



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 110

Metropolitan Youssef



Introduction

- This Psalm is titled *A Psalm of David*
- It was written by David, as the title shows, and is confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 22:43 and by the Apostle Peter, Acts 2:34 and was not written by anyone of the singers
- In spite of these facts, some scholars and commentators deny David's authorship
- Some Jews have worked hard and in vain to give this Psalm a contrary meaning
- Some have attributed it to Eliezer, the servant of Abraham; and state that he composed it on the occasion of his master's victory over the four kings at the valley of Shaveh, Genesis 14



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- Others say it was done by David, in commemoration of his victory over the Philistines
- Others make Solomon the author and some refer it to Hezekiah, and others to Zerubbabel, etc.
- But the mere reading of the Psalm will show the insignificance of these false claims
- This remarkable Psalm is one of the Old Testament passages most quoted in the New Testament
- Some counted 27 direct quotations or indirect references to this Psalm



Introduction

- According to some scholars, this Psalm is sung in the enthronement of any king of the descendants of David
- But the subject is so distinguished, the expressions are so exalted, and the description is so far above what can be applied to human
- No history has ever mentioned a king to whom a literal application of this Psalm can be made
- The Psalm is only applicable to Christ, and cannot be applied to any other and not even to David as a type, as some Psalms concerning him may



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- A King is described here who is David's Lord and sits at the Right Hand of God; a conqueror, reigning at Jerusalem, King from all eternity - having an everlasting priesthood, Judge of all nations, prevailing over all rulers
- Where has there ever appeared a king in whom all these characters met?
- It can be applied to Jesus Christ alone, to His everlasting priesthood and government, as King of kings and Lord of lords
- The Jews who lived in the time of our Lord believed this Psalm to have been written by David, and that it spoke of the Messiah alone



Introduction

- When our Lord quoted it in Matthew 22:42 and drew arguments from it about His mission, they did not attempt to deny it
- St. Peter, Acts 2:34, and St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:25; Hebrews 1:13, 5:6-10, 7:17, 10:12-13, apply it to show that Jesus is the Messiah
- St. John Chrysostom says, “Let us be alert, I beseech you, and concentrate: the Psalm tells us of extremely important principles. In fact, it joins battle with Jews, Paul of Samosata, the followers of Aruis, of Marcion, the Manicheans, and those professing unbelieve in the resurrection...the Jews do not accept the first verse, fabricating some other meaning by contrast. Let us first refute their argument and establish our own.”



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- St. Augustine says, “This Psalm is one of those promises, surely and openly prophesying our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ... For when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ asked of the Jews, whose Son they alleged Christ to be, and they had replied, ‘the Son of David;’ He at once replied to their answer, ‘How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto My Lord?’ etc. ‘If then,’ He asked, ‘David in the spirit call Him Lord, how is He his son?’ With this verse this Psalm begins.”
- This Psalm is one of the Ninth Hour Psalms of the Agpeya, the Prayer Book of the Hours



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Psalm Outline

- The Messiah the Lord and King 110:1-3
- The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7

The Messiah the Lord and King

110:1-3



- David prophetically revealed the words of *the Lord* to the Messiah, David's *Lord*
- He speaks with the authority of a prophet who is mindful of having received a message from God
- *The Lord said*, God the Father said, *to my Lord*, to Jesus Christ
- David, in spirit, saw the Messiah ascending into heaven after His death and resurrection
- And tells us the words of the Father when He invited Him to sit beside Him and reign along with Him

The Messiah the Lord and King

110:1-3



- This is clear not only from the context, but especially by how this verse is quoted in the New Testament
- The Psalm cannot refer to David himself, as if God had said to him, *Sit at My right hand*
- Nor was there anyone on earth in the time of David to whom it could be applicable
- Or, anyone whom he would call him *Lord or superior*
- If, therefore, the Psalm was written by David, it must have reference to the Messiah - to one who is his superior - his Lord - his Sovereign

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- And when this passage was quoted by Christ when arguing with the Jews, they did not attempt to question its reference to the Messiah, (Matthew 22:43-45; Mark 12:36-37)
- St. Peter quoted it on Pentecost, explaining how David prophesied the deity and ascension of Jesus (Acts 2:34-35)
- St. Paul referred to it in 1 Corinthians 15:25, explaining the rule and dominion of Jesus the Messiah
- St. Paul quotes it in Hebrews 1:13, referring to the superiority of Jesus the Messiah over any angel

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- The fact that Yahweh – the *Lord*, the covenant God of Israel – spoke to one that David himself called *Lord (Adonai)* demonstrates that both Yahweh and Adonai mentioned in this verse are God
- Yahweh (specifically, God the Father) spoke to the Messiah (specifically, God the Son), telling Him to take His enthroned place (Ephesians 1:20, Hebrews 8:1) until the Father provided the victory for the Son
- The seat at the king's right hand was the place of honor (1 Kings 2:19; Matthew 20:21; Psalm 45:9), but more than mere honor is implied here

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- This king is to share God's throne, to be next to Him in dignity, to be supported by all the force of His authority and power
- Sitting signifies peace and supreme power, which Christ was to enjoy; and sitting *at My right hand*, indicate equality, and an equal share in that supreme power enjoyed by God the Father
- Christ, as far as His divine nature was concerned, had that equality at all times
- But He only got it as regards His human nature after His humiliation unto death, even to the death of the cross

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- As St. Paul says, *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Philippians 2:9-11)
- Sitting on the right hand of God, then, is the same as being in the glory and the majesty of God, and that glory consists in having a name above every name, at which every knee shall bow

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- St. Paul said, *“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”* (1 Corinthians 15:25) which proves that the expression *Sit at My right hand* means nothing more or less than share my sovereign power
- St. Paul, in Hebrews 1:13-14, says, *“to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister?”*
- Thus proving the difference between Christ and the Angels, they are merely ministers and servants, not allowed to sit, but obliged to stand, in readiness for the execution of their Lord’s commands

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- While Christ, as Lord and King, sits with His Father above all creatures
- And St. Peter, in Acts 2:33-35, says, *“being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. ‘For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”*
- St. Peter clearly says here that *sitting at the right hand of God* means His having ascended into heaven, and ruling and governing in all places as God only can rule and govern

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- *Till I make Your enemies Your footstool*, The kingdom of Christ, is never to have an end
- The word, *Till* does not imply that Christ's reign was only to hold until His enemies should be subjected
- But it means that His kingdom would be always extended more and more until as much as not one single enemy not bowing the knee to Him would not remain
- Christ's kingdom will be completed on the last day, when every knee shall bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell, to Christ

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- All His enemies are not yet made His footstool
- The Apostle Paul observes this, Hebrews 2:8, *"But now we do not yet see all things put under him."*
- But why is the assertion *Till I make* attributed to the Father?
- Everything done by the Father is also done by the Son
- But the Father is made to act here, in order to reward the obedience of the Son, as the Apostle says, *"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him"*
- Everything implying power is usually attributed to the Father, though the Son has the same power

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- David having, in spirit, heard the Father saying to the Son, *Sit at My right hand* now addresses the Son, and, in the same spirit of prophecy, shows how the spread and extend of Christ's kingdom on earth was to begin
- *the rod*, is the symbol of authority and power, the instrument of chastisement
- As the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, John 18:36, but spiritual; so this *rod* is nothing else but His word or gospel published by Him, or by His apostles and ministers, and through the Holy Spirit, by which the Messiah set up and established His kingdom: Isaiah 2:3, 11:4; Micah 4:2; 2 Corinthians 10:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- Hence this gospel is called the word of the kingdom, “*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.*” (Matthew 13:19)
- *out of Zion*, The kingdom of Christ started from Zion, the city of David, for He was the Son of David
- But His authority would not be limited to Israel
- It would extend to the entire world, dominating all the kings and nations of the earth, giving Him *rule* over all *enemies*

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- His rod of strength out of Zion, is the preaching of the Holy Gospel that started from Zion, then spread all over the world
- As our Lord after His resurrection said, *“It was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* (Luke 24:46-47)
- Some understand *in the midst of Your enemies* to be about the Church
- Because, however prosperous and triumphant the Church may be, she will always be surrounded by enemies—by pagans, Jews, heretics, and bad Christians—as long as she sojourns here on earth

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- But at the end of the world, when the good shall come to be separated from the bad, the Kingdom of Christ will be no longer *in the midst of* His *enemies*, but will rise above, and be exalted over all her enemies
- Others interpret it spiritually
- This is a commission to set up a kingdom *in the very midst of* those who were His enemies
- In the hearts of those who had been and were rebellious
- His kingdom is set up not by destroying them, but by subduing them so that they become His willing servants

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- This commission is to make them His friends
- Mere power may crush people; it requires more than that to make rebels willingly submissive, have them voluntarily obey
- St. John Chrysostom comments on the word *rod* and says, “While the rod sometimes is disciplinary, sometimes on the other hand it is supportive and a symbol of kingship. For proof that it has both meanings, listen to the inspired author saying, ‘Your rod and Your staff, they comforted me.’ ... here he called his power a rod with which the disciples traversed the world, correcting people’s behavior and leading them from some mindless evil to the rational nature of human beings.”

The Messiah the Lord and King

110:1-3



- In verse 3, the psalmist sets forth the honors of Christ's kingdom in relation to the number of His people, and their prompt and cheerful obedience to His commands
- *Your people shall be volunteers*, In the full sense of the word, Messiah can only rule over willing hearts
- *Your people* shall not be His by a forced and false obedience, as those who are subject to or conquered by earthly princes
- But shall most willingly, and readily, and cheerfully obey all His commands, without any dispute, or delay, or reservation; and they shall not need to be pressed to His service

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- They are willing to serve Him; to suffer the loss of all things for Him; to deny themselves, and take up the cross and follow Him
- There have been much said about people's free will
- If men be forced to obey, it is the forcing power that obeys; and men show only the effect of this powerful force
- If men are incapable of doing and willing good and rejecting and not willing evil, they are incapable of being saved as a rational being
- And if they act only under an powerful force, they should not be condemned

The Messiah the Lord and King

110:1-3



- *In the day of Your power*, when Christ takes into His hands *the rod of Your strength*
- When He set up His kingdom in the world, and put forth His mighty power in the preaching of the word, and winning souls to Himself by it
- According to St. Jerome, the day of His power is the day of His crucifixion
- In the day of His crucifixion, when He shook the earth, darkened the sun, opened the graves, split the rocks, broke down the everlasting gates of Hades, and set the captives free

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- The Hebrew word translated *power* is the word for a *host* or *army*, the meaning may be that the Messiah's people are gathered together as a willing army
- And some commentators interpret *In the day of Your power*, to be on the last day, when His strength will move the heavens, darken the sun, shake the earth, raise the dead, and gather all to His judgment
- *In the beauties of holiness*, adorned with the beautiful and glorious robes of righteousness and true holiness, by which all new men or true Christians are clothed, Ephesians 4:24; Revelation 19:5,14

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- And with various gifts and graces of God's Spirit, which are beautiful in the eyes of God
- This verse in the Septuagint is, "*With thee is the beginning in the day of thy power, in the splendor of thy saints, from the womb, before the light of the morning have I begotten thee.*"
- *from the womb, before the light of the morning*, This expression, according to St. Augustine, carry a literal and symbolic meaning and was thus fulfilled
- The Lord was born at night from the womb of the Virgin Mary; the testimony of the shepherds asserts this, who were "*keeping watch over their flock*," (Luke 2:7-8)

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- Christ exists before the creation of anything, even before the angels, for, *"All things were made through Him"* (John 1:3)
- The Almighty Father says, *I begotten You*, not as He did all other created things, from nothing, but *from the womb*
- From His own womb, as His true and natural Son and of one essence with the Father, before any creature, before all ages
- *From the womb* Church fathers very properly use this expression as a proof of the divinity of Christ; for, if He were a creature, He could not be said to be born of the womb, God does not anywhere say that the heavens or the earth were born of the womb

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- They are *the dew of Your youth*; they are His offspring
- As the human nature of our Lord was born in the womb of Virgin Mary; so, the followers of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but by the Divine Spirit
- The extraordinary increase of the number of Christ's people is compared to the *youth*
- As men are astonished at seeing the earth irrigated and refreshed with dew, David declares that a countless offspring shall be born to Christ, who shall be spread over the whole earth
- The multitude who, in so short a time, have been gathered together and subjected to Christ's power, is incredible

The Messiah the Lord and King

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- This has been accomplished by the sound of the Gospel alone, in spite of the difficult opposition of the whole world
- Any person at any age, when he/she return to Christ, are considered children newly born, because the spiritual birth, according to St. Peter, (1 Peter 2:2)
- To the same purpose are the words of Isaiah, (Isaiah 53:10) that Christ *“shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”*

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- David now passes from the royalty to the priesthood, and shows that Christ is a priest forever, not by reason of His succeeding to Aaron, but as a priest directly appointed by God, and of whom *Melchizedek* was a type
- This verse is a proof that the person here spoken of is none other than Christ
- The King is also Priest by an absolute Divine declaration and is affirmed in the most solemn manner possible, an oath
- The '*oath*' of Him who cannot lie; He who knows all things from the beginning cannot *repent or relent* His purpose (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29)

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- This is the oath of God the Father regarding the God the Son
- *will not relent*, Will never change this purpose; it is perfectly without condition, and without contingency
- Nothing is left here to the will of man or angel
- Christ shall be incarnated, and the Gospel of His salvation shall be preached over the whole earth
- He vowed that the Messiah had an eternal priesthood, and that it was after the *order of Melchizedek*
- Melchizedek, King of Salem, and priest of God Most High, appeared in Genesis 14:18

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- After Abraham defeated the confederation of kings who took his nephew Lot captive, Abraham met with a mysterious priest named Melchizedek, whose name means *king of righteousness* and who was also king over the city of Salem (Jerusalem), which made him the *king of peace*
- Melchizedek blessed Abraham, demonstrating his greatness over the patriarch
- Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe, (Genesis 14:20)
- There is no mention of any father or mother of Melchizedek, and he appears without any genealogy

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- With this oath, God revealed that there is *another* order of priesthood, *apart* from the priestly order of Aaron
- The Israelite priests were all descended from Aaron and served in the tabernacle (or the temple), offering sacrifices and conducting ceremonies according to the Law
- Here we see that God established another priestly *order*
- The promise of an eternal priesthood corresponds rather to the promise of eternal dominion in 2 Samuel 7:10,13,25,29
- Now Christ is said to be a priest forever, because the effect of the one sacrifice in which He offered His body on the cross is forever

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews dwells upon this verse in his explanation of the typical significance of the priesthood of Melchizedek, quoting it to illustrate the divine appointment of Christ to His high-priestly office, and the eternal duration of that office (Hebrews 5:6,6:20,7:17,21)
- He is living forever, daily, through the hands of the priests of His Church, who succeed each other and offer the Eucharist
- St. John Chrysostom says, "What was the reason for his saying, *According to the order of Melchizedek?* With the Eucharist in mind, because he too offered bread and wine to Abraham."

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- Christ is both King and Priest, and He offered bread and wine at His last supper, that is, His body under the appearance of bread, and His blood under the appearance of wine
- And He is the priest, not only of the Jews, but of the gentiles; nor is His priestly office confined to one temple or one tabernacle
- But, as Malachi prophesied, *“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations,”*
(Malachi 1:11)

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- Some understand verse 5 as God the Father stands at Messiah's right hand (Psalm 16:8, 121:5) to protect and defend Him, and give Him victory in the battle
- Others see it as Christ being seated at the right hand of His Father, will defeat His adversaries
- St. Jerome says, "The Psalm says: 'The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand''; and now he says: 'The Lord is at Your right hand'. If the Son is sitting at the right hand of the Father, How does David say now that the Father sits at the right hand of the Son? This I say to confirm clearly that the Son is equal to the Father."

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- All would be subdued before Him, and none would be able to stand before Him and He would reign over all the earth
- *He shall execute kings*, This is to be understood of the kings and princes that stood up and set themselves against Him, Psalm 2:2
- Perhaps Herod and Pontius Pilate, Acts 4:26, who both died shameful deaths; as did another Herod, that set himself against the apostles and church of Christ, Acts 12:1
- 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, on the great day of His wrath, Revelation 6:15

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- It may also point to the antichristian kings, that shall be gathered together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, and shall be overcome and slain by Christ, Revelation 16:14
- Commenting on this verse, St. Jerome says: “The devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to Him: ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory, for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish’ (Luke 4:5-6); ‘He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath’”
- Having told us how Christ would deal for the present with His enemies, he tells us in verse 6 how He will deal, on the day of judgment, with all His enemies

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- In His conquest, the Messiah will exercise His authority over all *nations*, bringing His judgment
- Another interpretation would be that Christ will 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 disciples among them, enlarge His dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth
- *He shall fill the places with dead bodies* signifying His victory, and the overthrow of the world

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- It would be "as if" the bodies of the slain in battle filled the land, or filled the valleys of the earth
- Some commentators think that this seems to anticipate the slaughter at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16, 19:11-21)
- *execute the heads*, He will humble and defeat all the proud, that now, with unyielding heads are against Him
- He will trample on their pride, when He shall make their weakness known to the whole world, and thus render them both shameful and confused, such is the meaning of *execute the heads*

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- And he adds, *of many countries* because the truly humble and godly in this world are very few indeed, when compared to the proud and the haughty, who are nearly countless
- It may also mean 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
- Christ has wounded and bruised him, even his head; destroyed him and all his power, schemes, and works
- He now gives a reason for Christ being given with such power as to be able to break kings, to judge nations, to fill ruins, and to crush heads, and says, *He shall drink of the brook by the wayside*

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- As if he said with the Apostle, *“He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name.”* (Philippians 2:8-9)
- *He shall drink of the brook by the wayside*, This seems to be drawn from the conduct of brave and powerful generals, who, when in hot pursuit of the enemy, do not allow themselves to be diverted from their purpose by attending to luxuries; but, without kneeling down, are content to quench their thirst by drinking of the stream which they are passing

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- It seems that David figuratively attributes military skills and bravery to Christ, declaring that He would not take time to refresh Himself, but would hastily drink of the river which might come in His way
- The Son of God, through His incarnation, came down this stream, and “in the way,” that is, during His life on earth, drank the muddy water of this *brook* in experiencing suffering
- He descended into the very depth of the *brook* through His passion, the waters of which, instead of contributing to His refreshment, only increased His pains and sufferings

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- In consideration, then, of such humiliation, freely enduring for the glory of the Father and the salvation of mankind, He afterwards *shall lift up the head*
- Meaning ascended into heaven, and, sitting at the right hand of the Father, was made Judge of the living and the dead
- As St. Augustine explains, “He has not disdained to drink of this brook; for to drink of this brook was to Him to be born and to die. What this brook has, is birth and death; Christ assumed this, He was born, He died. ‘Therefore, has He lifted up His head;’ that is, because He was humble, and ‘became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.’”

The Messiah the Priest and Judge 110:4-7



- St. Augustine continues and says, “therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ the Lord is in the glory of God the Father.”
- St. John Chrysostom says, “*Therefore He shall lift up the head:* this is the fruit of His humility and difficult life. These words refer not to divinity, however, but to humanity – drinking from a stream, being raised up.”



Discussion

- Where is the first verse quoted in the gospels?
- What point does Jesus make by quoting it?
- Who are the Messiah's enemies? Do we see His enemies today?
What does this Psalm tell us about God's final plan?
- Who are His people? What will they do?



Discussion

- When is the day of His power?
- What does “the womb of the morning” mean?
- What does the “dew of Your youth” mean?
- Who is Melchizedek? What is a priest “according to the order of Melchizedek?” How is this order of priesthood different than the Levites?



Discussion

- What will finally happen to the Messiah's enemies?
- What will the day of Christ's wrath look like?
- How does this Psalm help form the true identity of Jesus and His divinity?