

JESUS, DAVID'S SON // LUKE 20:41-44 (PSALM 110)

From the series, The Gospel of Luke

The first verse of Psalm 110 provides a central concept: the enthronement of the Son of God. The LORD (the use of all capitals points to the Hebrew name *Yahweh*, God the Father) exalts “my Lord” (*Adonai*, another Hebrew name for God, this time pointing to the Son). There are several messianic psalms (Psalms 2, 22, 45, 72, and 110), but this one points to the kingship of Christ. He is not only a king, but the greatest king, coming in the line of David, but one who will reign eternally.

Three aspects of the lordship of Christ are presented here:

1. The spiritual reign of Christ (v. 2-3)

Christ reigns over an “already, but not yet” kingdom, one that has been initiated in the incarnation and will be consummated at his second coming. In this time in between, it is an invisible kingdom, with Christ reigning in the hearts of his people—thus, it is a personal, spiritual reign. The psalm points to the “mighty scepter” of Christ—the accomplishment of the cross—and “a people who offer themselves freely...in holy garments.” Christ is not only Lord, but a strong king, with an army of volunteers, and he never exhausts himself in making clean the garments of those who follow him.

2. The priestly reign of Christ (v. 4)

While this psalm focuses on Christ’s kingship, he is also prophet and priest. While a prophet represents God to the people, the priest represents the people to God. But Jesus is not a priest like those of the line of Aaron in the Old Testament, but rather, as Hebrews 7 explains, he is superior, a priest after the order of Melchizedek, the “king of righteousness” in Genesis. This is good news for the believer—Christ is a priest who can serve forever, forever represent us before God, and God promises that he will not change his mind about this role.

3. The judicial reign of Christ (v. 5-7)

The Father has given all things into Jesus’ hands (John 3:35). Psalm 110 makes clear that this is a judicial authority. From the right hand of the Father, the Son will “shatter kings” and “execute judgement.” Those who have rejected Christ and bowed the knee to idols will be defeated. And then, the Son will refresh himself, “He will drink from the brook by the way.” He will do a kingly work on the battlefield and end the day with his head raised high (Psalm 24).

Psalm 110 is the context for Jesus’ remarks to the religious leaders who had been trying to trap him. He asks, “How can they say that the Christ is David’s son?” In quoting Psalm 110, Jesus is publicly asking his enemies the question he had privately asked his disciples: “Who do you say that I am?”

Jesus is Lord. If we come to him as savior, we must also come to him as Lord.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the knowledge that Christ’s kingdom is presently in the hearts of his people impact how we live our lives?
2. Why is it important that Jesus is not only king, but also priest? What is the significance of his priesthood being in the line of Melchizedek?
3. Why does Jesus choose this psalm to confront the religious leaders at the temple the Wednesday before his crucifixion? How does it answer the question, “Who do you say that I am?”