

International Sunday School Lesson Study Notes

Lesson Text: Psalm 110:1-4; Acts 2:22-24, 29-32

Lesson Title: An Everlasting King

Introduction

The simplest definition of everlasting is "never coming to an end; eternal." With that in mind it is clear that few things in life are "everlasting." In relation to kings and kingdoms, no king in the history of the world has ever established an everlasting kingdom. Kings and kingdoms have come and they have all passed away. But there is a coming kingdom that shall not pass away and that kingdom will have an everlasting King. His name is Jesus.

From Psalm 110 and Acts 2 we learn about the everlasting King. These two texts focus on the royal nature of Jesus the Messiah, the King. He was promised to us centuries ago as part of God's covenant with David. He was presented to us when He was incarnated in Bethlehem's manger on the first Christmas. The Old Testament prophecies looked into the future and gave us glimpses of the coming King. The New Testament apostles proclaimed that He had arrived. But before He would set up His kingdom here on earth, He died on the cross in order to deliver sinners from sin. While the peace promised on earth through His kingdom is yet future, the peace He can give to the heart of man is available today through saving grace.

A Message of Royalty (Psalm 110:1-4)

Verse 1

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

David is the author of the 110th psalm. His first words are nothing less than divine revelation as depicted in the use of the word "said." In this context, "said" indicates that David has heard a heavenly conversation between "the LORD" and "my Lord" and is now declaring what he has heard. What David has heard is so important that it is quoted eight times in the New Testament (Mathew 22:44; 26:24; Mark 12:36; 14:62; Luke 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13).

The "LORD" (all capital letters) is the Hebrew word "Jehovah," or "God, the self-existing One." The other word "Lord" (capital L, lower case ord) is the Hebrew word "Adonai," or "master." David has heard a conversation between God the Father and God the Son, the Messiah. "The LORD," (Jehovah God the self-existing One) said to "my Lord" (David's Lord and master), "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Since David was the king in Israel, his "Lord," or "master," had to be a reference to Jesus Christ Himself. This is verified in Matthew 22:41-46, when the Pharisees asked Jesus, *"How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."* The only answer to their question was that the eternal Son of God came to this earth in the form of human flesh, born of the lineage of David. If the Pharisees had accepted this truth they would have accepted the deity of Jesus Christ. But like all who refuse to accept Christ's deity, they died lost and suffer eternally in torment.

As David hears this heavenly conversation, he heard God the Father tell God the Son, "Sit thou at my right hand." The "right hand" is the place or seat of authority. Remember, what David heard is prophetic. After Christ's death, burial and resurrection, He is to be seated at "the right hand" of God "until" God the Father makes the enemies of God the Son "thy footstool." "To sit at a ruler's right hand was a great honor (1 Kings 2:19; Matthew 20:21). When Jesus ascended to heaven, the Father honored Him by placing Him at His own right hand, a statement repeated frequently in the New Testament. (Acts 2:33-34; 5:31; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Col 3:1; Hebrews 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22)." *(from The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament © 2001-2004 by Warren W. Wiersbe. All rights reserved.)*

Christ's "enemies" are all who have worked against the redemptive plan of God. The "footstool" pictures complete subjection and submission. Ancient kings would often place their foot on the neck of their defeated enemies as a public sign of conquest. One day the world will be in complete submission to the Lord Jesus Christ as He rules and reigns (Psalm 2:8-9). However, the word "until" acknowledges that the world will not be in submission to God's appointed king for a while. We are living in that "until" period of time. But thanks be to God we are closer today to the reign of Christ than ever before!

Verse 2

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

In this verse, David the psalmist, is now speaking to Messiah directly. He says, "the LORD" (God the Father) shall send the rod of "thy" (God the Son) strength out of Zion..." In the Bible, "Zion" is referred to as the earthly place where God's seat of authority resides. When a Hebrew read the word "Zion" they would think of a place of authority and rule. The "rod of thy strength" is speaking of Messiah's ruling power. The "strength" out of which Messiah will one day rule is "sent" by God the Father. That means Messiah's ruling strength is divine, not human. Jesus will not rule one day because he was a great human being or was humanly able to persuade men to follow or obey him. He will "rule" because God the Father ordained it to be that way.

"Rule" is a word that means "dominion over conquered enemies." While there will be certain peace in Christ's coming reign the dominate thought is that Christ will conquer. "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city" (Numbers 24:19). He will also "rule...in the midst of his enemies." David is saying, "Master, you were sent to rule, so rule even though you are surrounded by enemies!"

Today, the "rule" of Jesus Christ is not one of political authority or bloodshed, but rather of conquering grace and love. However, this day of grace and mercy will one day be over and when Christ returns the second time upon this earth, *"...out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"* (Revelation 19:15).

Verse 3

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

When the rule of Christ comes upon this earth, referred to here as "the day of thy power, there will be a "people" who will be "willingly" ruled by the Messiah. In the day of Messiah's "power," God's people will offer themselves gladly to be his servants and soldiers. Messiah's enemies will be under his foot, but those who rule and reign with Him will do so "willingly.

Because of the power of the gospel and of the mighty hand of God, the servants of the Lord will be willingly ruled by the Messiah. They give themselves as servants

and soldiers, not out of fear of the King, but "in the beauties of holiness." That means "in holy obedience to the One who is at once King." It is a picture of the "people" coming to give themselves to the King as if they were clothed in holy white garments. It is all symbolic of pure intentional submission to the rule of Jesus Christ.

"From the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth" seems to reference the newness and freshness with which Messiah will rule. "Youth" is a word that conveys the thought that everything associated with the coming rule of Christ is full of life, energy, and hope. And while we literally wait on all of this to take place in the future, every sinner upon the earth can experience new life and hope immediately by trusting Christ for salvation. Just as the "people" who join ranks with the Messiah in his coming reign will do so because they are "willingly," those who are lost can be saved if they are "willingly" to come to Christ for salvation (John 3:16).

Verse 4

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

David declares that "the LORD" (God the Father) "hath sworn" (God gave His word) and He "will not repent" (he won't take it back). "Thou" refers to Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. God has said that Jesus Christ is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Up until this point in the psalm, Messiah has been portrayed as one coming to rule over his enemies from the right hand of God as King. Now, David the psalmist tells us that Messiah will also continue forever in His function as a "priest." God the Father has promised that Jesus Christ will be "a priest for ever." The coming Messiah will forever be what a "priest" was and fulfill the office and role of a "priest" as described in the Old Testament.

God also promises that Jesus Christ will be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." "Melchizedek" is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18 and is also mentioned in the New Testament in Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-21. Melchizedek mysteriously appears to Abraham, blessing him and receiving tithes from him and then he disappears as quickly as he appeared. We know nothing about Melchizedek's ancestry. Nothing is written about his father or mother (Hebrew 7:3). He appeared on the scene in God's Word to give us a picture of the superior priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Melchizedek" was both a "king and a priest" (Genesis 14:18-24). This is very important and the main reason Christ is compared to him. Christ could not have been a "priest" because He was of the tribe of Judah. "Priests" in the Old Testament, came from the tribe of Levi. Because Christ "was a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," he could serve as a "priest" forever and is ministering and interceding for us even now in Heaven. All of the priests who descendant from the tribe of Levi and Aaron eventually died. But there is no record of Melchizedek's birth or death which speaks of the eternal priestly minister. Thank God Christ is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Note: The "LORD" (God the Father) is the One making everything happen in Psalm 110:1-4. It is God the Father who makes Jesus' enemies His footstool. It is the "LORD" who will "send the rod of thy strength out of Zion" and cause Jesus to "rule...in the midst of His enemies." It is the "LORD" who will cause "people" to be willing to come to Christ in the day of His power. It is the "LORD" who promises that Christ will a never ending priestly ministry. Today, Jesus Christ has enemies who oppose Him. He has enemies who try to function as priests and mediate between God and man. But He is sovereign and rules from His throne in heaven although sinful men refuse to submit. But rest assured that will all change one day soon!

A Message of Resurrection (Acts 2:22-24; 29-32)

Acts 2 records Peter's first sermon. He preached it on the "day of Pentecost" (Acts 2:1) just fifty days after he had denied that he ever knew Jesus. Peter's message was great for many reasons. But the main reason it was great was because it was simple. Peter preached about Jesus and told his listeners how to be saved (Acts 2:21). Beginning in Acts 2:22-36, Peter gets to the main theme of his message and preaches about the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In essence, he tells everyone listening that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah.

Verse 22

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:"

To men today or even to Gentiles listening to Peter's sermon on Pentecost, it might have seemed like a small thing that Jesus is the Messiah. Part of the reason is that Gentiles in Peter's day and many people today don't fully understand what Messiah is all about. Messiah is the ultimate ruler. Messiah is the one of whom it was said

the scepter shall not depart from Judah. Messiah is the one promised to David in 2 Samuel Chapter 7 when God spoke to David through the prophet Nathan saying, *"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever"* (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

Messiah was the great anointed king who would come and set everything right and give Israel its kingdom and reign in Israel and restore everything that had been lost. Messiah was the greatest figure in the Jewish heart and mind. And for Peter to announce that "Jesus of Nazareth" was the Messiah to the Jew was nothing short of blasphemy. It was one thing for the Jew to believe prophecy of the coming Messiah and quiet another for Peter to say, "It's Jesus of Nazareth." Also, referring to Messiah as "Jesus of Nazareth" would have pierced their hearts. That was the title Pilate placed over Jesus when he hung on the cross (John 19:19).

Jesus of Nazareth was "a man approved of God." "Approved" means "to point out, too show." God pointed Him out to be the promised Son of David, the Messiah "by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." In the life of Jesus there were overwhelming "miracles, wonders, and signs" that proved beyond a doubt that He was who He claimed to be. Even at the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry Nicodemus said, *"...we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"* (John 3:2).

"Miracles" are things done beyond human power that require the divine intervention of God. "Wonders" are things that arrest man's attention that he cannot explain outside of God. "Signs" are things that point you to something. Everything Jesus did He did in order to point men to a greater truth or a greater point. These "men of Israel" listening to Peter couldn't deny that "Jesus of Nazareth" was Messiah. There was simply too much evidence and they knew it!

Verse 23-24

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

"Him" of course refers to "Jesus of Nazareth." Peter now tells the men of Israel how "Jesus of Nazareth" was crucified, buried, and had risen from the dead. Most

of Peter's audience had heard about Jesus' life, crucifixion and death, and they probably had heard different stories about Jesus' not being in the tomb. So Peter wanted them to hear the truth.

"Being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" meant that all who participated in Jesus' suffering and death, did so according to God's plan. "Delivered" means God intentionally gave Jesus to be crucified for man's sin. "Counsel" means "will or design." "Determinate" means "to mark out with a boundary." Everything related to Jesus' crucifixion was mapped out by God the Father and God the Son. In fact, everything was determined by the "foreknowledge of God." "Foreknowledge" means God planned for Christ to be crucified by "wicked hands" before the foundation of the world was ever laid (1 Peter 1:20).

"Foreknowledge" is more than seeing something before it happens.

"Foreknowledge" in relation to God means He caused it to happen! Jesus' death was no accident and it wasn't because He couldn't control events in His life. Jesus' death was the fulfillment of God's deliberate plan (2 Timothy 1:9).

"Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" means those listening to Peter had been used by God to crucify Jesus. Not only those listening, but Jews and Gentiles alike participated in the crucifixion of Jesus. God uses both the saved and the unsaved to carry out His will (Psalm 2:1-2; Acts 4:26). And He does so without ever violating a man's will or ability to choose. How can God do that? He's God!

Verse 29

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."

Beginning in Acts 2:25, Peter appeals to the Old Testament for support of his preaching. He quotes Psalm 16:8-11, and argues that those words were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth and in no one else. Therefore, the Messiah whom David promised was in fact Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter now speaks to the "men and brethren" about "the patriarch David." Everyone listening to Peter knew that "David" was "both dead and buried." In fact, the location of his "sepulcher" or grave was probably known by everyone listening to Peter preach. Peter wanted his audience to know that when David talked about the coming Messiah and king, he wasn't talking about himself, but about Jesus. When he said, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy

One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10), David was referring to Messiah and not himself. David could face death with a glad heart and soul, and could rest in the grave in hope, knowing that one day, he, too, would have a new glorified body. Paul used this same text to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 13:26-39).

Verse 30-31

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

"Being a prophet," and "knowing that God had sworn" or given His word to David through the Davidic Covenant, David was assured that one of his own descendants would be the Messiah and one day King. David also knew that when Christ was crucified and put to death, that God would "raise up Christ to sit on his throne." "He seeing this" are prophetic words. David saw all of this and was speaking about "the resurrection of Christ" and that "his soul" would not be left in the realm of the dead. Surely that is what happened when Christ died and rose again.

Verse 32

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

After all the preaching and quoting scripture and talking about Hebrew history, Peter now fires the shot he's been loading up to fire. He says, "This Jesus hath God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." Peter is saying, "If you're looking for Messiah, He's here. If you're looking for the Messiah who can rise from the dead, Jesus is the One."

Peter doesn't expect his audience to just take him at his word. He said, "We all are witnesses." These men knew the tomb was empty. Many of them alone with other "witnesses" had actually seen the risen Christ. On five occasions in Acts some of the apostles said they were "witnesses" of the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31). The enemies of the Lord could not produce a body to deny the resurrection. It was provable and believable, "God raised up" Jesus from the dead! Messiah accomplished His work and God "raised" Him up from the grave!

Conclusion

An everlasting King is good news for anyone who will accept and believe the gospel. It is sad that so many people in our day of communication excellence have still never heard. All of us who believe that God sent His Son through the lineage of David, and that He died and rose again are "witnesses." No, we we're there as were Peter and the apostles. But we believe by faith and we are "witnesses."

The one fact that still separates Christianity from all man-made religion is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are tombs all over the world that hold the decaying bodies and bones of religious leaders. Christ's tomb is empty. And because it is sinful man can have everlasting life and live in Heaven someday with our "Everlasting King."

Amen.