

PSALMS

Chapter 110

Sit at My Right Hand
A Psalm of David.

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 scepter. 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 forever 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 judgment 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.

Ps 110[†] Oracles concerning the Messianic King-Priest. This psalm (specifically its two brief oracles, vv. 1, 4) is frequently referred to in the NT testimony to Christ. Like Ps 2, it has the marks of a coronation psalm, composed for use at the enthronement of a new Davidic king. Before the Christian era Jews already viewed it as Messianic. Because of the manner in which it has been interpreted in the NT—especially by Jesus (see Mt 22:43–45; Mk 12:36–37; Lk 20:42–44), but also by Peter (see Ac 2:34–36) and the author of Hebrews (see especially Heb 1:13; 5:6–10; 7:11–28)—Christians have generally held that this is the most directly “prophetic” of all the psalms. If so, David, speaking prophetically (see 2Sa 23:2), composed a coronation psalm for his great future Son, of whom the prophets did not speak until later. It may be, however, that David composed the psalm for the coronation of his son Solomon, calling him “my Lord” (v. 1) in view of his new status, which placed him above the aged David. But if so, the NT seems to require that David, inspired by the Spirit, was already pointing beyond that preliminary application to “David’s greater Son” and “David’s Lord,” the Messiah. See introduction to Ps 101. (CSB)

One the most quoted of all psalms, used 17 times in the NT. Jesus quoted it (Mk 12:36) to show that He was the Messiah—David’s Lord, not just David’s descendant. Critics have complained that its meaning is hindered by textual problems. Yet Christ and the apostles interpret and apply the psalm boldly. Aug: “We are utterly unable to doubt that Christ is announced in the Psalm, since we are now Christians, and believe the Gospel” (*NPNF* 1 8:541). (TLSB)

Format: V 1, the Lord addresses the king; vv 2–4, the king commissioned; vv 5–7, the Lord gives the king victory. (TLSB)

This psalm is one of the most important Messianic psalms. It is quoted or alluded to very often in the NT. (PBC)

The psalm falls into two precisely balanced halves (vv. 1–3, 4–7). Each of the two brief oracles (vv. 1, 4) is followed by thematically similar elaboration. (CSB)

110:1–3 The Lord’s decree, establishing his anointed as his regent in the face of all opposition (see 2:7–12). (CSB)

110:1 The first oracle (see note on v. 4). – This verse was quoted by Jesus as a proof of his deity (Matthew 22:44). (CSB)

my Lord. My sovereign, therefore superior to David (see Mt 22:44–45; Mk 12:36–37; Lk 20:42–44; Ac 2:34–35; Heb 1:13 and their contexts). (CSB)

The second Lord is greater than David and has both divine (sits at the Lord’s right hand) and human characteristics (earthly enemies). *my Lord.* Hbr *’adonai*, a respected or superior person, used for kings and dignitaries. (TLSB)

Sit. Sit enthroned. (CSB)

If David, the greatest king of Israel, calls the Messiah his Lord, then the Messiah must be more than David’s descendant; he must be true God as well. (PBC)

right hand. The place of honor beside a king (see 45:9; 1Ki 2:19); thus he is made second in authority to God himself. NT references to Jesus’ exaltation to this position are many (see Mt 26:64; Mk 14:62; 16:19; Lk 22:69; Ac 2:33; 5:31; 7:55–56; Ro 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). (CSB)

your footstool. See Heb 10:12–13. Ancient kings often had themselves portrayed as placing their feet on vanquished enemies (see Jos 10:24). For a royal footstool as part of the throne see 2Ch 9:18. For the thought here see 1Ki 5:3. Paul applies this word to Christ in 1Co 15:25; Eph 1:22. (CSB)

In biblical times, the conqueror placed his foot on his enemies to indicate triumph. Melanthon: “Christ argues that He is not only the Son but also the Lord of David. Now both in the political realm and in nature a son or a successor is never the lord of the father or of the previous king” (Chem, *LTh* 1:87). (TLSB)

110:2 *your mighty scepter.* Expand your reign in ever widening circles until no foe remains to oppose your rule. (CSB)

Christi’s universal rule, which includes his powerful rule over his enemies, who will ultimately submit to him. (PBC)

Zion. David’s royal city (see 2Sa 5:7, 9), but also God’s, where he rules as the Great King (see Ps 46; 48; 132:13–18). The Lord’s anointed is his regent over his emerging kingdom in the world. (CSB)

110:3 *freely.* Lit. “freewill offerings,” i.e., they will offer themselves as dedicated warriors to support you on the battlefield (see Jdg 5:2)—as the Israelites offered of their treasures for the building of the tabernacle in the desert (see Ex 35:29; 36:3; see also Ezr 1:4; 2:68). Accordingly, Paul speaks of Christ’s followers offering their bodies “as living sacrifices” (Ro 12:1) and of himself as a “drink offering” (Php 2:17); see also 2Co 8:5. (CSB)

Lit, “are freewill offerings.” cf 119:106. “The converted person does good spontaneously” (FC SD II 64). (TLSB)

While v 2 describes His universal rule over all, even His enemies, this verse describes His gracious rule with those who join Him in battle. (TLSB)

110:4–7 The Lord’s oath establishing his anointed as king-priest in Zion and assuring him victory over all powers that oppose him. (CSB)

110:4 The second oracle. (CSB)

has sworn. In accordance also with his sworn covenant to maintain David’s royal line forever (see 89:35–37). The force of this oath is elaborated by the author of Hebrews (Heb 6:16–18; 7:20–22). (CSB)

God had promised the eternal reign of David’s line (2Sm 7:5–16; Ps 89:35–37). (TLSB)

priest ... after the order of Melchizedek. David and his royal sons, as chief representatives of the rule of God, performed many worship-focused activities, such as overseeing the ark of the covenant (see 2Sa 6:1–15, especially v. 14; 1Ki 8:1), building and overseeing the temple (see 1Ki 5–7; 2Ki 12:4–7; 22:3–7; 23:4–7; 2Ch 15:8; 24:4–12; 29:3–11; 34:8) and overseeing the work of the priests and Levites and the temple liturgy (see 1Ch 6:31; 15:11–16; 16:4–42; 23:3–31; 25:1; 2Ch 17:7–9; 19:8–11; 29:25, 30; 31:2; 35:15–16; Ezr 3:10; 8:20; Ne 12:24, 36, 45). In all these duties they exercised authority over even the high priest. But they could not engage in those specifically priestly functions that had been assigned to the Aaronic priesthood (see 2Ch 26:16–18). In the present oracle the son of David is installed by God as king-priest in Zion after the manner of Melchizedek, the king-priest of God Most High at Jerusalem in the days of Abraham (see Ge 14:18). As such a king-priest, he was appointed to a higher order of priesthood than that of Aaron and his sons. (For the union of king and priest in one person see Zec 6:13.) What this means for Christ’s priesthood is the main theme of Heb 7. (CSB)

Office of king and priest are joined. These offices were kept separate in the Law of Moses. However, Melchizedek represents a different order of priesthood, established long before the Law of Moses (Gn 14:17–20). Heb 4–10 explains and applies this unique arrangement to Jesus. See note, Lk 3:23–38. (TLSB)

forever. Permanently and irrevocably; perhaps alluded to in Jn 12:34. (CSB)

110:5 *The Lord is at your right hand.* God is near to assist you in your warfare (see v. 2; 109:31). Some take these words as an address to God: The Lord (David’s superior son) is at your (God’s) right hand (as in v. 1). (CSB)

Jesus the king-priest will not be frustrated by opposing forces of evil, because He sits at the Lord’s right hand. (TLSB)

110:6 *He.* The Lord’s anointed. (CSB)

execute judgment among the nations – While the priestly office is acknowledged, the focus is on the kingly office. In Rv 19, we have a similar picture of God’s judgment. (TLSB)

filling them with corpses. Battlefield imagery (borrowed from David’s victories) that depicts the victory of the Lord’s anointed over all powers that oppose the kingdom of God (see 2:9; Rev 19:11–21). (CSB)

110:7 *drink from a brook.* Even in the heat of battle he will find refreshment and lift up his head with undiminished vigor. (CSB)

Psalm 110. Complete victory of this king is emphasized by this picture of Him being refreshed and lifting up His head. A ritual act may be described (bowing to drink and rising up again). Luther associates His drinking from the brook with the humiliation of Jesus and the lifting up of His head with Jesus' exaltation (AE 13:345–46). (TLSB)

The world looks for the visible manifestation of God. David sees that manifestation prophetically in one of his future descendants. In this second Lord, the divine and the human become one in order to destroy the enemies of God and of His creation. • Dear Jesus, David's Lord and mine, I thank You that You have come to be my Priest who sacrifices all for my sins and to be my King to deliver me from evil. Amen. (TLSB)