

Psalm 110: Great David's Greater Son

*This is quite a unique Psalm, something more akin to a prophetic declaration than a song
David is led by the Spirit to look forward to his royal descendant, the promised forever-king
As he sings of his 'Lord' he is convinced of his total victory and glorious priesthood
This coming Priest-King is worthy of singing about and even singing to!*

Structure

The Psalm divides neatly into two according to God's declarations:

v1 The Lord's Rule Declared

v2-3 The Lord's Rule Described

v4 The Lord's Priesthood Declared

v5-7 The Lord's Victory Described

Notes

This Psalm is the 3rd of three by David. It follows his vindication against treachery in Ps 109
Psalm 109 closes with God at the right hand of the needy (like David).
Psalm 110 opens with God's Priest-King at his right hand in victorious rule

Echoes of Ps 2 are everywhere you look—in fact it would make little sense without Ps 2
E.g. The 'Lord' sits with his enemies who seek autonomy all around (in their midst, vs 2)
This Priest-King is the same figure as the Son-King of Psalm 2. Their victory is assured

There is a clear delineation between followers and enemies (v2-3).

Followers joyfully submit to their king, while enemies will also submit, but unwillingly.

Vs 7: The Psalm closes with a glorious image of the victorious king refreshed and vindicated

*For readers then, this is an unambiguous psalm of hope for the coming Son-of-David Messiah
For readers now, the New Testament repeatedly applies this Psalm to Jesus. Our place is in
the response. The stakes of response to Jesus are high but hope for his followers is certain.*

The big message for singers then and now?

→ **Bow before God's victorious Priestly-King**

New Testament Uses

Psalm 110 is the most frequently quoted or alluded-to Psalm in the New Testament

It is applied to Jesus to show:

1. Jesus is the King of Kings, Great David's Greater Son

- *Mt 22:41-26: Jesus quotes v1 himself: He is superior to David as David's 'Lord'*

2. Jesus ascended to reign at the right hand of God in heaven

- *Acts 2:34: Peter quotes v1 to argue for Jesus' ascension and reign*
- *This is the source of 'at the right hand of God' imagery. Each alludes to Ps 110!*
 - o *E.g. Rom 8:34; Col 3:1. We are even 'seated with Jesus' Eph 2:6*

3. Jesus is the certain and eternal priest(-king) of a certain and eternal covenant

- *Hebrews 1:13 quotes v1: Jesus is superior to angels (as new covenant mediator)*
- *Hebrews 7:1-22 quotes v4: The certain & eternal new covenant is based on Jesus' sworn (certain) and forever new priesthood*
- *Hebrews 10:12-13 alludes to v1: Jesus the priest who **sat down**. Unlike any previous priest, he finished his work and so the new covenant he brings in is absolutely certain!*

NB: The allusion to Melchizedek can be confusing. Hebrews 7 helps us understand.

As priest, Jesus brings in a new covenant in which he brings us to God.

He's not an old covenant priest like Aaron, who died—he's in a different, eternal order

Melchizedek is a mysterious king-priest figure in Genesis 14 who appears and disappears

He is king of Salem which means righteousness and is the same place as Jerusalem.

He is therefore like Jesus with no recorded beginning or end, is 'King of Righteousness' and king of the heavenly Jerusalem which will come down out heaven in the New creation!

Questions

What kind of tune do you think this psalm would have—what would be the music's mood?

How do you respond to the images of victory over God's enemies in this psalm?

In verse 1, who is speaking to whom? What does this tell you about who David has in mind?

What does it mean that this king is also 'priest forever in the order of Melchizedek'?

Look at Genesis 14:18-20 and Hebrews 7:1-10

How does this Psalm give us confidence in Jesus' victory, rule, and eternal covenant?