

THE LORD IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

In our First Reading today, Jeremiah repeated the promise the Lord had revealed to him earlier in his ministry (chapter 23). ¹⁴ “Look! The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I shall fulfil the gracious promise that I have made to the family of Israel and to the family of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I shall cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and He will put justice and righteousness into effect in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which the city will be called: ‘The-LORD-Is-Our-Righteousness,’” (Jer. 33:14-16).

The real marvel and wonder of God is Christ. The final words of this chapter (33) speak about Christ and the age to follow. Jeremiah describes more fully the nature of the Righteous Branch which the Lord would raise up for David. David was dead; the Lord had written Jehoiachin off “as if childless” (22:30), yet He promised that one from David’s line would sit eternally on the throne, ruling an eternal kingdom.

To be a descendant of David, this king must be human, a Jew. To rule an eternal kingdom, He must be more than human. Since there is only One who has eternal rule, and that is God, He must also be God.

The Lord added further information about this “righteous Branch from David’s line.” He would not only be a king but also a priest. For the Lord promised that the Levites would always have one to serve as priest before Him. He could not be as other high priests, for they served only until they died. His service would have to extend beyond the temple and its worship, for that worship would be interrupted and finally cease altogether. He would have to be the fulfillment of the promise made through David, “*You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek,*” (Psalm 110:4). (You might wish to read Hebrews chapters 7 to 9 for a fuller explanation of Jesus’ high priesthood.) Christ is a priest in an extraordinary way, for the sacrifice He offered was Himself; hence *The-LORD-Is-Our-Righteousness*.

What comfort these words convey! We have an eternal king whose eternal concern and rule has us as a central interest. He watches over us in all our ways to keep us safe for Himself. We have a priest who has a permanent priesthood, sealed by His own blood. “He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them,” (Hebrews 7:25).

We have the confidence that “if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2).