

Psalm 110 "Our Divine King, Our Eternal Priest"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless. Let's pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

So, you probably know this, but this summer at Messiah, we're looking at Psalms each week. And what I love about Psalms is they have a remarkable way of focusing us and, let us say, distilling biblical truths down to their essence as prayer offered to God. And so today's Psalm, Psalm 110, is a really important one, and it zeroes in on a really key question for us. And the question is this. What kind of leader do we need? What kind of leader do we need? Like me, you are probably bombarded with news of political division, leadership scandals. You probably heard a few this week.

And it becomes clear after a while that even the most well-intentioned human leaders cannot bring lasting peace and cannot fix what is broken. And people turn to religion. And religious leaders are limited and confused and often disappoint us. And so the question remains. This Psalm puts it right in front of us. What kind of leader do we need? What kind of leader do we need? Psalm 110, you'll be happy to know, gives an answer. And it reveals a leader who rules with power and justice, and a leader who brings us into God's presence with mercy and grace, does both those things. So it's not just a king, not just a priest, but a priest-king, a person who embodies these roles together, political leader, religious leader, priest-king, together. Now, the Old Testament, it's not in this psalm, but the Old

[3 : 19] Testament refers to this leader, this priest-king, as the Messiah. And Messiah means anointed one. That's what the word means. It's a Hebrew word, means anointed one. Because if someone in the Old Testament became a king or became a priest, what they would do is pour oil on their head.

They're anointed with oil. And that would sort of ordain them or induct them into that office. And so that's the Messiah. That's the Old Testament Hebrew. In the New Testament, which is written in Greek, they have a different word, a translation of Messiah. And that word is Christ. So when I was teaching the Bible in the Arctic, I would always tell my students, you know, Christ isn't Jesus' last name.

So like if you had the first century equivalent of a phone book, you wanted to give him a call, you wouldn't look under C. Christ is a title. And some modern Bible translations don't even say Jesus Christ, they just say King Jesus, to put that really before us. And so Jesus Christ is to say that Jesus of Nazareth embodies this promised priest king. Perfectly embodies that.

And so Jesus is the leader we need. And so let's look at Psalm 110 with that in mind, that Jesus embodies these two roles, the divine king, the eternal priest, and that he, because he embodies those two roles, is the leader we most need. So Psalm 110. We're going to begin with the first part

of it. It's kind of divided into two. And it's the two pillars of this Psalm, let's say, are two declarations that God makes to the Messiah, the priest king. So here's the first thing God says to the Messiah, then we'll look at the second thing. So I'll read it again, just so it's firm in our minds. So Psalm 110, 1 to 3, which I just read, but we'll read it again. The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies.

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. All right, so let's look at that declaration God makes. The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand, and I'll make your enemies your footstool.

[5 : 57] The Lord says to my Lord. Sounds weird in English. It sounds less weird in Hebrew. I think I said this last week, but I'll say it again. When you see in the Bible, in the Old Testament especially, that the word Lord written in all caps, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, that's God's name. It's the name that God gave to Moses at the burning bush when Moses asked God. Basically, who are you? Who's sending me? And God answered something like Yahweh or Yahweh, which is essentially, I am who I am. And so whenever you see Lord in all caps, it's that name.

When you see Lord, capital L, lowercase O-R-D, that's a more general title. It's the Hebrew Adonai. It's a title of respect and honor. So essentially, the Lord says to my Lord is the same thing as saying, Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, says this to a powerful king. Okay, so picture God in his throne room talking to a powerful, divinely chosen king. And even David, greater than David, because even David calls this figure, this my Lord, okay? Greater than David. Now, what is the covenant God of Israel say to the powerful king? It says, sit at my right hand. This is an ultimate position of shared authority.

Like even the visual of that, because if you look at, you imagine God sitting on a throne, you can, you probably picture only God, but this image is not only, only God, the father. It's also a powerful king beside him, sharing his authority right beside him. And so God is essentially saying to that figure beside him, my honor, my power, it all belongs to this person here too.

Everything belongs to this person here too. And that's what happened to Jesus. So imagine, 40 days after this scene, this scene here, this is the resurrection, 40 days after that, Jesus ascends to the father and he comes into the throne room of God the father. God is, the father's on the throne and Jesus, even his resurrected body has nail wounds and thorn scars on his brow and a spear mark in his side. And he goes to God's throne room, the father's.

And the father says, Jesus, my son, sit at my right hand, my honor and my authority belong to you. And my friends, Jesus has been reigning from that position ever since.

[8 : 49] He's been reigning as the divine king there ever since. So what does that mean? Well, it means, we talked a little bit about being disillusioned with political leaders and religious leaders. It means that when human powers fail, there's a king on the throne. And his reign, the reign of Jesus, the Messiah is a present reality. We're waiting for it to be fully brought into our world, but it's a present reality. Jesus reigns as king today. And this for me, and I hope for you, is a powerful source of hope. Because it means that whatever storms life throws at you, you have an anchor. You have a king who's reigning on high.

Shifting political tides, human leaders failing. You shouldn't be surprised. Our focus is we have a king.

We know the world's true king. Okay? Now that next bit. So the Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until, here's the next bit, until I make your enemies your footstool.

So the picture here is you have a throne with a king on it, and there's a footstool in front of it that the king puts his feet on. But with this imagery here, it's a picture of complete conquest where the enemies become furniture. That's pretty defeated when you become a piece of furniture, I think. So essentially God is saying that all who stand against my chosen king will be subdued.

God is saying there are no forces anywhere that can block what I'm doing through this king. God is saying there are no forces anywhere that can block what I'm doing through this king. My plans cannot be thwarted. So we don't fight a losing battle. We serve a king whose victory is assured.

[11 : 02] And so in any troubles that you experience, of any kind, keep your eyes heavenward.

Remind yourself there is a king in charge. It might not always look like it momentarily, but there is a king in charge.

Okay? Now what about our role in all this? Look at verse 3, just that line, your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power.

See, if we belong to Jesus, we're not furniture. We're not footstools. We're willing participants. We're like troops that are willingly engaged in this spiritual battle.

Now, you can see, I've read through this now, you can see in this psalm that there's a lot of militaristic imagery. And no surprise then that Jesus' contemporaries expected a kind of military leader to overthrow the occupiers and set up an earthly kingdom.

Turns out that the revolution Jesus brings goes deeper than that. doesn't just transform political arrangements.

[12:18] It actually transforms the human heart from the inside out. Through love, through truth, through mercy. And as willing people, as Christians, who are being transformed from the inside out, we are to embody these values of Jesus, these kingdom values.

You know what the other thing is? this king is the greatest servant of all. There's no greater servant than the king, King Jesus.

So he models this for us. So, that's the first part. A king, Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, who's currently reigning at the right hand of God, the Father, whose victory is assured, and who we can trust in when things look all topsy-turvy in our lives and in society at large.

He's our king. Not only that, and here's the second part, he's also our eternal priest. Divine king, eternal priest. So let's look at the second bit here.

Jesus is the eternal priest. So, again, remember I said the pillars of this psalm are declarations from God. The first one is that word to the Messiah said at my right hand.

[13:38] That's the first one. Here's the second one. The Lord, verse 4, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. Now God speaks to the Messiah.

You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Who on earth is that? I'll tell you in a minute. And then the rest.

The Lord is at your right hand. He will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses. He will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the way. Therefore, he will lift up his head. Before I say anything more, I should say this. The early Christians were so convinced that Psalm 110, this Psalm here, described Jesus so well and so comprehensively that they quoted this passage in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament passage.

It's all over. Every major New Testament writer quotes it. It's all over the New Testament. And if you go looking for it, you'll find it everywhere. So, Divine King, now we've got the eternal priest.

[14:50] Let's have a look at that. Now, I want to just first tell you how weird this is, this Psalm. Strange.

Why is it strange? It's strange because in Israel, a priest and a king were entirely different roles. and they were entirely different roles that you dare not mix.

They're different roles because Israel comes from 12 tribes and kings always came from the tribe of Judah and priests always came from the tribe of Levi.

So, you couldn't be both. You've got to be from one tribe and if you're from Levi, you may be a priest and if you're from Judah, you may be a king but you can't be both. And so, in that system, that law system in the Old Testament, there was no room for a priest king.

And so, somebody reading this would think, wait a minute, this isn't right. A priest king? How does that work? Like, even if you read King Saul in 1 Samuel, he tried to, he was a king but he tried to do priestly duties and he was judged for it.

[16:06] They don't mix in that system. But, but, it's a different kind of priesthood, it's a different kind of system.

And so, in this different kind of priesthood and different kind of system, they mix. In the Melchizedek system, they mix. So, let's talk a little bit about this Melchizedek person.

He's mentioned really in two places in the Old Testament, Psalm 110, right here. And then, way back at the beginning, in Genesis chapter 14, like, at the beginning of the Bible almost, Abraham wins this great battle and he's heading back home and he meets this man whose name is Melchizedek who comes out of nowhere.

Comes out to meet him. We've never met him before. We have no idea who this is. He's described as the king of Salem, which is the old name for Jerusalem. So, he's the king of Jerusalem and he's described as a priest of God Most High.

So, this guy, whoever he is, is a priest king. Both roles are sort of embodied in his person. He's a priest king. So, he comes out, meets this victorious Abraham.

[17:32] He's got bread and wine to offer him. He blesses Abraham and he receives a tithe. So, 10% of Abraham's food and animals and stuff.

Okay? And then he disappears. And we don't see him again until Psalm 110. 10%. And if all you had was the Old Testament, you would just think it's kind of an odd guy who pops up and, I don't know.

But see, Hebrews in the New Testament links it to Jesus. I'll tell you about that in a minute. So, I said Melchizedek's a priest.

He's a priest and a king. I probably should say something momentarily here about the Old Testament Levitical system. What does that mean?

I said that in the Old Testament, priests always came from the tribe of Levi. They are Levitical. They come from the tribe of Levi. And their job is to offer sacrifices in the temple.

[18:39] To bridge this gap between human beings and God. That's what a priest does. A mediator. So, that's what they would do. There's a real problem, though, is that these priests are all too human.

They sin. They corrupt, some of them. And they die. They die.

So, there's no permanent arrangement here because you have frail, sinful, mortal people who are priests. So, that system cannot provide a permanent, flawless pathway to God.

But see, Jesus can. Jesus can. Jesus is a priest king in the order of Melchizedek. He's in a different system, and he's in a system that predates that Levitical one.

And because he's an eternal priest, not subject to the same limitations as that other priesthood system, his sacrifice is eternally effective.

[19:51] And that's where it gets really weird. Because Jesus, the priest king from Melchizedek, he doesn't sacrifice animals.

He sacrifices himself. himself. So, imagine a priest, arrayed in all the vestments and all that, going into the holy place of the temple, and not putting an animal on the altar, but climbing on there himself, dying to make a way to God.

That's a weird image, but that is the claim of this passage, and that is the claim of our faith, that Christ is not only the great high priest, but he's the perfect sacrifice. So, as a perfect priest, offering a perfect sacrifice, he's a perfect bridge.

Do you see? As a perfect priest, offering a perfect sacrifice, he's a perfect bridge between us and God. I mentioned a spiritual hunger, that we all, we've all been disappointed by, I mean, probably in some way, organized religion or religious leaders or whatever, but we have a longing in our heart to know God.

We all do. And the message here is Jesus has done that. Open the gates wide. There's a wonderful passage in the New Testament book of Hebrews where it says, come boldly, come boldly to the throne of grace.

[21:27] Jesus throws those doors wide open and says, come with me, I'll bring you to God. And that changes everything. A perfect priest, a perfect sacrifice becomes a perfect bridge to bring you and me to God.

It's a wonderful thing. So, we started today with that question the psalm puts to us, Psalm 110. The question is, what kind of leader can actually help us?

What do we need in a leader? And Psalm 110 gives the answer, which is, we need a divine king, eternal priest, we need someone who can deliver lasting peace, who can fix what is broken, who can make us whole, who can bring us to God and make our relationship with God right.

And Jesus, my friends, has done that. He's our divine king, he's our eternal priest, and Hebrews says that, what is he doing now? He's continually interceding for us, like he's praying for us to the Father.

So just think about that, you go about your day, maybe it's a good day, maybe it's a bad day, you've got worries, you've got anxieties, Jesus, ascended to the right hand of the Father, is praying for you and for me, is bringing any concerns that you have on your hearts and minds to the throne of grace.

[22:51] We're in good hands, we're in really good hands, a perfect priest and a perfect sacrifice makes a perfect bridge, and we have a king who rules in righteousness, it's a wonderful thing.

I'll end with this, if you don't know Jesus, the priest king yet, I hope you do, I hope you come to know him, ask questions, and test it, and see if this Jesus fulfills your spiritual hunger. I think he will. And not just fulfill your spiritual hunger in a way that he adds a little bit to your life, you'll discover as you walk that path with Jesus, the priest king, you'll discover that he's not just like an augmentation to your life, he's everything.

He's all you need. He's all you need. So we can live with confidence. Our faith is not like shifting sands. We have a king that reigns and a priest that intercedes.

We can live with confidence. We can live in willing obedience. So we don't just have to sit here and wait, we can participate in Christ's victory. We can participate.

[24 : 13] The victory of God is unfolding in real time right before us. Again, it doesn't always look like it, but it's happening. So we can live with confidence, we can live with willing obedience, we can live in worship.

We can praise and thank this one who has done for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He's done it. So come to God.

How? Through the merits of our great priest king. He will not fail you. He will get you where you want to go. Because he's Jesus the Christ, the chosen one.

That's good news. Amen. Amen. Amen.