

PSALM 110

THE SESSION OF MESSIAH THE PRIEST-KING

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INTRODUCTION: Psalm 110 is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament (directly quoted 12 times, with dozens of allusions), and its importance cannot be overestimated. In this short psalm of only seven verses we find arguably the highest "density" of prophetic truth anywhere in the Bible.

The Lord Jesus used this psalm to teach the Pharisees the deity of the Messiah (Matt22:41-46; Mk12:35-37; Lk21:41-44), and the Book of Hebrews repeatedly uses this psalm in teaching both on the finality and efficacy of Christ's one-time offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin (Heb10:9-14) as well as His present High Priestly ministry in heaven (Hebrews 7).

THE SESSION OF CHRIST

- [1] The two occurrences of the English word "Lord" in this verse are derived from very different Hebrew words; "LORD" translates the Tetragrammaton (Lit., four letters, YHWH), which is the personal Name of the one true God (i.e., Jehovah), whereas "Lord" is the sovereign title and translates the Hebrew *Adonai*. The fact that "The LORD" is speaking to "my Lord" indicates these are two distinct Persons. That "my Lord" here is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, is made clear in the NT (Act2:33-36; Eph1:20; Heb12:2).

The Lord Jesus used this verse to confound the Pharisees (Matt23:41-46). They confessed that the Messiah would be "the Son of David", which is certainly true, but Christ pointed out that David called Him "my Lord" in this psalm; David would never call one who was merely his son by the title "Lord". By doing so, David confessed the divine nature of the Messiah Who would somehow also be his descendent. So confounded were the Pharisees by this that from that day on they ceased discussing Scripture with the Lord (Matt23:46).

Where is the Lord Jesus Christ today? Certainly, as fully God, Christ possesses the divine attribute of omnipresence (Matt18:20, 28:20). Yet, as a true man with a real body (Lk24:39), His physical body is confined to a unique location in time and space; that location today (during the Church Age) is sitting at the right hand of Jehovah His Father in heaven (Heb1:3). This extended period of time during which Christ sits at the Father's right hand is referred to as "the session of Christ". The session of Christ is not indefinite, but is to continue until the time when God finally puts the enemies of Christ in subjection to Him (this is what the Tribulation period is all about).

During the time of Christ's session, He is not reigning (Heb2:8), nor is He sitting on His own throne, that is the throne of His father David which will be on earth (Lk1:32-32), but is

temporarily sitting next to His Father Whose throne is in heaven (Rev3:21). Progressive dispensationalists who teach that Christ is currently sitting on David's throne today in heaven, as well as amillennialists who teach that Christ is in fact reigning today, are incorrect.

THE COMING KINGDOM OF CHRIST

- [2] At the time predetermined, Jehovah will install the Lord Jesus Christ as king in Jerusalem, not as King of Israel alone, but as "king over all the earth" (Zech14:9). Jehovah's mandate to Christ will be "rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies". Here, "rule" in Hebrew is not the normal word for 'reign', but according to Unger is a word meaning 'lord it over, subdue, tread down'; in other words, rule with a "rod of iron" (Ps2:9; Rev2:27, 12:5, 19:15). The Millennial Kingdom of Christ will be a time when righteousness is enforced, and every act of personal and national disobedience is immediately judged (Isa60:12, 65:20; Zech14:16-21).
- [3] The Jewish nation, which was not willing to receive Christ as King at His first coming (Matt23:37) will be willing to do so at the Lord's return. This implies the conversion of the nation; in fact, a necessary condition for the Lord's return is the repentance of Israel, acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus as Messiah, and their petition of Him to come in deliverance (Hos5:15-6:2; Matt23:39). This will occur near the end of the Tribulation; whereas the Tribulation hardens the Gentile nations in their rebellion (Rev9:20-21, 16:9-11), it serves to bring the Jewish nation to faith in Christ (Jer30:7; Zech12:10-13:1; Rom11:26).

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

- [4] The Lord's ministry at His first coming was that of Prophet (Jn1:18). His second coming will be His return as King (Rev19:16). It is during this inter-advent age (i.e., the Church Age) in particular that Christ is ministering in the role of Priest, Who as our High Priest at the right hand of God the Father (Eph1:20; Heb1:3) "ever liveth to make intercession for the saints" (Heb7:25).

Here it is pointed out, however, that Christ's priesthood will be "after the order of Melchizedek", not Aaron. The Lord Jesus Christ, being a Son of David from the tribe of Judah, is not qualified to be a priest under the hereditary Aaronic system (Heb7:14). The Lord's priesthood is of the order of Melchizedek, who was both King and Priest of the Most High God in Jerusalem (Gen14:18), and whose ministry is "forever" because it was not terminated by physical death (Heb7:3). However, while Christ is ministering as High Priest today, complete realization of His Melchizedekian office will not come until His return, when the High Priest is crowned King (Zech6:11-13), merging these two offices for the first time since Melchizedek.

A certain typology or foreshadowing of the Melchizedekian priesthood, to be realized in the Lord Jesus Christ at His return,

can be seen in the life of King David. Other Jewish kings were severely judged when they presumed to intrude upon the office of the priest (e.g., Saul in 1Sam13:9-14; Uzziah in 2Chr26:16-21), yet David did so apparently with the Lord's blessing (2Sam6:13-18); the only explanation for this is that in what David did, he did as a priest "after the order of Melchizedek", and not Aaron. When David chooses his capital it is Jerusalem, the city of Melchizedek (Gen14:18; Ps76:2).

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

- [5] Recall that "the Lord [Heb., *Adonai*] at thy [i.e., *Jehovah's*] right hand" is the Lord Jesus Christ (v1). A day of His (Christ's) wrath is coming, which the Book of Revelation calls "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev6:16-17). This day of wrath is the 70th week of Daniel (Dan9:27) or the Tribulation period (Matt24:21), which is the subject most often treated in the books of the OT prophets, and which is chronologically detailed Revelation 6-19.

While the OT most often emphasizes that the coming Day of the LORD is a time of *Jehovah's* wrath poured out on earth, it is equally true that it is a time of Christ's (i.e., the 2nd Person of the Trinity) wrath. The dichotomy between the judging, harsh and wrathful *Jehovah* of the Old Testament and the forgiving, meek and mild Jesus of the New Testament alleged by some is a false dichotomy. When the Church Age and its special offer of grace closes with the Rapture of the Church, the wrath of God, which includes *Jehovah* and Jesus, will begin.

The return of Christ will be an incredibly violent event. At the time of His return, the Antichrist will personally be attacking the believing Jewish remnant at Bozrah (Isa63:1-3; Rev12:13-15), which is today known as Petra, and the armies of all the nations of the earth will be attacking Jerusalem (Zech12:2-3, 14:1-2). Thus, Christ's return is a rescue event in which he utterly destroys these armies (Zech12:7-9, 14:3; Rev19:19-21); following this, the Scriptures describe the Lord's garments as being drenched with the blood of His enemies (Isa63:3; Rev19:13).

- [6] In this verse, the subject pronoun "He" is "the Lord [Heb., *Adonai*]" of v5, which is Christ. At the Lord's return, He will judge the Gentile nations (Joel 3:12-14; Matt25:31-46). Those who pass the judgment will enter the Millennial Kingdom; those who fail this judgment are immediately damned with "everlasting punishment" (Matt25:46) and will not enter the Kingdom. The criterion of this judgment is how the Gentile nations treated a group of people Christ calls "My brethren" (Matt25:40), which are the Jews; thus, the basis of this judgment is the Abrahamic Covenant, which promises blessing of those who bless Israel and cursing for those who curse Israel (Gen12:3).

- [7] On the cross, the Lord Jesus endured the agony of insatiable "thirst" (Jn19:28), which ended as He "bowed his head, and gave up the spirit" (Jn19:30).

What a contrast as here, with His enemies conquered and judged, and in possession of the inheritance (i.e., Millennial Kingdom) promised to Him by the Father (Ps2:8), He "lift[s] up [His] head" and "drink[s] of the brook". It is interesting that the Hebrew word here translated "brook" is specifically that of a wadi, or a dry river bed that is only filled with water on rare occasions; when the Lord returns, however, "...in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water..." (Isa35:6-7).