

Promised King & Forever Priest

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It is good to have you all here, both in person and on the live stream. We're glad you're able to join us today. You know, this week I had a couple of adventures in life management.

One was I needed to try to get someone to repair some siding on my house. And so I used HomeAdvisor because I didn't have a good reference.

And the second adventure I had is that I'm trying to buy a new bed and trying to search out in the midst of a pandemic when I don't have a lot of time to go to a bed store to try things out, exploring the world of bed in a box.

And I don't know if any of you have been down that rabbit hole, but it's an interesting one. One of the things that I found myself struggling with in both of them is a question of whether the promises that were made to me would be kept.

As I looked through the fine print, as I searched through whether this repair person would actually show up, and that was an adventure in and of itself, and as we continue to figure out whether these beds are going to work or not, and how to figure out what they're going to be, this question of whether promises will be kept is one that's been on my mind.

[1 : 25] And as we continue our series in the Psalms, during this Advent series, if you remember, we've entitled this series, Songs of Hope in an Uncertain Time. And it's occurred to me that one of the things that this uncertain times has caused in my own heart is a question.

Will God keep his promises? I don't know about you, but it's not been an easy year. There have been more losses than things to rejoice.

More disappointments than celebrations. There have been more challenges, twists and turns in the path of life than there have been ease and comfort.

And maybe, like me, you've wondered, what is God up to? And how is he keeping his promises?

And of course, we're not the first ones in the history of Israel, or the history of the world, or the history of the Bible to struggle with this.

We saw last week in Psalm 106 how much Israel failed to trust God and to believe in his promises. How often they grumbled and complained and disobeyed because of their lack of trust in him.

[2 : 44] You know, it's easy when things go well to think God is good. His promises are great. But with another relationship lost, another dream dashed, another time explaining to your children about what does it mean to wait on the Lord, it's not easy to trust God.

And it's easy to wonder about how he will show his goodness. And yet the Bible tells us that in the midst of this experience, which is a common experience for all of us, God continues to say that he is trustworthy.

And his promises are good. He continues to tell us that when we trust him and look to him, what he has for us is better than what we would ever imagine.

And that brings us to our text today. We're reading Psalm 110. If you have that on your phone or in your Bible, if you brought one or at home, we're going to look at Psalm 110.

It's a Psalm of David, and it is a Psalm of David the King clearly looking ahead to a Messiah who has not yet come, but who will come.

[3 : 58] Psalm 110 is notable because it is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. It is used a number of times, verses 1 and 4 in particular.

And as David was writing this, he was looking forward to a future kingdom that would be even greater than his own kingdom and a future Messiah who would be finally and fully all that we need. So with that, let's look at Psalm 110. We're going to read it and then pray. Psalm 110 says this, a Psalm of David.

The Lord said 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.

[5 : 00] The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. 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. And he will drink from the brook by the way.

Therefore, he will lift his head. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, as we come to this word this morning, I pray that by your spirit we might catch a glimpse of your glory and your greatness.

Lord, thank you that you have revealed yourself in various times in various ways, as we read earlier. But now fully, most fully, you have shown yourself in your son.

And Lord, as we read this psalm of David, help us to see his glory more greatly this Advent season.

Lord, I pray for our ears that we would be attuned to listen, our hearts that we would receive your word.

[6 : 12] Lord, I pray for me that I might speak clearly, Lord, and that by me, through me, Lord, you might proclaim to us your glorious truth.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. David writes of a Messiah to come.

And what does he tell us about this Messiah? This psalm is framed by two oracles, two words directly from the Lord that David heard and reports to us.

And we're going to look at those two in order. One is verse 1 and one is verse 4, and we will explore what those oracles mean and what they say. The first oracle is in verse 1. The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

In this verse, David is saying that there is a better king who is coming and who has power to deliver his people. It's interesting to stop and to think about who the people are in this very first sentence.

[7 : 24] The Lord says to my Lord. The Lord, the first one, has all the small caps. That's Yahweh. That's God, the God of the covenant, the God of Israel. And he is speaking to my Lord.

Who is my? Well, my is David. And so David is saying, there is one greater than I. I have a Lord who is a ruler of some sort that God is speaking to, giving these words of invitation.

Come sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. David is acknowledging this psalm was likely written at the height of David's power, at the height of his kingship, when his kingdom was greater than the kingdom of Israel had ever been or ever would be. And yet he is saying, there is one greater than I who is coming, to whom the Lord speaks these words. And friends, these words are picked up throughout the New Testament.

Jesus uses them in confounding those who say, who are you, Jesus? Who do you think you are? He says, who was David speaking to when he quoted these words?

[8 : 41] Who was David speaking of, that is? Who was the Lord speaking to? It wasn't to David. It was to one who would be greater than him. Similarly, the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, as he preaches, says the same thing.

You have trusted, the people of Israel have trusted that a great king would come in the line of David. Well, here he is, and he's greater, greater than David himself.

And as we read earlier in this, in the service, Hebrews 1.13, the writer of Hebrews says, And even if you were looking to angelic beings, this one is greater than they as well.

Because God never said this to an angel. He only said it to this one who is greater than David, but who would be in David's line.

So this is the king. David is looking, hearing this and saying, there is a greater king to come. And what does he say about this king? He says specifically, this invitation, this one who is coming, God will invite to sit at his right hand.

[9 : 52] And at his right hand, he will sit in a place of honor, and a place of counsel, and a place of rulership, and a place of authority. And he will not just stand there at the ready, but he will sit.

He will sit. Having finished his work. Having done all that he needs to do in order to rest in the finished work of his ruling over.

And God says to this one, Come and sit at my right hand. For you have done the work, and now I will make your enemies a footstool for your feet, under your feet.

Now, we don't use it. It's sort of a weird image, right? It's like pulling up a, you know, an Ikea, you know, footstool to kind of prop your feet up on top of because you're tired at the end of the day. And that's not the idea here. The idea here is maybe an image that we might have. The words would be, he has his foot on his neck, right?

[11 : 01] He's standing on his, it's that, it's a place of submission. It's a place of ruling over. It's a place of, I have conquered and defeated them, and they are now subjugated to me and to my rule.

And this is what we see in verses two and three, that as God seats this one with his finished work, he will rule over his enemies. He will have this ever-renewed army of willing believers, of willing followers, who will serve him.

And then we see in verses five and six how he will shatter his enemies. And in graphic imagery, that this one will defeat all the enemies of God and bring peace.

Now verses five and six have some fairly violent images, don't they? We need to make sure that we neither sanitize it nor misunderstand it. To sanitize it would be to say, oh, he doesn't really mean that.

Well, I think he does. He's using imagery of real war because in David's day, the establishment of the kingdom involved real war. But what we see though is this, the meaning of that has to do with conquering, has to do with overcoming, has to do with defeating utterly.

[12 : 24] David, the Lord uses this language to picture a greater rule and reign than just the physical victory.

And as we move to the New Testament, we see that the enemies of God are primarily not the rulers and authorities of this land. They are not people. They are ultimately spiritual forces, spiritual enemies.

enemies. And the victory that we see over those enemies, over sin and death and Satan, that they are all defeated in the person of Jesus.

We do not battle against flesh and blood, but against the powers, the rulers, the authorities in the heavenly realms. But we know that Jesus, by his life and by his death and by his resurrection, has come to triumph over them.

He has broken the power of sin and death. He has taken the power of Satan and put it on a leash. None of these ultimately have the rule.

[13 : 36] Though the wrong seems off so strong, he is the ruler yet. And though we live in the in-between times, and though we live, as many commentators have said, between D-Day when the invasion has begun and V-E Day when the victory is assured and peace is established fully, though we live in that in-between time, we know that the victory is assured.

And we know that this one that David was looking forward to was Jesus. And that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father.

And that he is resting from his finished work of his life and death and resurrection for our salvation and for the victory over the enemies of God.

And we are able to live trusting, trusting that the one that David foretold, the promised one, would actually come.

He comes with power and gives us hope that the evil will not win. That the ugliness and division in our own hearts and in our nation's life will not last forever.

[14 : 58] That the scourge of pandemics will not continue without end. But that God will come in Jesus. And when he comes and establishes his kingdom fully, all of these will end.

They will not win. They will not win in the end and they will not win in the lives of those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ. Because under his rulership, as they come to him in faith, they will be covered and rescued for the day of salvation.

And that we, as those people, can look forward to a kingdom with no more sin and no more sorrow, no more sickness, no more death. As Nick read earlier, that that glorious hope will be ours.

And that kingdom is our future in Christ. So this is the first oracle and this is the first word that he gives us there is a king coming with this great power to subdue our enemies.

But then the second oracle is in verse 4. Look with me at it. The Lord has sworn and he will not change his mind. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

[16 : 16] Now, you might be forgiven if Melchizedek hasn't come up in your Rolodex of the best heroes of the Bible that you know really well. Melchizedek is not a major player in the Old Testament story.

As a matter of fact, Melchizedek is mentioned twice. Once here and once in Genesis 14. And in order to understand what this means, we need to go back and look at that for a brief second. If you have your Bible, why don't you turn with me to Genesis chapter 14. If you don't, you can listen along. It's only a couple of verses that I will read. This is in the story of Abraham.

Abraham, the one to whom God gave a promise that he would make him the father of a great nation. Abraham, who is moving into the land of promise and in doing so, finding that there are enemies against him who seek to destroy him.

And he is gathering some other local kings to fight with him against other kings who are opposing him. This is part of what's going on.

[17 : 27] And in verse 18 of chapter 14 of Genesis, it says this. And Melchizedek, the king of Salem, brought out bread and wine.

He was a priest of God most high. And he blessed him, that is, Melchizedek blessed Abraham and said, blessed be Abraham by God most high.

possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be God most high who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.

There it is. That's the whole story of Melchizedek. What's the significance of it? Well, there's lots of things if you read this. One is, his name, Melchizedek, is a combination of king and righteousness. So he is presented, his name means he is the king of righteousness. He is clearly a king of Salem, which is, if you can think through this, this is Jerusalem.

[18 : 27] Salem is the second half of Jerusalem. And that's, so he is the king of Jerusalem, which at this point was not yet the center of the kingdom of God or the nation of Israel.

It was just a town. But he was the king of Jerusalem. And it says clearly, he was a priest of the God most high. And as Abraham encounters him, Melchizedek comes out and he brings provision and blessing.

And Abraham responds by honoring him and giving him a tithe as if he were a representative of God himself. There's lots of mystery about Melchizedek.

He had no lineage. He had no, he has no father. He has no son. He has no provenance. We know very, very little about him. But David knew about him.

And as you read through, it seems that in the Old Testament world, there was speculation in the nation of Israel about who this Melchizedek was and what role he might have. And there are lots of really interesting and curious and fanciful suggestions about what he might be.

[19 : 45] But what David says is, the one who's going to come will be in his line. And this thread then is pulled by the writer of the book of Hebrews.

And in Hebrews 5 through 7, we understand more about who Melchizedek was. Melchizedek was a king and a priest.

And he was a priest of the God Most High to whom Abraham, the father of Israel, gave honor and glory. Melchizedek had a role that superseded Abraham and Abraham's sons, including Levi and the Levitical priesthood that would flow from him.

So he had a priesthood that was greater than the priesthood that would happen under the law of Moses. And Melchizedek was one who didn't have a birth and didn't have a death in the story.

And so he was an eternal being in the way the story was told. Does that mean he literally lived forever? No. But it means that the way that he is reported is meant to be suggestive of the one who would come.

[21 : 02] And the writer of Hebrews says we have a great high priest in heaven, Jesus, in the order of Melchizedek, greater than the Levitical priesthood that had to offer sacrifices over and over again because Jesus was able to offer one sacrifice once for all that settled the problem of sin forever, that broke down the barrier between God and man, that made a way where a sinful people like us could approach a holy God and live.

He was also an eternal priest because Jesus, though he came and offered himself as a sacrifice, was risen from the dead and being risen he is an eternally interceding priest for us.

And so he ever lives to intercede for us and secure our salvation. Unlike the priesthood of old where the priest could lose their way or would fail to honor God, Jesus was eternally, righteously, indestructibly serving.

And he does that today. Listen to the writer of Hebrews as he explains this. He says, we have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the

curtain.

That's a picture of the temple where God was. Where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

[22 : 32] And further on in chapter 7, verse 22, he writes, this makes Jesus a guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office.

But he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Friends, this is what the story in Genesis and what Psalm 110 promises us. there is one who is going to come and fulfill this role.

And Jesus, we now stand on the far side of that fulfilled promise. Jesus has come and he has done more than we could ever imagine so that he might be to us a king and a priest.

He will never leave his post. He will never stop his role. He will always be the king and the priest.

And we know that what is now in the struggles of this fallen world, in the trials of our lives, we know that what is now is not what will be.

[24 : 05] We know that there is a promise that this Jesus will come back and when he comes back he will fully establish himself as the king and the priest.

And he will judge the enemies of God and he will end all evil. And he will welcome his people into a sweet fellowship and into a life and a kingdom that is ruled by peace and fellowship with God where we circle around the throne and give God glory and bathe in his glory and rejoice and worship in him forever.

What David looked forward to friends we have seen he has come and so we have hope. We have hope that God will fulfill his promises. We have hope in the midst of the doubts and the trials and the losses of this year.

We can be confident because of Jesus. we are going to sing in just a minute O come O come Emmanuel which in one way is written from an Old Testament perspective expecting the coming Messiah but I think it is for us as well in the New Testament as we long for Jesus to come back and to finally establish in his fullness all that we long for.

We will sing verses 4 and 5 O come our great high priest and intercede thy sacrifice our only plea the judgment we no longer fear thy precious blood has brought us near rejoice rejoice Emmanuel has banished every fear of hell O come desire of nations bind in one the hearts of all mankind bid thou our sad divisions cease and be thyself our prince of peace rejoice rejoice Emmanuel shall come again with us to dwell let's pray Lord as we think of this psalm we rejoice we rejoice at what it points to we rejoice at the things that we know the fullness that we have been able to see that David could only grasp at

[26 : 38] Jesus Emmanuel the king the priest the babe in the manger come for us for our salvation for our hope for our security for our deliverance oh Lord may we worship him we pray this in Jesus name amen we belts R