

Hail Our Priest and King

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[0 : 00] Father, we thank you for this psalm that gives us a glorious picture of you and your King. Help us to learn from it today.

Help us to be encouraged and challenged. May the Spirit stir in us, in our hearts, a great passion for your Son and for his work on this earth.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, friends, I wonder what makes you feel secure. So much so that you feel, ah, life's good, the future's bright.

Well, for some of you, some of the younger ones perhaps, it's, you know, maybe something like having a job or doing a course that will get you a job.

For others, it's about relationships, making sure that your family is around you and they're loving and they're all in good relationship. Others want a wide social network, you know, make sure I've got all my friends that someone to hang out with at any time of the day or night.

[1 : 05] Or maybe it's just, you know, haven't got that high expectations, you just want a few close-knit friends. People you can rely on, people you can turn to and just hang out with.

And still, for some of you, it's as simple as ensuring that you're connected. You know, connected to Facebook. Or having your one gigabyte download speed. And a whole box of, if you're Asian, instant noodles in the cupboard.

But for us living in Australia, we rarely think about, you know, we take for granted the fact that we have a stable government, a peaceful society.

Things like that, that actually are integral to having a good life or a life of security. So we may grumble if the Labour government is in power.

Or if you're a Labour supporter, the coalition. Or if you're a Green supporter, both of them. But by and large, we take it for granted that there is the rule of law in this land.

[2 : 06] When we put our money in the bank, it's secure, we'll get it back. That our governments are free of corruption when the cops pull you over. Not that that ever happens to any of you.

They're not going to ask you for money in order to get you out of your speeding fine. That when people break into your house, that they wouldn't get away with it without consequence.

Or even that when we travel about the city, we can do so safely and we're not going to be shot at randomly. We assume these things are just there.

We take it for granted. But you only have to look around the world, don't you? To realise that this is not the case for everyone. You know, the attacks in Paris. And then in Mali just recently.

It only takes one incident like that to really bring home the fact. To threaten, I guess, people who are living in those cities. Their sense of security. Now, for the people of Israel, being able to live in peace and security wasn't something that they took for granted.

[3 : 09] In those days, there wasn't such a thing as internationally recognised borders. Instead, the security of your home, of your family, depended on your king.

And his ability to defend the kingdom from other kings. So, in those days, who your king was really mattered. If you had a good king, then you can take some comfort that your life would be protected.

That he would defend you. That your family, your livestock, your crops. Those things would be safe. So, having a good king was literally a matter of life and death.

Well, today's psalm speaks of such a king. A good and strong king, which God promises. The psalm itself is not very long and there's sort of three sections to it.

And each of it contains either a promise that God makes or promises. Or else, something that God does for the king. So, let's start and look at the first part.

[4 : 11] Where it begins with, the psalmist saying, The Lord says to my Lord. And here's the first reference to, the first reference of which is Lord, in capitalized letters, Yahweh.

And the second is to my Lord, the human king. So, the Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Here, God promises the king that he is his anointed ruler.

Now, to have someone at your right hand is a place of honor, right? To call someone your right hand man is a trusted lieutenant. And so, to be at God's right hand meant that the king was God's trusted lieutenant.

He is a trusted person to execute his will on earth. And the place from which he will do it, it says in verse 2, is from Zion, the city of Jerusalem. It's from there that he will rule over the nations and defeat Israel's enemies.

Now, if you were here two weeks ago when we talked about Psalm 108, there's echoes there, isn't there? God was pronouncing rulership or kingship over countries like Moab and Edom.

[5 : 19] But whereas in Psalm 108, God's rule was direct, here in Psalm 110, God's promise is to rule by his king, to anoint a king to rule on his behalf.

And so, let me read verses 2 and 3. The promises to the king are these. The Lord will extend your mighty scepter, that's the symbol of rule, from Zion, saying, rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb. So what we have here is a picture of a glorious king. He's ruling with ease. He has a loyal army, troops that are willing to come up to battle with him, and they're young and fresh like the morning dew. God promises to establish his kingship, and the people that then live under him, well, they'll find protection and security.

But then God goes on in verse 4 to make a further promise. And here we find that the king, God promises that the king will be more than just a king. He will also be a priest.

[6 : 27] So like verse 1, verse 4, it's actually a solemn promise or oath. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

Now, this is a surprising development, because up till now in the history of Israel, as many of you would know, kings are never priests. Kings, including David, came from the line of Judah, but priests, comes from the tribe of Levi.

And yet what we have here is a promise that God will make this king a priest as well. And if we search the Bible, there's only one king that actually had this dual role, and his name is in that verse, Melchizedek.

Some of you were doing the series in Genesis with us early in the year. Well, that's where we met him, didn't we? He wasn't a Jew, but he was the king of Salem, and actually Salem becomes the city of Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.

But in Genesis, we find that he's called a priest of God's Most High. And what Abraham does when he's won his big battle and victory was that he comes to Melchizedek and makes an offering of a tenth to him.

[7 : 35] And in return, Melchizedek blesses him on God's behalf. So what Melchizedek does in that role is to mediate between Abraham and God. And that essentially is what the role of the priest is, to be a mediator between God and humans.

And the king here in Psalm 110 does just that, just like Melchizedek. Not only does he rule on God's behalf, but in verse 4, we find that he will be a mediator as well.

Now, the puzzling thing, of course, is that no king has ever been or ever done this in Israel. And so even as they sung the psalm, they would have had, in the back of their mind, been wondering, how is this promise going to be fulfilled?

How is it going to come to pass? Now, the third section, the last section, contains yet another surprise. And let's look at that in the final verses, from verse 5 onwards.

And what we find is that, just like in last week's Psalm 109, where we saw God at the right hand of the needy, now here in verse 5, the Lord himself will be at the king's right hand.

[8 : 42] Now, you may be a bit confused at the start to wonder who the Lord is. Is it the human king or the divine God, Yahweh? Well, unfortunately, this is yet a third use of the word Lord.

So it's not Yahweh, like in verse 1, 3, and 4, because it's not capitalized. But neither does it refer to a human king. It's still a divine title. And so it does refer to God. So what we're to understand then is, God is at the king's right hand, fighting alongside the king.

Verse 5, He will judge or crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead, and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high. Now, that last sentence is probably an allusion to 1 Kings 1 and verse 33.

There, King Solomon was the one that went to the spring at Gihon, and he drank from it at his coronation. So probably this is a reference to that incident, and it is a sign of exaltation, as the words lifting up his head high indicates.

[9 : 50] But people are not sure whether that refers to God himself drinking or the human king. But either way, it's a symbol of victory. And the main point of these verses, I think it's still the same, that is that in working out history, God is with his king, this anointed king, to achieve his plans and promises.

He's not standing idly by as he makes his promise in verse 1 to 3. No. He's actually in the thick of the action, achieving what he's promised. He and his king are one, working hand in hand, standing shoulder to shoulder, to use cliches that politicians are fond of.

But in a nutshell, this is the message of the psalm. It's not a very difficult message. It says that God is sovereign in human history, but he chooses to rule, to achieve his sovereignty in history, through his anointed priest-king, someone he will raise to do his will.

Now, it's sort of no surprise that we find this psalm in book 5. Remember, we talked about book 5 being the psalms collected as people returned from the exile. Because having a king is something that they would have hoped for, they longed for.

They could rebuild the temple, they could rebuild the city, but to have a king would give them security, identity, protection, but it would also let them know that God was still on their side.

[11 : 15] It would allow them to actually say, hmm, life is good because God is on my side and the future is bright. But of course, as we know from history, Israel's king never came.

He wasn't restored, not politically anyway, not since the return from exile. So, the Jews continued to live under foreign rule, didn't they? Firstly, under the Persians, then the Greeks, and then the Romans.

But then, along comes Jesus finally, and most of you will know the plot, and he declares that he is the fulfillment of the psalm. And so, we heard that in that reading in Matthew, didn't we?

Actually, it appears in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. All three have them. But, the point of that passage and the point of what Jesus was saying is that he was trying to point out that the Messiah must be greater than David.

The Pharisees knew that the Messiah would be a son of David, but Jesus says that he can't be merely a son or descendant of David. He had to be greater than that.

[12 : 18] Why is that? Well, he's explained it, didn't he? He says that if Psalm 110 is written by David, and it is because David's name is in the title, then David himself is referring to this king as my lord.

He's swearing allegiance to this king. And so, if he's doing that, he has to be greater than David. So, whoever he is, this anticipated king in Psalm 110 had to be someone special, someone that is greater than David that he should swear allegiance to.

Now, Jesus doesn't actually in that passage explicitly name himself as the king, but he does that as he stands in front of the Sanhedrin. So, that's a few chapters on in Matthew 26 and verse 64.

As he was standing there on trial, the high priest asked him who he thought the Messiah was, whether he was the one. And Jesus answered this, saying, from now on, you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Mighty One.

Now, this is a quote not from Psalm 110 but from Daniel. But it fits the description, doesn't it, of Psalm 110 because he's sitting at the right hand of God, the Mighty One. He's the one appointed by God and he's about, as he says that, he's about to bring God's purpose to pass on earth.

[13 : 37] But notice too when precisely he makes this claim. When does he acknowledge that he is the king of Psalm 110? He does it, doesn't he, just before he heads to the cross.

And this is no coincidence because Jesus isn't just declaring his kingship there, he's also declaring how he will defeat his enemies. Not with mighty armies, not with angel armies even, but by dying on the cross because the enemies he has to defeat first and foremost are the enemies of sin and death.

And so, as he does that, he actually solves the puzzle that I talked about in verse 4 in Psalm 110 because by dying he performs the role of the priest. He offers himself as a sacrifice on behalf of his people.

And if you read Hebrews 5 to 7, that's exactly what is being taught there. Jesus is the priest forever, is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

He's the great high priest at God's right hand having died and risen forever interceding for his people with his own blood. And so, my friends, it is to Jesus then that we need to look to for our protection and security because he's the king of Psalm 110.

[14:58] No matter what else might be happening, our future lies in following Jesus. No other power, no other king can give us that security or that protection. Why?

Because no one else has conquered sin and death, our true enemies. And no one else is able to mediate between us humans and God the Father. Only he can give us a relationship with our creator.

But I want to also say that just as Psalm 110 talks about Jesus being seated at the right hand in heaven interceding for us, it also talks, doesn't it, in verse 5 about God being at the right hand of Jesus.

That is, God being with his son Christ actively ruling in human history. God is with him and together they are executing God's purpose and will on earth, putting all remaining enemies under his feet.

And you may well ask, how is that happening? Because Israel doesn't have a king. Jesus is not the king. He's not even ruling. And he doesn't have any lands or standing armies.

[16:07] So how do we see Jesus' kingdom ruling? How is he a king today? Well, the answer is through his church or in his church primarily.

Paul sums it up in Ephesians chapter 1 in verse 19 and I think I've got the verses up there. Yes, I do. And I want you to, as you read through it and I read through it with you, notice the many connections there are with Psalm 110.

So Paul says that the power that God is working among us is the same as the mighty strength that he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand. Psalm 110, isn't it?

In the heavenly realms far above all rule and authority, power and dominion and every name that is invoked not only in the present age but in the age to come and there's lots of parallels, isn't there, with defeating of enemies and ruling compared with Psalm 110.

And then God's, he goes on to say God placed all things under his feet. Again, Psalm 110. And here's where we get the church connection and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.

[17:13] Christ's rule is for the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. So friends, we will not see Christ's rule announced on the news but let me assure you Jesus is ruling and where the action is is in the church.

If you want to see how God is ruling in history then look at the church. If you want to be on the right side of history then you need to be part of the church because that is where God's kingdom is growing.

By belonging to it as you put your faith in Jesus but also by participating in its growth. We're almost like the willing troops in verse 3 of the psalm going into battle not with swords or guns, no, but with the word of God with prayer and living our lives as witnesses for Jesus.

in and amongst the world events God's end goal in history is being played out as God is bringing all things under Christ for the church.

And he does that by first of all calling his people into his kingdom willingly as they believe in the good news of Jesus. But God will also bring all things under Christ as it says in verse 5 on the day of wrath when Jesus comes back and everyone including nations and rulers will come under Christ's authority whether they like it or not.

[18:41] But for those who have rebelled until that day there is only crushing defeat there is only judgment. I know in the last couple of weeks we've been looking at the news and you know we're tempted to do this discouragement aren't we?

Not just with the overseas incidents of terrorism but even at home when we hear about laws by our governments that move us further and further away from what God wants.

And if we're not thinking carefully we might be tempted to think God is no longer in control while he may be working in the church but he's no longer in control over history over politics over society because when we look out there we don't see the glorious kingdom of Psalm 110 do we?

Instead we hear Jesus' name being maligned we hear the church being ridiculed. Well friends I want to encourage you not to lose heart because that is not true.

God is still in control even over the events in the world in our society. And you might not believe it but I want to just take you back in history or give you a glimpse of world's history to see how God is even using the events of the world to grow his kingdom.

[20 : 00] Just take for instance those long years in exile when the people were waiting for a king. They may have thought that Jesus had forgotten about them. First the Persians then the Greeks then the Romans where is God in all of this?

Why is God waiting? Why is he taking so long? But actually God was working out his will wasn't he? Because if not for the Greek empire we would not have the Greek language. We would not have this common language across the empire with which the gospel could have been spread so easily. Imagine trying to preach the gospel it's difficult isn't it if you have to preach the gospel to another group of people that don't speak the same language as you but yet we have the Greek language and then we have the Romans and if you've watched Monty Python what have the Romans done for us?

You know they built the infrastructure the roads and that allowed people like Paul and all the missionaries to fan out across the empire to preach the gospel so God was using the Romans to prepare the way for the gospel wasn't he?

And then many hundreds of years later God raises up the British Empire and many of you go yay but why? Well English becomes the common language today doesn't it?

[21 : 10] And again the gospel is spread because of that and it was because of British Empire that the missionaries were able to get to all the places that they did in Africa in India North America even though they wouldn't consider themselves part of the British Empire and even down here in Australia the gospel comes to all these far-flung places because of Empire and today in Melbourne Australia churches are running ESL classes why?

Because everyone whether you're English or not wants to learn English the Chinese do the Iranians do they all want to learn English and so we as a church we have a chance to share the gospel as we teach English even this is part of God's plan is it not?

I'll give you one more example communism and people think how can we how can this ideology that's opposed to God have been used by God for his purpose?

Well I speak personally here but if Mao Zedong had not turned China communist in 1949 the missionaries would not have been expelled from China they would have not come down to Southeast Asia and my parents would not have heard the gospel and I would probably not be a Christian today and in spite of being expelled from China the church in China grows because of communism it grows faster actually than when the missionaries were there and even right now the church in China has raised up missionaries and they're sending them back along the Silk Route to Muslim predominantly Muslim countries to share the gospel the Arabs I'm told hate white people right the Westerners but they're more open to people like me black hair because they're not colonial powers and so the gospel is making inroads and I want to show you a clip in a while but I want to just think through now about Islam and the rise of Islamic terrorism should we be alarmed or should we see this as part of God's purpose as well well on the one hand we should grieve shouldn't we because our brothers and sisters are being persecuted in the Middle

East but then on the other hand we ought to trust that God knows what he's doing that perhaps the rise of IS is provoking billions of moderate Muslims to reconsider their own religion and then turn to Christ as they hear the gospel so I'm going to show you this clip now it's about Islam and about the Middle East but as you watch it I want you to just remember this that God is sovereign he is actively ruling over human history and the person he's appointed to do that ruling is his son Jesus and all things true good and bad times whatever the world event is all things are being put under his feet and the challenge for us is which side of history will we stand on will we be crushed by the king of psalm 110 or will we be like the troops of verse 3 willingly putting up ourselves putting our hands up as he calls us to serve him and be used by him to grow his kingdom alright let's watch that and that will be it for the

[24 : 20] Muslim call to prayer resounds to a large part of the earth where more than 1 billion people call themselves Muslims throughout the Islamic world many Muslims from Gaza to London are also responding to the call to global jihad where the goal is to take over the world for Islam throughout the nearly the Christian gospel for centuries many Christians tried to reach Muslims with

the good news with little success but according to many reports throughout the Middle East and around the world that history is changing Nazar Shaheen is the host of Light for All Nations a Christian program seen throughout the Middle East I see many Arabic speaking people turning to Christ accepting him as Lord and Savior What's happening nowadays in the Muslim world has never happened before Father Zachariah Butrus an Egyptian Coptic priest is one of the foremost evangelists to the

Muslim world he says Muslims of all ages and backgrounds are accepting Jesus Christ Young and old educated and not educated males and females even those who are fanatic one fanatic Muslim who came to faith in Jesus Christ is Samir Ahmed Mohammed he studied for years to become a Wahhabi Sheikh one of the most virulent forms of Islam he hated Christians and the church but his heart changed when he heard the gospel I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ Jesus forgave me for my sins he gave me eternal life and peace and the second thing I really suffered in my daily life but I had peace I had joy because Jesus entered my heart but Mohammed is just one of many Muslims who are coming to Jesus Heidi

Baker of Iris Ministries sees thousands of African Muslims receiving Jesus and getting baptized it's probably the only place in the world where they're coming so quickly many people are having dreams they see Jesus appear to them probably half our pastors were leaders imams in mosques they were leaders in these mosques now they're pastors another significant evangelistic movement among Muslims links China and Jerusalem Chinese home churches plan to send at least 100,000 evangelists from China through predominantly Muslim nations all the way back here to Jerusalem this quiet but powerful movement of itinerant evangelists is bringing the story of Jesus Christ into the heart of the Muslim world technologies like satellite TV and the internet also penetrate the world of Islam but beyond technology many say a supernatural dimension is also at work in the lives of Muslims we receive lots of letters about people who have had dreams about the Lord visions even miracles and when they watch the program they say yes we had a dream or a vision and they accept Jesus as Lord but Muslims who accept Jesus face persecution discrimination or even death despite the dangers many continue to live out their faith and lead others to Jesus Christ Jesus loves all people Jesus changes all people and Jesus is the one who places love and peace I was not like this but Jesus changed my life and I am not scared to talk about Jesus because praise is unto him some believe the church's response to jihad must be a fearless proclamation of the gospel to Muslims through prayer and evangelism many see an unparalleled opportunity for the gospel I anticipate this very near and perhaps within two three years we are going to see the greatest harvest in history Chris Mitchell CBM News Jerusalem