high priest.'"¹³ Hebrews draws Christ as the resolution of the plot of redemptive salvation. It is in tune with Pauline tradition. Christ makes it possible for all humankind to share the glory of Yahweh, which has been

⁹ Kenneth Schenck, *A New Perspective on Hebrews: Rethinking the Parting of the Ways* (New York: Lexington Books, 2019), 61.

¹⁰ Ibid., 164.

¹¹ Kenneth Schenck, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews: The Story behind the Sermon* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 104.

¹² For example, see Lev 7:11–13; Ps 107:21–22; 142:2; Matt 5:23–24; Rom 12:1–2; 1 Tim 2:1–2; Heb 10:5.

¹³ Eric F. Mason, *'You are a Priest Forever': Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 8.

intended since the beginning of creation.¹⁴ Presumably, the author of Hebrews expounds the duties of priests outlined in Deuteronomy by reviewing and recounting Yahweh's ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the purpose of the Levitical priesthood foreshadowed from the ancient past (Heb 2:17; 3:1–3, 6; 7:24–25; 9–10). Additionally, the author of Hebrews reflects on the Davidic prophecy from Psalm 110 as Jesus's Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to the Levitical Aaronic priesthood. This psalm reflects the duties of the priest outlined by Yahweh in Deuteronomy 33:8–11.

Psalm 110 recognizes the validity of the Aaronic descendant as a faithful priest prophesied in 1 Samuel 2:35a.¹⁵ King David's prophecy in Psalm 110 is associated with the covenant in the same manner that Yahweh made with the Israelites since the times of their patriarchs. The prophecy in 1 Samuel 2:35b exclusively predicts the perpetual role of the Levitical priesthood that will minister in front of the coming Messiah, who is King David's descendant. Since Christ's priesthood pertains to the sacrificial works accomplished during His earthly ministry, His role as a priest encompasses one of the two offices of Messiah as a priest-king revealed in Psalm 110.

The Return of Glory in Yahweh's Worship

Due to the apostate priests and leaders in the history of the Israelites, Yahweh's glory departed the temple (Ezek 9:3; 10:15–19) just before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. In Isaiah 44:28, Cyrus the Great issued a historic decree that would allow the Jews to reinstate their

¹⁴ Kenneth Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 44. All humanity has a shared unity in the fellowship of the trinitarian God since creation; Adam shares the same features the Trinity has: the body, soul, and spirit. In addition, Adam was a unique being created for Yahweh's glory, a little lower than the angels, according to the psalmist (Ps 8).

¹⁵ "Apparently, therefore, Zadok was understood to be the faithful priest who was to become the progenitor of an eternal priesthood of the Lord (v. 35)," see Clifton J. Allen, *1 Samuel–Nehemiah*, vol. 3, The Broadman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1970), 19.

temple worship. Thus, the exilic Jews returned home, rebuilding the temple and Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel (516 BC), Ezra (485 BC), and Nehemiah (445 BC). The temple worship was reinstituted, and the office of priests was reinstalled to resume rituals. A hundred years or one generation had passed since Jerusalem's fall; people had lost the appetite for worship despite Nehemiah's revival attempts (Neh 10:28–29). Malachi and Nehemiah were on the same page in terms of 'cause and effect' scenarios related to people's sins: polluted priests (Mal 2:8; Neh 13:23–27), mixed marriages with pagans (Mal 2:10–16; Neh 13:23–27), and failure to pay the tithes (Mal 3:10; Neh 13:10–12). The Prophet Malachi followed Haggai and Zachariah to denounce the people's actions related to the temple worship system.

The worship institution failed to characterize a nation as Yahweh's covenantal people, and thus, Malachi stood as the last prophet calling for repentance from corrupt worship. Malachi concludes his prophecy with an admonition and a promise to Israel:¹⁶ “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction” (Mal 4:5–6, ESV). From then onwards, Yahweh's silence lasted for about four hundred years until the precursor of Jesus, John the Baptist, emerged to carry the same tone of Malachi's message calling for Israel's repentance. Yahweh would remove the predicted judgment from the nation at that time if they repented of their wickedness.¹⁷ Jamieson asserts, “God sent no prophet after him till John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, in order to enflame His people with the more ardent desire for Him, the great antitype and fulfiller of prophecy.”¹⁸ The message of covenantal unfaithfulness conveys the image reflecting

¹⁶ Jack Lundbom, *The Hebrew Prophets: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 137.

¹⁷ Michael J. Vlach, “Israel's Repentance and the Kingdom of God,” *TMSJ* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 161–86.

¹⁸ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, n.p.

humanity's sinful nature. The negative outcome will impact anyone who fails to keep the covenantal relationship.

Someone must fill the gap as a king to sustain the lost Davidic dynasty and kingdom. Likewise, the broken Levitical worship system needs priests to carry the baton of leadership. The covenant terms "shall never lack" and "forever" are specifically mentioned in Jeremiah 33:17–22 and denote the continuity of these positions. The phrase "covenant with the day" mentioned in Jeremiah 33:20 is identifiable with 'the covenant of David'. This covenant relationship exists because the term "with day" in Jeremiah 33:21, 25, 35, and 36 also denotes the related covenantal intent in Leviticus 26:42 and Psalms 89:34, 37. Jeremiah notes the promises of the perpetuity of the throne of David fulfilled in the Messiah, the son of David (2 Sam 7:16; 1 Kgs 2:4; Ps 89:4, 29, 36) paralleling Luke 1:32, 33. He mentions that the blessing promised to all the tribes of Israel is restricted to Davidic descendants and the Levites since the whole nation's welfare rested on those roles as the kings and the priests (Jer 33:22). When the kingdom and priesthood flourish in the Messiah, the whole nation shall temporally and spiritually prosper based on Genesis 15:5 and 22:17.¹⁹

The deconstructive and redemptive effects are unavoidable once the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and His people is broken. Amos mentioned Yahweh's judgment over their neighboring nations as Yahweh was not confined to the borders of Israel alone. In Psalms 48:2, Yahweh is seen as a universal God who will consider Zion His seat by replacing all other gods in their sacred locations.²⁰ Unlike the presentations of Hosea and Amos during the earlier kingdoms, Malachi depicts the bleak picture of the priesthood in the postexilic situation.

¹⁹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, n.p.

²⁰ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 529.

His voice is the loudest among the twelve prophets as he directly addresses the verdict against the priests by making a sharp distinction between the honor given in the Jerusalem temple and the standing of Yahweh's name among other nations.

The Levitical priests profaned Yahweh's holy name among the gentiles (Mal 1:6) and the people behaved as if there was no future for them. They failed to understand Yahweh's sovereignty and that He would restore the remnant (Mal 3:16–18). They lost sight of Yahweh's historical covenant with Israel (Mal 1:2–5). All they could see was their present postexilic period.²¹ However, Ezekiel saw that Yahweh's glory fully manifested in the Millennial Temple without the ark of the covenant (Ezek 43:5). Feinberg asserts, "This incomparable prophecy began with a vision of the glory of God and concludes with a description of the glory of the Lord ... with God dwelling with man in holiness and glory. Beyond this is no greater goal of history and God's dealings with man."²² In reality, the presence of Yahweh's throne in Jerusalem indicates that the priest-king Christ will reign and have dominance over the kingdom from His royal palace, the new temple (Ps 110:1; Ezek 43:7b).

The Fulfillment of the Covenant of Everlasting Priesthood

Yahweh swore to Himself to appoint a new order of non-Levitical priesthood in Psalm 110:4. This reflects a similar oath that He made with Noah to preserve humanity from the destruction of another worldwide flood (Gen 6–9). In the account of the Genesis flood, Yahweh judged the entire world through the water. Christ serves as the ark to save Noah's family from Yahweh's judgment of death. The apostle Peter describes Noah's ark metaphorically with

²¹ Paul L. Redditt, "The Production and Reading of the Book of the Twelve," in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 26.

²² Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 279.

Christ's salvation from judgment on the wicked by the waters of the flood.²³ Yahweh's oath in Psalm 110:4a reflects Christ's perfect priestly reconciliation to relent Yahweh's judgment.

Yahweh chose the nation of Israel to represent His redeeming grace and righteous judgment among the nations (Isa 42:6–7). The role of the Israelites is significant in reconciling all nations to Yahweh by representing and worshipping Him faithfully. Under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, the nation's statehood was initiated, and the priesthood was instituted. In addition, Yahweh granted the covenant to the Israelites to remain steadfast for His glory among the nations. Israel's neighboring nations are generally understood as gentiles or the pagans in the Old Testament, and Levitical priestly activities are mainly focused on the Israelites. Yahweh's appointment of a new priesthood in Psalm 110:4 foreshadows a larger picture or broader understanding beyond the Israelites in the New Testament. Overall, Christ's sacrificial atonement on the cross represents not only the Israelites but also all humanity in terms of priestly reconciliation.

Yahweh called the nation of Israel to become a holy nation to safeguard their spiritual well-being but not to bring judgment upon themselves. Yahweh established the Levitical priesthood to represent Yahweh's holiness among His chosen people. In Deuteronomy 14:2 Yahweh declares, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (ESV). He proclaimed that Levitical leadership would represent a royal priesthood, which often refers to the whole nation shining His glory among the nations (Exod 19:6). He judged Pharaoh's household and Egypt to deliver the Israelites out of their bondage. Soon after that

²³ John F. MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2004), 217.

deliverance, He revealed a specific plan to designate them for the priestly duties. In doing so, Yahweh delivered them not only for a land of milk and honey but also for a greater task of delivering all the nations from their sins.

Yahweh commissioned the tribe of Levi to undertake the role of spiritual responsibility as priests, while the tribe of Judah was entrusted to become the kings (Deut 18:1–8; Gen 49:10; Ps 89:34–37). The kingdom of priests encompasses the role of kingly and priestly leadership entrusted to the nation through the Levitical priesthood. Significantly, the priests and Levites are responsible for following Yahweh’s instructions as if they were called to serve as civil and religious officials (שֹׁפְטִים) for taking the role of judges and priests (Deut 17:9).²⁴ Initially, they represented Yahweh’s governing body to rule over the Israelites through their priestly activities. Before the monarchy was installed, the Levitical priesthood served under Yahweh as vassal rulers. In retrospect, the responsibility of the Levitical priesthood is subservient to Yahweh’s kingship that reflects the idea of a royal priesthood until the first monarchy was fully installed during Samuel’s time.

In the New Testament, the apostle Peter best explains this concept of the royal priesthood/a nation of priests with a declaration to highlight Yahweh’s purpose for electing the believers for the church in 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (ESV), The Greek term ἀρετὰς, ‘excellencies,’ is used in this verse to denote the fulfillment of virtues. Peter employs this term

²⁴ The Levites are to serve as שֹׁפְטִים, ‘the judges’ (Deut 16:18; 17:8–13), כֹּהֲנִים, ‘the priests’ (Deut 17:9–13; 18:1–8), and נְבִיאִים, ‘the prophets’ (Deut 18:15–22).

directly from the LXX version of Isaiah 43:21,²⁵ which speaks of Yahweh's greatness.²⁶ The church is called to proclaim Yahweh's greatness and share His blessings. Schreiner sees the church's corporate responsibility to a royal priesthood as similar to Israel's: "The church is summoned to mediate God's blessings to the nations as it proclaims the gospel.... Both Israel as a whole and the church of Jesus Christ are identified as a 'royal priesthood'.... the priesthood here is corporate, and yet this does not rule out the truth that individuals serve priestly functions."²⁷ Thus, the believers have prerogative before Yahweh by the priest-king Christ. Jesus and His disciples reached out to all the nations for salvation during their lifetime and beyond. Indeed, the Great Commission has been established to reach all the nations (Matt 28:19–20). The priesthood of all believers will lead the nations to the priest-king Christ through the gospel. To enable fulfilling this call, Christ provided talents to this royal priesthood so that all could flourish in their divinely assigned roles.

Yahweh's redemptive mission was assigned to every one of the Israelites from the wilderness journey to the promised land. Christ's priestly duties described in Psalm 110's prophecy eventually fulfilled that specific call of that grand task. Like other nations that were not chosen, the nation of Israel fell short of Yahweh's glory by following idolatrous worship and committing many iniquities. The unified kingdom that David built was split in two: the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The majority of kings in both kingdoms pursued idols and forsook the Torah teachings. The Old Testament prophets repeatedly warned the Israelites of their sins and called for repentance. However, the Israelites continuously sinned against Yahweh by not heeding their teachings. As a result, both Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms were

²⁵ "The people whom I formed for Myself Will recount My praise" (LSB).

²⁶ Craig S. Keener, *1 Peter: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 141.

²⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), 121.

judged for breaking Yahweh's covenant. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken away by the Assyrians in 722 BC, and the nation could never stand and return. Similarly, the Babylonians destroyed Judah in 586 BC and took some Israelites captive.

The nation of Israel was destroyed, but Yahweh remained faithful to His promise even when they were in captivity. Cyrus the Great of the Persian Empire (Isa 45:1–3) allowed the exilic Jews to return to their ancestral homeland to revive national and religious activities later in history.²⁸ Even after they returned from exile and restored temple worship in Jerusalem, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the people continuously sinned against Yahweh. Most significantly, the failure of the Levitical priests in their sacrificial and priestly duties during this postexilic era was far worse than the acts of abomination committed by Eli's household during the preexilic era. They conducted a more gross catastrophe in the Levitical worship system than ever before. Their misconduct was structurally and significantly outlined in the book of Malachi.

Yahweh made a covenant with the whole Israelite nation based on the faithfulness of the tribe of Levi. The Aaronic priesthood is still considered legitimate in the Old Testament worship system before and after the exile. The whole institution of the Levitical priesthood is still required to uphold the instructions in the Torah. Malachi condemned the priests' faithlessness as their humiliation resulted from failure in responsible duties. The covenant of Levi (Mal 2:8) was first stated by the Prophet Malachi as synonymous with the priestly covenant made to the Phinehas (Num 25:11–13). Yahweh made priestly covenants with the Aaronic household. A perpetual covenant that Yahweh made with Phinehas, a grandson of Aaron, is the most significant, carrying the concept of faithfulness in the priesthood system through the ages. The

²⁸ Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus, the learned and authentic Jewish Historian and Celebrated warrior. To which are Added Seven Dissertations Concerning Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, James the Just, God's command to Abraham*, trans. William Whiston (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Library, 2005), 299–320.

Hebrew phrase, בְּרִיתִי אֶת־לֵוִי, ‘my covenant with Levi’ refers poetically to the responsibilities Yahweh entrusted to the tribe of Levi and the Aaronic priests (Mal 2:1–9).

The prophet Malachi gave an ultimatum to the Levitical priests to forsake their transgressions against Yahweh’s covenant (Mal 1:6–2:9). Similarly, in the New Testament, John the Baptist and Jesus called out the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, for their repentance (Matt 11:11). Prior to Malachi, Jeremiah repeatedly warned the disobedient Israelites to repent and redirect their hearts to Yahweh. If they repented and changed their wayward behavior, the judgment would have been relented even during Jeremiah’s time (Jer 42–46). The new covenant mentioned in Jeremiah 24:7;²⁹ 31:33–34;³⁰ 32:40³¹ has a significant power to relent the outcome of the verdict related to the judgment against Israel and the nations. Thus, Yahweh’s judgment may be averted if Jews and nations accept and understand the role of Christ’s reconciliatory task between Yahweh and the nations.

The covenant with Levi foreshadowed Christ’s new priesthood and the future redemption and restoration of Yahweh’s kingdom on earth. All men sinned against Yahweh since the time of the fall (Gen 3:1–24). All went astray like sheep (Isa 53:6). The apostle Paul reflects the original sin and the fall due to men’s disobedience (Rom 5:19). Hence, Yahweh’s order of authority needs to be restored through faithful and obedient people. Barrick asserts that the messianic kingdom is not merely referring to spiritual salvation but also affirms a literal earthly kingdom in

²⁹ “I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart” (ESV).

³⁰ “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (ESV).

³¹ “I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts, so that they will not turn away from Me” (NASB).

eschatology. In addition, this kingdom encompasses one significance of many components in Yahweh's plan, and more is yet to be unfolded in eschatology.³² The eschatological kingdom will signify the restoration of Yahweh's sovereignty on earth through the reign of the priest-king Messiah.

Psalm 110 clearly portrays that Yahweh unfolded His redemptive plan by choosing and declaring a new kind of priesthood that will draw all nations to Him. The Aaronic priesthood represented only the Israelites, but Psalm 110's new priesthood would present all nations. Christ's death on the cross represents Yahweh's judgment upon the sins of all humanity that deserve death. Jesus's mention of "the cup" in His high priestly prayer at the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41–46; John 17:1–26) is significant to understanding the nature of sin and Yahweh's wrath. On behalf of all humanity, Jesus took that wrath upon Himself. The cup that Jesus took symbolizes Yahweh's judgment. Timothy Keller asserts that 'the cup' is a metaphor for the wrath of God on human evil. It is an image of divine justice poured out on injustice. For example, Ezekiel 23:32–34 notes, "You will drink ... a cup large and deep; ... the cup of ruin and desolation, ... and tear your breasts." Similarly, in Isaiah 51:22, God speaks of "the cup that made you stagger; ... the goblet of my wrath."³³ Therefore, Christ's priestly reconciliation has thwarted Yahweh's judgment, which will be brought to Jews and gentiles.

Humanity was spiritually dead, but those who are saved are raised to live spiritually because of the priestly work Christ accomplished. The apostle Paul notes the fragility of human spirituality in Ephesians 2:1, 5, and 10 "In the past you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins ... that while we were spiritually dead in our disobedience he brought us

³² William D. Barrick, "The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament," *TMSJ* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 173–92.

³³ Timothy Keller, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 192.

to life with Christ ... God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do” (GNT). However, Christ will judge all nations in the end according to their deeds. In the last days, all humanity will have to appear before Christ’s *bēma*,³⁴ ‘seat’ for all the things they have done when their physical bodies were still alive on earth (2 Cor 5:10–14; Rom 14:10). The *bēma* refers to Christ’s judgment seat. This term is used twelve times in the New Testament.³⁵

The New Covenant Relationship with Yahweh

A new paradigm shift has occurred since the exilic times to redirect the nation’s attention towards Yahweh’s new covenant motif. Ezekiel envisions a new way of bringing justice and peace to the land as Levenson states, “The society of the vision of restoration in Ezek 40–48 is one whose norms seek to remedy past abuses, such as the interference of the palace in the temple, such as the royal confiscation of tribal lands, inequalities among the tribes, and oppression of the resident alien.”³⁶ Ezekiel changed the word ‘peace’ from a state of governmental affairs to a new relationship between Yahweh and Israel. So long as Israel’s relationship with Yahweh is valid, they are entitled to peace, security, and prosperity under the blessings of Yahweh’s promises.³⁷ Cooper insists that Ezekiel’s prophecy explains Yahweh’s

³⁴ Its general meanings and connotations are “a step, pace, the space which a foot covers, a foot-breath; a raised place mounted by steps; a platform [or] tribune of the official seat of a judge; the judgment seat of Christ; Herod built a structure resembling a throne at Caesarea, from which he viewed the games and made speeches to the people,” see Bibletools, “Thayer’s Greek Lexicon,” accessed on October 25, 2023 [https://www.bibletools.org/indExodcfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G968/bema.htm#:~:text=Strong's%20%23968%3A%20bema%20\(pronounced,b%C4%93ma.](https://www.bibletools.org/indExodcfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G968/bema.htm#:~:text=Strong's%20%23968%3A%20bema%20(pronounced,b%C4%93ma.)

³⁵ For example, see Matt 27:19; John 19:13; Acts 7:5; 12:21; 18:12, 16, 17; 25:6, 10, 17; Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10.

³⁶ Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel*, 40–48, 124.

³⁷ Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel’s Use of the Holiness Code* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 75.

intended purpose of bringing a new dimension to Israel's peace and prosperity: "Most of the Old Testament prophecy called for repentance and reformation of human society as the solution to the problem of evil in the world. Thus, it focused on establishing social, economic, and political justice. The key ideas were 'repent' and 'return' to the divine standards of God's Word."³⁸

Yahweh neither changed His mind nor failed His promises to the Israelites.³⁹

Christ is the new covenant mediator, as He performed a better sacrificial job than the Old Testament Levitical priests. Psalms 2, 8, 18, 22, 110, and 144 indicate Christ is the glorious king and the suffering servant who represents the nation of Israel. Additionally, Jeremiah's new covenant extends Yahweh's promises to the gentiles (Jer 31:31–34). Schreiner asserts that the gentiles were not incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel under the administration of the old covenant. Additionally, they were categorized as strangers, not entitled to the covenants of promise.⁴⁰ The cross was a pivotal historical moment for the believers in entering a new covenant relationship with Yahweh (Heb 8:1–10:18). Those who are cleansed and forgiven by Christ's atonement of sins can experience a personal relationship with Yahweh.

Yahweh included the Israelites and gentiles in the new covenant, unlike the old covenant, which was limited to the Israelites only. Most significantly, this new covenant is written in the believer's heart rather than an external set of laws and ceremonies. Likewise, Ezekiel 36 and 37 overshadow the new covenant, which is to be involved with a new heart and spirit. Because of Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross, Yahweh's old covenant was fulfilled, and the new covenant commenced. Christ's mediatorial death on the cross also redeemed Israel on the

³⁸ Cooper, Sr., *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture NIV Text*, 329.

³⁹ Yahweh says in Malachi 3:6, "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed" (ESV).

⁴⁰ Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*, 109.

account of grace. Walvoord states that the new covenant represents the theological covenant of grace because of Christ's atonement for the sins of all humanity.⁴¹ He further clarifies that, "it is also the basis of God's blessing upon Israel, as indicated in Jeremiah 31, where the restoration of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom is an act of grace, not something that they deserve but that is made possible by the death of Christ."⁴² Yahweh's redemptive-historical blessing is clearly portrayed in the new covenant on account of the cross. Christ died to redeem the blessings that belong to the Jews and the gentiles.

The priest-king analogy in Psalm 110 foreshadows the glorious Christ in fulfilling a new covenant. In the Old Testament, Levitical priests' ministry in the tabernacle reflects Yahweh's glory (Exod 39). For instance, Haggai 2:9 predicts more glorious tabernacle under a new covenant than the previous one by stating, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts" (ESV). Haggai alludes to Christ's fulfillment of the new covenant. Additionally, his prophecy shed light on the Sinai covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the presence of Yahweh's Spirit in the tabernacle (Hag 2:23). Levitical priests became unholy by being disobedient and defiling the sacrifices, and therefore broke Yahweh's covenants. Christ achieves the purpose of the tabernacle regarding Yahweh's holiness. Haggai connects the notion of the priestly garments (Exod 39:22) to the new covenant. In addition, Zechariah 14:16, 20 is reminiscent of Exodus 39:22–31, which explains the priestly garments with bells and a holy crown, with the "inscription engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD." Thus, Haggai and Zechariah's prophecies

⁴¹ Walvoord, *Prophecy in the New Millennium*, 144.

⁴² Ibid.

indicated the need to restore Yahweh's greatness. Thus, Yahweh's greatness focuses on Christ's new priesthood and draws all faithful priests to become holy in the new covenant.

Christ's priestly sacrifice on the cross is the heart of the new covenant. According to the book of Hebrews, Yahweh has entered a new covenant with Jews and gentiles through Christ. Norbert Lohfink and Erich Zenger assert that Yahweh's covenantal promise made to Israel can extend to the gentiles: "Speaking theologically we Gentile Christians could also live with the idea that extension to the nations of the promise of a 'new covenant' only became clear with its fulfillment."⁴³ The theological impact of the new covenant is significant as the New Testament underscores the relationship between the Old Testament covenants and Christ's priestly atonement. For instance, Paul's theology emphasizes that the new covenant offers voluntary submission as Ridderbos asserts, "One of the chief consequences of this creation of man by God in Paul's epistles is the thoughts of human responsibility to God."⁴⁴ Thus, gentiles and unregenerate Israelites who went astray in the Old Testament can receive God's forgiveness in their willingness. Richard L. Pratt Jr. states, "Paul penetrated to the very heart of non-Christian philosophy."⁴⁵ Everyone needs to acknowledge the fact that the apostle Paul was the one who unlocked the mystery of a new covenant to the believers of the first century. Thus, all Christians, including gentiles and Israelites, have benefited grace from this new covenant.

The entire context of Psalm 110 describes the current and future position of the priest-king Christ. Alva McClain alludes to Christ's current and future seating position to reflect His dual functionality: "Today Messiah sits at the right hand of God ... In the coming Kingdom He

⁴³ Norbert Lohfink and Erich Zenger, *The God of Israel and the Nations: Studies in Isaiah and the Psalms* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 35.

⁴⁴ Ridderbos, *Paul*, 105.

⁴⁵ Richard L. Pratt Jr., *Every Thought Captive: A Study Manual for the Defense of Christian Truth* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1979), 46.

will sit as King and Priest upon His own throne.”⁴⁶ Likewise, Zechariah 6:12–13 also hints, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: ... 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” (ESV). This text exemplifies the dual role of the priest-king Christ, which is later to be manifested in the future temple: Christ as the Great High Priest in Hebrews 4:14 and Christ as the King in John 12:15 and Zechariah 9:9. Thus, the new covenant makes the connection between Christ’s kingship and priesthood from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The coming kingdom will bring the reality of the fulfillment of the new covenant. The priest-king Messiah will reign over the nations (Ps 110:1–7; Ezek 43; Zech 6:12–13). In the millennial era, the priest-king Christ will carry out the new covenant relationship with Yahweh.

Psalm 110 and Covenantal Faithfulness in the Eschatological Role of a Faithful Priest: A Synthesis

The royal priestly messianism of Psalm 110 is built on a massive biblical-theological foundation. The canonical harmony between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 110 digs deeper into the Psalter’s messianic priest-king analogy. The narratives of 1–2 Samuel highlight the typological connections between David and Abraham, and David and Melchizedek, to determine why the Messiah would need to be a priest of the Melchizedekian order. Kingship, priesthood, covenant, sonship, and conquest all find their part in the textual orchestra bringing unity and harmony to David’s eschatological messianism. Yahweh established the eternal covenant with David that will be fulfilled in Jesus Christ to demand that the sovereign ruler of the eternal kingdom will

⁴⁶ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974), 242.

come. David's prophetic vision in 2 Samuel 22 was written as a psalm, confirming his victories as God's intervention, similar to Psalm 18.

Christ's eternal priesthood and kingship do not require hereditary succession like the Levitical priesthood and Israelite kingship in the past. Yahweh anointed the house of Aaron to serve as a priesthood during the times of Moses. However, the Aaronic lineage failed due to the disobedient acts of Nadab and Abihu in their priestly duties. The disintegration in Eli's household is followed by unfaithfulness to their priestly responsibilities. All subsequent generations need help maintaining the hereditary priesthood and reflecting persistent dedication to the priestly ministry. However, Zadok and his descendants are the only ones who remained faithful to their priesthood. The essential role of a faithful priest is related to both the houses of Aaron and King David due to their shared responsibilities in eschatology. This logic, the requirement of faithfulness in priestly ministry, serves as a premise to research the failures of the Aaronic house. Based on their unfaithfulness, their leadership was eventually transferred to the Davidic house. Thus, Psalm 110:4 highlights the new Davidic king as the leadership role of Yahweh's new non-Levitical priesthood to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ as an eternal faithful priest.

To a great extent, the Levitical priesthood under Yahweh's direct leadership also provided rulership similar to kingship during the times that covered Exodus to Judges. The people demanded no kingship during their faithful service in priestly duties. However, the unfaithfulness of Eli's sons in their priesthood duties resulted in their incompetence to rule over the nation and its people. The existence of the rulership rested upon the unity of the people that King David built. His observance of the Torah accounted for his faithfulness to Yahweh. David, a lowly shepherd boy, was credited and trusted for his accomplishments in fulfilling Yahweh's

faithfulness to the patriarchs. Thus, the “priest forever” (Ps 110:4a) is prophesied to be extended to the future Davidic king as a priest-king, which is to be fulfilled in Christ. Similarly, the faithfulness of Zadok to Davidic and Solomonic dynasties paved the way for future opportunities for the Aaronic lineage. Thus, they will minister to the future priest-king prophesied as the Davidic descendant in Psalm 110. The Aaronic lineage lost their rulership but could still maintain their priestly duties.

The Levitical priests lost their service as rulers due to their unfaithfulness. In retrospect, their rulership was never unwarranted since Yahweh was presumed as the sole legitimate king before establishing the Israelite monarchy. From the wilderness journey to the time of judges, the Aaronic house’s rulership and priesthood foreshadow what Christ would do in the future Millennial Kingdom. Yahweh’s faithfulness and purpose for setting apart the Aaronic house will ultimately be fulfilled through the shared responsibility between the priest-king Christ and the Zadokian priests.

The priest-king analogy associated with the implication of eternal faithfulness in Christ’s priesthood (Ps 110:4) indicates the significance of a new covenant in His ministry. Nick Brennan considers that the new covenant supports Christ’s trinitarian relationship:

New covenant realities involve the Son’s power, not only in the objective realization of God’s eschatological plan to save the people.... Through the Son they are empowered to be like the faithful of [Hebrews] chapter 11 ... the Son is not only author, but perfecter of the faith (12:2) as one who has traversed the road of persecution.⁴⁷

Thus, the eschatological role of a faithful priest, explaining the covenant faithfulness of both Yahweh and priests, is a novelty in the history of scholarship. A priest-king in Psalm 110 has shed light on the future responsibilities of the Aaronic line. Both prophecies of “a faithful priest”

⁴⁷ Nick Brennan, “Divine Power and the Priestly Abilities of the Son,” in *Divine Action in Hebrews and the Ongoing Priesthood of Jesus*, ed. Gareth Lee Cockerill et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 83.

in 1 Samuel 2:35 and “a priest forever” in Psalm 110:4 are theologically connected to Yahweh’s priestly and kingly covenants established in the Old Testament. The whole of Psalm 110 pictures Yahweh as the king and priest maker. Yahweh’s majesty enthrones the priest-king above all the nations with rulership and authority. Unquestionably, Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne and the priesthood so there will be no end of Yahweh’s kingdom on earth (Ezek 21:27; Luke 1:32, 33).

Many priests in the Old Testament misled the people in Yahweh’s name by accepting defective animals for sacrifices. They underperformed their duties as required by Yahweh’s sacrificial standards. They performed their duties for themselves without acknowledging accountability for the people’s spiritual needs. “The day of the LORD” (ESV) mentioned in Joel 2:1 became reality during the time of Malachi’s prophecy. In Malachi 3:23, he declared that Yahweh would bring a terrible judgment upon the nation of Israel. Nogalski asserts that Malachi reinforces the impending Yahweh’s judgment day upon the nation because of disobedient priests: “The coming day of Yahweh in Mal 3:23 will be directed at the wicked, not just the nations, but this alteration reflects the situation presented by Malachi where Yahweh’s people as a whole have returned to false worship practices just as at the beginning of the twelve, while some of ‘the nations’ have begun turning toward Yahweh.”⁴⁸ Followed by the superficial conduct of worship, the priests and the people broke the covenantal laws by indulging themselves in cultic practices in the name of the Lord. Even pagans and the gentiles took a more serious approach to their worship with full respect to their deities.

The priests breaking the covenant has significant consequences in the history of Yahweh’s people. The purpose of the Lord’s table is no longer applicable due to the loss of

⁴⁸ Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve and Beyond*, 179.

genuine worship based on the sacrifices polluted by the unfaithful priests. The priests should maintain the covenant nation in a godly manner until Yahweh finally restores the kingdom of David.⁴⁹ The Lord's table in Malachi 1:12 appears to be tantamount to the altar that the people have defiled. It is figuratively termed as a table because of the imagery of sacrifices being 'food' for Yahweh in light of Leviticus 1:2.⁵⁰ The priests' insolent performance defiled Yahweh's holiness in worship as Hugenberger notes, "They had deluded themselves into thinking that when it came to worship or offerings, something was better than nothing, lukewarm was better than cold."⁵¹ The priests lost a sense of control over their responsibilities to guard the purity principles of the temple. Malachi challenged them that the Lord would prefer their irreverent and hypocritical worship to cease altogether. The priests were irresponsive to Malachi's accusations that Yahweh would punish them in a manner that fit their crimes.

Psalms 110 can be regarded as an admonition for faithfulness and steadfastness, reflecting David's service to Yahweh and His people compared to other royal psalms.⁵² The Messiah's victories are determined based on His dependence on Yahweh's power and authority (Ps 110:5–7). Acknowledging the Davidic Messiah's conquest, Yahweh's people can realize that life can be difficult for Christians and all humans alike. Since all believers joined the journey of Christ's redemptive path, they all will be declared victorious Christians based on their confession to Christ as their Lord and Savior. Christian endurance is a must in the journey of faith to bring victory to Christ's future kingdom as the apostle Paul says in Romans 8:37 "No, in all these

⁴⁹ George Athas, *Theodicy and Hope in the Book of the Twelve*, ed. George Athas et al. (New York: T&T Clark, 2021), 248.

⁵⁰ Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 810.

⁵¹ Hugenberger, *Malachi*, 885.

⁵² Pss 2, 8, 18, 22, and 144.

things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (ESV). The Christian faith journey is attached to complex surviving works of endurance with promises for the future.

All believers should trust Christ like David, clinging to firm beliefs in Yahweh’s protection even amid suffering. Christians believe in the Messiah who suffers (Isa 53). Paul Benware asserts that Christ is present in the midst of believers’ trials and testing: Protection is promised to believers, to keep them from (*ek*) the hour of testing. There is considerable debate on the meaning of the Greek word *ek*. Some feel that using the word indicates that the church will be protected from the time of testing by being removed from the earth. Others believe the word suggests the church will be protected through the time of tribulation.⁵³

Benware believes ‘the hour of testing’ refers to the tribulation period. The promise does not prevent the spiritual leaders from experiencing any suffering, but it does protect them from ‘the hour of testing’.⁵⁴ Like the Davidic Messiah, believers can exercise their freedom in Christ to call for Yahweh’s intervention and overcome all circumstances at any time. The apostle John reveals Christ’s significant words to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10 that He will keep the believers from the hour of testing. John, in the book of Revelation, reassures the believers to stay steadfast regardless of trials, temptations, and persecutions. They all should be united in Christ, with all aspects of their lives founded upon Christ’s promises.

There is a greater agenda concerning the endurance and faithfulness of spiritual leaders through observing David’s psalms and the book of Hebrews. Psalm 110: 4–7 describes how the faithful Davidic Messiah endures while defeating foes during the time of conquest. Lee Cockerill notes, “Heb 1:1–2:18 affirms the Son’s deity and describes his incarnation, suffering, exaltation/session, and continuing ministry.”⁵⁵ The author of Hebrews wants to say that they must continuously work harder to achieve a significant purpose in Christian life. Today many

⁵³ Paul N. Benware, *Understanding the End Times: Comprehensive Prophecy Approach* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 175.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cockerill, “The Present Priesthood of the Son of God,” 206.

spiritual leaders face inevitable persecution like the righteous Davidic Messiah in various circumstances for themselves and the people they lead. The apostle Paul knew all believers needed comforting, encouraging words when he wrote from Macedonia and Greece to the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 20:1–21:16). Paul says that all spiritual leaders are to monitor their spiritual condition. Even Moses was challenged in times by his beloved Aaron and Miriam (Num 12:1–15). Nonetheless, spiritual leaders should never challenge the Lord Jesus Christ. King David and the apostle Paul exhorted all believers as they faithfully served the Lord, regardless of any cost to following the will of Yahweh.

King David and Isaiah allude to the providential reign of Christ over Israel and all world nations in eschatology (Ps 110; Isa 2:4; 42:1). The Hebrew word *בְּחֻרָתִי*, ‘my chosen,’ always refers to Israel, the chosen or elect of Yahweh (1 Chr 16:13; Ps 89:4; 105:6, 23; Isa 43:20; 45:4; 65:9).⁵⁶ The Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:1–3 reflects Yahweh’s plan for re-establishing His kingdom on earth. Additionally, the deliverance of Abrahamic descendants from Egypt foreshadows Christ’s work on behalf of Israel and the New Testament church later in history. Subsequently, Israel was entrusted at Mt. Sinai to become the agent of establishing Yahweh’s kingdom and visible embodiment of His reign on earth. This idea of election is Yahweh’s unique design for the chosen people for the purpose of reaching out to other nations. Thus, the pagan nations will abandon their practices after acknowledging the fact that there is only one true living God. Their mission is to extend the territories of Yahweh’s kingdom on earth and the knowledge of God from land to land and sea to sea around the globe, as prophesied in Habakkuk 2:14.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ BDB, 104.

⁵⁷ Helyer, *Yesterday, Today, and Forever*, 204–45.

Psalm 110, along with other royal psalms (Ps 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 132, and 144), give elements regarding Jesus's messianic ideals, role, and function in His kingship: (1) a military leadership in which the king leads prayer before battle similar to the Torah's instructions to the Levites for prayer and blessings; (2) the king, the administrator, upholds justice and righteousness to the general public; and (3) the king is a leader in faith and worship to keep up with the temple's construction, maintenance, worship, and ceremonies. Psalm 110 prophesies Yahweh's appointment of a Davidic descendant to the type of Melchizedekian priest-king (Gen 14:18). Thus, Christ's status is higher than the Aaronic priesthood even though the Old Testament covenant forbids the king from the priestly duties of sacrificial offerings.⁵⁸ H. H. Rowley notes the future temple rites and Messiah's royal function: "There is reason to believe ... royal psalms, used in the royal rites of the temple, ... were also 'messianic'. They held before the king the ideal king, both as his inspiration and guide for the present, and as the hope of the future."⁵⁹ This appointment reflects the ideal status of the priest-king Christ, who will exercise His universal reign in the combination of kingly and priestly offices.

In the Old Testament understanding, the kingdom of God directly points to Yahweh's absolute control over all the nations at all times.⁶⁰ The Levitical priesthood is part of Yahweh's plan to implement the royal priesthood, which was already established during Adamic dominion. Helyer asserts, "The idea of the kingdom of God already appears in the creation narrative of Genesis 1.... In overview, the rest of the Bible (Gen 3:8–Rev 22:6) recounts the re-establishment of the rule of God over a rebellious planet, which is under the malign influence of

⁵⁸ Helyer, *Yesterday, Today, and Forever*, 194–95.

⁵⁹ H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel: Aspects of Old Testament Thought* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 192.

⁶⁰ Renald E. Showers, *There Really Is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc., 1990), 156.

sin, death and the devil.”⁶¹ Hence, Yahweh’s sovereignty holds the preordained rulership over creation. Christ will exercise His authority over the covenantal people and all nations.

Christ the King will inherit all the nations from Yahweh and begin ruling for a thousand years after the period of the great tribulation (Ps 2:2–7; Rev 20:1–6). In addition, Psalm 22:27–28 proclaims the messianic kingdom agenda, “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations” (ESV). Similarly, to establish the kingdom, Jesus called the twelve disciples to carry out the ‘Great Commission’ (cf. Matt 28:19–20). His disciples carried out this commission until the end of their lives.

Jesus’s offer of salvation to all humanity also signifies the role of a priest-king Messiah that can change someone’s future from death to life. Christ alone is the eternal high priest without requiring a new successor in the order of the priestly line. Christ’s priestly performance does not require Him to atone for His own sins as the Levitical priesthood does. All the repentant sinners can have assurance of salvation in Christ’s priesthood (John 5:24; Heb 10:26–27). Thus, all nations will worship Christ the Priest. Christ’s eschatological kingdom is associated with a measure of rulership over Israel and all the earth’s inhabitants. The priest-king Christ is in the new orders of the priesthood and the Davidic dynasty that will fulfill the long-awaited messianic hopes and dreams from the patriarchal times.

Jesus Christ was proclaimed as Lord by the historical King David in Psalm 110. Thus, Jesus is the only viable person to oversee both priestly and kingly functions outlined in the Torah. Apart from Him, no one can fill the vacancy of a priest-king Messiah prophesied in this psalm. Christ’s priest-king status in the millennial age will characterize Yahweh’s sovereignty

⁶¹ Helyer, *Yesterday, Today, and Forever*, 203–04.

over His chosen people and intention to dwell with them in peace and unity. Thus, this research, “Psalm 110 and Covenantal Faithfulness in the Eschatological Role of a Faithful Priest,” amplifies Christ’s dual functionality as a priest-king regarding faithfulness in His duties and covenantal accountability. The priest-king Christ will oversee the priestly responsibilities of filling the gap that the unfaithful Levitical priesthood forfeited. In addition, Yahweh’s Millennial Kingdom comes with the temple in which the Davidic priest-king Christ will take the role of high priest. Ezekiel’s prophecy culminates Samuel’s prophecy of raising up a faithful priest (1 Sam 2:35) by providing the role of the faithful Zadokian priests of Aaron’s lineage, who will assist the priest-king Messiah with their ministerial duties in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, the coming Millennial Kingdom and temple, with Christ’s kingship and priesthood, will fulfill the Davidic prophecy in Psalm 110.

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