

PSALM 110

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 110

A Psalm of David.

This psalm was written by David, as the title shows, and which is confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ, (^{<42B>}Matthew 22:43) and by the Apostle Peter, (^{<42B>}Acts 2:34) and was not written by anyone of the singers concerning him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; nor by Melchizedek, nor by Eliezer the servant of Abraham, concerning him, as Jarchi and others: for the former could not call Abraham his lord, since he was greater than he, (^{<30B>}Hebrews 7:7) and though the latter might, yet he could not assign his master a place at the right hand of God; nor say he was a priest after the order of Melchizedek: and as it was written by David, it could not be concerning himself, as the Targum, but some other; not of Hezekiah, to whom some of the Jews applied it, as Tertullian ^{f1567} affirms; but of the Messiah, as is clear from the quotation by Christ, (^{<42B>}Matthew 22:43,44) and from the references to it by the apostle, (^{<42B>}Acts 2:34 ^{<45B>}1 Corinthians 15:25 ^{<30B>}Hebrews 1:13). And that this was the general sense of the ancient Jewish church is manifest from the silence of the Pharisees, when a passage out of it was objected to them by our Lord concerning the Messiah; and is the sense that some of the ancient Jews give of it; says R. Joden ^{f1568},

“God will make the King Messiah sit at his right hand, etc:”

and the same is said by others ^{f1569}; and it is likewise owned by some of the more modern ^{f1570} ones; and we Christians can have no doubt about it. The psalm is only applicable to Christ, and cannot be accommodated to any other; no, not to David as a type, as some psalms concerning him may.

Ver. 1. *The Lord said unto my Lord*, etc.] The Targum is, “the Lord said in his Word.”

Galatinus ^{f1571} says the true Targum of Jonathan has it,

“the Lord said to his Word;”

and produces an authority for it. These are the words of Jehovah the Father to his Son the Messiah; the “Adon”, or Lord, spoken of in (^{<381>}Isaiah 6:1 ^{<381>}Malachi 3:1), the one Lord Jesus, and only Potentate; the Lord of all, the Lord of David, and of every believer; not by right of creation only, as of all mankind; but by redemption, having bought them; and by right of marriage, having espoused them; and by their own consent, they owning him to be their Lord. The words said to him by Jehovah, as follow, were said in his mind, in his eternal purpose and decree; which he, lying in his bosom, was privy, when he foreordained him to be the Redeemer; and in the council and covenant of peace, when he promised him this glory as the reward of his sufferings; and in the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak as of the sufferings of Christ, so of the glory that should follow; and when the fact was done, when, after his death, resurrection, ascension, and entrance into heaven, he was placed, as follows:

Sit thou at my right hand; of power and majesty; expressive of the honour done to Christ, and the glory put on him in the human nature, such as angels nor any creature ever had, (^{<3813>}Hebrews 1:13), it being always accounted honourable to sit at the right hand of great personages, (^{<1129>}1 Kings 2:19 ^{<981>}Psalms 45:9 ^{<4121>}Matthew 20:21), and also of rule, and power, and authority; being upon the same throne with his Father, exercising the same government over angels and men; “sitting” is explained by “reigning” in (^{<465>}1 Corinthians 15:25). It also denotes having done his work, and to satisfaction; and therefore is set down, being entered into his rest, and having ceased from his work and labour, enjoying the presence of his divine Father; in which is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore: and it also signifies the continuance of regal honour and power; he sits and continues a King as well as a Priest for ever.

Until I make thine enemies thy footstool; Christ has his enemies; all the enemies of his people are his; some are overcome already by him, as sin, Satan, and the world; and the Jews, his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them, have been destroyed: but as yet all things are not put under his feet, which will be; as antichrist, and the kings of the earth that are with him, who will be overcome by him; the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast into the lake of fire; where also the old serpent, the devil, after he has been bound and loosed, will be cast likewise; and when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed; till that time comes, Christ reigns and will reign, and afterwards too, even to all eternity. The allusion is to

the custom of conquerors treading upon the necks of the conquered; (see ~~604~~ Joshua 10:24).

Ver. 2. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion,* etc.] His royal and powerful sceptre, called the sceptre of righteousness, (~~486~~ Psalm 45:6) and is no other than the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation; and which is mighty through him, for the reducing souls to the obedience of Christ; when it comes with power, and works effectually. This was first preached in Zion, or Jerusalem, and went out from thence into all parts of the world; the first ministers of it had their commission there, and were sent from thence to publish it all over the world; (see ~~208~~ Isaiah 2:3 ~~247~~ Luke 24:47 ~~404~~ Acts 1:4 8:4), by means of which the kingdom of Christ was set up and spread in the world; with this rod and sceptre in his hand, he went forth with his ministers, conquering and to conquer, (~~442~~ Revelation 6:2). The Jews ^{f1572} own this rod to be a rod in the hand of the Messiah, which they seem to understand literally; and have a fabulous notion of its being the same that Jacob, Judah, Moses, Aaron, David, and so every king of Judah, had, down to the destruction of the temple: the Targum in the king's Bible is,

“the Word of the Lord shall send, etc.”

the essential Word.

Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies; or, “thou shalt rule”, as the Targum and Arabic version; in the hearts of those who, in their unregenerate state, are enemies: but the arrows of his word being sharp in them, they are brought to submit to him; the everlasting doors are caused to open; he enters in, takes possession of their hearts, and rules there. Or this may be understood of his church in the world, which is his kingdom, and lies surrounded with enemies on all hands; but, in spite of them, and all their opposition, he will support his kingdom and interest.

Ver. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of that power.* etc.] Or, in the day of thine army ^{f1573}. When thou musterest thy forces, sendest forth thy generals, the apostles and ministers of the word, in the first times of the Gospel; when Christ went forth working with them, and their ministry was attended with signs, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; and which was a day of great power indeed, when wonderful things were wrought; the god of this world was cast out, the Heathen oracles ceased, their idols were abolished, and their temples desolate; and Christianity prevailed

everywhere. Or this may respect the whole Gospel dispensation, the day of salvation, which now is and will be as long as the world is; and the doctrine of it is daily the power and wisdom of God to them that are saved. Or rather this signifies the set time of love and life to every particular soul at conversion; which is a day for light, and a day of power; when the exceeding greatness of the power of God is put forth in the regeneration of them: and the people that were given to Christ by his Father, in the covenant of grace, and who, while in a state of nature, are rebellious and unwilling, are made willing to be saved by Christ, and him only; to serve him in every religious duty and ordinance; to part with their sins and sinful companions, and with their own righteousness; to suffer the loss of all things for him; to deny themselves, and take up the cross and follow him: and when they become freewill offerings to him, as the word ^{f1574} signifies; not only willingly offer up their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, but themselves, souls and bodies, to him; as well as enter volunteers ^{f1575} into his service, and cheerfully fight his battles, under him, the Captain of their salvation; being assured of victory, and certain of the crown of life and glory, when they have fought the good fight, and finished their course. The allusion seems to be to an army of volunteers, such as described by Cicero ^{f1576}, who willingly offered themselves through their ardour for liberty.

In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: this does not design the place where these willing subjects of Christ should appear; either in Zion, beautiful for situation; or in Jerusalem, the holy city, compact together; or in the temple, the sanctuary, in which strength and beauty are said to be; or in the church, the perfection of beauty: but the habit or dress in which they should appear, even in the beautiful garment of Christ's righteousness and holiness; the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; the best robe, the wedding garment; gold of Ophir, raiment of needlework; and which is upon all them that believe: as also the several beautiful graces of the Spirit; the beauty of internal holiness, by which saints are all glorious within; and holiness is the beauty and glory of God himself, of angels and glorified saints. This, though imperfect now, is the new man put on as a garment; and is true holiness, and very ornamental. The phrase, "from the womb of the morning", either stands in connection with "the beauties of holiness"; and the sense is, that as soon as the morning of the Gospel dispensation dawns, these people should be born again, be illuminated, and appear holy and righteous: or, "from the womb, from the morning ^{f1577}", shall they be "in the beauties of holiness"; that is,

as soon as they are born again, and as soon as the morning of spiritual light and grace breaks in upon them, and they are made light in the Lord, they shall be clad with these beautiful garments of holiness and righteousness; so, “from the womb”, signifies literally as soon as men are born; (see ~~488B~~ Psalm 58:3 ~~280B~~ Isaiah 48:8) (~~280B~~ Hosea 9:11) or else with the latter clause, “thou hast the dew of thy youth”: and so are rendered, “more than the womb of the morning”, i.e. than the dew that is from the womb of the morning, is to thee the dew of thy youth; that is, more than the dew of the morning are thy converts; the morning is the parent of the dew, (~~488B~~ Job 38:28), but the former sense is best; for this last clause is a remember or proposition of itself,

thou hast the dew of that youth; which expresses the open property Christ has in his people, when made willing; and when they appear in the beauty of holiness, as soon as they are born of the Spirit, and the true light of grace shines in them; then those who were secretly his, even while unwilling, manifestly appear to belong unto him: so young lambs, just weaned, are in Homer ^{f1578} called *ερσοι*, “dews”; and it is remarkable that the Hebrew words for “dew” and “a lamb” are near in sound. Young converts are Christ’s lambs; they are Christ’s youth, and the dew of it; they are regenerated by the grace of God, comparable to dew, of which they are begotten to a lively hope of heaven; and which, distilling upon them, makes them fruitful in good works; and who for their numbers, and which I take to be the thing chiefly designed by this figure, are like to the drops of the dew; which in great profusion is spread over trees, herbs, and plants, where it hangs in drops innumerable: and such a multitude of converts is here promised to Christ, and which he had in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea, when three thousand persons were converted under one sermon; and especially in the Gentile world, where the savour of his knowledge was diffused in every place; and as will be in the latter day, when a nation shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. The sense given of these words, as formed upon the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, respecting the generation of Christ’s human or divine nature, is without any foundation in the original text.

Ver. 4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent*, etc.] What he swore about, and did not repent of, was the priesthood of Christ, as follows; and which shows the importance of it, since when Jehovah swears, as it is by himself, because he can swear by no greater; so it is about matters of great moment only that are sworn to by the Lord, as this of the priesthood of

Christ was; which was concerned in things pertaining to God and his glory, as well as in making reconciliation for the sins of his people: and it shows the truth, and was for the confirmation of it; since doubts might arise whether the Aaronic priesthood was changed, seeing it was given to Phinehas for an everlasting priesthood; and since so great a person as the Son of God is said to be a priest; and since, in the human nature, he was of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe nothing was said concerning the priesthood: and this oath was not so much for Christ's sake, to establish the priesthood with him, and assure him of it, as for the sake of his people; who, by two immutable things, the word and oath of God, might have strong consolation from it; and it clearly shows the validity of his priesthood; that he was called of God to this office, and invested with it, and consecrated in it with an oath; and which is expressive of the singularity of it, and of the dignity and preference of the priesthood of Christ to that of Aaron's, (^{<3872>}Hebrews 7:20,21,28). What follows was said, and this oath was made, in the council of peace, when Christ was called to this office, and he accepted of it, (^{<3916>}Psalm 40:6-8), and of this the Lord never repented; as he never does of any of his acts of grace, (^{<4239>}Numbers 23:19 ^{<5129>}Romans 11:29).

Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; or, “according to the word of Melchizedek”^{f1579}; that is, according to what is said of him; there being an agreement between the things said of one and of the other; so the Syriac version, “according to the likeness of Melchizedek”, (see ^{<3875>}Hebrews 7:15) of him no mention is made elsewhere, but in (^{<0148>}Genesis 14:18) and in the epistle to the Hebrews. Various are the opinions of men concerning him: some think he was not a man, but an angel that appeared to Abraham: others, a divine power, superior to Christ, who were called “Melchizedecians”: and others, that he was the Holy Ghost; and others, the Son of God himself, in an human form. On the other hand, some take him to be a mere man. The general notion of the Jews is, that he was Shem, the son of Noah; others, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham: but others do not think it proper or lawful to inquire who he was, or from whom he descended; this being purposely hidden from men, that he might be more clearly a type of Christ. That there is a likeness between them is certain; the signification of his name, a title of office, King of righteousness, and King of peace, agrees with Christ the Lord, our righteousness and our peace: his being without father, mother, descent, beginning of days, and end of life, agree with the divinity,

humanity, and eternity of Christ; and who is likewise King and Priest, as he was; and who blesses his people, as he did Abraham; and refreshes them with bread and wine, as he did Abraham's soldiers; (see Gill on ^{<S07D>}Hebrews 7:2-3"). Now Christ is a Priest like him; whose office is to offer sacrifice, which he has done, even himself, for the atonement of the sins of his people; to make intercession for them, which he ever lives to do; to introduce their persons to his Father, and present their petitions to him; and to call for every blessing for them, and answer all charges against them: in which office he continues for ever; there never will be any change in his priesthood, as there has been in Aaron's; nor will he ever have any successor: his priesthood is unchangeable, or does not pass from one to another, (^{<S07D>}Hebrews 7:24), the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice always continues, and intercession is ever made by him, and the glory of his mediation is ever given him. The apostle produces this passage in proof of the change of the Aaronic priesthood, and so of the law, (^{<S07D>}Hebrews 7:11-19) and about the time Christ appeared as the high priest, the legal priesthood sensibly declined, and which the Jews themselves own; for they say,

“after the death of Ishmael Ben Phabi, the splendour of the priesthood ceased ^{f1580};”

which man was made priest by Valerius Gratus, governor of Judea, under Tiberius Caesar ^{f1581},

Ver. 5. *The Lord at thy right hand*, etc.] These words are either directed to Christ, at whose right hand the Lord was to help and assist him, (^{<S06B>}Psalm 16:8) or to the church, consisting of the Lord's willing people, at whose right hand he is to save them; is ready to help them, and is a present help to them in time of need, (^{<S04CB>}Psalm 109:31) or rather to Jehovah the Father, at whose right hand the “Adonai”, or Lord, even David's Lord, and every believer's Lord, is, as in (^{<S01D>}Psalm 110:1), and who is spoken of in all the following clauses; and to whom the things mentioned are ascribed, and so what immediately follows:

shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath; not only strike at them, and strike them; but strike them through, utterly destroy them. This is to be understood of the kings and princes that stood up and set themselves against him, (^{<S01D>}Psalm 2:2), which is interpreted of Herod and Pontius Pilate, (^{<S04CB>}Acts 4:26,27), who both died shameful deaths; as did another Herod, that set himself against the apostles and church of Christ, (^{<S04CB>}Acts

12:1,2,23), and also of Heathens, kings and emperors, who persecuted the Christians; as Diocletian, Maximilian, and others; who are represented as fleeing to rocks and mountains, to hide them from the Lamb, the great day of his wrath being come, (~~665~~ Revelation 6:15-17), and also of the antichristian kings, that shall be gathered together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, and shall be overcome and slain by Christ, (~~664~~ Revelation 16:14,16 17:14 19:20,21) which will be a time of wrath, when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon the antichristian kings and states; (see ~~661~~ Revelation 16:1,19 11:18). And may also reach the last and general judgment; when kings, as well as others, shall stand before him, and receive their awful doom from him; and shall perish when his wrath is kindled against them, (~~621~~ Psalm 2:11,12).

Ver. 6. *He shall judge among the Heathen*, etc.] Either rule among the Gentiles, making them through his Gospel obedient by word and deed, and so reigning in their hearts by his Spirit and grace; and, by making many converts among them, enlarge his dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth: or inflict judgments on the Heathen; that is, the Papists, as they are called. These are the Gentiles to whom the outward court is given; the nations that will be angry when the time of his wrath, and to judge the dead, is come; and whom Christ will break in pieces with his iron rod; and are the Heathen that shall perish out of his land, when he is King over all the earth, (~~662~~ Revelation 11:2,18 19:15 ~~697~~ Psalm 10:16).

He shall fill the places with the dead bodies: the Targum adds,

“of the ungodly that are slain;”

namely, at the battle of Armageddon; when the fowls of the air shall be called to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty men; of horses and their riders; of all men, bond and free, great and small, (~~697~~ Revelation 19:17,18).

He shall wound the heads over many countries; that is, kings over many countries; as the Targum explains it: it is to be read in the singular number, “he shall wound the heads over a large country” ^{f1582}; him who is the head over a large country; meaning either Satan, the god of this world, the wicked one, under whom the world lies; and who has deceived the inhabitants of the earth, and rules them at his pleasure; him Christ has wounded and bruised, even his head; destroyed him and all his power, policy, schemes, and works, agreeably to the first hint concerning him,

(^{<0015>}Genesis 3:15 ^{<8014>}Hebrews 2:14 ^{<6108>}1 John 3:8) or else antichrist, who is head over a large country, or many countries; the whore that sits on many waters, which are people, nations, and tongues, and reigns over the kings of the earth; who has seven heads and ten horns; one of whose heads has been wounded already, of which it has been curing again; but ere long this beast will receive such a wound from Christ, as that he will never recover of it; when he shall consume him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; (see ^{<6072>}Revelation 17:2,15,18 13:1,3) (^{<5108>}2 Thessalonians 2:8). Musculus renders it, “the head of the country of Rabbah”: and refers it to David’s conquest of the king of the Ammonites, whose head city was Rabbah, (^{<3101>}1 Chronicles 20:1,2).

Ver. 7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way*, etc.] This some understand of the sufferings of Christ, compared to a brook, a flow of waters, because of the abundance of them, as in (^{<1901>}Psalms 69:1,9), his partaking of which is sometimes expressed by drinking, (^{<4102>}Matthew 20:22 ^{<6181>}John 18:11) and this was in the way of working out the salvation of his people, and in his own way to glory, (^{<0205>}Luke 24:26). If this is the sense, there may be some allusion to the black brook Kidron; over which David, the type of Christ, passed when in distress; and over which Christ himself went into the garden, where his sorrows began, (^{<1053>}2 Samuel 15:23 ^{<6181>}John 18:1), but seeing this clause stands surrounded with others, which only speak of his victories, triumph, and exaltation, it seems to require a sense agreeable to them; wherefore those interpreters seem nearer to the truth of the text, who explain it of Christ’s victory over all enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death; and illustrate it by the passage in (^{<0234>}Numbers 23:24), “he shall drink of the blood of the slain”; with which compare (^{<2301>}Isaiah 63:1-3). Others think the allusion is to the eagerness of a general pursuing a routed army, and pushing on his conquest; who, though almost choked with thirst, yet will not stop to refresh himself; but meeting with a brook or rivulet of water by the way, takes a draught of it, and hastens his pursuit of the enemy: and so this is expressive of, the eagerness of Christ to finish the great work of man’s salvation, and the conquest of all his and their enemies; (see ^{<1104>}Luke 2:49 12:50 ^{<6181>}John 18:4-8). But I think the clause is rather expressive of the solace, joy, and comfort, which Christ, as man, has in the presence of God, and at his right hand, having finished the work of our salvation; then he drank to his refreshment of the river of divine pleasure, when God showed him the path of life, and raised him from the

dead, and gave him glory, and introduced him into his presence; where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, (^{1961b}Psalm 16:11).

Therefore shall he lift up the head; as he 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. Or, “so shall he lift up his head”, as Noldius ^{f1583} renders it; not that his sufferings, which he understands by “drinking out of the brook”, were the cause of his exaltation, but the consequent of it: these two, Christ’s humiliation and exaltation, though they are sometimes joined together, yet not as cause and effect, but as the antecedent and consequent; Christ having finished what, according to the divine order was to be finished, glory followed by the same order: and so the words thus taken respect not the cause, but the constitution of things, according to that writer.