



## **Our Reigning Priest King**

Sermon on Psalm 110

November 13, 2016

Rob Snyder

### **INTRODUCTION**

When King Herod told the wise men to come back to him once they found the Messiah, so that he too could come and worship this child King, Herod actually thought that he would be able to snuff this messiah out.

When the wise men were told to go back to their own land another way and Mary and Joseph fled with child to Egypt, you'll remember how this diversion enraged King Herod which then sparked the infanticide of all male children, two years old and younger in Bethlehem, and the surrounding region.

Herod was a king who ruthlessly sought to keep his throne. He was a king, not unlike many rulers and kings throughout history who sought to guard the continuation of his own rule and reign at any cost.

Herod the great has also gone down in history as one who murdered his own wife, several sons, and some of his relatives all because he felt that they posed as a threat to his throne, to his kingdom.

But in the midst of these displays of "power", what really comes to light is the amazing frailty of these earthly kingdoms. The security of the kingdom rests squarely on the shoulders of the king. And the kings among men are fraught with limitations, weaknesses, corruption and greed.

I love how simply Mathew closes the account of Herod's rule and reign. Mathew 2:19 says "But when Herod died...".

Herod with all his pomp and power could not beat death, just as every other king and ruler who has ever reigned has not beaten death.

Well, with that in mind, let's look at our text for today.

### **THE LORD'S DECLARATION OF THE PRIEST KING (v.1)**

The LORD - Yahweh. What did this name for God conjure up for the believing Israelite? Professor of OT Richard Belcher Jr. puts it this way: "*Yahweh is the covenant name that reminded the people of his saving power to deliver*"

So just think of the exodus now. Egypt was the world super power of the day and Pharaoh was the king. Pharaoh was completely humiliated by the LORD (Yahweh) as He delivered the Israelites out of the bondage and slavery of Egypt. Following the Exodus,



Yahweh, in the OT, is constantly pointing his people back to that display of power to remind his people of His power to deliver.

So it's the delivering LORD (Yahweh) who is making this declaration. This begs the question, who is being invested with this power? King David was the author of this Psalm. King David is clearly referring to someone other than himself.

This would have been a puzzling Psalm for the Israelites in David's day. After all, it was with David that The LORD had made the Davidic covenant - 2 Samuel 7:13 "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"

Just put yourself into an Israelites shoes in David's day for a second. Could king David in this Psalm be referring to one of his sons? Who is it who will be invested with this power. "My Lord" is, at this point, a mysterious figure indeed.

Next, I want to point out, the ease with which this declaration is made by Yahweh. He simply says - "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

Notice the complete lack of any power struggle here. There is no democratic process here either. No tiresome 600 day campaigns, Yahweh declares, and the Lord takes his seat.

The complete ease with which the LORD makes this declaration is indeed in line with his sovereign character. Think about the act of creation: Yahweh speaks - the universe obeys. Underlying this declaration is the reality of the unhindered, unlimited capabilities of Yahweh.

He answers to none and no one can stay his hand or say to him, "what have you done?" He has all authority and all power. Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. (Psalm 115:3)

So what we see here is not some type of cosmic arm wrestling match with some other powerful king or being who is able to thwart God's plans. There is no one else who is His equal or maybe even almost his equal- such a rival to Yahweh does not exist.

To zoom out a little bit to look at the Psalms in general, I want to look briefly at this theme of Yahweh's unhindered, unlimited rule and reign.

Flip to Psalm 93 (Psalm's 93-99 are often referred to as Yahweh kingship Psalms):

*Psalm 93:1,2 (ESV) - "The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty;  
the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt.  
Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.  
Your throne is established from of old;  
you are from everlasting."*

*And Psalm 99:1-2 (ESV) - "The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble!*



*He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!  
The Lord is great in Zion;  
he is exalted over all the peoples.”*

There are more examples we could look at but for our purposes that will suffice. I bring these passages up to reinforce the truth that for the believing Israelite, the universal Kingship of Yahweh was a given. There were no doubts there.

But...again the question would have remained, who is the Lord who will be invested with this kind of power and authority, even to sit at Yahweh's right hand?

That question would have become all the more potent years after King David was dead and gone; after the kingdom had been split because of Solomon's sin and folly. After the hard learned trials of the exile, learning how Holy God truly is and how sinful and idolatrous the human heart actually is.

Even after the return of the remnant back to Israel this Psalm must have seemed like a far-fetched idea. After the return of the exiles, Israel was still under the rule and reign of foreign super powers who had given them degrees of freedom under puppet governors and kings who ultimately served the foreign empire.

Psalm 89:49 captures the sentiment of God's Old Covenant people in this regard:  
“Lord, where is your steadfast love of old,  
which by your faithfulness you swore to David?”

## APPLICATION

I wonder if some of you here today are feeling like God's promises are distant and abstract notions. In the midst of our decaying culture, being governed by increasingly corrupt leaders, does it seem to you like the rule of the LORD over the earth is an abstract idea with very little significance over your everyday life?

This living word here penned some 3000 years ago is for you today!

Again the question, who is the Lord at Yahweh's right hand? What does this person do to get this exalted status?

And when does the declaration of the LORD'S priest king take place?

Well, the NT actually leaves us no room for speculation on this point.

*“When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.” Hebrews 10:12-13 (ESV)*



Jesus Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for sins, then sat down. What's between the lines there? The resurrection! A dead man can't be exalted! Jesus Christ is the "my Lord" of Psalm 110.

We know this. But look at the way the NT speaks of this reality. Psalm 110:1 is the most quoted OT verse in the entire NT. This verse is quoted or alluded to 22 times in the NT.

So we've got to figure out what this means for us as new covenant believers.

Jesus speaking to the chief priests and scribes during his mock trial said "But from now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (Luke 22:69) He is seated at the LORDS right hand right now! Read Hebrews 10:12-13 again.

I bring this up because I've had conversations with multiple Christians who feel like Jesus reign will not truly begin until he comes back. The NT answer to this is an emphatic NO! He is ruling and reigning right now!

The hinge that this all turns on is the sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It follows then, quite clearly, that the reign of the Lord does not wait to begin until after his enemies are dealt with. It's going on right now while his enemies are being made a footstool. While Yahweh works on his behalf to that end.

The footstool in ancient times was where the king who was seated on his throne would rest his feet (pretty self explanatory)

So the picture we have here is that Jesus is sitting on his throne right now at the Fathers right hand and he is at ease. This process of his enemies being made a footstool is not taxing for him. He's not getting tired or weary. His agonies and sufferings of the cross are over, it is finished! And Yahweh says to him-take a seat!

Author Greg Gilbert speaking of William Shakespeare's "The history of Henry the 4th" says this:

*"It was William Shakespeare, in 1597, who had Henry the 4th complaining about the duties of kingship. "How many thousands of my poorest subjects," the king lamented, "are at this hour asleep." He goes on to wonder why Sleep would rather live in the ramshackle hovels of the poor rather than in the palaces of a king, and how she can give her gift of rest to a soaked sailor boy being tossed around by the sea while denying it to a king in all his quiet comfort. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!" Henry cries.*

This is not so with Christ-not that he needs to sleep now. But the point is - that he is at ease. His head is not uneasy. He's not anxious. He's not stressed out. What we find



out here is that the unlimited, unhindered abilities of Yahweh are working on behalf of “my Lord”.

Christ is not sweating, fearful that someone is seeking to usurp his throne. He's not paranoid of a hostile takeover, constantly on the lookout for those closest to him who may be scheming behind his back. He is seated, at ease, while Yahweh works on his behalf. This is a striking contrast to the kings and rulers of this world is it not?

That is the LORD'S declaration of the Priest King.

### THE UNLIMITED EXPANSION OF HIS KINGDOM (v. 2-4)

As Yahweh works on behalf of this king, notice the steady, outward movement of the King's reign and rule. There is a sending forth from Zion. So Zion is the location where it begins and then it expands out to places that are not Zion.

The scepter: In the ancient middle east, the king's scepter was symbolic of his striking power against his enemies.

So the striking power of Christ is being sent forth so that he is ruling in the midst of his enemies.

In light of this, consider Jesus parting words to his disciples before his ascension in Acts 1:6-8: (After his resurrection, before his ascension)

*“So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:6-8 (ESV)*

To the ends of the earth! What happened after the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7? The Jerusalem church was scattered and the followers of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit went out preaching the gospel in Judea, Samaria and beyond!

If that's not sending forth from Zion, I don't know what is!

See, the disciples at the ascension of Christ still had a limited and distorted understanding of what Christ's kingdom entailed. They saw it as solely the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. That geographical local that was given to them by the LORD when he brought them out of Egypt.

They no doubt had in mind something like what Israel looked like when David was king only better.



This passage is prophesying something far greater. This isn't a build the big walls and hold down the fort type of reigning. It's not an "I'm the king of the castle" type reigning.

This is a sending forth into the midst of the Lord's enemies reigning. It's going into their backyard, their stomping grounds, their neighbourhood. And The Lord will rule and reign there.

John Piper once said that the OT was mainly about a come and see religion but the NT is mainly about a go and tell religion.

So in the OT you had the Queen of Sheba coming to see Solomon's kingdom for example.

That "come and see" emphasis of the OT has been turned on its head. Now the emphasis is "go and tell!"

Now, you might be thinking....wait a minute. This text says that the Lord himself will be there in the midst of his enemies.

And now I'm trying to say that v.2 is in fact happening right now as the gospel goes out to the ends of the earth. So where is Jesus is all of this if he's at the Father's right hand right now?

Well to answer that we've got to look at v.3 now which is really an explanation of what v.2 looks like.

So, to start, what is "the day of your power?"

Well, in light of what we've already looked at in v.1, we know that it was the power of the resurrection that put Christ in the position that he is in right now.

What is more powerful than a man who has displayed his power over sin and death? Never to die again? It is the reality of sin and death that has plagued humanity since the fall in the garden.

If the day of his power is not wrapped up in the reality of the resurrection, then what else are we waiting for? Are we waiting for something greater to happen before it's the day of his power?

And again, where is Jesus in all of this? Is he with his people and at the Father's right hand?

To answer these questions just consider the great commission. (keep your eye on v.3 as a read the great commission.

What does Jesus say? "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (that's power that he has right now), "Go therefore" (because I've got the power you go), "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (this is the sending forth from Zion) "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching



them to observe all that I have commanded you” (this is your people offering themselves freely!)

So where is Jesus in all of this? Is it just God's people being sent forth from Zion? “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”

There it is. Do you see how this Psalm takes on a Trinitarian reality in light of the gospel?

The LORD (Yahweh) sends forth Jesus scepter from Zion, by the power of the Holy Spirit moving in God's people to press the claims of King Jesus on all of humanity.

Just think about this regarding yourself for a minute. How is it that you have come to know and love King Jesus? It's because the word of his reign has been sent forth from Zion. The rule and reign of Christ has broken in behind enemy lines and you have seen the power of the Christ to deliver you from death.

So that now, after hearing about this conquering King who has defeated sin and death you have been compelled to offer yourself to him, for his service.

And what's the result? Well the result is what verse 3 describes. And so the sending forth continues as the unlimited, unhindered striking power of Jesus gospel scepter reverberates throughout the world.

And Jesus is with us, with his people! By the power of the Holy Spirit, even as he is seated at the Father's right hand.

Just consider why it is that the Lord's people would be compelled to offer themselves freely to his service. The King, rather than rightly crushing his enemies, lays his life down for them. What kind of king does that for enemies?

Just think about Herod for a sec now. He took the lives of his people in an attempt to secure his kingdom. Jesus gave his own life for his people, in order to establish his kingdom.

We have never seen the likes of this before. A king who has laid his life down for people who were in fact his enemies. A king who has offered himself freely in the place of his enemies to take upon himself their punishment for sin from Yahweh.

So that now those who were his enemies can be called his people. Clothed in holy garments, that is the righteousness that their king has given to them.

Don't you want to offer yourself to a King like that?

What does the world do with a movement of people who have fully internalized the reality and implications of the gospel. Consider the Apostle Paul - “For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain”. What does the world do with a person like that? A person who has offered himself freely on the day of his king's power? Who understands that the same resurrection power that is his King's, also belongs to him through his union with the King?



To die is gain! What are you scared of losing in this life, even if it's life itself. You lose your life, you go to be with your King! That's gain.

What could be more powerful than a worldwide movement of people who think like that?

Islam, historically, has spread by the sword. People have been compelled to join the ranks of Islam through fear and intimidation.

The Lord's people multiply through our King's mighty gospel scepter going out and proclaiming eternal life to the Kings enemies at the cost of the Kings life.

Read v.3 , note semi-colon at the end of "holy garments". So if v. 3 is a description of what v.2 looks like, I think the end of v.3 after the semi-colon is an illustration of the description of v.3 "*From the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours*"

So the speaker here is still the LORD (Yahweh) speaking to the Lord (Jesus)

Womb, morning, youth. These are all words that are pregnant with allusions to life. I think even new life. It's from the womb that life comes and life begins.

Both the morning and dew are things that are perpetually taking place, at the start of each day, never ceasing.

Out of the reality of this king's resurrection life is the subsequent influx of the free offering of his people...in unlimited, never ending quantities. Just as the morning continues to come each day, so this king as he is seated at his Father's right hand, will never be lacking in willing servants who are offering themselves for his cause, to make is rule and reign known.

There is an endless supply of troops who have the guarantee of eternal life through their king, to then go and tell others about their King as the unlimited striking power of his gospel scepter goes out.

From the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.

Moving on to v.4. What we see here is really another declaration of Yahweh to my Lord. The structure is very similar to the declaration of v.1

So again, you see the unhindered, unlimited ability of Yahweh to simply speak and it is so. And in this case, this declaration has to do with the perpetual priesthood of the king.

Read. v.4. The LORD will not change His mind, once the declaration is made there is no repeal. There is no double mindedness on the LORD'S part. He's not waffling in and out of this decision. This declaration is firm and fixed.

"You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek". So who was Melchizedek? He's a rather mysterious figure in the OT. In Genesis 14 you can read of how Abraham gave spoils of war to Melchizedek.



There is much speculation about who Melchizedek was, but for our purposes today, what is very clear about Melchizedek is that he was a priest and a king to God. These are two offices that after the giving of the Mosaic law were to be distinct.

So, under the old covenant, the king of Israel was never to serve as the priest as well and vice versa. The priest could never serve as king. Melchizedek who came before the giving of the law at Sinai, was just that, he was king and priest.

So in the same way then, after the order of Melchizedek, Jesus is both priest and king and as we see here in v.4 he is such forever. This is why [the first point in the outline] is called the LORD'S declaration of the priest king.

Verse 4 really fills this out more. King Jesus, in his priestly role, entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. See Hebrews 9:12

This raises a question though, if Jesus as our high priest offered himself as a sacrifice for sinners, thus securing an eternal redemption why then must he remain as a priest forever, as The LORD has declared in v.4?

Wasn't the sacrifice of himself once and for all? Don't we already have holy garments? (v.3) Are we not already guaranteed eternal life through the resurrection of our priest king?

Yes to all of the above questions. But....we still sin.

Jesus does not need to offer himself over and over again, it was once and for all. But we are still sinners, and sin causes our consciences to [be] plagued and gives the devil ammunition for his accusations against us.

Because of this, The LORD has seen to it that His Priest-King will always live to make intercession for the saints.

Because he holds his priesthood permanently he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to him, since he always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25)

Brothers and sisters, do you realize that there will never be a time between now and eternity that Christ will not be at the Father's right hand, interceding for you.....praying for you.

Pleading his blood and righteousness on your behalf before the Father, even as you battle it out with remaining sin until the day when you are free from it.

There is no time when he won't be there. And what does this reality do than for the Lord's people who have offered themselves freely to his service. It gives you confidence and perseverance to continue.



It gives you confidence and perseverance to continue as you remember that he offered himself freely for you and he continues to intercede for you even as his unlimited, unhindered gospel scepter spreads out to the ends of the earth and even as we are engaged in that work, right now, during the day of his power!

### **THE CONSUMMATION OF HIS KINGDOM (v. 5-7)**

I think based on the NT writers understanding and use of this Psalm in the NT it is safe to say that the age we are living in right now is in v.1-4

Jesus Christ said that the gates of hell would not prevail against his Church. Now is the day of his power!

Rather than being instantly crushed for our sin and rebellion against this king, God is sending forth his son's mighty scepter throughout the nations. It is a gospel scepter of mercy and grace. Which again is why any of us here who are Christians can now be called his people, though we were once his enemies.

The way the day of the LORD was understood by old covenant believers was that what is described in this Psalm would all happen at once.

So, the inauguration and consummation of God's kingdom would happen at the same time. This side of the cross we can see now that there is this age of mercy in which we now live where those who were once God's enemies are being brought into His kingdom, before the final day of judgment.

### **Illustration:**

A helpful illustration I've heard in the past which is useful here is that of a mountain range. From the OT side of the cross the Kingdom of God and the day of the LORD were seen far away on the horizon as a single, massive mountain range.

Now, on the NT side of the cross we can actually look back and see that we have passed through the first mountain range and we are now in a broad valley. The mountain range behind us is representative of the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. As we look out over the horizon, the mountain range looming in the distance is representative of the day of Judgment or the consummation of God's kingdom.

Thus, this broad, sweeping valley that we find ourselves in right now is the age of mercy. As has just been unpacked in v.2-4

But this age of mercy does not last forever.

The Lord in v. 5 seems to be the "my Lord" of v.1 (It's Jesus)



So there is a shift now as far as the recipient of these promises. In the Psalms there is a recurring theme of the LORD (Yahweh) being at the right hand of his people. Being God for them as it were. So for example if you look back one page at Psalm 109:31 it says “For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.”, speaking of Yahweh. Other examples of this idea in the Psalms as well.

It seems as though there is a shift here in this Psalm and now the “my Lord” of v.1 is at the right hand of God's people. He is now fulfilling the role of Yahweh, judging all wicked rulers on behalf of God's people.

Reminiscent to Yahweh judging the nations of the promised land for Israel in the OT is the Lord of v.5 doing the same here in the close of this Psalm for his people.

The Kings and the rulers of the world will be no match for King Jesus. It is the King of Kings and the Lord of lords who will one day, vanquish all of the rulers who take counsel together against the LORD and against his anointed.

Look at the certainty of this judgment: “ He will”. Just as there was no power struggle in Yahweh's appointment of King Jesus to his right hand, now what we see here is that there will be no power struggle for King Jesus when he comes to vanquish his foes. (All those who persist in sinful disobedience and rebellion against his Lordship)

He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If you don't like this part of Jesus, Christian, what you are saying is that you'd rather see sin and rebellion against his Kingship go on forever. The wrath of King Jesus is something we ought to praise him for. He will put an end to all sin, and rebellion.

Verse 7 is a tricky verse but the context here seems to be one of Christ as he pursues his enemies, stooping down to refresh himself in a vulnerable position and then lifting his head with the confidence of sure victory. His confidence in victory is such that he does not fear an ambush, his victory is certain.

Psalm 27:6 in a similar turn of phrase says: “And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me”, Speaking of the kings' sure victory over his enemies.

Jesus clearly said “whoever is not with me is against me” (Luke 11:23)

There is no neutral ground when it comes to King Jesus. You are either for him or against him. If you are against him here today, you need to know just how futile your endeavours are against him.

Just consider the futility of King Herod trying to wipe out the messiah. He knew exactly what he was trying to do. He asked the chief priests and scribes where the Christ was to be born. And then he tried to snuff him out.



Do you see how amazingly deceitful sin is here. Herod actually thought that he could beat God. What an amazing exercise in futility. More than that what a frightful prospect of setting yourself against the LORD and against his anointed.

I've just got to ask you if you're here today raging against the King, King Jesus. Do you really know who it is you are up against? Do you actually realize that you're scheming against the Creator of the Universe.

More than that, have you considered the amazing mercy and grace that is available to you through this King? Who else are you going to turn to? My plea with you today is that you would turn to this Christ and live. This age of mercy will only last so long. Now is the day of salvation!

### **Application:**

1. In light of Remembrance Day I've been thinking of our veterans who fought and died so bravely, particularly in the brutal horrors of the trench warfare of WW1.

As Christians, we have not been called to simply hold the line. To hunker down until Christ comes back and hold the ground that we've gained. No, we go out into no man's land. Armed with the power of the gospel, proclaiming this age of mercy, we penetrate enemy lines even into the hearts and homes of those who are in the kingdom of darkness, here and abroad!

Our veterans were willing to lay their lives down for a temporary kingdom. We are to offer ourselves to the service of our King for his eternal kingdom.

2. Who are you looking to, to fix this world? The leaders of this world are like fireworks. There is great display of pomp and power and yet, you blink and it's gone. All that's left is smoke and ashes being carried off by the wind.

As the world frantically looks to the next up and coming leaders to fix our broken world, there is One who has already guaranteed the accomplishment of that, it's coming in a new heavens and earth in which righteousness dwells.

And you know what? Today is the day of his power. There is no one more powerful than a man who was dead and is now alive forevermore. The God-man, Jesus Christ. We have the privilege of getting to serve alongside him in order to make his reign known.