

Psalm 110

The New Testament tells us this is a Messianic Psalm and was considered one by the Jews of Jesus' day. It is quoted in the Gospels, in Acts and in Hebrews:

- **Matthew 22:41-46** - "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

- **Acts 2:33-35** - "Exalted, then, to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

- **Hebrews 7:21-22** - "(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."

R. Joden (in Midrash Tillim apud Yalkut in loc.) translates it: "God will make the King Messiah sit at his right hand"

Rashi and some later rabbinical interpretation said it was referring to Abraham. Others said Hezekiah. Rashi also interpreted this as "Wait for My right hand": i.e. "Stay and wait for My salvation."

The Midrash on **Psalm 18:35** refers over to **Psalm 110** and says, "Sit thou at My right hand" is specifically applied to the Messiah, while Abraham is said to be seated at the left.

"So Abraham's face will become white with envy, and he will say, 'The son of my son sits on your right and I must sit on your left?' Then the Holy One will appease him by saying, 'Your son is on your right and I am on your right.'" (Yalqut Shimoni Ps. 110, Nedarim 32b and Sanhedrin 108b.)

The rabbis also saw Messiah in a similar position in a Midrash on **Psalm 80:18** - "Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself."

See also <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/davearmstrong/2017/04/psalm-110-jewish-commentators-who-regard-it-as-messianic.html>

[For a modern Jewish rebuttal to all this, see <http://www.judaismsanswer.com/>

IdlRisto.htm]

Psalm 110:1 - "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

A lot is packed into his one verse.

The first "LORD" = Yahweh; the second Lord = *adonai*.

Targum of Jonathan: "the Lord said to his Word" - *Memra* in Aramaic, i.e. the Logos of the Gospel of John and of Philo, The Memra was personified during the centuries leading up to Jesus in the apocryphal literature as an intermediary between God and man. The identity of the Memra became merged and confused with both Messiah and the Holy Spirit.

An example: "My Shekinah I shall put among you, My Memra shall be unto you for a redeeming deity, and you shall be unto My Name a holy people" (Targum Yer. to Lev. 22:12)

"The LORD said unto my Lord" - "My Lord" being Christ the Messiah. David is a "prophetic prototype" of the Messiah, but though Messiah is called the "son of David," He is still David's Lord (**Matthew 22:41-46**).

Rashi maintains that "sit" means "wait." - Wait for My salvation and hope for the Lord. [The root] ישיבה means only waiting, as Scripture states (Deut. 1:46): "And you stayed (ותשבו) in Kadesh for many days."

But the New Testament sees more here. "Sitting at the right hand" is a place of high honor, but specifically in this case it further means Christ, who is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God, is also reigning with God, or on God's behalf:

- **1 Corinthians 15:25** - "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

- **Hebrews 12:2** - "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

- **Hebrews 2:8-9** - "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

As an addendum to this, Paul says we are sitting/reigning with Him now:

- **Ephesians 2:6** - "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in

heavenly places in Christ Jesus"

Sitting as Rest - The other idea displayed in "sitting down" is that Christ is at rest, having completed His work, the results of which are being worked out by God.

"enemies" - Who are the enemies that will be put under his feet? The spirit of Antichrist, the Beast and False Prophet, the Whore of Babylon - all serving Satan and his evil spirits to hinder and derail God's plan.

[God says:] "Ephraim, My firstborn, you sit on My right until I subdue the army of the hosts of Gog and Magog, your enemies, under your footstool... (Mid. Alpha Betot, 2:438-425) See **Ezekiel 38:2** and **Revelation 20:7-9**.

"footstool" - The allusion is to the Ancient Near Eastern custom of conquerors ritually placing their feet on the necks of the conquered leaders:

- **Joshua 10:23-26** - "So they brought the five kings out of the cave — the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. "Do not be afraid or discouraged," Joshua said. "Be strong and courageous, for the LORD will do this to all the enemies you fight." After this, Joshua struck down and killed the kings, and he hung their bodies on five trees and left them there until evening."

The Rod

Psalm 110:2 - "The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."

The rod or staff = *matteh* - rod, staff, branch, scepter

The rabbis saw this as referring to the mystical staff of Judah representing the King Messiah, and the scepter which would not pass out of Judah's hand (Beresh. R. 85, ed. Warsh. p. 153 a) "as in the verse [Psalm 110], 'The staff of thy strength the Lord will send out of Zion.'" Also see Midrash Yelamdeinu

See Jacob's blessing in **Genesis 49:10** - "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

This was also said to be the staff of Aaron, which changed into a serpent in the court of Pharaoh, and which is said to have been in the hands of every king till the Temple was destroyed, and since then to have been hid and will be restored to King Messiah (Bemid. R. 18)

[Aaron's] staff was held in the hand of every king until the Temple was destroyed, and

then it was [divinely] hidden away. That same staff also is destined to be held in the hand of the King Messiah (may it be speedily in our days!); as it says, "The staff of thy strength the Lord will send out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Numbers Rabbah 28:23).

This staff is supposed to be the same as that of Jacob with which he crossed Jordan (**Genesis 32:11**) by splitting the waters according to tradition, and the same which David had in his hand when he slew Goliath (Yalkut on Psalm 110, vol. ii. Par. 869, p. 124 c).

Midrash Yelamdeinu concurs and states that the Messiah will use the staff to conquer the nations of the world.

"Rule in the midst of thine enemies" - i.e. in the hearts of sinners, brought to repentance and saved by His sacrifice on the cross and who now call Him Lord.

Psalm 110:3 - "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."

Peter quoted **Psalm 110:1** on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:24-26**)

- **Acts 2:34-36** - "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, 'Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool.' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Since the Hebrew word translated "power" is the word for a host or army, the sense is that the Messiah's people are gathered together as a willing army.

'Willing'

The emphasis on willingness here shows that despite God's foreknowledge, power and plan, we are required to respond, to say "amen," to step forward, to say "Here am I" like Isaiah did. Saying God will take care of things without our action is like telling a homeless person "be warmed and fed" without giving him anything to eat. The gathered disciples on Pentecost had the attitude of free-will offerings without qualifiers or strings attached. To get to the place of saying "Not my will but thine" in fact takes an act of your will. The power, the ability to even consider that step, let alone act on it, comes from God and not us. But it is a continuing decision we face every moment.

- **Psalm 40:8** - "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

"The Beauties of holiness" are the garments of salvation and righteousness that Christ provides us, when we are born again "from the womb" meaning into the family of our mother the New Jerusalem. The meaning of Greek "brethren" = "*adelphoi*" is "from the same womb."

"Dew" and "lamb" are similar sounding words in Hebrew. Converts to this Gospel, the sheep of his pasture, will cover the ground like dew - which appears mysteriously.

Psalm 110:4 - "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

"a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" or according to what was said about Melchizedek, or "according to the likeness of Melchizedek."

Rashi says more: A priesthood that is "above" the priesthood of Melchizedek, and that is the kingdom, which is above the high priesthood in thirty steps.

Abraham met Melchizedek the King of Salem or "king of peace" (later *Jeru-salem*) after the battle against the four kings and gave him tithes and also shared a meal with him, a prototype of the Passover afikomen and the Lord's Supper communion (Genesis 14:18-20). A mysterious figure, he is only mentioned in Genesis 14 and in Psalm 110 in the Old Testament. Some commentators see him as a pre-incarnate Christ, like the Angel of the Lord who appears to men. Whoever he was, he is certainly a prototype of Messiah - the Prince of Peace.

Josephus says Melchizedek was the founder of the first temple built in Jerusalem, and was thus the first priest before God.

The Midrash on **Psalm 110** mentions Abraham's war to recover Eliezar, which preceded his meeting with Melchizedek. This incident is also related to Messiah sitting at the right hand of God:

'Who made all those wars? (I.e. the wars Avraham had with the kings) Is it possible for 318 men to fight against all of them? Rabbi Yochanan the son of Rabbi Yosi said, "Is it not the case that only his servant Eliezer was with him?" It is the case that (his name) has that same value. (I.e. the name Eliezer in Hebrew has the numerical value of 318) Who made all the wars? The Holy One Blessed is He, who said to him (Avraham) sit by my right side. Sit by my right side and I will make for you the war. Even though it was not written there (in Genesis) David explained it, as it says: "The words of HaShem to my master, sit at My right side." And also He says to the Messiah, "He prepares with chesed a throne, and he sits on it with truth [in the tent of David.]" (Isaiah 16:5) The Holy One Blessed is He says, "He (the Messiah) will sit and I will make war." Therefore and he sits on it with truth [in the tent of David.] And what is for us [for him] to do? To read and to study in the Torah that is called Truth. [As it says, "The judgments of HaShem are true" (Psalm 19:10) and it says] "Purchase truth and don't sell it." (Proverbs 23:23)

In other words, Abraham figuratively "sits" by God's right side while God fights his battles for him. In the same way, the Messiah "sits" - "The Holy One Blessed is He says, 'He (the Messiah) will sit and I will make war.' Therefore and he sits on it with truth [in the tent of David.]"

Psalm 110:5-6 - "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries"

Wait - who is on whose right hand?

Interestingly, the previous **Psalm 109** ended with David saying the Lord "shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." The "poor" is David himself, or the Messiah prophetically. So looking at both psalms, we see an interchangeable relationship - first the Father at the right hand of the Son, and then the Son at the right hand of the Father, and now the Father on the right hand of the Son again. This speaks of the interpenetrating oneness of the Trinity.

Rashi again sees the "kings" here as referring (past-tense) to the four kings in **Genesis 14** that Abraham battled - Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations.

But this more likely points to the cosmic victory over all of God's enemies:

- **Ezekiel 39:17** - "And as for you, son of man, this is what the Lord GOD says: Call out to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field: 'Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great feast on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood.'"

- **Revelation 19:17-18** - "Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out in a loud voice to all the birds flying overhead, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and commanders and mighty men, of horses and riders, of all men slave and free, small and great."

Rashi sees this - besides the four kings - as representing victory over Pharaoh: Now where did He execute justice, making them a heap of corpses? (Exod. 14:30), "the Egyptians dead on the seashore." This resembles the prophecy of Habakkuk 3:12: "You have crushed the head of the house of the wicked." [This refers to] the head of Pharaoh, who was the head and the prince of a land greater and more esteemed than all the lands.

In fact, this looks toward the final completion of what was finished on the cross:

- **Genesis 3:15** - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Satan's head is crushed even as Messiah's heel is wounded.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:8** - "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:"

Psalm 110:7 - "He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."

Verse 7 according to Edersheim is also applied in Yalkut (u. s. col. d) to Messianic times, when streams of the blood of the wicked should flow out, and birds come to drink of that flood (See **Ezekiel 39:17** and **Revelation 19:17-18**, above).

Compare Balaam's forced blessing of Israel in **Numbers 23:24** - "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain."

"Therefore shall he lift up the head": as Jesus did at his resurrection; He bowed it when he died, He lifted it up when He rose again, and so when He ascended on high to his God and Father; when He took his place at His right hand; where His head is lifted up above his enemies, and where He is exalted above angels, principalities, and powers, and where He must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. - *Gill's Exposition*