



It's a setting for choir, organ and orchestra of the words:

Zadok the Priest

and Nathan the Prophet

anointed Solomon King.

And all the people rejoiced and said:

God save The King!

Long live The King!

May The King live for ever!

Amen, Alleluia! Amen.

But who was Zadok the Priest, and what are the events to which the anthem refers?

Zadok was a biblical figure who played a significant role in the history of ancient Israel. He was a high priest who served during the reigns of King David and King Solomon, and his name is mentioned several times in the Old Testament.

In Hebrew, Zadok means 'just' or 'righteous.'

Zadok was descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses. He was appointed as high priest by King David after the rebellion of Absalom, and he continued to serve in this position under King Solomon.

One of the most significant events associated with Zadok was his support of King David during the rebellion of his son Absalom. When Absalom declared himself king and attempted to overthrow his father, Zadok remained loyal to David and helped him to escape from Jerusalem. Later, when David was restored to power, Zadok was instrumental in bringing the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem.

Zadok's descendants continued to serve as high priests in Jerusalem for many centuries, and the name "Zadok" became associated with the line of high priests.

The text of the anthem Zadok the Priest is based on the biblical account of Zadok's anointing of Solomon as King, said to have taken place around 970 BC:

"So the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and led him to Gihon.

"There the priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, 'Long live King Solomon!'" (1 Kings 1:38-39 NRSV)

Like Solomon, King Charles III is also anointed during the Coronation. This is the most sacred part of the coronation ceremony, where holy oil is used to anoint the sovereign on the hands, breast and head.

Handel's setting of *Zadok the Priest*, heard at the Coronation, was composed for the coronation of George II in 1727 as one of four Coronation Anthems, and the piece has been sung at the coronation of every British monarch since.

But the words are much older, and have been said or sung at every coronation as far as we have texts –going back to the 10th century. It is styled 'Sadoc ye Prieste' in the older texts.

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