

## Psalm 110 – “Sit At My Right Hand” (Ascension Sunday) – May 12, 2024

1. “Major on the majors; minor on the minors”
  - a. “Keep the plain things the main things; and the main things the plain things”
2. Where Scripture makes an obscure reference or two to something, we need to be careful to not spend too much time on speculation and guesswork
  - a. Where Scripture makes a sustained case for something, we need to be careful to not relegate it to the sidelines
3. Last year I shared that of the “Five Evangelical Feast Days”, we almost put exactly the wrong priority on them
  - a. I’m not interested in scaling back on Christmas and Good Friday and Easter
  - b. But I am interested in having Ascension and Pentecost capture our imagination once again
4. You have all heard it said that Psalm 110:1 is “*God’s favourite Bible verse*”
  - a. This is because no other verse is cited as often as this one in the NT
    - i. It shows up in the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke)
    - ii. Acts
    - iii. Paul’s epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Corinthians)
    - iv. Hebrews
    - v. Peter’s epistle (1 Peter)
  - b. In this Psalm, we have a picture of David’s greater Son taking up His throne as a conquering king and a perfect High Priest
  - c. The NT writers make mention of this Psalm in relation to the Ascension of Christ, and this is therefore an important theme

- i. The trajectory of Christ’s ministry goes from obscurity to majesty, from dust to glory
    - 1. So this means that each Holy Day on the Christian calendar exists in service to the one that follows
      - a. Christmas < Good Friday < Easter < Ascension < Pentecost
    - 2. This is what I mean when I say that we likely emphasize these holidays in reverse order of importance
5. V.1 – *“The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”*
- a. This is a Psalm of David, which is important, so we know who is talking about who here
  - b. English is limiting here as we use the word “Lord” in several senses
  - c. The way it is differentiated in English is that the first LORD is capitalized, and the second Lord is in lower case
    - i. The first is YHWH (the unpronounced name of God)
    - ii. The second is Adonai (a title for a ruler)
    - iii. Our word Jehovah is created by taking the consonants from YHWH and the vowels from Adonai
  - d. So we have David telling us that God is speaking to one who is a lord over David
  - e. Jesus uses this verse in one of his dust-ups with the Pharisees
    - i. Matthew 22:41-46 - *“Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” 43 He*

*said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 44 “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’? 45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” 46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.”*

- ii. The expectation of the Messiah would be that he would be a political figure who would free the nation of Israel from their conquerors
- iii. They correctly understood that this Messiah would come from David, but they misunderstood the nature of His ministry
  - 1. But Jesus points something out to them
  - 2. In Psalm 110:1, the great-great-great-grandfather David is calling his grandson “Lord”
  - 3. He is elevating his grandson above himself, which should grab our attention
    - a. David is the head of this family, and its greatest member
    - b. His family is named by him
      - i. “Ben-David” or “Davidson”
      - ii. Custom was to honour grey headed patriarchs instead of social media influencers, so the Jesus is getting them to explain why David calls his grandson by a superior name
      - iii. Jesus is alluding to His divinity here

1. The grandson is greater than the grandfather because He is the God-Man, the Second Person of the Trinity
  2. David calls his grandson his Lord *because He is David's Lord!*
- iv. Jesus is telling them *"You understand that the Christ is David's son – great! But you're still thinking of Him in terms of being a local king who has authority over a relatively small sliver of land north of Egypt. You don't understand that the Christ is God in the flesh, who rules over the entire cosmos."*
  - v. This seemed to do the trick of stopping their mouths
- f. So, by Christ's own interpretation here, we can see that we have God saying to Christ *"sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool"*
    - i. But now we are dealing with an expanded understanding of who the Christ is, and thus also an expanded understanding of who these enemies are
    - ii. The enemies are not just the Greeks or the Romans, or whoever is occupying the land of Israel at the moment, but it is anyone who stands in opposition to the Christ
  - g. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Christ took this seat after He made purification for our sins
    - i. Psalm 110:1 is about the ascension of Christ, when He goes back to the Father after His resurrection

- ii. The Father tells Christ to sit there until He makes His enemies His footstool
  - 1. This is the culmination of Christ's earthly ministry
  - 2. During His earthly ministry, He has bound the strong man (Matt. 10:29); He has seen Satan fall like lightning (Luke 10:18); He has thrown Satan out from his place as ruler of the world (John 12:31)
- iii. Having accomplished a change in the cosmic order, Christ now takes His seat with the Father so this victory over sin and death can begin to play itself out in world history
  - 1. Next week is Pentecost, when the church is given this Ascension power to play her role in the drama of redemption
- iv. Things happen first in the heavenlies, and then they work themselves out as realities in time and space
  - 1. LBCF 13 – Sanctification discussion in SS
  - 2. Heaven declares us righteous at the moment of justification and this works itself out in very practical ways as we live out our days
- 6. VV. 2, 3 – *“The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! 3 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.”*
  - a. Here we see the outworking of Christ's *session* (being seated)
  - b. What happened in Zion is working its way out
  - c. The good news of Jesus Christ starts as a small pin prick in Jerusalem, but is meant to go out to the nations of the earth

- i. Like a small chip in your windshield, slowly expanding outward
- d. Christ is moving even into enemy territory to make His rule known
- e. V.3 talks about the nature of Christ’s redeemed people, how they are made willing to offer themselves up
  - i. New covenant reality that is better than the Old Covenant
  - ii. Jeremiah 31:31-33 – *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*
  - iii. The Old Covenant was an external covenant
    - 1. It was by birth and so it included both regenerate and non regenerate people
    - 2. The new covenant (covenant of grace) has only regenerate people in it

3. These are people who have God's law on their heart and offer themselves freely
4. Jeremiah says these people know the Lord
5. David says they're in "holy garments"
  - a. They are covered in the righteousness of Christ
- iv. When the church goes out into enemy territory to announce Christ's has won and that they need to lay down their arms, they are going out as a new kingdom people
  1. The language of v. 3 highlights this newness
  2. They come "*from the womb of the morning*"
- v. "*the dew of your youth will be yours*"
  1. Most difficult portion of this Psalm
  2. Seems fitting with the theme of Christ establishing the new age/new covenant/new heaven and earth
    - a. Dew is what refreshed the earth before the fall
    - b. Unlike rain, it is almost imperceptible as it does its work
      - i. John 3:8 – "*The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*"
  3. Calvin – "*As men are struck with astonishment at seeing the earth moistened and refreshed with dew, though its descent be imperceptible, even so, David declares that an innumerable*

*offspring shall be born to Christ, who shall be spread over the whole earth. The youth, therefore, which, like the dew-drops, are innumerable, are here designated the dew of childhood or of youth. The Hebrew term, ילדות, yalduth, is used as a collective noun, that is, a noun which does not point out a single individual only, but a community or society. Should any wish to attach a more definite and distinct signification to the term, he may do so in the following manner: That an offspring, innumerable as the dew-drops of the morning, shall issue from his womb.”*

vi. As always, God is creating a people for Himself and involving them in His redemptive work

7. V.4 – *“The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”*

- a. The kingship of Christ has been highlighted so far, but David also sees how the Christ will be a priest
- b. The book of Hebrews makes much of Christ’s priesthood, and of it being modeled after Melchizedek
- c. Melchizedek was this curious figure that Abraham met, he was a man without father and mother, without beginning or having no end of life, he was the king of Salem, or the king of Peace, and he was greater than Abraham because Abraham offered a sacrifice to Melchizedek
- d. He was very clearly a type of Christ
- e. His priesthood was different than the priesthood of Aaron or of the Levites



- i. In Israel, the offices of priest and king were kept separate
  - ii. In Melchizedek, we have a king who is also a priest
  - iii. This also foreshadows Christ in the way He holds His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king (*munus triplex*)
- f. When Christ ascends to heaven, He does so as God's final prophetic Word to creation, as the king who has reclaimed His kingdom, and as the great High Priest who is constantly interceding on behalf of His people to the Father
  - i. The fact that our King is also our High Priest not only assures the victory of Christ's people in history, but it assures us of our salvation and of our righteous standing before God in heaven
  - ii. This ought to make us the most joyful warriors of all
  - iii. The Christian life is a battle
    - 1. We are in a spiritual war
    - 2. But we are warriors sent out on behalf of a king who has already guaranteed our victory, and who has secured our eternal rewards for us
    - 3. This is why "fight, laugh, feast" has been used as a descriptor of our days here on earth
      - a. Our battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil needn't be desperate, angry, or impatient
      - b. We have a priest-king who provides us a foundation of joy even when He calls us to do difficult things

8. VV.5, 6 – *“The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.”*
- a. Here is another picture of the king reclaiming His kingdom, or of the heir claiming His vineyard
  - b. This work is ongoing and progressive through history, culminating in Christ’s bodily return to earth at the end of history
  - c. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 – *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then kat his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”*
  - d. The first resurrection happens during Christ’s first coming – the firstfruits
    - i. Those of us who have been made alive become partakers in this resurrection, for now spiritually

- ii. Isaiah 65:17-25 describes this new covenant age as being one of joy
    - 1. Yet even in this very happy and joy filled passage, death remains present
    - 2. V.20 describes man living a long and peaceful life (those who die at 100 will be considered cursed) but even still, death remains
  - e. V.25 picks up on this Psalm and reminds us again that the resurrected and ascended Christ reigns until all his enemies are under His feet, and when He returns, the final enemy, death, will be wrapped up once and for all
  - f. The physical resurrection of our bodies becomes a reality, never again to see corruption in the eternal new heaven and earth
  - g. The ascended Son has completed His work; He has subjected everything to Himself and hands His completed work back to the Father, having finished His mission, and God will be all in all
  - h. This is the final picture we see in v.7 of this Psalm
9. V.7 – *“He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.”*
- a. Here we have a picture of peace and refreshing even amidst the suffering and difficulty the Son must endure
  - b. John Gill – *“I think the clause is rather expressive of the solace, joy, and comfort, which Christ, as man, has in the presence of God, and at his right hand, having finished the work of our salvation; then he drank to his refreshment of the river of divine pleasure, when God showed him the path of life, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, and introduced him into his presence; where are*

*fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psalm 16:11 (at your right hand are treasures forevermore).”*

- c. This is a suitable closing
- d. At the end of His ascended reign from heaven, Christ is honoured, vindicated, and lifted up yet again as the Father receives the completed kingdom from His Son
  - i. All there is left to see is the glory and perfection of Christ as He has fully claimed heaven and earth as His own
  - ii. Every loose end has been tied up; every tear dried; every problem perfectly resolved with no remainder
  - iii. *“how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own”*

## 10. APPLICATION

- a. So what is the practical impact of this in our life?
- b. We can be patient and joyous when the earthly outworking of salvation goes slower than we may want
- c. Pursuit of Holiness – describes the battle against temptation in terms of guerilla warfare
  - i. If a civil war has been fought and one side captures the capital city, victory has occurred
    - 1. The war is over
  - ii. Yet sometimes news of this change is slow to reach the far outposts, and so people keep fighting
    - 1. Perhaps other people refuse to accept the results and keep waging their own campaigns

- iii. This is a good description of the Christian life in this chapter of history
- iv. Satan is no longer the ruler of this world – Christ has deposed him
  - 1. The capital city has fallen, and Christ has claimed His inheritance
  - 2. Yet Satan refuses to accept his fate and he continues to wage guerilla campaigns
  - 3. When these battles come up, and they will, we need to remember that our war is against an already-defeated enemy
  - 4. Colossians 2:13-15 – *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”*
  - 5. This logic of ascension moves on into the next chapter – Colossians 3:1-4 – *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*
  - 6. Ephesians 1:18-23 – *“having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you,*

*what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”*

7. The new life in Christ and the confidence of obedience should become contagious. The Great Commission is not go see how many people we can convince to make Jesus Lord
8. The Great Commission grounded in the rock solid reality that Christ is Lord regardless of what people think of Him
9. Matthew 28:18-20 – *““All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go **therefore** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

v. Pentecost is the fitting last step in our commission

1. We do all of this in the power of the Helper that the Father and Son send us
2. This is how we make disciples through evangelism, this is how we tear down strongholds, and this is how we put sin to death in our lives

## 11. CHARGE

- a. *“Ascension Day reminds us that Christ has defeated the dragon and cast him down from the heavenly places (Rev. 12). The war rages on, however, since the fallen dragon continues to attack the saints on earth. Jesus’s reign is a reality which is already fully acknowledged in heaven, and which must be increasingly acknowledged on earth. The ascended Priest-King is taking His earthly claim through the work of His church, as we conquer sin, tear down strongholds, and disciple the nations. Ascension means that Jesus has cast the dragon down and allowed us to share His heavenly victory on earth. He is trampling Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20).”*

## 12. BENEDICTION

- a. 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5 – *“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ”*