

**PSALM 110:1-7 ESV**

1 A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 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. 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." 5 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 (Lit. "smash the heads") over the wide earth. 7 He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

STRUCTURE

- I. **Divine Decree to the Messianic King: "Sit at My right hand"** (v. 1)
 - a. Christ initiates holy war from heaven (v. 2)
 - b. Christ engages holy war through His church – on the "day of your power" (v. 3)
- II. **Divine Oath to the Messianic Priest: "Yahweh is at your right hand"** (vv. 4-5a)
 - a. Christ initiates final victory by smashing heads – on "the day of his wrath" (vv. 5b-6)
 - b. Christ consummates victory by lifting His head over His enemies (v. 7)

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

No book of the Bible is quoted in the New Testament more than the Psalms, and no Psalm is more quoted by the apostles than Psalm 110. It appears twenty-four times in their canonical writings. Whereas many of David's songs applied first to his own life and then prophetically to a future Son of David, Psalm 110 is pure prophecy. David speaks not of himself but of his Lord—of Jesus.

The song consists of two halves, each beginning with divine speech. The first half focuses on the beginning of Christ's reign from heaven, and the last half emphasizes the consummation of Christ's reign on earth. The first half begins with Christ's ascension to heaven, and the last half prophesies His return to earth. Christ's ascension from earth to heaven was not just about geography—Jesus moving from A to B. It was about exaltation, vindication, the fulfillment of God's promises of an eternal Davidic King, and Christ's continued ministry by the Spirit through the church.

The church is Christ's volunteer army from verse 3. They mysteriously appear like dew at dawn, after the dawn of Christ's resurrection. That army is us—the church. When Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father, He poured out His Spirit on Pentecost, and we became His army of volunteers, laying down our lives for the One who gave us His life so freely. Like an army, we fight evil. Like dew, we cover the earth and renew it. This holy war continues "until" Christ enemies become His footstool (v. 1).

Until that "until"—Christ's enemies remain. He rules "in the midst of" His enemies, comprised of evil people, evil spirits, and even death (cf. 1 Cor. 15:26). This explains the problem of evil. How could a good God permit such evil? Because Christ reigns amidst His enemies. He permits it for a time because His volunteer army has work to do (perhaps a better question is: how do God's people permit such evil?). Sure, God could have wiped out human civilization when the population of our planet consisted of two. Instead, when Adam and Eve sinned, God promised that one of their offspring would conquer all evil. He continued making promises to Noah, Israel, David, and to us. In Psalm 110, He promises that a priest-king like Melchizedek would eradicate evil once and for all, but not before God's "until" is fulfilled. By allowing evil to remain for a time, God has raised up a volunteer army to snatch more people from the flames of hell (2 Pet. 3:9) and invite them to join His army of redemption.

Those who refuse to join Christ's army will instead suffer judgment at Christ's return. The "until" of verse 1 will not last forever. At some point, Christ will cease extending mercy to evildoers in order to stop them, once and for all, and to launch a new era of everlasting peace and righteousness. At that point, Christ will not reign in the midst of His enemies; He will reign instead of them. The problem of evil will at last be dealt with. For now, we strive with enemies, both human and non-human. Then we will have none. Tears, death, mourning, and pain will become distant memories, replaced by God's beauty, which lights our eternal home (Rev. 21:23).

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

1 A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

—"A Psalm of David": David's authorship is not incidental, for it points to the Messiah's identity. In Matt. 22:41-46, Jesus quotes v. 1 to His enemies: *"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.' He said to them, 'How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet''? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?' And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.*

—Jesus's point is that David refers to this messianic figure—the prophesied "son of David"—as "my Lord" in v. 1. In other words, the Messiah would be BOTH "son of David" and "Lord." Jesus the Messiah is not just God OR man; He is God AND man. He is David's son and David's Lord.

—"The LORD says to my Lord":

- Yahweh (God's personal name, translated "LORD") says to Adonai (Hebrew word for "Lord," which means, "Master." Contextually, it is a divine appellation).
- With New Testament hindsight, we can read this as, "The Father says to my Lord Jesus."

—Some New Testament Verses that quote Ps. 110:1 and offer insight (not comprehensive):

- Matt. 26:63-65: *But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see **the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power** and coming on the clouds of heaven.'* Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy."
 - Jesus assumes the titles, "Christ... Son of God... [and] Son of Man" in this passage, which the high priest interprets as blasphemy: a claim of deity.
 - Jesus blends Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 in His response. The former relates to the "Son of Man" coming before the Ancient of Days—God the Father—on the clouds of heaven to receive dominion over all peoples. The latter concerns the Messianic King being seated at God's right hand and reigning over all peoples.
 - Both passages depict Christ's ascension to the Father's right hand and reception of all authority.
 - When Jesus tells Caiaphas, "from now on you will see" Christ's ascension and coming on the clouds of heaven, He does not refer to His return but His ascension and heavenly reign, which His immanent crucifixion makes possible. Jesus is saying, "From now on—as a result of your sham trial and My crucifixion—you will see (and suffer) the effects of my heavenly reign."
 - Indeed, Jesus rules in the midst of His enemies. While they pronounced judgment over Him, Jesus rather decreed judgment over them. The consummation of that judgment occurs at the end of the Psalm (and of history).
- Mrk. 16:19: *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and **sat down at the right hand of God.***
 - Again, Psalm 110:1 is interpreted as a reference to Christ's ascension into heaven and session at the Father's right hand.
 - Christ's "session" is a theological term, which refers to Christ's being seated on a throne at the Father's right hand.
- Acts 2:33-36: *Being therefore **exalted at the right hand of God**, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.*"
 - The ascension is viewed as an exaltation, a glorification. It is a visual picture of the perfectly humble being most highly exalted.
 - Just as Jesus earned the right to the Spirit's power while on the earth (Luke 4:13-14), He earned this promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, through His greater obedience, obedience

- unto death by crucifixion.
 - The “promise” was not just for Jesus but “for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (2:39).
 - Before Christ came, God’s people enjoyed a more limited interaction with the Holy Spirit (Jhn. 7:39). On the cross, He paid for our sin, making us fit temples for His holy presence. In the resurrection and ascension, He triumphed over the consequences of sin, ascended above the agents of sin—Satan and His minions (cf. Eph. 1:20-23)—and received the Spirit, whom He poured out on the church.
 - This outpouring of the Spirit is called the baptism of the Spirit, which marks the new era in which we live.
 - The ascension was God’s validation of Christ’s ignominious death. It was God’s way of stating to Israel and the whole world, “this is your Lord and Christ.”
 - One day, Jesus will make His enemies a footstool, but in the meantime, He calls them to “know for certain” Christ’s identity so as to trust in Him and be saved.
- Rom. 8:34: *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is **at the right hand of God**, who indeed is interceding for us.*
 - What activity fills Jesus’ days while He sits at the Father’s right hand? Intercession. It’s the opposite of condemnation. Rather than coming before the Father to say, “Look at how evil these people are,” He is standing in the gap, to say, “You have forgiven their evil deeds, so let Us treat them accordingly.”
 - Intercession is a priestly duty. Psalm 110 will address this in v. 4.
- Eph. 1:19-23: *and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and **seated him at his right hand** in the heavenly places, 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. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*
 - Jesus’s ascension and session exalted him “far above” Satan and demonic rulers.
 - This means that we have authority in Christ over Satanic forces (cf. Eph. 2:1-6).
 - The power that exalted Christ above Satanic forces dwells in us. The problem is not our lack of power but our lack of faith in this power (Eph. 1:18-19).
 - Some passages only say that Jesus sat at the Father’s right hand, but here the Father’s action is emphasized: the Father “seated” the Son at His right hand. Jesus did not assume His seat; He received. His throne was not a party favor but a reward for His faithfulness unto death.
- Heb. 1:3-4: *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*
 - “radiance” and “imprint” convey Christ’s eternal begottenness—that is, that Jesus is “God from God” and “light from light,” to quote the Nicene Creed. In other words, He is the Second Person of the Trinity—one with God, equal to God, actually God, yet also proceeding from God.
 - To be seated “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” also teaches eternal begottenness, for it distinguishes Christ from the Father while simultaneously associating Christ with the Father, who stamps His divine “name” (1:4) on Christ.
 - Christ’s session is portrayed as a completion of a task, namely, the task of “purification for sins.” Just like a preacher or lawyer sits after finishing his talk, or just like a performer sits after finishing his act, or just like any of us sits after a long day on our feet, Jesus sits after completing His payment for sin.
- Heb. 8:1-2, 6: *Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is **seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven**, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man... But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.*
 - Like Romans 8:34, Hebrews 8 emphasizes Christ’s priestly work, which continues in heaven. Christ “obtained” this heavenly “ministry” by virtue of His life, death, and resurrection.

Before the ascension, Jesus ministered on earth; after the ascension, He ministers from heaven.

- The ministry of every other religious leader ended with his life; the ministry of Jesus had only just begun.
- Jesus performed the priestly work of “purification” (Heb. 1:3) by living a perfect life that culminated in His atoning death. After rising and ascending, His priestly ministry now continues from the Father’s right hand.
- Heb. 10:11-14: *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But 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. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*
 - So far, we have observed that Jesus sat at the Father’s right hand as vindication before His enemies (Mrk. 16:19), as exaltation above His enemies (Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:19-23), to give us the Spirit (Acts 2:33-36), to signify completion of His earthly ministry (Heb. 1:3-4), and to launch His heavenly ministry (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 8:1-6).
 - Now, the author of Hebrews cites Ps. 110:1 to show how Jesus’ session is for the purpose of “waiting”—but for how long? “from that time [His ascension] until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.” In other words, Jesus reigns amidst His enemies as a result of His ascension. These enemies include humans (Acts 2:33-36) and non-humans (Eph. 1:19-23) that He triumphed over in the ascension. The greatest enemy He triumphs over is death (1 Cor. 15:26), which occurs initially in Christ’s resurrection and consummately at His return.
 - Right now, Jesus reigns from the right hand of the Father as His co-equal human viceregent. But He reigns amidst enemies. These enemies explain why the world remains evil despite Christ’s initial victory in the first century. The victory was only initial. Wicked men and devils wreak havoc, and death still haunts us.
 - But it won’t always be this way. Christ’s initial victory in the first century portends final victory at His return. Christ is not returning to reign—He already does! Christ is returning to remove all contest.
 - In the meantime, He waits.
- Kidner: “So this single verse displays the divine Person of Christ, His power and the prospect before Him. Together with verse 4 it underlies most of the New Testament teaching on His glory as Priest-King.”

—Verses 1-3 depict Christ’s ascension and heavenly ministry; verses 4-7 portray Christ’s return and final judgment. Verses 1-3 reveal “the day of your power”—while Christ’s volunteer army (the church) pushes back darkness by the Spirit. Verses 4-7 initiate a transition toward “the day of his wrath,” when grace expires for unbelievers, and He judges them.

—Waltke says that “the day of your power” is a metonymy (figurative device) signifying holy war.

2 The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!

—Christ sits, but not on a La-Z-Boy recliner to veg out and watch football. Verse 4 will highlight how He sits to minister (as a priest), and verse 2 emphasizes how He sits to reign (as a king).

—On one hand, Christ sat down to mark the *completion* of His purifying work (Heb. 1:3-4), but on the other hand, He sits to *begin* another work. Christ paid for sins once—that work is complete. But He now reigns and ministers as the God-man—that work began at His ascension and continues until He returns. After that, He will continue to reign and minister, but no longer from heaven. Heaven and earth will be one. He will reign and minister, physically, in our midst.

—The flow of the Trinity is from the Father to the Son. This flow—“procession” is the theological word—has no beginning, as God has no beginning. The Son eternally proceeds from the Father.

—This eternal relation of origin dictates how the Father and Son relate in time. Just as the Son proceeded from the Father in eternity, the scepter—Christ’s reign as the God-man—derives from the Father who “sends forth” the scepter, and who “seated” Christ at His right hand (Eph. 1:20; cf. Ps. 110:1). In other words, the Son proceeds from the Father in eternity, and that procession is reflected in time: the Son is sent (not the Father), and His kingdom is received.

—“from Zion”: Zion typically meant Jerusalem or the temple, but it could also refer to heavenly Jerusalem or the heavenly temple, as it does here.

—"Rule in the midst of your enemies" has been explained under the cross-references in v. 1.

—Kidner: "The word used for 'rule' has a certain sternness, which suits the contrast between the enforced obedience of enemies in this verse and the glad response of volunteers in the next."

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.

—"Your people": verse 2 addresses Christ's foes; verse 3, His friends.

—Christ rules over His enemies; He rules with His friends. Verses about ruling with Christ:

- 2 Tim. 2:12: *If we endure, we will also **reign with him**.*
- Rev. 2:26-27: *The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and **he will rule them** with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.*
- Rev. 3:21: *The one who conquers, I will **grant him to sit with me on my throne**, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.*
- Rev. 5:9-10: *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a **kingdom** and priests to our God, and **they shall reign on the earth.**"*
- Rev. 20:6: ***they will reign with him** for a thousand years.*

—"offer themselves freely":

- "Your people shall be volunteers" (NKJV); "Your people will serve you willingly" (NLT); "Your people will volunteer" (CSB); "Your people will volunteer freely" (NASB).
- This verse alludes to the Song of Deborah, which celebrated Israel's victory over Sisera and the Canaanites to take possession of the land:
 - Judges 5:2: *That the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people **offered themselves willingly**, bless the Lord!*
 - Judges 5:9 (ESV): *My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel who **offered themselves willingly** among the people. Bless the Lord.*
- Just as the people of Israel offered themselves willingly to defeat wicked men and capture the Promised Land, the church offers itself willingly to defeat the powers of darkness through holiness, prayer, baptism, communion, and gospel proclamation.
- The church is Christ's volunteer army. We lay our lives down willingly just as our Lord did for us. We take up our crosses. We are living sacrifices.
- We are not mercenaries, paid to fight the Lord's battles. We don the armor of God and enter the fray because Jesus is worthy. We fight for free since Jesus freely bled for us.
- When we align ourselves with Jesus, His enemies become ours. We used to be friends with the world and enemies of God, but now that we have been reconciled to the Father through the Son, we are the world's enemies and God's friends.
- How do we fight Satan? With God's armor. How do we fight human enemies? Not by fighting human battles—with violent hands and words. No, we fight spiritually. We pray for them, bless them, forgive them, and plead with them: "Join Team Jesus!"
- When will this volunteer army take up arms?
 - The church began taking up arms (spiritually) "on the day of your power".
 - The "day of your power" aligns with the Father's pronouncement: "Sit at my right hand." When Jesus ascended, Jesus "came to power." This does not mean that He lacked power before; it's that He began His reign as the promised Son of Abraham and Son of David, the God-man, who subdued the earth in a way that Adam failed to, conquering sin with righteousness, and death with life. This power, this authority, began with the resurrection: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..." (Matt. 28:18).
 - The day of Christ's power became the day of our power because our Commander equips His army. In the ascension, Jesus poured out His Spirit (Acts 2:33-36), and He poured out gifts on His church (Eph. 4:7-16).
 - Therefore, David foresaw a future day in which "my Lord" (God the Son) would receive ruling authority from "the LORD" (God the Father), and He would reign for some stretch of time: "in the midst of your enemies" but "until" they become a "footstool." Christ's volunteer army would fight during this stretch.

- After the enemies become a footstool, we have no need to fight. Now is our time. Christ has equipped us with gifts and armor. He laid His life down and called us to the same.
- David foresaw the Spirit-empowered church as Christ's volunteer army, pushing back darkness "until" His enemies perish and only light shines.
- What will this volunteer army be like?
 - We will wear "holy garments".
 - This reminds me of Revelation 19:8, where "fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints."
 - Christ's army is a holy army, and our war is a holy war.
 - Our holiness can be understood in three ways: we are "justified"—declared righteous on the basis of faith; we are being "sanctified"—becoming righteous through continuing faith; we will be "glorified"—perfected in righteousness, when Jesus returns to replace our body of sin with a body like His (Rom. 7:24-25; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).
 - We will come "from the womb of the morning":
 - This verse speaks to our source.
 - The language is figurative. Both "womb" and "morning" speak of a new beginning. Christ's army breaks on the scene like a baby from the womb and like morning from night. The church appeared suddenly. One moment, the shepherd had been struck and the sheep scattered; the next moment, Christ poured out from the Father's right hand the Spirit of God, and the church—Christ's volunteer army—was born.
 - Note: I do not place too sharp a distinction between Israel and the church. There is a sense in which Israel could be called "church" (Acts 7:38; Heb. 12:23) and the church could be called "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). Despite this unity between Israel and the church, I think we can still talk about a church being born on Pentecost because the Spirit created a multi-ethnic entity previously unimagined (Eph. 3:5-6).
 - "from the womb of the morning" possibly, if not probably, refers to Christ's resurrection, which occurred at the dawn of a new day—literally and figuratively. The Apostle John presents the resurrection as the eighth "sign" of His divine Sonship. Eight is the number of new beginnings. Furthermore, Jesus rose on Sunday, "the first day of the week." Christ initiated a "new day" on the dawn of resurrection Sunday.
 - That "new day" was the "day of your power."
 - In sum, Christ's volunteer army would burst on the scene out of a dark night where evil seemed to hold the upper hand. The dawn of Christ's resurrection initiated a new day, a holy war, in which forces of light and righteousness would push back darkness and evil.
 - We will cover the earth like "dew":
 - "Your young men will come to you like dew from the morning womb" (NIV); "Your youth are to you as the dew" (NASB).
 - The Hebrew is uncertain, but undoubtedly David intended to link "morning" and "dew" since dew appears in the morning.
 - This army that breaks onto the scene after Easter morning will cover the earth like a blanket of dew. Christ's army will not be limited to Palestine; it will envelop the whole planet; it will include every nation.
 - Dew appears mysteriously. Nobody discerns its appearing. The kingdom of God is like that, which Jesus illustrated with the parable about leaven spreading throughout the dough—symbolically, the earth. The kingdom of God mysteriously envelops every nation.
 - Furthermore, "dew" renews the earth, supplying moisture, regulating temperature, and nourishing vegetation with nutrients and minerals. Likewise, Christ's army does not destroy life but renews it.
 - Christ exhibits His reign with a different sort of army. We're an army that renews the planet and its people rather than destroying both like conventional armies. In our wake is life, not death.

- Waltke: "from the womb" pictures the dawn of the final king's rule as giving birth to this dedicated army. "Of the dawn" signals dispelling the night in which people weep and presages the beginning of hope and joy in human experience (Ps. 30:5). This army, as copious as morning dew, mysteriously appearing and glittering on every blade and leaf, refreshes a languishing earth... In sum, God mysteriously raises this holy army to refresh the earth with justice and love."
- Kidner remarks on the dew symbolizing "a splendid army suddenly and silently mobilized."

4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

5 The Lord is at your right hand

—I include the beginning of verse 5 in this section because I think it actually goes with verse 4. Verses 4-5a are in the second person, but David shifts to the third person in 5b-7. Furthermore, the statement about the "right hand" occurs in both 1 and 5a, making these two opening statements match. See "STRUCTURE" above.

—"sworn... not change his mind":

- The author of Hebrews makes much of this oath. The section is worth quoting in full: **6:13** *For when God made a **promise** to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to **swear**, he **swore by himself**, 14 saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." 15 And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the **promise**. 16 For people **swear** by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an **oath is final for confirmation**. 17 So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the **promise** the unchangeable character of his purpose, he **guaranteed it with an oath**, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. 7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. 3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. 4 See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! 5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. 8 In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. 9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, 10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him. 11 Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. 15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." 18 For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. 20 **And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, 21 but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'**" 22 **This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.** 23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for*

them. 26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. 28 For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, **but the word of the oath**, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

- This section of Hebrews contrasts “the word of the oath” with “the law” (7:27). The latter appointed imperfect men who are prevented by death (and implicitly, the sin that caused it, see Heb. 7:27 and Gen. 2:17) from serving as priests forever. In contrast, the “oath”—a reference to Psalm 110:4 that God would raise up a Melchizedekian priest-king—confirms our new and better covenant, mediated by a sinless priest-king who perpetually ministers on our behalf “by the power of an indestructible life” (7:16).
- In other words, the old covenant law appointed sinning mortals to serve as priests throughout their brief lives, but the new covenant “oath” appoints the perfect Son of God to serve as a priest forever by the power of His indestructible life.
- The author of Hebrews compares the “oath” of Ps. 110:4 with God’s promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:17 (“Surely I will bless you and multiply you”). Whereas people swear by something greater than themselves, God swears by His own name, since there is none greater (6:13-14). God intends by His oath (in Ps. 110:4) to offer “confirmation” (Heb. 6:16) that His promise is “guaranteed” (6:17) and can provide “refuge” (6:18) to suffering souls that wait like Abraham for the promise.
- Since Jesus is better and His covenant is better, we should not expect a “greater revelation” than what has been. What revelation could surpass Jesus? What promise could eclipse the one sealed with His blood?
- It’s important to emphasize the superior nature of what we have in Jesus because false teachers claim “progressive revelation” continued beyond Jesus. Progressive revelation is real; God revealed Himself progressively to the patriarchs, to Moses, to judges, prophets, priests, and kings. Each revelation “defogged the window” progressively, but we can’t get clearer than Jesus. People who claim that God has recently revealed a new sexual ethic or a new criteria for entering eternal bliss have moved the goalpost. They have departed from orthodoxy.
- The passage from Hebrews contains much more valuable insight regarding Jesus’s association with Melchizedek, which I comment on below.
- Kidner: “This may be a glance at the promise which had to be withdrawn from Eli (1 Sam. 2:30). THIS priest will never abuse his office, and this priesthood is both older and more perfect (as the New Testament will show) than that of the whole house of Levi.”

—“after the order of Melchizedek”:

- Melchizedek was a mysterious figure who appeared in Genesis 14—a chapter about warring kings. The word “king” appears thirty times in that chapter because the author of Genesis is answering the question: who rules the world? In a scene that has repeated itself since time immemorial, five kings battled four kings. Initially, the four kings won and took the spoil—including Abraham’s (at the time he was called Abram) nephew Lot—but Abe and his ninja army of 318 men intervened to rescue Lot and rout the drunken five kings who had celebrated too soon. Readers of this story should instantly think of turf battles in our own day: Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Gaza—the list goes on. The military industrial complex is not new. Empires rise and fall, but who rules them all?
- Enter: Melchizedek. After Abram rescued Lot and reversed the outcome of fallen empires, a mysterious priest-king enters the scene. His presence clarifies that neither the five kings nor the four truly ruled the earth. Not even Abraham did, for he was met by one greater. Where did this king and priest of Yahweh come from? We do not know—that is the point. The author of Hebrews comments that Melchizedek’s mysterious origin points us to the Son of God: “*He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever*” (Heb. 7:3). The priest-king’s presence reveals that Yahweh rules the world; He alone determines which empires rise and fall; His empire—better, His kingdom—will last forever.
- Just like Melchizedek’s origin was mysterious, Jesus the Son of God derived from heaven and eternity, which no one can fathom; just like “Melchizedek” means king of righteousness, Jesus is our perfectly righteous king; just like Melchizedek ruled over Salem—meaning peace, and referencing Jerusalem—Jesus is the King of Peace who rules from heavenly Jerusalem and will one day reign from the New Jerusalem; just as Melchizedek blessed Abram, Jesus blesses us with

Abram's blessing—the gospel; just as Melchizedek brought bread and wine to Abram, Jesus brings us the bread and wine of His body and blood; just as Melchizedek is both priest and king, Jesus likewise combines these offices; just as Melchizedek's priesthood did not derive from Levi and was therefore not grounded in the Law, neither was Jesus, whose covenant is superior.

—“the LORD is at your right hand”:

- In verse 1, the LORD (God the Father) seated the Lord (God the Son) at His right hand. Now, in verse 4, the LORD (God the Father) is at the Lord's (God the Son's) right hand.
- In the first case (v. 1), the Father is conferring a position of authority upon the Son based on the Son's redemptive work. The “right hand” spoke of rulership.
- In the second case (v. 4), the Father is promising His presence, which guarantees the culmination of the Son's redemptive work. The “right hand” spoke of presence.
- We should not think of this literally, as though the Father and Son are dancing the “do-si-do” in heaven. For one, the Father is not corporeal but spiritual. The Son, who has a physical body, could not possibly dance with the Father. Two, the language is symbolic. It means that the Father has conferred authority and promised His presence to the Son.
- Could the Father have not promised to be at the Son's left hand? Or to guard His back? Or to go out before Him?
 - By promising to be at the Son's right hand, it creates a poetic parallel to verse 1. The parallel communicates, “The Father has conferred authority on you (v. 1), and He will strengthen you to fulfill what You decree by that authority (v. 4).”
 - To provide an analogy, have you ever been granted authority but then hung out to dry? Perhaps you were assigned a task and told you had authority to fulfill it, but then your supervisor denied ever assigning you the task, or abandoned you when things got tough, or micromanaged you to such a degree that you never truly had authority. God is saying, “I won't do those things.” Rather, God the Father entrusted authority to God the Son, and He will grant Him everything He needs to fulfill His authoritative intent.
 - Note that within what we call “the ontological Trinity” (God's essence), there is only one will because God is one. We don't have a Trinity at war with itself, with multiple wills, because to have separate wills is to be three separate entities. It is tri-theism. This is how the church fathers viewed it.
 - Within what we call “the economic Trinity” (God's roles/functions in relation to creation, redemption, etc.), God the Son submits to God the Father because He took on humanity, including a human will, which He submitted to the Father. Therefore, Christ's divine will is eternally one with will of the Father and the Spirit, since God is one, and His will is one. However, Christ's human will is distinct from His divine will. His human will is therefore also distinct from the will of the Father and the Spirit. Christ has and always will submit His human will to the divine will.
 - I know that's a lot. I say this because my analogy about a “supervisor” might suggest to some that Christ has eternally submitted His will to the Father, implying two separate wills and two separate gods. I don't believe that, though. I align with church history on this matter. For more, consult Remnant Radio episodes on the Trinity or Matthew Barrett's book, *Simply Trinity*.

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 (Lit. “smash the heads”) over the wide earth.

—The first three verses describe the period extending from Christ's ascension to Christ's return, when God makes His enemies a footstool. From that position, Christ reigns—through His church, by the Spirit.

—After the pivot in vv. 4-5a, the verses turn to Christ's return. Here, at last, Christ's enemies become His footstool. He returns to judge the earth. This occurs at Armageddon.

—“kings... chiefs”:

- This emphasis on “kings” continues in Revelation, where the “kings of the earth” gather against Christ and His church at Armageddon. I disagree with the common popular notion that Armageddon describes a final bloodbath in a field north of Jerusalem between Jews and Gentiles. This “last battle” is a global persecution against the church where Christ appears at the final moment to rescue us and destroy our enemies.
- Leon Morris: Armageddon is “a symbol for the final overthrow of all the forces of evil by an almighty God.”

- The presence of “kings” and “chiefs” emphasizes the political nature of Armageddon. Governments will conspire to decree a global massacre. Therefore, Christ directs His “wrath” first toward leaders of nations.
- Ultimately, it won’t just be wicked leaders but all who oppose Christ who suffer in this judgment. He will exhibit wrath “among the nations, filling them with corpses.” The “wide earth” will not escape the wrath of the Lamb.

—“day of his wrath”: presently, we live in “the day of your power” (v. 3), where Christ’s Spirit-empowered volunteer army offers terms of surrender to Christ’s enemies (namely, repentance). Christ reigns over all, but He reigns in the midst of His enemies, extending grace for a season. Eventually, however, the day of His power will give way to the day of His wrath. Terms of surrender will no longer be offered. Gospel invitations will no longer be proclaimed.

—“shatter chiefs” (or “smash heads”): Waltke sees a potential allusion to Genesis 3:15, where offspring of the woman (Jesus) crushes the head of the serpent and his offspring.

7 He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore, he will lift up his head.

—“drink from the brook”:

- On the face of it, this depicts the messianic warrior pursuing His enemies yet pausing to refresh Himself. While enemies flee erratically, the messianic warrior possess control of His faculties. The battle is in His hands. Furthermore, He will not tire. Implicitly, He will refresh Himself to complete the victory.
- We should not interpret this literally, as though Jesus needs a breather to complete His judgment of the wicked. It simply means that He is in control, and He will finish the task.
- On a deeper level, this verse seems to allude to the story of Gideon. God whittled down Gideon’s army from 32,000 volunteers to 300. The first reduction went from 32,000 to 10,000 when Gideon eliminated every scared soldier. The second reduction went from 10,000 to 300 when Gideon eliminated those who drank water from the brook by drinking it like a dog. He kept those who lapped with their hands, implying an ever-readiness to spot an enemy, even while drinking.
- The connection between drinking from the brook and lifting the head suggests an allusion to Gideon’s army. If I’m correct, this allusion shows how Jesus is our Better Gideon. He is ever-ready to take out the enemy, and He will win.

—“therefore, he will lift up his head”:

- “therefore” means that lifting up the head will occur as a result of drinking from the brook. The messianic warrior will refresh himself and lift his head in victory.
- The lifting of the messiah’s head in victory contrasts with smashing heads in battle (v. 5). The word “chiefs” is literally translated “heads.” Like in English, a “head” can refer either to what rests atop our neck or to one who presides over others.

—The victory of verse 7 began with the decree of verse 1. The elimination of evil from the earth occurred because Jesus ascended to the Father’s right hand, where He reigns as the God-man and ministers as our perfect High Priest.