

Psalms: God's Worship & Prayer Guide

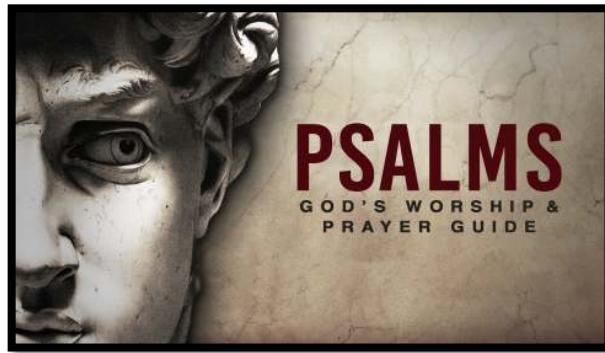
The Marvelous Messiah

Psalm 110

Written By

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Last Thursday one of our garage door mechanisms malfunctioned so I called a door company to come and look at it. When the two men arrived in their work truck, I met them out in the street and introduced myself. I quickly surmised based on our conversation that the one man was the main worker responsible for training the newer man.

Striking up a conversation with the trainee, I asked him where he went to school. He replied, "I received a degree in anthropology from the University of Virginia."

"That's great," I said. "What are your plans with your degree?"

"I don't know yet, but in the meantime I needed a job so this is it for now," he answered.

I sought to encourage him by saying, "I'm glad to see a young man who knows the value and importance of hard work."

He smiled.

Looking at his arms I noticed several tats. On the inside of his right forearm as a large hourglass with some words. "Hey, could you explain your tats to me?" I posited.

"Sure, man" he replied. "The wording of the hour glass reminds me that I shouldn't waste my time because each one of us is only given so much time."

"I agree," I said. "God gives each one of us just so much time and it is very important how we use that time."

He nodded his head in agreement.

"What's that tat on the outside of your forearm?" I queried.

"That's my mother's name. I put it there because she means so much to me," he offered.

"Wow, that's amazing. You must respect and love her very much," I stated.

Again, he agreed and we all headed into the garage. I picked up where I had left off cleaning up from my kitchen remodel, and they started working on the door. Somewhere in the

conversation one of them asked me where I worked. Once they found out I was a pastor, the conversation headed in a completely different direction.

With the trainer up on a ladder working with some jumbled cabling, the trainee said, "Pastor, I just want to confess to you that I really do need to get back to church. Could I come to your church? Where is it? When are the services?"

In the background I heard the trainer say as he worked with the wiring, "Yeah, I agree. I, too, need to get back to church."

After the trainer finished speaking, I answered the trainee, "Sure, you are most welcome to attend," I commented. After I answered his questions about location and time, he looked at me and said, "I just want to tell you that I am really afraid of death and dying."

"Oh, you don't need to be afraid of death and dying. Why? Because Jesus came to defeat sin and death so that when we, as repentant sinners, place our faith in His person and work, He grants us eternal forgiveness and life. At the moment of death, we merely walk right into His amazing presence. What could be fearful about that?" I stated.

Isn't it interesting how quickly God can bring witnessing opportunities your way? It's equally interesting how spiritually hungry and open some are to the gospel. What this young man lacked was a faith relationship with the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, David talks about prophetically in Psalm 110, verses 1 through 3. He knows he won't see Him when He comes as the King because there is no faith relationship. Additionally, he is fearful of death because he knows he is on his own should he die. Again, the answer which will quell his fear is found in the role of Jesus as the saint's High Priest as foretold in Psalm 110, verses 4 through 7. When Jesus is your priestly representative before the Father, there is no fear of mortality because He shares His eternal priesthood with you.

Should fear of your mortality keep you up in the middle of the night, should it cause you great pause when you have some private downtime, I think it is time you took a hard, honest look at the prophecy of Christ's roles as showcased in this most famous Psalm.

What Are The Roles Of The Messiah? (Psalm 110)

He's The True King (Psalm 110:1-3)

As I stated in our last study, Jesus used this text to validate the fact He was, in fact, the long-awaited eternal and divine King of Kings from the line of David. This text also teaches how the King will one-day return to definitively judge the wicked and establish His glorious Davidic empire based out of Zion, or Jerusalem (v. 2). Jesus naturally told us this much in His Olivet Discourse in Matthew chapters 24 through 25 where He carefully laid out what will occur prior to, at, and after His magnificent arrival to reclaim what man lost in his fall from grace in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3).

Ostensibly, all of this leads to a key life question: Is Jesus your King? If so, you should have no fear of the future for He holds you in His powerful hands and He will make sure you rule and reign with Him as He promised: "*And Thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth,*" Rev. 5:10; "*Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand*

years," (Rev. 20:6). If Christ is not your king, then a follow-up question is in order, "What is keeping you from asking Him to be your eternal king?"

Turning from the concept of divine and eternal kingship of the Messiah in verses 1 through 3, in verses 4 through 7 David heads in a completely different and very unexpected theological direction. Here he, by way of divine inspiration, speaks prophetically about a second major role of the Messiah:

He's The True Priest (Psalm 110:4-7)

First, let us read these jaw-dropping prophetic verses, and then we will swing around to analyze them further:

⁴ The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." ⁵ The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. ⁶ He will judge among the nations, He will fill *them* with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. ⁷ He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up *His* head.

Writing, as I've said, close to one thousand years prior to the birth of the Messiah in 5 B.C., David shockingly states that the coming Messiah will not just be the Davidic King of Kings, but He will fill a role no king of Israel ever retained: He would be THE High Priest to end all High Priests in Israel. The Torah never wedded the roles of the king and the priest. The High Priest (or priests) came strictly from the order of Aaron within the family genealogical line of Levi, while the rightful kings originated strictly from the line of Judah. Never did God mandate that one man could fulfill both roles. Years later when King Uzziah attempted to do this based on his own arrogance, the priests warned him of his over-reach (which is what prideful politicians are typically guilty of), and then God immediately struck him with leprosy on his forehead (2 Chron. 26:16-23). God never removed his leprosy, and eventually he died with it still disfiguring his body as a reminder of his former disobedience.

However, here in Psalm 110, verse 4, the Spirit prophesied through the pen of David that the Heavenly Father, the LORD, Yahweh, swore that the Davidic Messiah would be a High Priest but of the order of Melchizedek. Amazing. The role of King and Priest would be wedded into one man, according to the Father, yet the priesthood would NOT be of the Aaronic line. All of this theological change on God's part is worth some additional digging.

Prophesying some five hundred years after David wrote Psalm 110, Zechariah (519-480 B.C.)

¹⁰ Take *an offering* from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon. ¹¹ And take silver and gold, make an *ornate* crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. ¹² Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD (Zech. 6).

¹³ Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices (Zech. 6).

Here, the Spirit of God speaking through Zechariah, informed ancient Israel that one day the Messiah would come and He would weld the roles of Davidic King and High Priest together into one, just as David had prophesied. Placing a crown on the head of the High Priest, Joshua, was but a typological preview of what would be reality when the Messiah arrived in time and space. This man, or should we say, God-man (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; John 8:58; Col. 1:16-17; 2:1-9), will come on the world scene like an unassuming shoot/branch from the stump of the Davidic empire/tree (Jer. 23:5; 33:15-17), which the Babylonians had ruthlessly cut down in 586 B.C. Eventually, as Zechariah notes, this King/Priest will build the final earthly temple of the LORD, the Millennial temple as described in detail in Ezekiel 40 through 48. This is all so emphatic in the Hebrew text as the author opens with the uncanny personal pronoun, “he,” wedded to a *waw*, making it quite disjunctive:

יְהוָה אֲתִיךְלֵב יְהֻנָּה (Zech. 6:13)

All of this, of course, will transpire after the seven-year tribulation (Dan. 9:24-27; Rev. 4-19), which will culminate with the coming of the messianic king/priest whose goal will be to deal with evil and reward His saints so He can, and will, erect His promised kingdom. We will circle back to this motif when we consider the theological import of Psalm 110, verses 5 through 7 in a moment. But for now, we focus on the prophetic fact that the Messiah would be the eternal king and the priest, and as David states, his priesthood would be directly tied to Melchizedek. This, quite understandably, leads to several logical questions.

Who is Melchizedek? His name, **מֶלֶךְ־צֶדֶק**, in Hebrew is composed of two words: *melech*, which means *king*, and *zedek*, which means *righteous*. Combined we get the meaning of “king of righteousness.” Melchizedek first appears in biblical history as the mysterious Jebusite priest who enjoyed regal authority over Salem, or ancient Jerusalem (Gen. 14). Interestingly enough, Abraham paid ties to him from his war booty secured from the enemies he routed when he rescued Lot from their clutches. Obviously, Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation, recognized the regal, priestly role of this man of God who, in a polytheistic culture, still worshipped the one true God, Yahweh.

Why is Melchizedek important? As Dr. Allen Ross, my former Hebrew professor at Dallas Theological Seminary states,

Because he was both a king and a priest, and because he was reigning in old Jerusalem, he made the perfect prophetic type of the Messiah, whom the prophets declared would be a king and a priest (see Zech. 3 and 6).¹

¹ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150): Commentary*, vol. 3, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2016), 353.

Aaron's line could have never fulfilled this role. Melchizedek was, therefore, perfectly positioned and suited to represent the Messiah's new role as king and priest, something the Aaronic line was never designed to accomplish.

All of this emphasis on the Melchizedekian priesthood and kingship in Psalm 110 and Zechariah 3 and 6 is fulfilled in the person of Jesus, the Christ, as it clearly argued and proved in Hebrews chapter 7. In chapter 5, verse 11, the author said he would love to talk and teach about the priesthood of Melchizedek, but he couldn't straightaway because of the spiritual immaturity and sinful activity of the saints in question. After he addressed the danger of willful sin and carnal living in the lives of saints in chapter 6, the author turns in chapter 7 to address the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek, especially as it relates to the Messiah, Jesus.

Jesus, The Ultimate High Priest: Hebrews 7		
The Superiority of Melchizedek's Priesthood vv. 1-10	The Inferiority of the Levitical Priesthood vv. 11-22	The Superiority of Christ's New Priesthood vv. 23-28
ASSETS	LIABILITIES	ASSETS
Both King & Priest v. 1	Temporal access v. 11	Perpetual life Perpetual life vv. 23-24 vv. 23-24
A "timeless" man v. 3	Transitory vv. 12-14	Perpetual forgiveness v. 25
Received tithes vv. 4-10	Earthly/temporal vv. 15-19	Perfect life v. 26
	Lacked divine oath vv. 20-22	Perfect sacrifice vv. 27-28

greatness of the new priest, Jesus (vv. 23-28). We will look at them in the order presented, highlighting the superiority of Jesus as our Melchizedekian priest.

And let me ask you a personal question: Why would you want something which is inferior? Don't we, by definition, gravitate toward the superior in everything else, so why would you want anything/anyone less than Jesus? When I moved into my house thirteen years ago, the former owners left me a bottle of cleaner I had never seen before. I remember the first time I used it. I tried all of my cleaners to clean black weather stains off of my gutters, and nothing worked. Then I pulled out this bottle, poured it on a cloth, and started wiping. Presto! Instantly all of the dirty discoloration vanished. That's the work of Jesus as our High Priest. Nothing or no one matches His power as our High Priest to clean us up and make us acceptable to the Father.

The author of Hebrews develops the superiority of our Lord in this fashion. Melchizedek's priesthood is superior to that of Aaron insofar as he was both king and priest (vv. 1-2), he was timeless or eternal in the sense he had (recorded) father or mother or even a known genealogy (v. 3), and Levi actually paid tithes to him when Abraham, Levi's forefather, gave this unusual king/priest tithes to the living God from the spoils of a hard fought battle (vv. 4-10). All of this foundational teaching clearly shows how Melchizedek's ancient and eternal priesthood, by definition, stood head and shoulders above the temporal priesthood of Aaron.

The Aaronic priesthood was inferior because of four limitations not known or possessed by the Melchizedekian. First, it provided incomplete access to God (v. 11).

Granted, we do not have the time to delve into the intricacies of the author's argument here; hence, permit me the luxury of summation. Structurally, the passage moves in three segments: (1) The greatness of Melchizedek (vv. 1-10), (2) the need for a new priesthood (vv. 11-22), and (3) the

¹¹ Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? (Heb. 7).

Second, it was transitory (vv. 12-14).

¹² For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. ¹³ For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests (Heb. 7).

The argument here is this: The Levitical priesthood, based on the Mosaic Law, was built on temporal men who officiated at a sacrificial altar. Since the new priest comes from an eternal priestly line *and* from the line of Judah (a non-priestly line) and He, too, is eternal, a divine change is warranted, a change which does away with the former (the inferior) to make way for the latter (the superior).

Third, it was earthly and temporal (vv. 15-19):

¹⁵ And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become *such* not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is witnessed of *Him*, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸ For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God (Heb. 7).

Of course, the "other priest," who possesses an indestructible, eternal life is none other than Jesus. His priesthood is heavenly and eternal, which is what David prophesied in Psalm 110, and which was something the Aaronic could *never* achieve.

Fourth, the new High Priest had a divine oath guaranteeing His new office, which is something the old priesthood did not possess.

²⁰ And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath ²¹ (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever' "); ²² so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant (Heb. 7).

Jesus, as the new king/priest had the Father's inexorable promise that He would be THE final and eternal High Priest over a new order, and the quote from Psalm 110 underscores this point.

The third movement/argument of this passage, viz, vv. 23 through 28 highlights the superiority of Christ's priesthood over against that of the Aaronic line. Four arguments support the overall point.

First, Jesus serves as our High Priest before the Father because death has no hold on Him (vv. 23-24).

²³ And the *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, ²⁴ but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

Are you not thankful for the truth of these verses? He is always there in the heavenlies to represent you, as His child, before the Father.

Second, Jesus offers eternal forgiveness, not temporal (v. 25):

²⁵ Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

This is what the trainee lacked. He had not drawn near to God through faith in Christ, the High Priest. If he ever does this, he will be saved "forever" by the High Priest who is capable and willing to save him. That in and of itself makes the fear of death disappear like the morning dew before the rays of the sun. Have you drawn near to God through faith in Jesus? That is THE question of all questions.

Third, Jesus, as the God-man, lived a perfect and holy life, making Him the perfect priest . . . again, this was a level of spirituality that no mere human Aaronic priest could ever achieve (vv. 26-27):

²⁶ For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, like those high priests,

The divine Son, who came in the eternal order of Melchizedek, could not have been more qualified to fulfill this lofty goal.

Fourth, Jesus was not only the King and the Priest, but He was also the sacrifice to end all sacrifices (vv. 27b-28). Once more, no Aaronic priest could ever fulfill this divine role as prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53 of his magnificent book:

. . . to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. ²⁸ For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever (Heb. 7).

The Aaronic priests merely offered sacrificial animals constantly for the sins of the people and their sin. Jesus, conversely, had no sin, making Him the perfect, final, and superior sacrifice for the sins of sinners like you and me. All of this makes Him the High Priest to end all High Priests for He, more than any other, is equipped to not only forgive your sin forever when you draw near

unto Him faith (John 5:24-25), but He always lives to be your representative with the Holy Father. What a privilege we possess because of the perfect way He held up under His suffering so He could be our King, our Priest, and our Sacrifice.

In light of all of this, I am compelled to ask you again point blank: Is Jesus your King? Is Jesus your High Priest? Is Jesus your sin Sacrifice? The day you bow before Him is the day He washes your soul clean of its sin as He makes you His son or His daughter. Let not anything or anyone keep you from coming to Him in faith.

Why do I say this most firmly? Because of what is taught in the ensuing verses. They stand as a warning and a wake-up call to the lost:

⁵ The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.

⁶ He will judge among the nations, He will fill *them* with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. ⁷ He will drink from the brook by the wayside;

Therefore He will lift up *His* head. (Ps. 110).

Christ's first coming showcased Him as a suffering, humble servant, a real sacrificial lamb as prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 42:1-2; 53:1ff). At His Second Coming, which is at the end of the seven-year tribulation, He comes as the King of Kings and the Holy High Priest who is ready and willing to deal definitively with sin, sinners, and those who have rejected Him. Revelation 19 gives us a taste of what this ominous, awe-inspiring moment in history will be like:



¹¹ And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it *is* called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹² And His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *upon* Him which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ And *He* is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." ¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice,

saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God;¹⁸ in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army.²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Rev. 19).

I don't know about you, but I'd rather be riding behind Jesus as a spiritual victor, than to be standing in front of Him as a recipient of His pent up wrath against wickedness (Rom. 2:1-5). Where you will be on that day depends on what you do with the Jesus as the King and Jesus as the High Priest. I counsel you to make the right decision on this one.

I'd also counsel you to not be deceived in being drawn toward anyone or anything which promises you salvation but can't deliver. Here's a picture of my mailbox, surrounded by my favorite four o'clock flowers. Now, let's take a closer look. What do you see? At first blush, all the leaves look like four o'clock. If that was your conclusion, you'd be quite wrong. Let me highlight in the lower right quadrant the weed which grows among my favorite flowers which looks almost exactly like them, but it is not them. It's a weed and it produces no beautiful flowers. It's just a cheap, deceptive substitute for the real deal.



I don't know what's going on in your life right now, I don't know what belief religious system you've embraced, maybe because your parents embraced it, but if it has nothing to do with Jesus as the King and Jesus as the High Priest, then you had better fear death like the trainee, Scott.

Wise people pull the weed out of their life and enjoy the true flower of faith which is planted and rooted in the rich soil of the Savior.



Weeds amongst 4 o'clock flowers

