

PSALLO

Psalm 110

In the translation of Psalm 110 before you, once again we have endeavored to preserve the Hebrew as closely to the original as possible, adding only those words and phrases necessary to render an English metrical use, so that we may sing with facility. The translation is quite straightforward, with only a few usages which perhaps will be unfamiliar with the reader. In verse two, we have rendered more literally the Hebrew word כַּוְכָבִים, as “inward parts”. This word is translated as inwards, meaning the entrails (Leviticus 1:13); bowels (Job 20:14), and the famous phrase by David, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all *that is within me*” or, ‘all my inwards,’ ‘all my bowels’ (Psalm 103:1). In the use of this word David indicates the ability of the Lord at the Right Hand of the Yaveh to subdue even the inmost parts of His enemies to himself. We have retained the convention of the KJV (and others) as to the rendering of the Covenant-Name of God, יהוה, in that, it is seen as “LORD” (all upper case) except for two instances where “Yaveh” is used. This is to be distinguished from “Lord” which is used to translate the Hebrew אֲדֹנָי (Adonai) which means “my lord,” or master.

The New Testament writers are fond of this Psalm, quoting from it several times. Our Lord Jesus Christ uses Psalm 110:1 in a question to the Pharisees regarding the nature and person of Messiah (Matthew 22:41–46; Mark 12:35ff; Luke 20:41ff). In this conversation our Lord draws attention to David’s use of the title “my Lord”, in Psalm 110:1, calling the Messiah “Lord”, thereby confessing Messiah’s preeminence over himself, and pointing out that a mere human son of David could never be considered the superior of the great King of Israel. When our Lord asks, “whose son is he?” the Pharisees immediately respond with “The son of David.” While this was not an incorrect answer, it was also not the whole of the revelation given in that Psalm concerning the nature and person of Messiah. Our Lord then presses to them that the Messiah is greater than David, asking rhetorically, “If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” The answer is not given in the text, but the obvious inference is that Messiah is greater than David, in that David calls him “Lord” and that he sits at the Right Hand of Yaveh. Our Lord also reveals something of the inspiration of Scripture, in that He tells the Pharisees (and us as well!) that when David penned Psalm 110 he spoke “in the Spirit,” that is,

under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, thus affirming that Psalm 110 is “God-breathed” (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

Other New Testament writers have noted that this favored position to which David’s greater Son is elevated here in Psalm 110 is the place of God’s authority and power. The Apostle Paul writes that this place is “*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:21–23 KJV) In other words, this is a unique place where the absolute and sovereign authority of God is administered, and that by Jesus Christ, at the Right Hand of God. The implication is clear, that Christ Himself is divine—He sits as God at the Right Hand of God, and administers the authority of God, not as a creature, but as God Himself. The Apostle Peter also uses this enthronement to say much the same thing: “*Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him*” (1 Peter 3:22). Note here that Peter declares that angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Christ. The terms Peter employs speak of all the created order—the spiritual realms (angels), earthly governments (authorities), and all might or strength (powers). Thus, as with Paul, Peter declares the absolute reign of Christ, at the Right hand of God. This session of Christ at the Right Hand of God was also one of the points in Peter’s Pentecost Sermon to the multi-tongued multitude of Jews gathered at Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Weeks (Acts 2:34), where he, speaking in the Spirit, declared that Christ Jesus was the One called Lord in Psalm 110:1. To this agrees the Apostle, telling us in Hebrews 1:13 that no angel belongs here, seated at the Right Hand of God, for it is a place of absolute authority, to be administered by One who is God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This reign, as we saw above, extends to the “inwards” of Christ’s enemies, so that we, who were once the enemies of Christ (Ephesians 2:11–15) are now subject to Him in the inner man. Note especially the command of the Apostle Paul as it relates to Psalm 110: “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory*” (Colossians 3:1–4). Is this not the fulfillment of this command to Christ in Psalm 110:2 to rule over the inward-parts of His enemies? Are not we commanded here by the Apostle to “set our affections on things above ... where Christ is, seated at the Right Hand of God”?

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In other words, we who have fled to Christ, who were formerly His enemies, are now, by His grace and Spirit, enabled to lay down our inmost parts to Christ, to be subject to Him in the inner man, in the affections, in the mind.

But more than the Kingship and reign of Christ is shown here in Psalm 110. He is also seen as the great High-Priest after the order of Melchizedek (110:4). Although space will not permit a detailed treatment of this subject, still a few details will give good fodder for meditation on this most necessary aspect of Christ's ministry. First, we see that in Christ, at the Right Hand of God are met the two offices of King and Priest. This was not an unexpected development to the faithful worshipper of Yaveh during the Old Testament administration of the Covenant of Grace. Note Zechariah 6:12–13. In this most interesting prophecy we see that the Messiah to come, the BRANCH will be a priest and a king upon His throne—both justice and intercession, mercy and truth, will characterize His righteous and peaceable reign (Psalm 85:9–11).

The New Testament writers also teach that his place at the Right hand of the Majesty on High is not only a place of absolute authority and reign, but also a place of intercession. The seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes clear that our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed that fulfillment of the priesthood foreshadowed by Melchizedek, and fixed for our notice in Psalm 110:4, which must be administered after the power of an endless life, and not by a carnal commandment. In other words, our High Priest must have an eternal priesthood, an intercession which ever rises before the Throne of God, not by a succession of imperfect and dying men, but by One Great High Priest, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and Himself eternal (7:25–28). The author then begins chapter eight with these words: *“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”* Here the writer tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ is ascended to the Right Hand of the Majesty on High specifically to make intercession for us, continually, before that great Judgment Seat—the throne of God Almighty. The Apostle Paul expresses this same sentiment when he writes, *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”* (Romans 8: 34). What David penned so long ago was fulfilled in time by our Lord Jesus Christ who is indeed ascended into the heavens, seated at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high, to rule, and to make intercession for us.

Finally then, we note that we are commanded by the Apostle Paul, by way of implication, to sing with the understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15). The Psalter also enjoins this very duty (Psalm 47:7). In this latter use the Hebrew word for

“understanding” is מִשְׁכִּיל (Heb. Maschil) which is from the root שָׁכַל which means wisdom, or understanding. Many of the Psalms we denote as “wisdom Psalms”, or “instruction Psalms” because they use the word Maschil in the title (verse one in the Hebrew text; see Psalms 32:1, 42:1, 44:1, 45:1, 52:1, 53:1, 54:1, 55:1, 74:1, 78:1, 88:1, 89:1, 142:1). The uniform testimony of all our reformed divines and theologians is that we, as New Covenant believers, enjoy a greater light than our Old Covenant counterparts. As it regards singing the Psalms, this means, especially as we have seen much New Testament light thrown upon this Psalm, that if we are to fulfill the command to sing with understanding, it will require our most stout efforts to bring to bear the New Testament revelation and illumination not only of Psalm 110, but all the Psalms. Let us then take up this happy duty to sing the Psalms in the light of the greater revelation we have, by that same Spirit, shedding more light upon these Psalms in these New Covenant days. Let the Psalms be preached, let Christ and His Person and Work be proclaimed in this great Book of Praises as we sing therefrom with New Testament understanding about our Lord, and as He accepts of the offerings of our lips, interceding for us from the Right Hand of the Majesty on High, that these offerings may be accepted in Him. ■

TODD L. RUDELL ■

Psalm 110

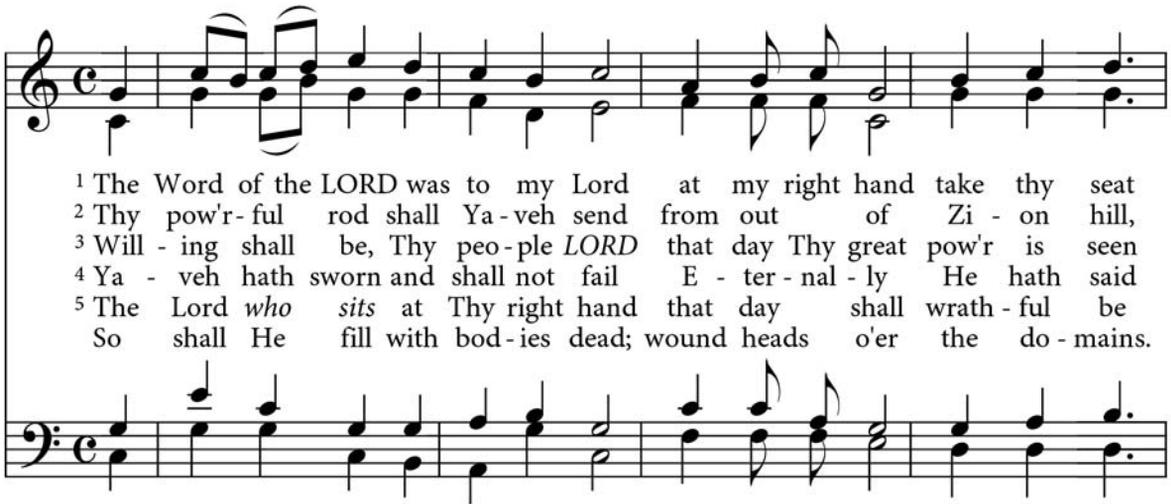
- 1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
- 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
- 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.
- 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
- 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
- 6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.
- 7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. ■

Psalm 110:1-7

A Psalm of David

The Womb of the Dawn

Todd L. Ruddell



1 The Word of the LORD was to my Lord at my right hand take thy seat
 2 Thy pow'r-ful rod shall Ya-veh send from out of Zi-on hill,
 3 Will-ing shall be, Thy peo-ple LORD that day Thy great pow'r is seen
 4 Ya-veh hath sworn and shall not fail E-ter-nal-ly He hath said
 5 The Lord *who sits* at Thy right hand that day shall wrath-ful be
 So shall He fill with bod-ies dead; wound heads o'er the do-mains.



Un-til such time as Thine en-'mies I make a stool for Thy feet.
 The in-most parts of Thine en-'mies must bear thy rule and will.
 In ho-ly awe as birth of th'morn the dew of Thy youth is to Thee!
 A priest Thou art, al-ways shall be of th'or-der of Mel-chiz-e-dek.
 He'll through-ly crush *princ-es* and kings. 6The na-tions judge shall He.
 7The stream by th'way shall give Him drink and thus the head He shall raise.