

Sermon: 2018.09.23

Title: The King Who Justifies

Text: Psalm 110: 1-7

Theme: Psalm 110, David describes the Messiah as combining qualities Jesus Christ fulfilled: divine king, everlasting priest, and conquering deliverer.

1The Lord says to my lord:

“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

2The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of your enemies!” 3Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning’s womb.

4The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

5The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. 6He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. 7He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high.

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Why Psalm 110? A Messianic Psalm by David.
- B. We’ve been looking at David to see at least partly how he points to Christ. Now, we’ll take the perspective of the New Testament writers to look back at how they read the Old Testament and the prophecies of the Messiah’s coming.
- C. Old Testament Scriptures like Psalm 110 help us to know God better. That’s especially important as society becomes less Christianized and more susceptible to those who want to confuse people about God generally, and Christ specifically.
- D. Psalm 110 is quoted more by the New Testament writers than any other Old Testament scripture. That’s significant because they didn’t yet possess a New Testament. Psalm 110 must have been pretty important to them. It’s quoted more than 20 times. It’s used by Peter in his inaugural sermon at Pentecost, the writer of Hebrews, and by Paul. Jesus uses it to indicate His own identity as the divine Messiah.
- E. This Psalm shows us Messiah as divine king, as everlasting priest, and as conquering deliverer.

II. MESSIAH AS DIVINE KING.

- A. In Matthew 22 and Mark 12, Jesus is questioned by the religious leaders who want to trip him up, undermine his credibility, dent his popularity.
- B. After answering their questions in surprising and captivating ways, Jesus turns the table and questions His questioners.

“41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 'What do you think about the Christ ? Whose son is he?' 'The son of David,' they replied. 43 He said to them, "'How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him "Lord"? For he says, 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 can he be his son?' 46 No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions." *Matthew 22:41-46*

- C. Context. Old Testament is full of prophecies of a Messiah, the anointed one, a 'son' of David, who would free Israel from its oppressors and restore Israel's past glory.
- D. By asking the question, how can David call him Lord if he is but David's son; Jesus is saying the Messiah is far more than the human political leader they are looking for.
- E. This is confirmed by the rest of verse 1 and verse 2. David is saying, the Messiah will share the throne, equal with God.

“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” 2 The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of your enemies!” *Psalms 110: 1-2*

- F. Christ tells the religious leaders they've set their sights too low. They want a political leader who will rid them of the Romans, he comes as a divine king who offers them the world.
- G. They can't stand a Jesus who confronts and challenges them. Can we?

II. MESSIAH AS EVERLASTING PRIEST

- A. Verse 4 shows that the Messiah will not only be a king, he will be a priest.

4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” *Psalm 110: 4*

- B. Nowhere in the history of Israel had anyone served as both priest and king. It's startling David describes the future Messiah this way for three reasons.
 1. Saul lost the throne at least partly for tangling up his role of king with the role of priest.
 2. The calling of priests and kings is different. Kings rule in place of God. Priests bridge the gap between the people and God.
 3. Priests had to come from the line of Aaron. It was illegal for anyone to be a priest not a Levite. But the future messiah was understood as coming from the line of David. A king and a priest each have almost opposite roles.
- C. The two priesthoods established by God: Aaronic and Melchizedek. Priesthood by descent vs. a priesthood that lasts forever.
- D. Melchizedek shows up in 2 verses in Genesis 14, and we never see him again.

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. Genesis 14: 18-20

- E. But much is made of him in Psalm 110. Hebrews 7: 1-28 tells us how we can understand Melchizedek in the person of Jesus Christ. I quote only verses 4 - 7.

4 Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! 5 Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. 6 This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater.

- E. The whole Jewish religion depended on the sacrificial system administered by Levites. It would have been difficult for Jews to believe in a messiah who was both king and priest. But Melchizedek solves that problem

- F. C.S. Lewis makes the case that for a Jewish convert to Christianity, a priest along the lines of Melchizedek would have to have been invented were he not already introduced in Genesis 14.

“For a Jewish convert to Christianity this was extremely important and removed a difficulty. He might be brought to see how Christ was the successor of David; it would be impossible to say that He was, in a similar sense, the successor of Aaron. The idea of His priesthood therefore involved the recognition of a priesthood independent of and superior to Aaron’s.” C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*

- G. You will never understand Christ or the Gospel unless you see that Christ is both divine king and everlasting priest. He is both lion and lamb.
- H. And to the extent you understand Christ as more priest than king or more king than priest, it will warp your theology.
- I. Jonathan Edwards’ tells us what this means in his sermon *The Excellency of Christ*. Edwards’ discusses the the paradoxical qualities that make him the most unique figure in history.

"There is an admirable conjunction or meeting of diverse and paradoxical elements in the Person of Jesus Christ ... diverse excellencies, as otherwise would have seemed to be utterly incompatible in the same subject." Jonathan Edwards, *The Excellency of Christ*

- J. Edwards goes on to juxtapose the almost opposite qualities that Christ embodies. Infinite justice and infinite grace. Infinite in highness and infinite in condescension. Infinite in justice and infinite in grace. Infinite in glory and in humility. Majestic and meek. Reverence and divinity. Absolute sovereignty over creation and yet perfect resignation to death on a cross.
- K. But when we see Him as He is, we’re transformed.

III. MESSIAH AS CONQUERING DELIVERER

5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. 6 He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. 7 He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high. *Psalms 110: 5-7*

- A. The deliverers of old and their heaps of dead; the old way as exemplified by deliverers like Gideon, Samson, Deborah, and David.
- B. The new way, practiced by Christ. Not heaps of bodies, but His body. Not turning living enemies into dead enemies, but turning enemies dead in their sins to life and fellowship with Him.

“20 ... he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ... 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” *Ephesians 1: 20, 22 - 23*

- C. Jesus answers Pilate.

“Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.’” *John 18: 36*

- D. Jesus tells Peter in Matthew 26:53, he could call on His Father and receive 12 legions of angels. He could heap up the bodies. Instead He call His Father from the cross and asks Him to forgive their sins.
- E. For those who refuse God’s offer of friendship, who insist on living in a place in which their own hearts are the highest standard of what’s right, God will grant them their wish. It’s hell.
- F. C.S. Lewis says this who question the love and mercy of the God who judges.

“In the long run the answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell is itself a question: “What are you asking God to do?” To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering every miraculous help? But he has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? They will not be forgiven. To leave them alone? Alas, I am afraid that is what he does. “The damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; the doors of hell are locked on the inside. . . . They enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved.” C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

- G. The Bible tells us the choice is our’s. We can turn our hearts over to Christ, stand on His work. Or, we can choose to follow the standard of our own hearts, and stand on our own works. For those who choose the former, judgement day has already

come, and the judge has taken our penalty onto Himself. For the latter, you receive the Hell you've chosen.

- H. In the Great Divorce, Lewis writes, "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'"

IV. APPLICATION

- A. Christianity is different than every other religion because it's not about how you come to God, it's about God coming to you. It's about the person Jesus Christ. Have you met Christ as the person He is? Or, have you created your own Messiah like the religious leaders of Jesus' day? Have you allowed your doubts to overwhelm your reason? Judgement is coming. For those in Him, the judge has become the justifier. The rest of us will stand on our own work.
- B. What's it mean that we are called kings and priests? Kings lead people to salvation and joy. Priests serve the lost and hurting. If we're in Christ, that's our calling.
- C. What's it mean that Christ's "troops will be willing on your day of battle."? Our responsibility to serve Christ in patience, obedience, and assurance.