

Psalm 110 is an important psalm. It is the most-often quote Psalm in the New Testament. It is rich, and full and triumphant. One commentator writes: *Few psalms pack away so much depth of truth and insight as does this little gem of seven verses.* (H.C. Leupold)

It is a “Messianic Psalm” because it is clearly a prophecy about the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. *All* the psalms are messianic because in some way they proclaim Christ, but some are especially pointed and clear. Here God reveals to David (and to us) **the Glorious, Almighty and Eternal Reign of Jesus Christ who will Bring the Church to Complete Victory.** So with God’s help, and recognizing that we can never dig up all the riches of Christ in this Psalm, I want to proclaim the glories of Christ from Psalm 110.

### **1. Jesus Christ Exalted to The Throne (Psalm 110:1-4)**

*a) as God’s All-Powerful King (Psalm 110:1-3)*

David, speaking by the Spirit (see Mark 12:36), opens this psalm with a conversation that took place between the LORD and the Lord. This is confusing at first until you understand that these two “Lords” are two different Persons. In English they *sound* the same, and even *look* the same (almost), but they’re *not* the same. The first “LORD” is all capitals; the second “Lord” contains lower case letters.

In Hebrew these are two completely different names: **Jehovah (Yahweh) said to Adonai, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”** The LORD (Jehovah) is the great I AM WHO I AM, the Almighty God and Father who created the world, who covenanted with Abraham to make him a father of many nations, who came down to help Israel when they were crying out for help as slaves in Egypt. The LORD (Jehovah) is the God who set up a throne in Israel and anointed David to sit on that throne and rule Israel in justice and righteousness. This LORD (Jehovah) says to King David’s Lord and King (Adonai): **Sit at My right hand.**

Do you remember how the LORD (Jehovah) sent Nathan the prophet to tell King David (in II Samuel 7) that one day a Son would be born into David’s family line, and this Son would 1) reign on David’s throne forever, and 2) His kingdom would be eternal. This Son of David would be a King who was far greater than David! So David, in faith, does not call this promised Son “my child” but “**my Lord**” (Adonai – which means Sovereign Ruler). He worships the one would come into the world as his son!

What did the Holy Spirit reveal to David in this psalm? One day the time promised by the LORD (Jehovah) would come – the time for David’s Son (who is also David’s Lord) to take His eternal throne and rule over His eternal kingdom. But this amazing thing is revealed to David: the throne that the LORD (Jehovah) will give his Son and Lord (Adonai) is not on *earth*, in Jerusalem, but *in heaven* at God’s right hand! The Christ would be a far greater Person with far more power and a far greater kingdom than David!

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus, the Son of David, after He died to destroy sin and death, rose again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and 40 days later was lifted up from earth to heaven. He passed through the heavens to a place above the heavens and was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (see Hebrews 1:3, 4:14, 7:26) There on heaven’s throne, is the bright-shining glory of God the Father, and at His right hand is Jesus Christ God’s eternal and radiant Son in human form. This has happened and it’s real today!

David saw that *after* His coming down to earth to suffer and perish for sinners (David prophesied much about His suffering too! – see, for example, Psalms 22 and 69), God would call His Son back to heaven, give Him the throne of the universe, give Him a Name that is **above every name that can be named** in heaven and on earth and under the earth. (see Ephesians 1:20-21, Philippians 2:9-10), give Him **all authority in heaven and on earth**. (Matthew 28:18) That is a lot of power and authority! His rule at God’s right hand shows that David’s Lord, Adonai, Jesus Christ, is fully divine. He shares the divine, eternal throne with the Father.

And what will God the Father do through His exalted King? **He will make His enemies His footstool.** The picture comes from ancient battles where a victorious King would line up conquered kings who surrendered at the base of his throne and put His feet on their necks to proclaim victory. Here is God’s promise to Jesus Christ, David’s Lord: *I will cause all your enemies to cringe before You, to lick the dust, and to bow before You.* (see Psalm 18)

Psalm 110:2-3 show how this total victory of Christ in this world is going to happen. It will come in 2 ways:

i) It will come by the King’s Power: **<sup>2</sup> The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!**

Here we see Jesus on a throne in Zion with a rod or scepter in His hand, the symbol of power. Jesus reigns from Jerusalem in heaven, *heavenly Zion*. For Christians living today, after Jesus’ died, rose, and ascended into heaven, that’s where the Jerusalem of the Old Testament is. It is no longer on earth in the Middle East. It went up to heaven with Jesus and that’s the center of the world for the Church – the Jerusalem that is above. That’s where Jesus reigns in power and glory.

What is Jesus doing with His 'rod of strength' (His scepter)? He is **sending it out** (or stretching it forth) to the ends of the earth. He is obeying His Father's command: **Rule in the midst of your enemies.** This is so important for the Church to remember today. Evil does not rule the world. Not *anywhere*. Christ rules the world. *Everywhere*. He rules evil. *Everywhere*. He rules His enemies, the enemies of God and the Church *everywhere*. His sceptre is stretched out over them and He's overpowering them. They are permitted to do only what He allows them to do, only what serves His kingdom and church to the glory of God the Father!

Remember how the Amalekites ambushed the Israelites in the wilderness, and Moses went up on top of a hill with the rod of God in his hand? As long as he held up his hand and stretched out his staff over the enemies, Israel was winning the battle; but when he got tired, he put down his hand and Amalek prevailed. In the same way, the hand of Christ is stretched out over His enemies so that His people are winning the battle against God's enemies. He never grows weary, so victory is certain; His enemies cannot prevail.

ii) Victory will come through the King's Army: <sup>3</sup> **Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.**

Here is the volunteer army promised to Jesus. When Jesus ascended and took the throne, what was His first act of power? He poured out His Holy Spirit on the whole church, young and old, men and women. By the Spirit He enters dead sinners and makes their hearts alive to God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He fills them with His Spirit and makes them willing soldiers of Jesus Christ. You see that in Acts on the Day of Pentecost how Jesus created a people who **devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.** (Acts 2:42) Through this army, the Word increased & the army grew.

The word 'volunteers' is actually '**free will offerings.**' Most offerings in the Old Covenant were required, but the *freewill offerings* were entirely voluntary. This is the kind of sacrificial spirit King Jesus gives to His people. **In view of God's mercies, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** (Romans 12:1) Isn't this what has happened to you, people of God? Once you were the enemies of God, but Jesus' power reached your life and saved you. He converted you from an enemy of God to a volunteer for Christ. Now you offer your lives freely to Him. Once you opposed Him, but now you're actually looking for ways to serve Him; you're praying: ***O use me Lord, use even me, just as Thou wilt and when and where!*** (PH 404) This a true Christian: one who willingly and from the heart, in love, not reluctantly or by force, serves the Lord Jesus Christ.

What are you like, you holy volunteers of God and soldiers of Christ? You are described here as the **dew** that comes **from the womb of the morning**. A very unusual expression! The heavy dew of Mt. Hermon falling on Jerusalem was very powerful and refreshing in that dry climate. Morning was like a mother's womb giving birth every morning to dew that refreshed Jerusalem. Whenever and wherever you serve Christ, God's people are refreshed and renewed. But it's not only others who view you this way; Jesus does. You are the dew of His youth upon the earth. He sends you out into the battle to water people's lives with the Message of the King.

b) Jesus Christ is Exalted to the Throne as God's Eternal Priest (Psalm 110:4)

Now we move to the very centre of the Psalm: <sup>4</sup> **The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."**

It's hard to understand how 110:4 fits into the mix of the 7 verses. The other 6 verses have to do with Christ the King – His throne, his sceptre, his army, his fighting, his conquering, his victory. But right in the middle this psalm about Messiah the King is this verse about his priesthood: <sup>4</sup> **The Lord has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."** Why did the Holy Spirit add this? How does it fit with the rest?

This statement by the LORD (Jehovah) to the Lord (Adonai) is even stronger than the statement in 110:1. Here the LORD (Jehovah) swears an **oath**. All God's words are true and stand forever, but to assure us He sometimes adds His oath to His Word, telling us He means what He says and will never, for any reason whatsoever, back down from His Word or alter it. And His word is that Jesus Christ is **a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek**. The priesthood was taken away from Eli because he and his sons abused the priesthood; but this will never, ever happen to Jesus. He will be a faithful priest. His priesthood will never be removed.

Who is **Melchizedek**? His name means King-Priest. He was the King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God whom Abram met after a battle. Unlike the priests in the line of Levi, Melchizedek had no term limits, he did not have to belong to a particular family, and he could serve more than one office at a time. Well, King Jesus is like that. He is not only our King who goes to war for us, but also our Priest who pays for our sins and reconciles us to God. He has no term limits; He will never die. He ever lives to intercede for us. We can always come to God through Him. He is always there, and will be there forever for His people until the end. This makes the complete victory of King Jesus a sure thing! He is on the throne, and God has sworn an oath that He will be there forever. No power, no person, no false religion, no heresy, no movement will be able to dethrone Him.

Do you see how this verse is connected to verse 3 about the army of volunteers? We, the people of Jesus, not only have a King who reigns forever by His power, but a Priest who defends us and intercedes for us forever by His perfect sacrifice. By this we know for sure that Jesus will always have a Church, and His Church will grow. Because we have an advocate in heaven, Jesus Christ the Righteous One, who pleads our cause before the Father. (see I John 2:1). We have in Jesus our High Priest a never-ending source of forgiveness. We have in Him a sympathy that understands our weaknesses and temptations. He calls us to come boldly to His throne for mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.

Because He is a King, you have His power. Because He is a Priest-King, you have all the grace you need for your sins and weaknesses. Can there be any doubt that in such a King the victory of the church is absolutely secure? **Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!**

## 2. Jesus Christ Victorious in the Battlefield (Psalm 110:5-7)

In the remaining three verses we return to the King's war against His enemies. The scene changes from the throne to the battlefield.

**5 The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.**

**6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.**

These verses are speaking about Jesus, David's Lord (Adonai). At God's right hand, in absolute power over the universe, the kings of the earth don't stand a chance. When He strikes them in His wrath, they shall be executed. Think of Herod, the King who killed James the apostle. One day he put on his royal robes, took his seat upon his throne, and delivered a speech. **The people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.** (Acts 12:21-23) The Lord Jesus sent that angel and executed him.

He continues to govern (and execute) the kings of this world. **He judges among the nations. He shall fill the places with dead bodies.** The power which Christ possesses for the destruction of those who oppose Him is awesome and dreadful. In our culture we are constantly tempted to tame Christ into a mild and harmless nice-guy who would never hurt anybody. Let us never forget that Jesus is meek and lowly, the gentle Lamb of God who is the perfect resting place for ruined sinners. He invites you to turn in to Him and He will receive you, embrace you, cleanse you, and exalt you. People who had lost their way in life always found in Jesus the Good Shepherd who would love, rescue and restore them.

But let us also remember **the wrath of the Lamb.** (see Revelation 6:16) The Lamb is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. His wrath is so fierce and terrifying that **when the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, have to face Him whom they opposed, they hide themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!"** (Revelation 6:15-16) Indeed, the LORD has a special place in His heart for His Church. She is the apple of His eye, and anyone who persecutes and assaults His people will receive especially severe vengeance from His hand.

**It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** (Hebrews 10:31)

Seeing then how great the Lord Jesus is, the Priest and King on His throne, will you not repent of your opposition to God? Will you not turn from your hardhearted ways? Will you not fall before Him, confess your sins and ask Him to show you mercy, before He kills you? You can be absolutely sure that this King – the High Priest who shed His own blood for sinners – *delights* in mercy. And **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.** You too can be changed from an enemy of God to a willing volunteer in Christ's service! Jesus is powerful enough to do that – and He is willing to do that for all humble themselves before Him.

Psalm 110 ends on a note of triumph: **7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head.** What does this mean? The King will not take a break or a vacation. He will not sit back while His people are being persecuted and assaulted. He will take a drink along the way, lift His head high, and keep on going till the work is done, till the battle is over, till all His foes are destroyed, till His Church is completely safe. He will not be diverted or distracted from His purpose. He keeps on going after His foes.

Psalm 110 is great comfort for all the people of God. When you come to Christ in faith and take refuge in Him, He will not let you be destroyed. No matter what or who attacks you, you are safe under His throne and safe in His heart. He will always fight for you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. In the midst of all the persecution in the world today, do you believe in the Christ? In the midst of the radical Christ-hating secularism of our culture, do you trust in Him to rule in the midst of His enemies? Do you believe that He is victorious and winning the battle; that in spite of all Satan's assaults, Christ's kingdom is increasing and Satan's is decreasing?

John Calvin saw that in his day, a day when Islam far outnumbered the Church, and when the false church far outnumbered the true church. He wrote in his commentary on Psalm 110: *The multitude who, in so short a time, have been gathered together and subject-ed to Christ's sway, is incredible; the more so, as this has been accomplished by the sound of the Gospel alone, and that, too, in spite of the formidable opposition of the whole world.*

Is your faith in Him making of you a willing volunteer in the promotion of His Name and Kingdom? Since under Him we cannot fail, are we ready and willing to give ourselves wholeheartedly to such a Glorious King, knowing that giving to Him is no loss and all gain?