

THE ASCENDED CHRIST.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 110

Luke 24: 49 – 53

Lord's Day 18

Psalter 375

Psalter 418

Psalter 199

Psalter 45: 1,3,4,6

Congregation,

The Lord Jesus Christ is the center of the whole Word of God. He is the summary, the conclusion and the content of the Word of God. Neither may anything else be preached to us than Jesus Christ. He is most needed. He is the only Way to salvation.

That is why Augustine the theologian from the early church, from around 400A.D. said that he did not really like anything unless it had Christ in it. He had studied the Greek classical writers and their philosophies and found them to be interesting and could delight in them, but at the same time this delight was tempered because the name of Jesus is not found in these books. All the learning of this world cannot be compared to the knowledge of Christ. Knowing Christ you have something far above everything you can learn in this world.

Think of what Paul said: Philippians 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*

Christ is revealed to us in the Old and the New Testaments. But there is a difference. Christ is explained to us in the O. T. under a veil, it is still in the shadows. Christ is explained to us in the N.T. openly.

But already in the O.T. we see Christ. He is reflected in the laws. The ceremonies in the temple reflected Christ. Christ came to fulfil the whole law of God, and that is for His people the ground of their righteousness. He came to pay the penalty for transgressing the law. He was the Lamb of God that had to be slaughtered. That is all prefigured in the laws.

The O.T. prophets reveal Christ to us. Christ Himself is the Author of their prophesies. He gave light to men of old to prophesy concerning Him and His coming and his work.

We also find Christ revealed in the Book of the Psalms. What was it again we read in Luke 24: 44 there the Lord Jesus speaks to His disciples: *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.*

The Psalms speak of Christ. Especially Psalm 110 reveals Christ to us as the Saviour, who enters into His glory. This psalm is directly connected to the Ascension of Christ. Christ ascended into glory. He went up. His disciples were watching Him. as He spoke to them, He was lifted up. He was blessing them. He stretched forth His hands over them, leaving his blessing behind. He was taken up and a cloud took their view of Him away. He was gone. He ascended into heaven. What happened then? To answer that we must look at Psalm 110. We consider our text: verse 1a *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand.*

We meditate on: **The Ascended Christ. 1. Who He is? 2. Where He is? 3. How he is doing?**

So, in the first place: Who He is? He is my Lord. The LORD said unto my Lord. Secondly, where He is? He is at the right Hand of God. Thirdly: How is He doing? He is sitting, Sit thou at my right hand.

1. The Psalms speak of Christ. We can give various examples. Psalm 22, the suffering Servant of the Lord, Psalm 23 He is the Good Shepherd. In church life people find much comfort from the book of Psalms. Some people have such love to a certain psalm that they call that 'their' psalm, or, that was the psalm of my father. Then we think of various well-known psalms. We think of Psalm 23. That is especially loved. Or Psalm 42: My soul thirsts for God. Or Psalm 63: *Thy lovingkindness is better than life*, Or Psalm 17: 15 *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

But do you know anyone who says Psalm 110, that is my psalm? Do you know anyone who has a special love for Psalm 110? Think of Peter and Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, actually the whole early church loved Psalm 110. They had such great comfort from Psalm 110. Did you know that this Psalm is the most quoted psalm in the N.T? There is not a psalm so much quoted in the N.T. as Psalm 110. This little psalm of 7 verses is the most quoted psalm in the N.T.

Well, that should be sufficient reason for us to pay special attention to this psalm. There must be something special about it. There is. This psalm is unique because it speaks directly about Messiah. This psalm reveals to us the Lord Jesus Christ in the O.T. without any veil covering it. Because it says there in verse 1, *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

David speaks there in a unique manner. Why unique? Because David speaks more about the Messiah but then it is always a reflection from himself, or in comparison to himself. He speaks about victories and

salvation wrought and then refers to himself, but in the background it refers to Christ. We see in the background Christ shining, but here in Psalm 110 David is not around anymore. The only thing we find of David is that he says in verse 1: *The LORD said unto my Lord*. He recognizes that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God is David's Lord. but that is all, for the rest David is in the background and he speaks most wonderful things of the Lord Jesus and of His rule and glory and Kingdom.

It is most comforting for the church of Christ to realize and to know that Jesus is King, and that He rules forever. He shall bring His people into glory. He is ruling all things in this present world. Let the Romans rule, but in reality it is Christ, who rules in the midst of His enemies. We will see startling and fearsome examples of that. He rules, He reigns. His Kingdom shall come and is now already breaking through into this world. And all his enemies are being overthrown. Not one who defies the Son of God shall be exempted. They will all be overthrown.

That was the source of rich comfort for His people in the early church, when during the first 200 years the church was heavily persecuted, it was especially in this Psalm 110 that the church found such deep comfort. That is why it is quoted so often in the N.T.

But not only for that reason, we find such blessed N.T. truths spoken of here. Some theologians have studied this psalm and they came to the conclusion that you can find so much of the apostolic confession back in this psalm. They called this psalm David's confession of faith. David's creed. Consider what you can all find in this Psalm 110:

You find here the Trinity in verse 1: *The LORD said unto my Lord*. There is Lord, God the Father, and my Lord, which is Christ and Christ was sanctified as King and as priest and that takes place through the Holy Spirit.

You find here the incarnation of Christ; David says: 'My Lord', but this One is His Son. Yet at the same time he honours Him as My Lord.

You find here also the sufferings of Christ, because He was consecrated a priest and a priest has to bring offerings. He gave Himself.

You find a reference to His resurrection: *He shall lift up His head*, vs. 7.

You find here His ascension and glorification: *Sit Thou at My right hand*. That includes His descent into hell. For Paul says: Ephes. 4:9 *Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?*

You also see here the holy catholic church gathered together by the scepter of His Kingdom. He holds them together in a beautiful communion of the saints. Psalm 110:2,3 *The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*

You find here the last judgment because all His enemies shall be subdued. Verse 1 says that *I make thine enemies thy footstool*. Paul says: *he must subdue all His enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be subdued is death*.

You also see here life everlasting, for Christ is priest forever and He is sitting forever at the right hand of God.

This shows that this psalm very clearly explains to us the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Himself also loved this psalm. It is quoted numerous times in the Gospels. Matt 22: 41-45; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; We find that Peter quotes this psalm on the day of Pentecost: Acts 2: 34. Hebrews 1:3, 13; 5:6; 7:17,21; 8:1; 10: 12,13; Ephes 1: 20; 1 Cor 15: 24-28. The list goes on. That shows how significant the N.T. considers this Psalm 110 to be.

Let us look at these simple but deep words: *The LORD said unto my Lord*. This is a unique phrase in the O.T. We are here allowed to look inside the Holy Trinity. We see here the LORD, which is God the Father, and He is speaking to His Son. David calls the Son: My Lord. That means to say that David recognized the great King, who would come from David's loins, as Messiah, as His own Lord. He calls here His Son my Lord.

But more than that God says Lord to Him. *The LORD hath said to my Lord*. God the Father is Lord and God the Son is Lord. God has power, the Son has power. God has authority, the Son has authority. The Father is merciful, the Son is merciful. Omnipotent, sovereign, holy. The Father and the Son are equal.

The LORD said unto my Lord. Here we also see the eternal decree of God the Father and the Son. Jehovah says to *Adonai*. David under inspiration of the Holy Spirit heard the solemn Voice of Jehovah speaking to Messiah from old. What a wonderful intercourse there has been between the Father and the Son. From this secret and intimate communion springs forth the Covenant of Grace and all its marvelous arrangements. Now the Triune God condescends that we may listen in to what Jehovah says to His Son. It is so comforting because this communication between the Father and the Son deals with salvation and deliverance from all enemies. It deals with eternal salvation. The Head is Lord and He shall gain the ultimate victory over all enemies. His people shall be forever with Him.

He is Lord. He came forth from God the Father to be Lord over all. He is before all things and all things consist by Him. He is also Lord because He is the first born, the heir of all things. He is Lord because He is anointed to be the Mediator, to be the prophet, priest and King over his people. He would have in all things the pre-eminence.

He is Lord in power and strength. He has power to forgive sins, power to make alive whom He will. He has power to cleanse, to justify and to sanctify. He has power to strengthen in temptations. Power to raise from the dead. Power to hold fast His sheep. Power to cast out the accuser of the brethren. He is Lord in authority to judge, to anoint, to command whom and what He will.

He is Lord. If He is Lord then we must trust in Him. we must depend upon Him. For all things of life, for our present support and for our future grace. He that believeth in Him shall not be put to shame. We cannot serve two masters. Christ is Lord. Him we must follow and serve and love.

2. Where He is. That is what we find further: *Sit thou at my right hand.* The Lord Jesus is at the right Hand of God. That is the place of honour. The kings would place those whom they wish to honour at their right hand side. You know of Solomon who sat his mother Bathsheba down at his right hand, in 1 Kings 2:19 *the king rose up to meet Bathsheba, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.* Psalm 45:9, *upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*

The right hand is in Scripture the symbol of strength, and blessing. Psalm 77 says *I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.* That is the years in which God in power gave His refreshing grace. That was by his power. That flows from His right Hand. The strength and salvation of the Lord is symbolized by His right Hand. He strengthens His people by the right hand of His righteousness. That means that in their weakness He supports them.

God's right Hand is called the right Hand of majesty, the right Hand of power. To sit then at God's right Hand means to have great power and honour. But the Lord also executes His wrath from His right hand. His fury is the cup of His right hand.

Christ is now exalted. God decrees that His Son shall be King forever. He is at His right hand. Nothing can undo this. That is the joy of His church. Her King rules. Jesus is on the Throne. That is the comfort of the N.T. believers. That is the comfort whereby Paul can say: Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

Jesus has been decreed to be King. God has spoken. His Word is true, His Word is reliable. It shall come to pass. It came to pass because Jesus went out with His disciples to the Mount of Olives and there as He spoke to them He was taken up and they saw Him and He went to His Father to see the fulfillment of this Word spoken by His Father.

He is Lord of lords. He is King of kings. He is the eternal Son of God. He is at the right hand of God the Father. The rule and the authority are given to Him. He reigns forever.

We must make a distinction between His rule by nature (*Regnum naturale*). That is His power and authority, that He already had over all things. He ruled over the waves and the animals and over all people. He had power to silence the storm and waves. He ruled over evil spirits and over all people. That is His rule that He always had. But now it is different. Now He has the rule in which He saves and in which He dispenses salvation. (*regnum oeconomicum*) that means He can dispense the Divine economy of salvation. This was given to him by His Father. He is now Head of His church, He is a prince of peace, a King of righteousness.

Therefore God prepared Him a body, or a human nature. God anointed Him with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In the strength of the Holy Spirit the Son gave Himself as the ransom price for sin. He shed His Blood and gave His life and He arose from the dead. He ascended into Heaven. God gives Him glory, power and dominion. God has given Him the souls of men, He has given Him power of judging and condemning enemies. *The LORD said unto my Lord, sit Thou at My right Hand.*

Church of God, remember He lives, and He is at the right Hand of God. He is there forever. He has the keys of death and hell. Your Beloved is made to be Lord and ruler.

Jacob had to hear that Joseph his beloved was made ruler over Egypt, what joy this was for Jacob. He revived. But the fact that your Beloved Saviour is Ruler and Lord over all and that He is there for your good, that should fill you with far greater joy. He is King on Zion's holy hill to bless you, to protect you and to take you where He is.

He is at the right hand. He has all power and He uses that power to save His elect. He uses that power to rule over His enemies. He will He is gloriously exalted, above the angels. He is on his throne. He is glorious in His Name, as He has a Name above every name. He is glorious in His rule, for His rule is full of sweetness, to His people, fear towards His enemies. He is righteous and pure. What terror He instills in His enemies.

Think of the way He had to go in order to gain this exaltation. He first humbled Himself. That is also the way for all of His children. They will be exalted in no other way than in the way of humbling themselves. There will be a cross to bear, a battle to fight, a race to run., There will be tribulations and afflictions. There is the fight of faith. It costs self denial. You go down and become less. But in that way the Lord Jesus shall lead all his people to share in His glory. They too will reign with Him forever. They will be made like unto Him. Child of God, humble yourself before Him so that you may be exalted in due time. The only way to do this is the way of love to Him, for His person.

In that way be assured that he will supply you with all you stand in need of. He as the Head gives to all his members grace for grace, from the right Hand of God.

3. How is He doing? *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* How is this King doing? He is doing very well. He is sitting. He is seated at the right Hand of His Father. That is a special statement.

His work is done. He may sit. He may sit by Divine appointment. The first stage of the exaltation of Christ was His resurrection. The second stage is His ascension into heaven. The third stage is His sitting at the right Hand of God.

We must understand the significance of sitting. It does not refer to a physical posture. Because Peter and Paul both say elsewhere that He is at the right Hand of God. Stephen saw Him standing at the right Hand of God.

In Scripture sitting refers to rest. Christ has entered into the rest. He has ceased from His works and from His sufferings. He is in the rest in this sense that He has fulfilled the work that He had to do on earth as mediator. We think of Hebrews 4:10 *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works.* He had to learn obedience by the things He was to suffer. He was made perfect through suffering. He finished this all. Hebrews 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.* He will do this till his enemies be made his footstool. We think of what the Lord Jesus says in John 17:4,5 *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

He finished the work of redemption on earth. It is finished. He has overcome death and as the sign of this He would ascend to His Father and be seated at the right Hand of God the Father. That is why He said to Mary after His resurrection: John 20:17 *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.* He was taken from prison and judgment, because the debt was paid. God's people be assured that His Blood pays for all your sins. Sinners realize that there is only salvation for you in Christ, because He is seated. He has finished the work of earning salvation. Look to Him for full redemption.

This rest also humbles us, for we can never reach the rest in ourselves. We are never done with our work. We are never finished. All our work is incomplete. It is all stained with sin. But Jesus' work is complete. He can wash us from all our sins. He can save to the uttermost.

Sitting also refers to taking possession of something. We read in Judges 5:17 that *Asher sat, continued on the seashore.* That is a permanent possession. Christ sits in heaven. He is there permanently. That is where all His people shall, be with him, He is there to gather all His people to be with Him.

Sitting is a symbol of honour, and majesty. The king sits on his throne and does not even stand in the presence of his noblemen. Think of the honour and majesty of Christ. His divine nature is glorified, because never more shall He have to hide His divine nature under the covering of His human nature. His human nature is glorified because He is now elevated above all suffering and weakness. Christ has all majesty and honour. This is for His people. He has power and authority to present His people before God without any stain of sin. They shall be with Him. They shall inherit this salvation. He shall deliver them now from the fiery arrows of the evil one. He shall save their souls. He has power.

Sitting is also the posture of a Judge. He sits to speak justice. He sits in glory and honour, in rest. He is King forever. To Him must all bow. We think of Psalm 2. There it says in verse 12: *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

There is more to be found in what it means to be seated at the right hand of the Father. That is that God will make His enemies His footstool. That is what we find further explained in this Psalm 110.

But now as a conclusion we may say: Kiss the Son. That is your calling on Ascension Day. Kiss the Son. To kiss means to love Him for His finished work, for His salvation. Love Him as Saviour, as Prophet, Priest and King. To kiss in religious sense means also to worship and adore. To kiss is also an expression of loyalty and obedience. This is duty we owe to Christ. He is ascended into glory. He is seated at the right Hand of God. Kiss the Son. Bow before Him. Worship Him. Be obedient to Him. Be ruled by the scepter of His mouth, His Word. Every soul which shall not hear Him shall be destroyed from among the people. Whoever we are, great or small, we are all called to kiss the son, honour Him.

The natural man does not like this. He cries out: Let us break His bands asunder. We will not have this man to rule over us. But remember you either will serve God, or you will serve the devil. The devil has come to steal, to kill and to destroy, but the Son has come to save and to give life eternal. The proof is that He is ascended into glory. He is seated at the right Hand of God. His Kingdom is a Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy. From His throne He sends His Spirit. Through His Spirit, sinners cannot live anymore without Him. They are convicted. They cry for mercy. He hears. Has He heard you cry for grace? Do you bow for this King? Kiss the Son. AMEN.