

Psalm Sundays

Text
Psalm 110

Topic
We are informed that when the Lord returns in His Second Coming, He will "crush kings on the day of His wrath"

Title
"Crush to Judgment"

They are the two most iconic images from the Second World War caught on film:

- 👤 Fifty years after the picture was taken, the Associated Press wrote that "the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima was the world's most reproduced."
- 👤 "VJ Day in Times Square" is a photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt that portrays a jubilant sailor embracing and kissing a stranger on Victory over Japan Day ("V-J Day") in New York City's Times Square - August 14, 1945. The photographer wrote, "I was walking through the crowds on VJ Day, looking for pictures. I noticed a sailor coming my way. He was grabbing every female he could find and kissing them all - young girls and old ladies alike. Then I noticed the nurse, standing in that enormous crowd. I focused on her, and just as I'd hoped, the sailor came along, grabbed the nurse, and bent down to kiss her."

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The two photographs capture a different type of victory in the war:

- 👤 It was victory on Iwo Jima, but the war would go on another six months.
- 👤 In Times Square, the victory was final.

Psalm 110 is about warfare and victory:

- 👤 It is set in a time of ongoing conflict. "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
- 👤 It promises final victory. "The Lord is at your right hand; He will crush kings on the day of his wrath."

The conflict is cosmic. It spans all the time from the creation of the earth, and especially mankind, until the Revelation of Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. It is ongoing; and that means we on earth are currently immersed in the conflict.

Here is what I want to get to. **The psalm captures an iconic image.** It's in verse seven: "He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high."

What is it we say about a picture - that it's worth a thousand words? Well, this is the picture of cosmic victory that's worthy of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, of words.

The iconic image of the kneeling, brook-drinking, King of kings holding His head high should elicit hope and produce strength.

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I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 The King Drinking From The Brook Is Your Hope For Tomorrow**, and **#2 The King Drinking From The Brook Is Your Strength For Today**.

#1 - The King Drinking From The Brook Is Your Hope For Tomorrow (v1-6)

You should always read Scripture in several translations. Today I'm going with the NIV for the teaching. It is better in capturing the poetry (IMHO).

Psalms 110:1 Of David. A psalm. The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

David is credited as the author, but the psalm is not about him, or his immediate kingdom on the earth. We are at once transported to the heavenlies where David's "Lord" has been welcomed by God to occupy the place of sovereign authority over the universe.

The Lord is, of course, Jesus. The writer of Hebrews makes that clear, applying Psalm 110 to Jesus, saying, "After [Jesus] had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven... To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?" (1:3 & 13).

The "enemies" of God are defeated. It happened at the Cross upon which Jesus died. Because Jesus died in our place, as our Substitute, God can remain just while He justifies believing sinners.

You may be familiar with this quote, credited to Charles Spurgeon: "You stand before God as if you were Jesus, because Jesus stood before God as if He were you."

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There's a word of pause in verse one: "Until." It tells us that the defeated enemies of God are still at large, still resisting, still fomenting rebellion. These supernatural foes blind humans from God's truth. In one place we are told that Satan holds them captive, to do his will. The Last Days in which we live are full of the doctrines of demons.

If you're wondering why the conflict is ongoing, wondering why God doesn't end it, it's because He is longsuffering, not willing that anyone perish eternally, but rather that they would believe on Jesus and be justified.

There is another important doctrinal message here. William MacDonald reminds us,

One day when Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees in Jerusalem, He asked them what they believed concerning the identity of the Messiah. From whom would the Promised One be descended? They answered correctly that He would be the Son of David. But Jesus showed them that according to Psalm 110 (which they acknowledged to be messianic) the Messiah would also be David's Lord. How could He be David's Son and David's Lord at the same time? And how could David, the king, have someone who was his Lord on earth? The answer of course was that the Messiah would be both God and Man. As God, He would be David's Lord. As Man, He would be David's Son. And Jesus Himself, combining in His Person both deity and humanity, was David's Master and David's Son.

Between verses 1 and 2 we have what H. A. Ironside called "the great parenthesis." It is the Church Age, a mystery revealed, which extends from the Ascension of Jesus to the Second Coming described in verse two.

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Psalms 110:2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of your enemies!"

We have the full revealing of these future events. We know, from the last book in the Bible, that verse two is looking ahead to Jesus ruling the earth from David's throne in Jerusalem. The entire reign lasts one thousand years; thus it is commonly called "the Millennium."

In that glorious Kingdom of God on the earth, there will be children born who will not believe Jesus - even though they see Him. Even though they see **us** - ruling with Jesus, in glorified, sinless, human bodies. The nonbelievers will eventually be led in rebellion by Satan, who will be released from his prison on his own recognizance. Their rebellion is easily overcome.

Psalms 110:3 Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb.

This probably depicts the Second Coming, when the saints of the Church Age return with Jesus. Or I suppose it could describe the final rebellion at the end of the Millennium being crushed. Either way, we are described as "arrayed in holy splendor." That is how the Revelation describes our uniform of the day as well: "And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses" (19:14).

One commentator paraphrased the last words of verse two, *"... as dew is born of its mother the morning, so Thy army shall come to Thee numerous, fresh, bright and powerful."*

We will be an unusual army in that future time in that we never fight; we never engage any supernatural being. Our weapon is our holiness, our

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righteousness - granted by grace. Human beings on the earth will see us, and we will reveal to them the glory of God and His plan to redeem and restore mankind.

Our weaponry today is the same. It is our holiness, our righteousness. It is walking with the Lord, in humility, surrendered to Him as living sacrifices, led and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

At the Second Coming, we follow a victorious Jesus, and He conquers.

Today, we follow a victorious Jesus, and He conquers. But today we follow His example in His first coming. Victory is in our weakness being made strong by Him to confound the wisdom of our enemies. Today we are *martyrs*, not *monarchs*.

That photo of raising the flag on Iwo Jima... Three of the six soldiers who participated were killed during the last six months of the war. We are martyrs, not monarchs.

Psalms 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Mysterious Melchizedek appears in Genesis out of nowhere to Abraham. We learn of him that he was appointed by God to be the Priest and King over Salem, which was ancient Jerusalem.

The phrase "in the order of Melchizedek" is interpreted for us in Hebrews chapters five through seven. There the priesthood of Melchizedek is compared and contrasted with the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood established in the Law of Moses.

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Under the Law, you must be of the tribe of Levi, descended through Moses' brother, Aaron, in order to be a priest. And there were no priest-kings.

Jesus descended from David, of the tribe of Judah. His priesthood isn't less than the one in the Law; it is superior, by far. His kingly priesthood was established by the sovereign eternal decree of God, and since He lives in the power of an endless life, His kingly priesthood will never end.

There will be no separation between secular and spiritual. Worship will be the very atmosphere of the Millennium.

Psalms 110:5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

The last book of the Bible is The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The word "revelation" is *apocalypse*. Because the book tells of the myriad of judgments coming upon the earth, *apocalypse* has come to mean the end of the world; or some global event that nearly wipes-out mankind.

The word means, *to reveal, to unveil*. The book reveals, it unveils, Jesus Christ as He is today, and as He will be for eternity.

Further, *the world doesn't end*. It is redeemed, restored, made new. We're not headed for the end of the world, but for the world's new beginning.

The seven-year Great Tribulation described in chapters six through eighteen of the Revelation is a time in which God is pouring out His wrath against sin upon the whole earth. We refer to it as the Grace of Wrath, because each judgment is designed to draw mankind to salvation in Jesus.

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I hesitate to call it "Tough Love," because the judgments are awful. But they pale in comparison to a single soul being committed to an eternity of conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Psalms 110:6 He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

"Crush," "crushing the rulers," sounds a great deal like the Battle of Armageddon. Rather than describe it, I can read it to you:

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Revelation 19:12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

Revelation 19:13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Revelation 19:14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Revelation 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Revelation 19:16 And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Revelation 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

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Revelation 19:18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great."

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

Revelation 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 19:21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

It might be the final, end-of-the-Millennium battle:

Revelation 20:7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison

Revelation 20:8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth... and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.

Revelation 20:9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

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There's a great, big, beautiful tomorrow. But not until the Second Coming. **"Now** may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ" (Second Thessalonians 3:5).

#2 - The King Drinking From The Brook Is Your Strength For Today (v7)

As iconic images of the *apocalypse* go, the king drinking from a brook wouldn't come to mind. It doesn't seem as exciting as Jesus breaking through the clouds on His great steed at His Second Coming. It almost seems out of place in Psalm 110.

Of course, it isn't out of place. It is one of the powerful iconic images the Holy Spirit wants us to see.

Psalms 110:7 He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high.

How are we to take this? Commentators are split into at least four interpretations:

1. Some commentators see the sufferings of Jesus, compared to a brook, a flow of waters, because of the abundance of them. For support, they cite Scripture in which His partaking of sufferings is expressed by drinking.
2. Other commentators see it as Jesus' victory over Satan, sin, and death - mostly on account of the context of the first six verses.
3. Other commentators think the allusion is to the eagerness of a captain pursuing a routed army, and pushing on his conquest; who coming across a brook by the way, takes a drink of it, and hastens his pursuit of the enemy. This is the eagerness of Jesus to finish the great work of man's salvation, they say, and the conquest of all His and their enemies.

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4. Others see the joy, and comfort which Jesus has in the presence of God at his right hand, having finished the work of our salvation. The drinking is symbolic of His being satisfied.

I want to suggest to you that there may not be one 'correct' interpretation. There doesn't need to be. The verse isn't teaching doctrine or duty. There is nothing to agree with, or to disagree with. The very variety of possible interpretations tells us we have some liberty.

The first six verses - those have obvious connections to specific biblical persons and events. They are not symbols; they are not allegories. They anticipate the persons and the events of the Revelation.

We have an image of Jesus pausing somewhere along His journey to refresh Himself. The Holy Spirit is holding it up for us to see Jesus in a unique snapshot. It is for each of us to draw strength for the conflict that is all around us - "until" we are with the Lord.

Here is something the Lord ministered to me. Jesus stops to drink from a brook of running water. Running water is also called *living water*. Like my Lord, I need living water - the refreshment of the indwelling Holy Spirit to fill me, to lead me. I can't simply keep going, on my own, is I am to share in His victory. Having begun in the Spirit, I cannot make progress in my flesh.

It's the pause that refreshes.

In the image, Jesus lifted His head high. There are more than a few verses in which Jesus lifted His head toward Heaven or in which He looked intently:

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- 👤 Jesus “lifted up His eyes” before some of the miracles He performed, e.g., before feeding the multitudes, and before raising Lazarus from the dead.
- 👤 Jesus “lifted up His eyes to Heaven” when He prayed for His disciples before His crucifixion.
- 👤 He “looked up” and saw Zacchaeus high in a tree before inviting Himself to a meal that would change that tax collectors life.

Jesus still “looks up,” and “lifts His eyes,” so to speak, **for you & for me.** I’m reminded that He is praying for me; that He could do a miracle if it was in my best interest; and that He can save me when I’m far out on a limb.

Think about this iconic image, won’t you? It can bring you strength for the battles in the parenthesis of the Church Age when sharing in the sufferings of Jesus is our mandate.

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