

# A King to rule

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Date: 04 October 2020

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning, everybody. Thanks for joining us. My name is Vijay. I'm one of the pastors here. It's great to have you with us here this morning. If you could please keep Psalm 110 open, which Barry read for us, that would be great. And I'm going to start with a question.
- If you were in a burning building, which leader would you trust to rescue you? If you were in a burning building, which leader or hero would you trust to rescue you?
- I want to let that stew for a second there. I wonder how many of you are thinking about Prince Charles. Well, why not? He's a prince, isn't he? A future king? I guess we probably don't have that Disney view of princes on white horses. Prince William, he's pretty good. But Prince Charles is a bit...
- I don't know what Prince Charles is. He's just a bit something, isn't he? All right, then. In a burning building, how many of you said you would call Andrew Price? He's sort of sitting over there. Or myself. Would you call either of us?
- Why not? We're priests, aren't we? Well, we probably don't have that high Catholic view of priests in this place. After all, these past few years, we've seen a bit of the damage done by priests in Catholic and Anglican circles.
- [ 1 : 2 3 ]     American politics. Aussies were obsessed with it. The big election is next month. The debates were this week. Which one of the candidates would you trust to rescue you?
- Actually, I suppose at the moment, Trump's in quarantine. He's not in a position to help you. And I think Biden's knees might actually give way if he did that fireman's lift over his shoulder.
- But closer to home, Melbourne is sort of on fire with COVID and lockdown. In summer, lots of the state will literally be like a burning building.
- Is there a leader you would trust to rescue you? See, I wonder how your emotional energy is going when it comes to leaders. Do you have room in your head and your heart to trust in just one more?
- Or has 2020 and some of the big issues of life exhausted you when it's come to leaders? I'll be honest. I'm worried that we, me included, I'm worried that we can't talk about leaders without the conversation becoming ungodly and toxic.
- [ 2 : 4 3 ]     And that is why we're doing Psalm 110 today. It's one of the most important psalms because it's written to Israel at a time when they were exhausted by leaders.
- This psalm shows what God has done about leadership once and for all. You see, way back in Psalm 2, which Andrew opened the service with, in Psalm 2, God announced that he has a king, a perfect leader, who will rule the nations in justice, who will end God's enemies.
- The Psalm 2 king is good news for anyone exhausted by bad leaders. It's the gospel for God's people. And the rest of the book of the Psalms is a search for this man.
- David, he wrote a lot of these poems. Maybe he is the one. After all, he ruled over Israel. He expanded the kingdom. He defeated Goliath.

He was a man after God's own heart. Maybe he is the man. But actually, in many of the Psalms, many of David's Psalms, he's miles away from Zion.

[ 3 : 54 ] Instead of smashing enemies, he's on the run from them, hiding in caves and the like. In Psalm 51 with Bathsheba, David was an adulterer and a murderer and a power abuser too.

He is not the Psalm 2 king. Maybe it's Solomon, his son. Could he be the one? He was from the promised dynasty. He had unparalleled wisdom. He even built the temple.

But he was unfaithful to God as well. His 3,000 wives led him into idolatry and divided the kingdom. In fact, 95% of Israel's kings were all hopeless and sinful.

Nothing like the Psalm 2 king. And the overall narrative of the Psalms is a search for this man and a lament as Israel suffers from one bad king to another until she's eventually exiled.

You see, the Israelites, like the Melbournites, were exhausted when it came to leaders. And that is why Psalm 110 is so important for them and for us.

[ 5 : 09 ] Because 108 Psalms later, after all the strife in their state and in ours, God announces that his king is still on his agenda, that it's right for us to hold out for one more leader.

And even though the Bible is God speaking to us, today is very special. Because today God speaks to his son.

See, this is a Psalm of David. And he narrates a conversation within the Trinity between the Lord in capital letters, that's Yahweh, and David's Lord, Jesus.

The idea is we're listening into a conversation, the Lord God, the Father is over there, God the Son is over there, and David is over here, narrating it all down.

And so let's read. First one, 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.

[ 6 : 20 ] The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, Rule in the midst of your enemies. You see, in one sense, Jesus is David's son, his descendant.

But when he arrives, he did call David Lord, which that would have been respectful. Because actually, it was the other way around. Jesus was rejected by the Jewish authorities, but then he quoted verse one at them many times to show the pecking order in Israel.

The Lord God, Yahweh, said to David's Lord, Jesus, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

And the message for the Pharisees then and for God's enemies today is don't oppose Jesus. Because God the Father has said to God the Son, Take your rightful place next to me while I turn your enemies into furniture.

The footstool here, it's not the comfy one by the fire. This is battle language. The idea is that Jesus will be more comfortable when all opposition to God has been ended.

[ 7 : 37 ] When his foot is on his enemy's throat. It's an Old Testament image of absolute power versus absolute vulnerability. Verse two talks about his scepter, which is, you know, it's a staff or a rod that showed the authority of a ruler.

Jesus, so God will extend Jesus' scepter his rule way beyond Zion. The Father says, rule in the midst of your enemies.

It is a forced rule. The enemies don't come happily and repent. Jesus forces them to bend the knee. If we're thinking dictator, just remember that Jesus is as pure and good as God.

To rival authorities who want to oppose God, he says, bring it on. My son's rule will extend everywhere, even in your midst.

Resistance is futile. And I think verse three is the call to enlist in the army. I think it's the call for us. Verse three, your troops will be willing on the day of your battle, arrayed in holy splendor.

[ 8 : 52 ] Your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb. The footnote in my Bible says that even the translators had a tough time with this verse. But I think it's picture language about enlisting in an army.

See, God's people, they've seen the scepter of his king. They offer themselves in his service. They close ranks willingly and gladly on the day of his battle because his victory is certain.

You see, once they were a sinful lot, once a leaderless rabble, but now arrayed in holy splendor. They were totally new people. They're like young men, refreshed, like the Jew, born again, like the morning's womb, it says.

And the army imagery puts a sharp edge on what it means to follow Jesus. It's a with him or against him sort of feel.

Whose side will we be on? One with the world in opposition to God? Or will we close ranks willingly, gladly behind his king? Do we wake up every day like soldiers with that sense of purpose and mission and determination?

[ 10 : 14 ] Are we in a battle every day against the world, the flesh, and the devil? Every day, how do my thoughts, words, and actions show where my allegiance lies?

You see, Psalm 2 announces a king and then centuries later again in 110 to underline its certainty and its importance and its imminence.

Jesus' arrival is the big thing on God's agenda. We spent time in the Psalms these past few weeks bringing all our lockdown emotion to the Lord, but this Psalm, it draws us back out to the big thing God is doing in the world.

Have you got enough emotional energy to trust in one more leader? Israel were desperate for new leadership. All her kings were hopeless.

Her priests were rubbish too. And so where will she turn for leadership? Who will protect her from enemies and intercede for her with God?

[ 11 : 23 ] And the answer in verse 4 is a blast from the past. Verse 4, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, he's a bit of a mystery man in the Bible. He appears out of nowhere and then doesn't seem to die but just sort of vanishes into thin air.

And so he was of a different order, a forever priest. And that is just what Israel needed because one of the big problems with priests is they keep dying.

Hebrews 7 which is on your screen, you can see there. Now there have been many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in office.

But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he's able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

[ 12 : 26 ] You see, every time a Christian sins, Jesus says to his father, turn aside your anger. Don't judge that one. Every time he's a priest forever, he's always alive, always living, always interceding for us.

Another problem with priests is that generally they're no good. Again, on the slide there you can see, look at verse 27 there, unlike the other high priests, Jesus does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people.

You see, the reason you don't call Andrew Price or myself in a burning building, the reason you don't call any other priest when you're on fire is we're all in the same building with you.

We've got enough of our own sin to atone for, let alone trying to mediate with God for you. But in Jesus, not only do you have a forever priest, but one who is holy, blameless.

Hebrew says, pure and set apart from sinners, unlike all other high priests before him. The Hebrews passage we looked at, it said that Jesus sacrificed for their sins, once for all, as a good priest should.

[ 13 : 57 ] It said that Jesus offered himself, take me so they can be saved, my life for theirs, so they can go free, as a good king should.

And that is the gospel. Way back in Psalm 110, the powerful king, the perfect priest. It is good news for anyone who lines up, who closes ranks with Jesus.

At the moment, my auntie Christine, she's on the prayer list, my auntie Christine, she has advanced cancer, she's a lapsed Catholic, and every week I go and visit her, and she's sort of dusted off the bottles of holy water and the rosary beads and got them all next to her bed when I go and see her.

And I'm sure her priests were perfect gentlemen, but none of them were 24-7 enough, or none of them walked with her down through the years, throughout all her life.

She's a great lady, but none of her water or rosary beads are holy enough to atone for all her sin.

[ 15 : 13 ] and so I keep telling her, look, Anglican or Catholic, she's just got to have Jesus. It's a simple swap. His life for hers.

His rule for hers. A few weeks ago she said to me, right, so it's not about religion then, it's whether I love Jesus.

And that's it. That's absolutely correct. And I wish that I was her priest 60 years ago, so that she could have had a lifetime exploring what it means to love Jesus, exploring what he has done for her, so she could know it for years and years the way we all know it.

And I'm so angry and exhausted by church leaders who don't prepare their people to die, who don't prepare people for the arrival of God's king.

The sharp edge of Psalm 110 is that Jesus can be our Lord like David or our enemy. But make no mistake, he will win in the end.

[ 16 : 27 ] If you're not a Christian here and you're listening in, we're really grateful that you've decided to join us. But you can be cynical about what I've said, you can scoff at everything we believe, but only for a time.

See, we might, or people might reduce this psalm to being just poetry and just sort of abstract ideas. We might think it's never going to happen. Maybe it seems that Jesus is nowhere and he's not actually going to rule.

And so the remaining verses 5 to 7 underline the certainty of it all. This will be our last point. Look at verse 5 and 6.

The Lord is at your right hand. He will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

And I think what's actually happening in verses 5, 6 and 7, they sort of parallel verses 1, 2 and 3. Both mention sitting at the right hand of God.

[ 17 : 32 ] Both mention crushing enemies, judging and ruling over the nations. The idea is that Jesus will certainly rule. And in the middle, I think that's why it says, the Lord has sworn, verse 4, and will not change his mind.

You've just got to have a priest. You've just got to have Jesus if you're to escape his rule, his judgment. But there is a sense of determination about the whole thing.

And if we're shocked by all the judgment language, I think it's because we don't understand enemies anymore. We don't really have enemies per se, not in the way that they did back in warring nations in the Old Testament.

But 1 Corinthians 15, which is on your screen, that is a list of God's enemies. It says, then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom, that is, Jesus hands the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. You see, the last enemy there, death, that is an enemy we can all be afraid of.

[ 18 : 51 ] I think the coronavirus is an example of death and its power and reach in the world. Death is undefeated so far. But we have a king.

God is at his right hand and he will take death's corpse and throw it on a heap. He will heap up the corpse of death along with all his other enemies.

And verse seven, I think, shows his determination. It says, he will drink from a brook along the way and so he will lift his head high.

The picture is that Jesus arrives to take on death. It's a tough battle. Death makes a run for it. Will Jesus give up? No way. Verse seven, he will take a drink along the way.

Like a marathon runner whose determination and resolve is lifted up when they have a drink of water. It is a relentless pursuit of death, but Jesus will overtake death and his enemies.

[ 19 : 57 ] He will tie them up and put his feet on their throats and end them. It will be a terrible day to be in opposition to God, but a great day to be in the army because this victory is completely, completely certain.

And this glorious picture of Jesus today, it is a refuge during lockdown, when the shadow of death sort of looms over our state.

We need not fear it. This picture of Jesus, we can hold it up and compare any other leader out there to him and say finally, here is one we can trust to act for good and for God.

Finally, one who will really bring justice and peace and an end to evil. Here is a king we can confidently close ranks behind.

Have you got enough room in your head and your heart to trust just one more leader? Do you feel that Jesus is your hero in the burning buildings of your life?

[ 21 : 10 ] Who do you turn to? The pressure at work, when the temptations to sin are overwhelming, when lockdown life has us beaten?

do you ask your king for help? Is Jesus the first name you reach for? The perfect priest who turns aside God's anger, the powerful king who will deal with evil and death forever.

Jesus is so much more comforting than any other leader out there. His rule is the biggest truth claim you will find and being his friend or his footstool is much more urgent and important than anything COVID related.

Should I pray and give thanks to God for Jesus? Do join me. Father God, we praise you for the Lord Jesus.

We praise you that once and for all you will do away with evil and death and all things that are not good. Thank you that you are determined and will certainly send your king.

[ 22 : 25 ] Thank you that he has come once and we look forward to his arrival, the completion of his work again. Please would we close ranks behind Jesus.

Please would we show how much we trust and obey him in our lives. Please would we show where our allegiance lies in the battle. And we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.