



Jesus Music

Psalms #7 | Nov 26, 2023 | 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 AM | Preached by Steve H

Opening



I can't help but realize that I'm growing older. There are lots of signs, but one recently that hurt my soul just a little was when I was driving down the road with my daughter. Chaynee loves to make sure we have music playing while we're in the car, so she was in the role of radio DJ.

(For the most part, our styles are compatible; I'm more OK with her choices than Deb's! LOL).

As she was scanning, she stumbled across a song that brought me back to high school. It was a rock song, one that had a good groove. It was popular; it was *cool*. She stopped flipping through stations to listen to this one, and I had a moment of pride at her fine taste.

"Why did you stop at this one, Chaynee?" I asked...looking for some answer related to how awesome it sounded.

Her reply? "I recognized it from a credit card commercial." *[Debbie downer sound effect]*

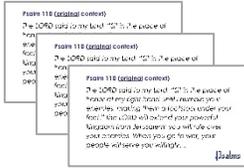
It's deflating to know that your cool high school anthems are now being relegated to credit card advertising (*and it will be even worse when it starts being used for arthritis medication commercials*).

But our little interaction illustrated a key point (beyond my age): it reminded me that music has a life of its own. Songs don't just stay in their lane. They branch out and find new listeners and new connections and new meaning. Different generations identify in fresh ways with these tunes and use them for new purposes:



- *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* by Bach is now the song you associate with Dracula.
- *Sweet Caroline* (BOMP BOMP BOMMM) by Neil Diamond is now a crowd anthem at sporting events.
- *My City Was Gone* by The Pretenders is now known as the opening music for The Rush Limbaugh Show.
- ...and Old Testament Psalm 110 is a New Testament hit!

Maybe that last one failed to connect with you, but it's worth listening to. Here in Psalm 110, we find a fantastic royal song (*a song connected to the nation's king*) that illustrates the development of new meaning in music. In case you don't know it, let's spend a little time there this morning. Turn in your Bible to Psalm 110 right now, and let's read.



Psalm 110 (original context)

Psalm 110

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The LORD said to my Lord,
“Sit in the place of honor at my right hand
until I humble your enemies,
making them a footstool under your feet.”
- ² The LORD will extend your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem;
you will rule over your enemies.
- ³ When you go to war,
your people will serve you willingly.
You are arrayed in holy garments,
and your strength will be renewed each day like the morning dew.
- ⁴ The LORD has taken an oath and will not break his vow:
“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”
- ⁵ The Lord stands at your right hand to protect you.
He will strike down many kings when his anger erupts.
- ⁶ He will punish the nations
and fill their lands with corpses;
he will shatter heads over the whole earth.
- ⁷ But he himself will be refreshed from brooks along the way.
He will be victorious.

Explanation

In our series, we’ve been looking at the *range* of songs and trying to learn to *read them well* as we *cultivate a heart* that shares their wisdom. Faced with that task here, we can deduce a few things just from *careful* reading. Slow down...and really pay attention to what’s happening. Let’s read this song well by asking a couple of questions about its ORIGINAL context.



Who is in the song?

In this song, we find an interaction between two “lords.”

“The LORD said to my Lord...” (Psalm 110:1)

- **The LORD (all caps).** Whenever you see this in your Old Testament, it is a special glimpse into the original Hebrew language. *The LORD* is a translation of the divine Hebrew name Yahweh (YHWH).
 - o The Israelites didn't want to sin by saying God's name wrong (and thus breaking the command not to take His Name in vain), so they just avoided saying it altogether! Rather than read the word "Yahweh," they would substitute their word for lord/master (Adonai). So, our English translations follow that tradition and say "Lord," but they use small caps to indicate that the Hebrew writer was originally using God's covenant name, YHWH.

- **My lord (lowercase).** Here is the *actual* Hebrew word for lord/master (Adonai). In this case it is a human "lord," a reference to a royal ruler. So, we have a powerful human in a position of deference before the all-powerful God.
 - o In context, this seems to be related to David and his dynasty – those descendants who would follow him on the throne.

So, if we are going to read this psalm well, we need to pay attention to those two individuals and their interaction – noticing who is speaking and who is acting.



Tip: You can print out the song and mark it up. Use a consistent symbol for each individual – maybe a CIRCLE for God and a BOX for the human king. Then, at a glance, you'll be better equipped to see each person's place in the song. You can even use different symbols for actions done by God or actions done by the king.

What is the song's focus?



As we explore the action, what do we discover? We find that Psalm 110 is a song of victory and honor. The human king ("the Little Lord") is being placed in the winner's circle by the godly King ("the LORD"). Consider some of the things that God says to this human ruler:

1. *"Sit at my right hand."* (v. 1) Take a seat, God says. You don't have to work anymore, I've got this. And don't just sit anywhere! Sit at my right hand!

It's reminiscent of what we hear in Luke 14 where the wedding guest is honored. Here, the Little Lord is moved into the best seat in the house. He is **HONORED**.
2. *"Have a footstool."* (v. 1) The Little Lord gets to prop up his feet...and not just on anything. Here, we see an ancient middle east picture of victory – a king literally putting his feet on the neck of his enemies. It may not be politically correct (or comfy!), but it shows **VICTORY**...a victory achieved by God.
3. *"Extend your scepter."* (v. 2) God allow the Little Lord to increase his **POWER** beyond its usual boundaries. It is a picture of expansion from the seat of power ("Zion" aka Jerusalem).

4. "Command your holy army." (v. 3) Instead of recruiting or drafting soldiers, God inspires an army of holy warriors to volunteer and to serve in ongoing **STRENGTH** and **PURITY**.

NOTE: This verse is worded strangely in the original Hebrew, making it harder to untangle into English, but the warriors are somehow described in terms of the morning dew...either a reference to abundance, or sudden appearing, or perhaps fueled by sugary fluorescent caffeinated soda (?). Whatever it means, the context assures us that the phrase is positive!

5. "You have access to Me." (v. 4) The Little Lord isn't just a king; he is a priest! He can approach God in a way that few others can. It is a picture of **PROXIMITY** to God, and it is promised **FOREVER**.

The rest of the song (v. 5-7) continues to paint a picture of victory. But as you read, notice that none of these accomplishments are the Little Lord's to claim! He is never the subject (the one doing the action); he is the object (the one acted upon). He is just along for the ride, enjoying the blessings that God is showering upon Him. He is the picture of **HUMILITY** in this song.

How should we understand the song?

Remember back to our sermon on the royal psalms? There is no doubt that this Little Lord is completely dependent on the LORD (all caps) for his success. It paints a picture of providence, and consequently it should result in THANKS!

Remember: "Godly thanks is rooted in God's good rule."

Any normal Israelite from the time of David forward would just look at this song and use it to praise God and trust Him for His provision and protection.

End of story. Solid song. Classic praise.

Musically it is the equivalent of this song (a traditional choir with European folk song vibes):



But then...then something comes along and changes this song into something completely different! (a late 2010s rap). *Both renditions of Psalm 110...but changed!!!!*



Psalm 110 (new context)

Normal Israelites might hear Psalm 110 in its normal, original context...but as Christians, we can't help but hear other things in this song. The song has new listeners and new connections and new meaning!

Jesus vs. The Pharisees (Matthew 22:44)

Read verse one of Psalm 110, and you and I as Christians are immediately transported to the New Testament book of Matthew where Jesus challenges the Pharisees – the religious leaders of the day – to a theological battle.

“Then, surrounded by the Pharisees, Jesus asked them a question: “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They replied, “He is the son of David.” Jesus responded, “Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, call the Messiah ‘my Lord’? For David said, ‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies beneath your feet.’ Since David called the Messiah ‘my Lord,’ how can the Messiah be his son?” No one could answer him. And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.” (Matthew 22:41–46, NLT)

Jesus throws down a little bit of a theological puzzle for the Pharisees...one that doesn't make sense according to the old religious rules, but one that has a simple solution when you understand a key Christological truth.

At this time in history, the “Little Lord” of Psalm 110 is now widely regarded as a reference to the prophesied Messiah – a figure whom God would raise up to deliver His people. Everyone is hyped up for the Messiah to arrive, so there are lots of debates about him. But most of those debaters are looking for a human figure, a political messiah who will help their nation gain independence.

In this challenge with the Pharisees, Jesus pulls out Psalm 110 and uses a bit of logic to show that the Messiah had to be something more than what was commonly assumed! The

Messiah is *more than* a human descendant. Jesus (whom they don't yet know is the Messiah) is offering a sneak peek at his own nature; he is fully man, yet fully God!

Psalm 110 has morphed from a royal song into something much bigger!!!! Amen? Amen!



Jesus is Better (Hebrews 1, 7)

If you keep reading, you discover that Psalm 110 has even more Christian content! It catapults us further into the New Testament, into the book of Hebrews.

Here the author of Hebrews quotes freely from Psalm 110.

- **Quoting Psalm 110:1 (again)** *“And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?”* (Hebrews 1:13, ESV)
- **Quoting Psalm 110:4** *“For it is witnessed of him, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.””* (Hebrews 7:17, ESV)
- **Quoting Psalm 110:4 (again)** *“but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.””* (Hebrews 7:21, ESV)

Throughout Hebrews, the writer is making a case that Jesus is *better than* the Old Testament Law. He is better than angels, better than Moses, better than the high priests. Using Psalm 110 in his arguments, he builds a case that the Messiah (aka Jesus) is superior.

Side note: this is so amazing, and well worth a deeper study...especially if you don't know about this guy named Melchizedek! But you'll have to do that on your own time. We need to get back to the point!

So, the “Little Lord” from Psalm 110 has morphed into something much bigger!!!! Amen? Amen!

Messianic Psalms



When my son was younger, he had an impressive collection of Transformers toys – toys that unfold from a vehicle into a robot and back again. At that young age, he had a hard time making the intricate transition sequences, so I was the cool dad who knew exactly how to get Optimus Prime and Megatron into their official shapes.

One thing I loved about them was that some robots could transform in different ways...some of them in combination with others! Unfold Wingsaber in just the right way, and he could latch onto Optimus Prime to create the coolest flying samurai robot you've ever seen!

A bit of extra information can make a huge difference!

What we are seeing is that Psalm 110 isn't just a "royal song." It has now transformed into something different, something better – it has a bit of *extra information*. Psalm 110 is now a "Messianic song" – a song about the Messiah!

Definition

Messianic songs are songs that contain a divinely inspired element pointing to God's ultimate work through Jesus. They have themes and details that explicitly and implicitly direct our attention beyond the original songwriters' intent, putting the focus on the Christ.

These songs are often cited or referenced in the New Testament to show that Jesus was God's long game to solve the problem of sin.

If you look through Psalms, you'll find many Messianic Psalms:

Psalms 2, 22, 69, 72, 89, 110

Each one adds something new to our understanding of the Messiah, Jesus.

New Content

Messianic psalms shift the scene quite dramatically with new content.

Prior to the Psalms, if we look through the books of history and search for references to the Messiah, the search is somewhat difficult. There is one reference immediately after the Fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Even as God spells out punishment for mankind's initial sins, he paints a picture of a Special Descendent that will gain a painful victory over Satan. God's plan for redemption through Christ was already on His mind in the immediate aftermath of the first sin!

Yet, after that first mention, things go quiet. You find an occasional mention in the stories of Abraham (Genesis 12) and Judah (Genesis 49) and David (2 Samuel 7). But these scant references only hint at the coming Messiah. It is not until one reaches the Psalms that the references come clearly and frequently.

The **history** books, Genesis to Ezra, allude to Jesus in maybe 13 prophecies in 436 chapters. But in just one book, Psalms, we suddenly see that total *shoot up* to 34 distinct prophecies, all in just 150 chapters! (A rate change from 3% to 23%!) In Psalms we find statements of the Messiah's existence, descriptions of the Messiah's character, and prophecies of the Messiah's experience (ex: details that match up with the crucifixion scene). And once the topic has a foothold in Psalms, references to the Messiah skyrocket with 70-some prophecies occurring (not surprisingly) in the **prophetic** books that follow.

This new content provides an amazing shift in perspective for those who hear or read the Psalms. The messianic psalms shift an entire people so that they can focus on God's coming "Anointed One."





New Combinations

In addition to new content, the messianic prophecies found throughout Psalms bring some interesting new combinations to mind.

As we look at content proclaiming the Messiah in the Psalms, we discover that none of the songs are *purely* “messianic.” All of them are a *fusion* of content regarding the Messiah with an existing genre.

For example, Psalm 69 contains clear references to Jesus (ex: compare Psalm 69:9 with John 2:17). Yet when you look at Psalm 69, you discover it is a song of lament and imprecation.

There are no songs that feature exclusively Messianic content. All the material about Jesus is blended within the structure of other types of songs – praises, sad songs, songs regarding justice or punishment.

Why is this knowledge important?

On an important topic like the Messiah, we tend to view His content in isolation. Our focus is on Jesus, and so we look closely at the verses that share about or prove His identity as Messiah. Our tendency is to overlook the other material as secondary.

However, the fact that Jesus’ content is mixed in with normal content shows how immersed the Messiah is in these other situations. He is inseparable from the emotions of the other situations!

If the Psalms provide a godly example of how we are to share our emotions to God, then the Messianic psalms provide a godly spotlight on Who is With Us during those emotions. They demonstrate that part of our focus when sharing emotions is to return to Jesus.

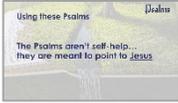
- He is relevant in sadness.
- He is relevant in hope.
- He is important in all the circumstances that surround our life.

Rather than single out the messianic elements, we should look at the totality of the song and see that the fusion of the Messiah with life is no accident – Jesus was and is a crucial part of sharing emotions in a godly way.

Using these Psalms

As we come to the end of this particular sermon and our overall sermon series on Psalms, I want you to understand and value these songs that place the focus on Jesus.

In each type of song we’ve studied, their primary function has been to demonstrate a godly reaction to the circumstances of life. Psalms provides a wonderful example of how to take our emotions to God, regardless of whether or circumstances are positive or not. They are a tool to help us make wise choices and put our knowledge of God into practice. But remember:



The Psalms aren't self-help... they are meant to point to Jesus!

"Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.""
(Luke 24:44, NLT)

The situations we've covered in the Psalms find their truest fulfillment in Jesus!

- If we want to **praise** God, there is nothing higher to praise than His work in Jesus!
- If we need to **trust** God, there is no greater source of confidence for the Christian than Jesus!
- If we need to share our **sadness** with God, there is no one who understands us more than Jesus.
- If we want **justice** against our enemies, there is no place that epitomizes justice and mercy like the cross of Jesus.
- If we want to enjoy the **provision and protection** forever, there is no greater King than Jesus.



The Psalms provide a songbook that points to Jesus in its Messianic detail -- a songbook that shows us that our only hope is in Jesus.

Whether you find these songs centered deep in your Old Testament, packed in the back of your pocket New Testament, blaring loudly in the lyrics on your radio, or written on your very heart, I pray that you will be transformed by their example and conformed to their truth.

I pray that you will embrace them as your godly example.

I pray that you will hear Jesus as you hear them.

Invitation

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Notes

Psalm 110 (original context)

Explanation

Who is in the song?

What is the song's focus?

How should we understand the song?

Psalm 110 (new context)

Jesus vs. The Pharisees (Matthew 22:44)

Jesus is Better (Hebrews 1, 7)

Messianic Psalms

Definition

Psalms 2, 22, 69, 72, 89, 110

New Content

New Combinations

Using these Psalms

The Psalms aren't self-help... they are meant to point to Jesus!

(Luke 24:44)

Sermon Discussion ?s

Use the following questions based on today's sermon as a starting point for spiritual discussions with your family or a small group of Christian friends this week.

Fellowship—Relationship with a Purpose

- What is your favorite song about Jesus? What do you love about it? What does it communicate in its meaning or its message?

Growth—Thinking About Spiritual Matters

- Many songs in Psalms include content that relates to the Messiah (aka Jesus!). Look up the following passages and find the connection. What is your reaction to their prophetic content?
 - Psalm 110:4 + Hebrews 6:20
 - Psalm 41:9 + Mark 14:10
 - Psalm 109:7,8 + Acts 1:18-20
 - Psalm 27:12 + Matthew 26:60-61
 - Psalm 69:4 + John 15:23-25
 - Psalm 22:16 + John 20:27
 - Psalm 34:20 + John 19:33
- Skim Psalm 69. Note some of the content that matches up with Jesus (aka “messianic”), but also note the other content. What genre is this song (praise, lament, song of confidence, song against enemies)? What percentage of the song is focused on the Messiah?
- Why is it important that messianic content isn't stand-alone content? Why does God intermix it with other songs?
- How intermixed is Jesus in your daily life? Is He a Sunday-only feature, or is he inseparable? Why?
- What have been your biggest takeaways from this series on Psalms? Share some things you've learned and offer one change you can make in your life based on what we've discussed.

Prayer – Taking Your Thoughts to God

- Thank God for His plans of restoration and redemption that focus on Jesus. Praise Him for sending Jesus to fulfill his plans!