Jesus in the Psalms – Psalm 110 – Jesus Lord, King, Priest, Judge

1. Introduction

a. Psalm 110 is a short Psalm written by King David. It consists of only 7 verses yet it is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament where verse 1 alone is quoted 7 times and the whole Psalm is quoted or alluded to 27 times. It is a prophetic Psalm that takes in the ascension of Christ and, most importantly, His return at the end of the age.

b. It is a Psalm that moves from the rejected Messiah of previous Psalms, onto the risen Messiah, and concludes with the ruling Messiah. In fact, it pictures Jesus first as Lord, then as King, then as Priest and finally as Judge. And He is all of that and more!

Psalm 110 *The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." **2** The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty sceptre. Rule in the midst of your enemies! **3** Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. **4** The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." **5** The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. **6** He will execute judgement among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. **7** He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.*

2. The Lord says to my Lord

a. The first thing we notice is that there are two 'Lords' mentioned. Now although both words are translated Lord in the Hebrew they are actually two different words. (In some translations the first Lord in capitalised to show the difference.) The first word is the name 'YHWH' (normally pronounced Yahweh) which speaks of the self-existent, self-sufficient One - The great I AM! This was the name given by God when Moses asked who it is that he should say had sent him.

b. The second Lord is the Hebrew word 'Adonai'. This word means 'Lord, ruler, master' and speaks of the supreme authority and power of God. Both names were often used of God in the same verse.

c. For the Jewish mind, living before the time of Jesus, the question would be who is this second Lord that King David speaks about? For us the text gives us several clues. It tells us he is seated at the right hand of Yahweh, called by God's name, 'Adonai', a King who will rule, but also a Priest forever. He will judge the nations and set up his throne from Zion. He is the Lord, the Priest, the Judge and soon coming King of Kings. Clearly this is Jesus.

d. However, as an average Israelite living at the time when David wrote around 1000 BC all your life you have repeated the 'Shema' (the basic foundational statement of Judaism):

Deuteronomy 6:4 *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!'*

e. You would have known that there is one God, one Lord, who was the Lord of Abraham, the Lord of Moses and the Lord of David. His name is Yahweh and is often addressed as Adonai. But as you got to Psalm 110:1 you read of Yahweh speaking to Adonai! Who is this 'other' Lord, this King and Priest, that is at the right hand of God? And even more confusing, why does King David say that it is this 'other' Lord, not Yahweh that is his Lord? Who is this second Lord? What did Jesus say about these verses?

Matt. 22:41-46 *Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, **42** saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." **43** He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, **44** "'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'? **45** If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" **46** And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.*

f. Though the Jews of Jesus' time saw Psalm 110 as Messianic, they saw the Messiah in purely human terms, as a physical descendent of David, and thus inferior to David. If the promised Messiah was just a human, a normal son born into David's line, why would David call Him 'Lord' using a title for God? Clearly, the Messiah was going to be something far greater!

g. Hence we can see from Jesus' reasoning that verse 1 is leading us into a conversation between the Father and the Son who pre-existed even David. These two points of the pre-existence of the Messiah and His divine nature were brought home in an earlier statement that Jesus had made to those that would listen.

John 8:58 *Jesus said 'Truly, truly I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I AM!'*

3. Sit and wait

"Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

a. Nearly all of the writers of the New Testament picked up on this so let's look at their emphasis on it:

Mark 16:19 *So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.*

Acts 2:32-35 *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. **33** Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. **34** For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, **35**until I make your enemies your footstool.'*

Hebrews 10:11-14 *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when Chris] had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

b. So what does it mean that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God? It means His work on the cross is complete, and He can now sit. However, he is sitting on a throne not a lounger! A place of authority. Look at how Paul expands on this thought:

Ephesians 1:18-23 *that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, …. what is the immeasurable greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

c. There is a rest in the finished work of the cross both for Jesus and for us but there is a waiting too.

d. Notice also from our text that even Jesus, who has all authority in Heaven and on Earth, has to wait until His Father finally puts all His enemies under His feet. In other words, the enemies and problems, even for Jesus, don't just disappear straight away. Jesus is instructed to sit until an appointed time when that will happen.

e. In other words, our sense of peace is not meant to be dependent on all problems, enemies and worries being removed. Our peace comes from knowing that we know the One that is above all and controls all and on that basis He bids us to sit and rest with Him until. The timing of this 'until' is in the Father's hands but he always has an 'until'.

Psalm 110:2 *" [2] The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty sceptre. Rule in the midst of your enemies!*

f. The first thing the Father said to the Son was to sit at His right hand. This began at the time Jesus went back to the right hand of the Father and lasts until the time of the end comes where Jesus will return as indicated in verse 2.

g. Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father nearly 2000 years ago. It has been a long wait for many saints of God who have longed for His return but we are rapidly approaching that day. There is a day coming when he will rule.

Psalm 110:3 *[3]Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.*

h. Messiah's rule will be resisted by his enemies (as in Psalm 2), but will be extended by force with the Messiah at the head of a mighty army. Throughout the Psalms is the image of Yahweh as the Mighty Warrior. Yahweh's Messiah, the one that reigns for him and extends his rule, is the Mighty Warrior!

Revelation 19:11-15 *[11] I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. [12] His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. [13] He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. [14] The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. [15] Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre."[a] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.*

i. The Jews of Jesus' day understood Messiah coming as a conquering king who would set up Yahweh's kingdom on earth, reviving the glory days of David's rule. What they did *not* understand was the Messiah as a priest. Jesus is our Lord and our King but he is also our priest.

4. Jesus our priest in the order of Melchizedek

Psalm 110:4*. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."*

a. Melchizedek was a contemporary of Abraham. He was both king of Jerusalem and priest of the Most High God. Because of his position as a priest of the God that Abraham served, Abraham presented him with one tenth of the spoils of battle (Genesis 14:18-20).

b. The writer of Hebrews, in an extensive exposition of Psalm 110:4 (Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20-7:28), clearly sees Melchizedek as a type of Christ our High Priest. Psalm 110 combines the roles of king and priest in a way that is unheard of elsewhere in the Old Testament.

c. This King and Priest of Psalm 110 not only rules for Yahweh, he acts as a mediator between man and God to atone for man's sins. Only when we understand Jesus as the forsaken one of Psalm 22, who in himself bore our sins and carried our iniquities, can we understand how Jesus served as a priest to bring us to God.

Hebrews 7:15-19 *This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,* ***16*** *who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.* ***17*** *For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."* ***18*** *For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness* ***19*** *(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand,* ***a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.***

d. That Jesus is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek is said to introduce a better hope by which we can draw near to God.

Hebrews 7:23-25 ***23*** *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* ***24*** *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever.* ***25*** *Consequently,* ***he is able to save to the uttermost*** *[j]* ***those who draw near to God through him****, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

e. Jesus lives forever! Thank God that we have a living Saviour. He is not in any tomb or grave but He is a priest forever! Death could not hold him down! Our great High Priest is at this very moment at the right hand of God. He is alive forever. Risen! He has said that he will never leave nor forsake us. He intercedes and cares for us. That is part of what it means that Jesus in a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. That is ultimate hope!

f. I love this quote from J.Vernon McGee.

'My friend that is where we need to put the emphasis. He died down here to save us, but He lives up there to keep us saved..."He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." He is able to keep on saving you. "To the uttermost" means all the way through. He is able to save us completely and perfectly.'

5. Jesus the Judge of all

Psalm 110:5-7 *The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.* ***6*** *He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.* ***7*** *He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high.*

a. The last part of this Psalm speaks of Jesus as the Judge of all the nations. This thought of God as a judge is not very popular today. In this day, one of the great sins according to the world is to 'judge' something or someone – tolerance is the world's by-line.

b. If John 3:16 is the Christian's favourite scripture, Matt 7:1 ('Judge not lest you be judged') is the world's favourite verse. The world hates the thought of judgement because they do not want to be honest in the assessment that they stand guilty before a holy God. The Lord Jesus, who fully understood the heart of man, said it like this:

John 3:19-21 *And this is the judgement: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.* ***20*** *For everyone who does wicked things*

hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. [21] But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

c. In other words, men love the darkness. They love being able to do whatever they want, when they want, without being accountable to a higher being. But the light exposes what they are and they run when the light comes on preferring the darkness.

d. These three verses describe Jesus, the Messiah, judging the nations, crushing kings and rulers and heaping up the dead. Those rulers that the world crowds the streets to see and almost worships in some cases, do not have the same standing in the sight of God (unless their heart is right with Him) and are given a specific mention concerning those that the Lord will crush in the end times.

e. And the Lord, having put down the rulers and opposition in the world, is then seen as the conquering King, refreshed by the water (which speaks of the living water of God's Spirit) and His head will be lifted up. He will be exalted and His name will be the only name in all the earth (Zech 14:9).

f. And on that day, as verse 3 of this Psalm says, God's people will volunteer freely. So if you struggle with this thought of judgement and bloodshed now, I can guarantee you that on that day, when you know even as you are known, you will see that Jesus is perfect in all His ways and His judgements are true and just.

g. This day of wrath is a 7-year period, split into two halves of 3 ½ years, which the Bible declares will be unlike any time either before or after it - it will be totally unique and unprecedented. Jesus Himself said:

Matthew 24:21 *"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.*

h. There are various names given to this period of time. Jesus called it the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21). The prophets often called it the day of the Lord. Daniel called it 'the time of distress' (Dan 12:1) and 'the indignation' (Dan 11:36). John, in Revelation, called in the 'hour of trial' (Rev 3:10).

i. This may seem a distant day but to be honest we would have to say that the world is becoming all the more ripe for judgment. But let's be clear: God takes no pleasure in this. God is amazingly gracious and patient with all of mankind. It was His love for the world that caused Him to send His only Son to die for it. God said to Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 33:11 *Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?*

j. God's judgement is His last resort. But there does come a time when He says enough! The question is will we know when that time has come. For the world, the Bible says it will come like a thief in the night. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:37-39 *For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. [38] For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, [39] and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

k. The prophet Daniel was told:

Daniel 12:9-10 *"Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.* ***10*** *Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.*

l. It is different for believers:

Hebrews 10:23-25 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* ***24*** *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,* ***25*** *not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

m. The believer can and should be able to see the day approaching. We don't know the day nor the hour of when these end time events take place, but we can see and read the signs so there should be a general knowledge that that day is approaching if we are looking for it.

n. Now, we know this day is a day of wrath but the early church wasn't specifically looking for the coming wrath itself, nor were they looking for the coming world ruler, the Antichrist. They were looking for the Lord and His return. In fact, Paul commended the Thessalonians who turned from idols to God, and were waiting for Jesus to come.

1 Thes. 1:9-10 *For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,* ***10*** *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

o. Later, but still in the context of God's end time judgment upon the world, Paul wrote:

1 Thes. 5:9 *For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*

p. Now that's not to say that things won't get difficult for the believer as we approach the last days. Terrible persecution exists in many countries for Christians and even in the West things are definitely changing for the believer. But in terms of God's wrath and judgment, He does not, and will not, judge the righteous with the wicked.

John 5:24 *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.*

q. The only truly safe place in this entire world is 'in Christ'. We will not be judged for our sin for another has already been judged for that on our behalf. For the believer the judgement will be about our work and lives as Christians which will be brought into the light to be tested for the purpose of eternal rewards.

6. Conclusion

a. All the main aspects of Jesus' life, death and resurrection were foretold in the book of Psalms. And so was His second coming! We have only looked at the three most quoted but as you read the psalms over and over again you see the foreshadowing of Jesus.

b. God's plan of redemption has been in place from before the creation of the world. God binds Himself with a solemn oath, *"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind"*. Jesus will never be defeated or replaced. He is our Lord, our King, our Priest and our Righteous Judge and we can trust him completely to accomplish all that the Father has ordained.