

"Therefore let all the house of Israel
know for certain that God has made
Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus
whom you crucified."
Acts 2:36 NASB1995



Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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The Great Priest-King

(Psalm 110)

New Testament writers quote from Psalm 110 more than any other chapter of the Old Testament. The writer of Hebrews bases most of his argumentation on Psalm 110. It is surely one of the most important chapters in all the Bible.

Psalm 110 can aptly be described as a coronation psalm. It extols the enthronement of a great king from the lineage of David. The background for this psalm is to be found in the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7. God promised that David's seed (offspring) would possess the right of kingship forever. David's seed would enjoy a father-son relationship with Jehovah and would build God's house (2 Samuel 7.11-16; see also Psalm 89 & 132). Other Old Testament passages expanded this promise. The sovereignty of David's dynasty would eventually encompass the whole world, with Davidic king reigning not only over Israel, but over all nations (Isaiah 2.1-4; 9.6-7; Daniel 7.13-14; Psalm 2). None of the Davidic kings from Solomon to Zedekiah ever elevated the throne of David to this high level. The Old Testament indicated that this ideal situation was to be achieved only with the advent of the final Davidic king: the Messiah

We should read Psalm 110 in this light. Here God says to the Messiah: "Sit at My right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet... Rule in the midst of thine enemies (verses 1-2). This great king would reign until all of his enemies are vanquished. ...

He would be more than a match for all who dared to oppose Him: “He will shatter kings in the day of his wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country” (verses 5-6).

The heading of Psalm 110 indicates that this psalm was written by king David himself. Though the psalm headings are probably not part of the inspired text, there is no reason to doubt the information they give. Jesus Himself confirmed the fact that David was the author of Psalm 110 (Matthew 22.43). It is interesting to note how David refers to the Messiah: “The LORD [i.e., Jehovah] says to my lord [i.e., master]...” (verse 1). Jesus argued from this that the Messiah must be greater in nature than David, since David would never have referred to an ordinary human descendant as his “master” (Matthew 22.43-46). Jesus’ argument is irrefutable. Psalm 110 foreshadowed the fact that the Messiah was going to be God incarnated as a descendant of David.

When Jehovah tells the Messiah to “Sit at My right hand,” He is inviting the new king to sit beside Him and to rule on His behalf. This expression is based upon the ancient Near Eastern concept that a king’s sovereignty was bestowed upon him by the nation’s chief god, on whose behalf the king ruled. Several Egyptian statues depict the pharaoh and an Egyptian god sitting on the same throne, with the pharaoh at the god’s right side.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of Psalm 110 is verse 4, where the Messiah is promised priesthood as well as kingship: The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” In the ancient Near East, kingship and high-priesthood were normally not separate offices. The Canaanites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Sumerians and Babylonians all understood that the king was the best possible priestly mediator between a nation and its gods. Israel actually seems to have been an anomaly. The law of Moses stipulated that the priest were to be of the lineage of Aaron from the tribe of Levi. This prevented the Davidic kings (from the tribe of Judah) from exercising priestly function during the Old Testament era — and inherent inadequacy. ...

But since Psalm 110 said that the Messiah would be a priest as well as king, this necessarily implied that the Mosaic Law (with its Levitical priesthood) would be done away with when the Messiah assumed the throne. This is the point that the Hebrew[s] writer makes to show that the Mosaic Law was superseded by a better covenant (7.11-14).

It is significant that the Messiah’s priesthood is likened to the priesthood of Melchizedek and not to the priesthood of Aaron. Melchizedek was the name of the ancient priest-king of the city of Salem (i.e. Jerusalem) during the days of Abraham (Genesis 14.18-20). As noted above, Canaanite kings normally functioned as high priest to their pagan gods. Melchizedek was exceptional in that he was the priest of Jehovah, the one true God. It may be that Jehovah had called Melchizedek out of paganism even as he had done with Abraham.

When Psalm 110.4 compares the Messiah with Melchizedek, it is indicating more than the simple fact that the Messiah would be both king and priest. The priesthood of Melchizedek was a priesthood which belonged solely to that one man; Melchizedek neither inherited the priestly office from his ancestors nor did he pass it on to his descendants. This is what Psalm 110 is implying about the future messianic priest-king when it says “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” The Messiah’s ancestors would not have been priests; and as the final king of the Davidic lineage the Messiah would not pass on his priesthood to a successor. This is the point of the Hebrew[s] writer brings out in Hebrews 7.

We can see, then, that the purpose of Psalm 110 is to foretell the fact that the Messiah would rule and function as priest until all His enemies had been destroyed and all God’s chosen people had been delivered. What a glorious promise! After Jesus was raised from the dead, He ascended to heaven to take His rightful place as king and priest at the right hand of God (Acts 2.33-36). We can be confident that our great priest-king will provide us with the final victory (1 Corinthians 15.24-26).

Written by; Martin Pickup

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