

The Promised Victory of Our Risen Conquering King

Psalm 110, Part 2

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, March 31st 2024

I. Introduction

If you were to ask the average Christian what his favorite Psalm is or even which Psalm he considers to be the most important, it is unlikely that it would be Psalm 110. He might choose Psalm 1 or Psalm 23 or any number of other Psalms that give comfort or that minister to him personally in some way. And those *are* precious Psalms. But I pointed out last week that this is apparently the New Testament's favorite Psalm by far. One commentary says, "Psalm 110 is quoted or alluded to thirty-three times in the NT..."¹ That's a lot.

And if you were to look up all of those New Testament references you would see that it gives a rather full theology of the nature of Christ, His resurrection and ascension, the Kingship of Christ, the nature of His kingdom, the future of His kingdom, and His eventual victory over the curse. So the New Testament *itself* shows that there is a lot packed into this little Psalm.

And we began looking at *some* of those things last week. We saw that this Psalm presented Jesus as fully God and fully man. As God He was up to the job of doing what He had promised to do. There is nothing too hard for Jesus. We also saw that this Psalm presents Jesus as currently reigning as King over a disputed empire. It shouldn't surprise us that there are enemies *during* certain periods of His kingdom. Yet we also saw that despite the opposition to His reign He is destined to eventually gain the entire victory. It shows the kingdom starting in the first century with a very small beginning. We also saw that He fights against anything in *us* that resists His Lordship. He's not just subduing enemies out there. He has declared a war against things within our *own* hearts that defy His Lordship. We also saw that He rules through the weakness of volunteers who are empowered by the Holy Spirit. That was a *lot* to chew on and apply last week.

But today we are going to finish off the Psalm by looking at the promised victory of our risen conquering King. This is going to be an introduction to Postmillennialism. This promised victory has spurred some of the greatest and most effective missions movements

¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002). Also, see Michael P. V. Barrett, *Beginning at Moses: A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), 294. Some of the key passages are Matthew 22:44–45; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44; Acts 2:34–36; 1 Cor. 15:25–28; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 1:13; 5:6; 7:17, 21. However, there are other allusions as well.

in history. This promised victory has energized me and given me great hope. Charles Spurgeon (the famous Baptist preacher from the 1800s) said,

It would be easy to show that at our present rate of progress the kingdoms of this world never could become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Indeed, many in the Church are giving up the idea of it except on the occasion of the advent of Christ, which, as it chimes in with our own idleness, is likely to be a popular doctrine. I myself believe that King Jesus will reign, and the idols be utterly abolished; but I expect the same power which turned the world upside down once will still continue to do it. The Holy Ghost would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His holy name that He was not able to convert the world²

² Charles Spurgeon, quoted by David Chilton in *Paradise Restored* (Fort Worth: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 129-130. I have traced Spurgeon's pilgrimage from being a very pessimistic Premil in 1861-1865 who saw things as getting worse and worse, to a more historic Premil in the early 1870s, to perhaps a hybrid of postmil and premil thought in 1876, to statements that can only be taken in a postmil way in the last years of his life. For example, commenting on Psalm 86, Spurgeon said, "It makes us content to be in the minority to-day, when we are sure that the majority will be with us to-morrow, ay, and that the truth will one day be carried unanimously and heartily. David was not a believer in the theory that the world will grow worse and worse, and that the dispensation will wind up with general darkness, and idolatry. Earth's sun is to go down amid tenfold night if some of our prophetic brethren are to be believed. Not so do we expect, but we look for a day when the dwellers in all lands shall learn righteousness, shall trust in the Saviour, shall worship thee alone, O God, "and shall glorify thy name." The modern notion has greatly clamped the zeal of the church for missions, and the sooner it is shown to be unscriptural the better for the cause of God. It neither consorts with prophecy, honours God, nor inspires the church with ardour. Far hence be it driven." C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 465-466. But even earlier (if he was a Premil still) we see him believing that eventually the church would win every soul to Christ. He said, "I see the Icelanders bowing before Christ, and the vilest and most depraved of men submitting to Jehovah's sway. But Satan has one dark-souled being the last man that is left unconverted. Ring your sabbath bells, my brethren! Go up to your house of prayer! Be happy!... Not a hoof shall be left behind!... Christ has conquered, and has taken back all His possessions. Not a hoof shall be left behind!" C. H. Spurgeon, "Full Redemption," in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 6 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1860), 188. His optimism went well beyond historic Premillennialism. Even when he was a Premillennial, he saw the future conversion of Israel as occurring through the church's evangelism: "There will be a native government again; there will again be the form of a body politic; a state shall be incorporated, and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land....If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage [Ezekiel 37:1-10]—a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a

I love that! Yet good godly sincere Christians today doubt that because they have wrong presuppositions. And they don't realize the disastrous consequences of having a faulty eschatology - especially the Dispensationalist viewpoint that I grew up with. And again, I don't want to smear the godly character or the sincerity of these people. Some of them are very godly and sacrificial saints. I used to hold to this unbiblical eschatology. But there *are* consequences to being wrong on this first point. This first point is the most critical point in the whole sermon. Ken Gentry said,

It should not go unnoticed that the Twentieth Century may not only be called the age of the triumph of dispensationalism, but also the age of the triumph of humanism. Many believe, with good reason, that the two 'victories' are closely related.³

In other words, as Christians backed off from changing the world because of their lousy eschatology, humanists stepped in to fill the void. It was unavoidable. Vacuums demand to be filled. And many commentators from *all* persuasions have said that your eschatology (in other words, your view of the future) dictates your faith *and* your actions. Spurgeon and thousands of Postmillennialists like him have found incredible encouragement in this Psalm. R. J. Rushdoony said,

...if I believe that the world will see the progressive triumph of Christ's people until the whole world is Christian and a glorious material and spiritual era unfolds, I shall be motivated very much differently from either a premillennial or an amillennial believer. Thus, we cannot hold that these differing doctrines of eschatology are a matter of indifference. They make a very great difference in how we view the world and our work and future in it.⁴

So we are going to look at the Postmillennial hope that the New Testament draws from this Psalm - a hope that Greg Bahnsen clearly demonstrates energized John Calvin, Tyndale, the Puritans, Matthew Henry, William Carey, Jonathan Edwards, and thousands of other well known men. They said that their faith to *attempt* great things for God flowed from Scriptures like this that caused them to *expect* great things from God. And I hope it gives *you* great encouragement today as well.

In any case, be Bereans who check everything that I say against the Scripture, and only accept what you see clearly flows from Scripture. But we are going to dig into this Psalm more deeply and build upon what we looked at last week. Last week was the necessary

king is to rule over them." Spurgeon, "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 10:426

³ Kenneth Gentry, in "Foreward" to Joseph R. Balyeat, *Babylon: The Great City of Revelation*, p. 8

⁴ R.J. Rushdoony, *The Meaning of Post Millennialism: God's Plan For Victory*, p. 2

foundation for what we will be looking at today. We looked at the first six points last week. That's why we are starting with point number VII today.

II. Christ's reign is gradually and progressively advancing (v. 1,3,4; Matt. 13:31-33,36-43; Mark 4:26-29; 1 Cor. 15:22-28; Heb. 1:13)

Point VII says that Christ's reign is gradually and progressively advancing, which logically means that Satan's kingdom is gradually and progressively losing ground. A majority of Christians today deny both the "gradual" part of the equation (and that's because they believe the kingdom will be brought in instantaneously and perfectly at the Second Coming and without any help from us - without any help from what verse 3 calls "volunteers") and they deny the "advancing" part of the equation (they think things are getting worse and worse and that the church will one day be completely extinguished). For example, one very godly theologian by the name of J.C. Ryle (who otherwise has a lot of good stuff to say), claims,

"...there will be comparatively few true believers upon earth when He comes again. True faith will be found as rare as it was in the days of Noah, when only eight persons entered the ark, and in the days of Lot, when only four persons left Sodom."⁵

Wow! That's quite a different vision, isn't it? He thinks that the faith will progressively diminish over time until it is finally almost extinguished. His version of Christ's manifesto is, "I will *try* to build My church, but eventually the gates of hell *will* prevail against it." That is in effect what his eschatology is saying.

Now, some people are impatient with differences like this. They think, "Who cares? What difference does it make? They cavalierly say, "I'm just going to be a pan-millennialist. It will all pan out in the end." But we saw last week that that's not the case. It won't all pan out in our generation if the church doesn't have faith. And you can't have faith if you don't understand God's promises for the future. Your sense of morale flows out of what you believe.

There have been many soldiers who have been willing to lay down their lives for a good cause that they believed would be won. For example, the soldiers under Robert E. Lee enthusiastically charged into battle even against enormous odds because they trusted their leaders and really thought that it was a winnable battle. With the death of Stonewall Jackson, it took the wind out of their sails. And I think it is significant that he got shot by one of his own soldiers. We are not defeated today because of the enemy. No, no, no, no, no. We are being defeated today because the *church* can't get it's theological and moral act

⁵ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1879), 258.

together. And what you believe about the future has a profound affect upon your life. It really does.

So let's look at the evidence of a *gradual* advancement of Christ's kingdom. There is no hint in this Psalm that Christ's kingdom is instantly and perfectly established (like some people think).

Verse 1 says that this battle is winnable. It's promising a time when all enemies will be beneath Christ's feet. Verse 2 reinforces that. He is not coming down *from* heaven or *ending* His current reign until all enemies are *already* subdued. Verse 4 assures us that our General will not relent; He will not give up. Verses 5-7 make it clear which side you better be fighting on. It's clear who wins in this Psalm.

What about the second side of the equation? Will this be won all at once at the Second Coming? Or will it be won gradually over history? Let's look at the evidence. The word "till" in verse 1 implies that God has ordained there to be a long period of history before all enemies become Christ's footstool. Paul emphasizes that word "til" as indicating a long process of time. We have already seen that verse 2 implies that enemies are not conquered overnight. He's ruling for a period of time while enemies are still around. The enthusiastic volunteers in verse 3 are not enthusiastic because they start out as a majority. No, no. Far from it. They started off in Acts 2 as only 120 disciples in the upper room. The kingdom was as small as a tiny mustard seed - which is exactly the image Christ used to illustrate the smallness of His kingdom's beginnings. It was almost unnoticeable. Yet those 120 were enthusiastic because they really were convinced that the Great Commission could be achieved by God's power.

Then verse 3 uses three metaphors or images to convey this idea of gradual growth: one is a womb which indicates conceptions and beginnings. The church in Acts 2 was pretty small. It was (as it were) still in the womb developing and growing. Many people could not even tell that the kingdom existed. It was *hidden* in the womb (so to speak).

The second metaphor is morning. And this is very significant. Evening conveys the idea that the sun is going down into darkness - things are going from brightness to darkness; from good to bad to worse. But morning conveys the opposite - that the time of night has finally finished and the beginnings of light are getting brighter and brighter.

Will there be darkness after our age of day? No. God doesn't keep time from morning to evening. Genesis 1 begins with evening/morning progressions. So the evening and the morning were the first day, the evening and the morning were second day, etc. God's definition of days *started* with darkness and they *end* with light. This is the way it is in history. The darkness of the Old Testament gives way to the dawning of the kingdom. There will be no end of the metaphorical day, because at the end of the day we will be ushered into eternity. When everything in the earth is converted, *then and only then* Christ will cease His reign, hand the kingdom over to the Father, and usher the world into eternity.

Now, by combining those two images of the beginning of the kingdom (the womb of the morning) he powerfully conveys the idea that the kingdom started in darkness with just a haze of light showing, and the kingdom light will from that time on keep growing.

Now it's true that the New Testament predicted that in the last days of the Old Covenant leading up to AD 70, there would be a falling away, and things would be getting worse and worse as the birth pangs of the kingdom came upon it. But a womb is dark, right? The womb stage was the forty years from Pentecost to AD 70. And the womb gives birth to the early rays of morning. So three New Testament passages describe the days from Pentecost to AD 70 as being like painful birth spasms; a woman giving birth (John 16:21; Romans 8:22; Rev. 12:2). But those were just the last days of the Old Covenant and the womb was *beginning* days of the New Covenant. There was a forty year overlap of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. And the Bible speaks of the bride travailing and giving birth during those last days. Once AD 70 happened, the church began to take off so fast, despite persecution, that within about 300 years a majority of the Roman empire was Christian. Was the church of the fourth century young and immature? Yes it was, but it was still growing. So back to the first century, those are the images of the womb and the dawning of the morning.

The third and fourth images in verse 3 are the refreshing dew that waters the earth and the image of a baby. The Hebrew word for "youth" is יְלֻדוּת (yaldut) which is simply a form of the root word, יָלַד (yilod), to be born. And that too is beautiful imagery. Last week we saw that the dew represents the Holy Spirit that *began* the church at Pentecost (a kind of conception) and the word "youth" or babyhood refers to the end of the womb period when a baby emerges in AD 70. So the church started at Pentecost, but it emerged from the womb in AD 70. AD 30 to AD 70 is the overlap of Old Covenant and New Covenant. Those are the last days of the Old Covenant - the time when the kingdom is established and begins.

And there are other indications of this gradual but progressive growth of the kingdom. Verse 4 says that He won't relent, "The Lord has sworn and will not relent." Well, what does that imply? Two things: 1) that there is opposition and 2) secondly, that God will persevere. Perseverance requires time. God will keep at it for a long period. Why? Because He is ruling in the midst of enemies – there *is* opposition. He has to persevere. Verses 5-6 also indicate that it is being advanced over quite a period of time as He wars against nations and executes heads of countries. And we will get into that in a bit.

But verse 1 is *the* most quoted verse in the New Testament. It says, "Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies your footstool." As already mentioned, that word "till" indicates the purpose and the goal of Christ being assigned a position at the right hand of the Father. The goal is to make the enemies a footstool. He is doing that from His position in *heaven*, not at the Second Coming when He will come *down from* heaven to earth.

But what does it mean to be a footstool? In the Old Testament, for a nation to be the footstool of another nation was to be conquered by that nation and to remain under its rule and dominion. That is what Christ is in the process of doing. And that word "till" indicates that it will be a gradual process.

Now when you think about it, that makes perfect sense. How does He subdue our *own* hearts to Himself (as individuals)? Does He sanctify us overnight? No. We grow in grace over time. If individual sanctification is gradual, why should we expect it to be any different with Christ's reign in society as a whole? There are literally hundreds of Scriptures which

speak of a progressively growing kingdom that is being disputed by Satan and his forces. And I won't take the time to go over all of those. There are many images like leaven. But I want to give you *one* Biblical type or picture of the kingdom that helps to make sense of it.

Any time you want to think how this Psalm will be fulfilled, think of how the land of Canaan was conquered in the Old Testament. The book of Hebrews says that the conquest of Canaan was given by God to be a type or a picture of our work in the Great Commission. So how did that happen?

From the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt to Joshua entering the land there are 40 years. And those correspond to the forty years from Pentecost to AD 70. So the conception of the kingdom was in that Exodus out of Egypt. The kingdom was conceived. There was *some* conquest of Canaan that happened on the East side of the River. It was actually a fairly large territory that was conquered. But you can liken Israel's forty year period to the forty year period between Christ's resurrection and AD 70. It was the womb of the kingdom, so to speak. A lot happened, but they had not yet crossed the Jordon River into the land of Canaan.

Then Joshua goes into the land. Does he win it in one day? Obviously not. One year? Obviously not. There are still enemies to be subdued when Joshua dies. And even after that long period there are hundreds of years of Judges when Israel sometimes does well and sometimes does poorly. Then Saul and David finish off the conquest and Solomon reigns for a time of peace symbolizing the period when Jesus will bring peace to the earth. That is a picture of the gradualness of the last 2000 years, and (who know?) perhaps thousands more.

In Exodus 23:29-30 God says,

"I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land."

He promised to do it little by little. God is a God of order, and He establishes the kingdom more and more *as the people are ready*. Is the church today ready? Not by a long shot.

Now, I've harped on this point because I have seen so many people discouraged over the slowness of the advancement of God's kingdom. I've seen people give up on their *own* sanctification because they have falsely *expected* to overcome their enemy instantly. And when that didn't happen, they became disillusioned. Why? They had a false hope. That's not the way God works. And many others are discouraged because they don't see a national election won, or abortion instantly abolished. There are so many who have lost hope because they were banking on a false hope.

Last week I quoted both Premillennialists and Amillennialists who think that it is hopeless to convert the world - absolutely hopeless. Amillennialist Herman Hanko said, "The world [is] filled with sin and getting worse, a hopeless situation beyond repair and impossible to

salvage.”⁶ Did you get those words? Worse and worse; hopeless; beyond repair; impossible. If that’s your hope, it is going to affect what you are willing to try. People don’t try things that they believe God *Himself* says are hopeless. And yet they know that there is a promised victory, so some pessimists try to find some victory by waiting for Christ to do all the work and bail them out at the Second Coming. For them, that’s the primary victory. And hundreds of quotes could be given along those lines. R. A. Torrey said, “The darker the world gets the lighter my heart gets! Because that means we are that much closer to the Second Coming of Christ!” It doesn’t bother him that the world is getting darker. That’s what He expects to happen.

It reminds me of the Peanuts comic strip I read one time. Charlie Brown had been criticized for his negative outlook on life, and so he made a New Years resolution to be more positive. He said, “I have a new philosophy. I’m only going to dread one day at a time.” But we ought not to be dreading life as if all things are working together for the church’s disaster and extinction. No. God is making all things work together for our good. According to this Psalm it would be much more Biblical if the church would have a vision of Christ’s kingdom that made them convinced that it is *Satan* who is dreading every day; that it is *Satan* who is doomed, and that even when he roars against the volunteers who are walking in the Holy Spirit’s power (that we talked about last week), there is nothing he can do to stop the church militant. He can slow them down for a time, yes. He can give them temporary setbacks, yes. He can make them backslide so that even God fights against His people for a time, yes. But even those things are designed to purify the church and make her stronger and to make her more ready to take the conquest. Even the blood of the martyrs blossoms into hundreds of new converts.

And this is one of many passages in the Bible that gives a full-hearted optimism in the power of the Gospel to conquer this world for king Jesus. When you begin to get discouraged over the state of America, stir up your faith by meditating upon these words: till, sit, footstool, Your power, womb of the morning, the dew of Your youth, etc. It’s not Satan’s kingdom that is progressively advancing; it is *Christ’s* kingdom.

How much has Christ’s kingdom advanced from the 120 believers in Acts chapters 1-2? In 2013 John Piper and the International Evangelical Alliance estimated that there were more than 700 million evangelical Christians worldwide.⁷ Eleven years later the International Evangelical Alliance is estimating that there are around 1 billion evangelical Christians.⁸ That’s more than at any time in history. But though it has been advancing rather rapidly in the last eleven years, we’ve gotten to this place gradually. In any case we’ve got to be

⁶ Hanko, “The Illusory Hope of Postmillennialism,” p. 159.

⁷ John Piper says 700,000,000 <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-much-is-left-to-do-in-the-great-commission>

⁸ See <https://www.eauk.org/assets/files/downloads/Evangelical-Alliance-Brand-Guidelines.pdf> Also see <https://www.eauk.org/about-us>

convinced of the *increase* that God promises to His kingdom if we are to have the kind of faith and hope for the future that will make us persevere.

III. Christ's reign advances through us (v. 3; Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57)

Point VIII is that Christ's reign advances *through us*. Many people today actually assume the exact opposite. They say that we will be utterly passive when Christ establishes the kingdom (for them, future tense). He will do it all by himself, instantaneously, and our activities will achieve nothing. Tommy Ice says that the kingdom of Jesus will be brought in instantly without any human agency whatsoever.⁹ Salem Kirban said, "Without the hope of our Lord's return...what future do any of us have?"¹⁰ He is waiting for something to happen. Walvord says, "Christians have no immediate solutions to the problems of our day. A solution to this unrest and turmoil is provided in the Bible, and there is no other. That solution is that Jesus Christ Himself is coming back to bring peace and rest to the world." *He'll do it.*

But what does this Psalm say? Verse 3 says, "Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power." Yes, we need God's power to achieve this, but we *do* have a part to play. God's kingdom is not advanced by Christ coming out of heaven and snapping His fingers. God establishes His kingdom just like he established the provisional kingdom in the Old Testament - *through people*. Israelites didn't get to sit on the grandstands with popcorn and coke and watch Joshua conquer Canaan for them. They had to risk their lives and livelihoods to take Canaan. No great thing was ever won without sacrifice and hard work. The founding fathers of America risked their lives and fortunes to establish this nation, and we will not get this nation back without similar sacrifice.

IV. Christ's reign advances salvation ("Priest") and righteousness ("King"). He is both Savior and Lord (vv. 3-4).

The ninth point shows that Jesus advances *both* salvation *and* righteousness. He is not just interested in being your *Priest*. Praise God that He *is* interested in that. We love that doctrine of salvation. But He is *also* interested in being your King. Another way of saying it is that Jesus is both Savior *and* Lord. Verse 4 says,

The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

Melchizedek was called a priest and a king in Genesis 14. In fact, the name Melchizedek means, "king of righteousness." King of *righteousness*. That's a key. God holds Christ's

⁹ Thomas D. Ice, "An Evaluation of Theonomic Neopostmillennialism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (1988): 293.

¹⁰ Salem Kirban, *Your Last Goodbye* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1969), p. 252

priesthood and His kingship so tightly together that they cannot be separated. You can never separate His Lordship from His salvation or his salvation from His Lordship. We are saved *unto* good works, and the only way good works will be exalted in the earth is through salvation.

This is why we say that evangelism has to come before any *lasting* societal transformation can be seen. But it also means that kingdom people need to be evidencing the kind of life-transformation that will make the world (as Paul words it) *jealous* of the Gospel - where the Christian life looks so good that they want it.

Look at how verse 3 words it. Verse 3 starts by showing *who* will produce this righteousness - "Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power." God's power advances His cause through His people. But then He gives the *character* of this kingdom when he describes it as "the beauties of holiness." That's the phrase I'm going to focus on here. He then indicates that it will start small and grow over time. "From the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth." But the *heart* of that verse is the *beautiful holiness* that God desires for planet earth. And that is what we should be seeking. King Jesus told His people, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Seek it. Seek it. Seek it. He prophecies in Isaiah 62:2 that this seeking *will* be successful: "The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory..." Jeremiah 23:5 says,

Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness. A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

So here is the question: if you are selling God's kingdom and the beauties of His holiness, does it look beautiful? Are you good ambassador's for the central purpose of His kingdom - holiness or righteousness? Do you yourself love righteousness? Do you see it as a beautiful thing that you long for? Matthew 5 says that this is one of the indications that the King of righteousness has come to your heart. It says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Do you hunger for the King of Righteousness to produce righteousness and the beauties of holiness in you? And what kind of sales job are you presenting to others for this kingdom righteousness? Does your life beautifully display it in a way that will make others wish they had what you have? Do you model beautiful solutions to the broken marriages, abused children, confused genders, and other ugly things we see in America? Our lives should display more and more of Christ's grace and power that flows from His priestly office and it should display more and more of the righteousness and law-keeping that flows from His kingly office. Paul said that is how His kingdom grows. Romans 11:11 says that this is how the nation of Israel will eventually get saved. Some time in the future the nation of Israel will be moved to jealousy of what the Gentile nations have. You can see that the Gentile nations have a ways to go. There is nothing to be jealous of modern Christian nations.

V. Christ Reign Is Cosmic in It's Scope: Heaven (v. 1) and Earth (v. 6); Within the Church (v. 2) and Outside the Church (v. 2ff); With Friends (v. 3) and With Enemies (v. 1,2,5,6)

The tenth point indicates that Christ's reign is cosmic in its scope. Verse 1 indicates that He has authority in heaven, and verse 6 indicates that He has authority on earth. When was Christ given all authority in heaven and on earth? Not at the Second Coming. Matthew 28 says that it has already happened.

Unfortunately, even with Reformed people there is a tendency to look at the kingdom in a pietistic way – seeing it as purely within us as individuals or within the church. But verse 2 indicates that Christ rules within Zion (that's the church - especially the church in heaven), and verses 2 and following indicate that He is also ruling outside of Zion. David Chilton very rightly shows how the Great Commission in Matthew 28 mandates converting the nations and teaching them to live under Christ's kingship. He says that the Great Commission,

“does not end with simply witnessing to the nations. Christ's command is that we disciple the nations—all the nations. The kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of Christ. They are to be disciplined, made obedient to the faith. This means that every aspect of life throughout the world is to be brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ: families, individuals, business, science, agriculture, the arts, law, education, economics, psychology, philosophy, and every sphere of human activity. Nothing may be left out. Christ must reign, until He has put all enemies under His feet.”¹¹

And all I can say is “Amen.” His reign is cosmic, and our interests must therefore be cosmic. We tried to give our children an interest in God's whole cosmos in their homeschooling, and to show them that the Bible speaks to all of life. As the hymn writer put it, “All for Jesus. All for Jesus.”

But many Dispensationalists disagree with Chilton's exegesis of the Great Commission (even though his is the same exegesis that church fathers, Calvin, Matthew Henry and thousands of others have had). But they disagree. For example, Thomas Ice says,

However, this passage does not say what Chilton wants it to say, unless a priori assumptions are carried into it. He is reading his theology into the passage and then citing it as proof for his theology. Why is this passage not talking about evangelism [I find that statement remarkably blind. But he says of the Great Commission, “Why is this passage *not* talking about evangelism”], as most understand it? Premillennialists certainly believe that all those things Chilton mentioned will occur, but they disagree with the postmillennialists on *timing* (these changes will occur after Christ returns, not before) and *agency* (just as in

¹¹ David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Fort Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 213.

creation, the Flood, the Exodus, and salvation, Christ will accomplish this directly, not through secondary means).¹²

That is a huge deviation from what the church has always historically held about the Great Commission. And Tommy Ice admits it. Turn with me to Matthew 28 and let's see if he is right about timing and agency. He claims that Christ will do it apart from any human help whatsoever (no volunteers) and that He will only do it after Second Coming. Let's read verses 16-20 of Matthew 28:

Matt. 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. [The first thing to notice is who He is talking to and about. He is addressing the leaders of the church - the eleven apostles. Verse 17] 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. [The dictionary defines the Greek word for doubted as "to be uncertain about taking a particular course of action, [to] hesitate."¹³ Well, Christ is going to give them certainty about what course of action they should take. Verse 18] Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority [Note it isn't just some authority, but all authority] has been given to Me [Notice that He isn't waiting for the Second Coming to gain this authority. Both Psalm 110 and this passage connect that authority tightly with His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. He is *about to* ascend. All authority has been given to Me] in heaven and on earth. [Notice how cosmic this authority is. Nothing is left outside of His authority in heaven or on the earth. Verse 19] 19 Go therefore [The "therefore" indicates that based on His cosmic authority there is a *logical conclusion that must follow*. This is not a command waiting to be fulfilled. It is a logical necessity of His already having been given all authority. He says, "Go therefore"] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [I don't know how Tommy Ice can say that this doesn't include evangelism. It does. It's making disciples and baptizing them. And notice that it is entire nations that will be Christianized. That's the goal. But it is far more than simply making them Christian. Verse 20 says,] 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Christ is currently using weak volunteers (like you and me) to extend His kingdom and He doesn't need to be visible to be powerfully present with us. He will be with the church to accomplish this stupendous commission till the end of the New Covenant age. And what did Jesus command them in the Gospel of Matthew? In Matthew 5:17-19 He says,

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly I say to you, til heaven and earth pass away,

¹² Thomas D. Ice, "An Evaluation of Theonomic Neopostmillennialism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (1988): 293.

¹³ BDAG

one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. [The last time I looked, the heaven and earth haven't passed away yet. And to me this means that every jot and tittle of the Old Testament Hebrew continues to be relevant. Even the ceremonial law, which is no longer binding, teaches us something. Conclusion? The next verse says,] Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

So what did Jesus command earlier? Remember that the Great Commission says that we are to teach everything that He commanded the apostles to teach. Well, in this passage Jesus commands us to teach the nations to obey the blueprints of the whole Bible - even the least commandment. Let me read you the commandment that the Jews referred to in Christ's day as the *least* of the commandments. It's Deuteronomy 22:6. And it says,

"If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days."

You might think, "Do I really need to take that law seriously? That might affect ecology, but does it really affect my walk with God?" But Jesus said it does. He said, "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

The bottom line is that Jesus wants the church to teach nations (not just magistrates [though it includes them], but every part of every nation) how to live out the entire Bible.

And there are many other New Testament passages that also point to the cosmic scope of Christ's current kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15:22-28 quotes this Psalm and says,

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father [Notice that the Second Coming is said to be the *end* of the Kingdom and the time when He hands His kingdom *back* to the Father. That's not the time that He receives it. Verse 25 explains.] ...25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. [Wow! Death is the *last* enemy? Well, that means every other enemy has to be overcome *before* the final resurrection. I don't know how Full Preterism can survive with verses like this. Verse 27] 27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son

Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

How extensive does it say that His authority was intended to be? Jesus is called by the Father to bring everything in submission to Himself *except for the Father*. That's everything in the cosmos.

Ephesians 1:22-23 says, > And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Philippians 2:9-11 says,

Phil. 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That is the goal of His current kingdom - to eventually have every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that He is Lord. Colossians 1:16-18 is another of several New Testament passages that confirms how cosmic Christ's kingdom is. It says,

Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

I won't give more, but I think it is quite clear. Jesus is currently exercising His rod of iron from the right hand of the Father and will remain there until the entire cosmos glorifies God. *That* is postmillennialism.

VI. God Will Not Give Up, And Neither Should We ((v. 4)

The eleventh point is that God will not give up and neither should we. Verse 4 says, "The LORD has sworn and will not relent." Relenting is giving up. It is exactly the problem *we* have many times. We give up because the task looks too hopeless and the enemies around us look too many. This is what got the ten spies into trouble in Numbers 13. They looked at all the giants in the land and they relented in their determination to advance. But God does not honor lack of faith, and He won't let us abandon the Greatness of the Great Commission without suffering negative consequences. Nothing short of discipling the nations and teaching them to observe all that His Word commands should satisfy us.

Certainly it can get discouraging, and certainly we sense our weakness. But the point of the Psalm is to take our eyes off of ourselves and to put them onto the sufficiency of Christ. David didn't see *himself* as the answer: he looked in faith to Christ as Lord. Isaiah says that

the Messiah would not grow discouraged or give up until He has established justice in the earth. As the author Balyeat said,

“The Church has been paralyzed by its false short-termed, pessimistic, predestined view of the future. The enthroned Christ, who has been given all power and authority and dominion, has stretched forth His mighty hand to the paralyzed cripple, and said, “Arise, take up your mat, and walk!”¹⁴

In other words, even if we are as weak as that paralytic, *Christ's* power is what counts. And He calls us to faith-action like He called that paralytic to faith-action. God will ensure that Christ's priestly and kingly work are successful. God will not go back on either his purpose to save or His purpose to rule through Christ. He has sworn, and He will not relent. There should be no turning back for us either.

VII. Christ's Reign Will Tolerate No Competition (v. 5-6)

Notice in verses 5-6 that Christ also brings judgment *in* history. “The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.” In some ways those are chilling words. They were literally fulfilled in AD 70, and in our Revelation series we saw that they were fulfilled in the judgments on Rome and the final judgments on Israel in the Bar Kochba rebellion of AD 135-136. The cities and countryside were literally filled with dead bodies.

But that was just the *beginning* of His historical judgments. Does that mean that America might suffer a high body count and high losses of leaders if it does not repent? I believe so. Psalm 2 says that Christ takes His rod of iron and smashes *every* nation that rejects His rule. Not just Israel; not just Rome - every nation. America is not an exception. There is no way we can escape without repentance when we have been killing millions of babies through abortion. And slowing abortion down slightly with a 15 week ban is not repentance. It is actually entrenching abortion in the first trimester. And yet it is Christians who are promoting that non-repentant stance. Even our politics needs to take seriously the claims of Christ - one of which is the complete abolition of abortion. That's what we need to keep pressing for.

There is no way God can turn a blind eye to pornography, sexual perversions, gender fluidity, socialism, and all the other evils in America that motivated God to cast the nations out of Canaan. I see God's hand of judgment *all over* America. His judgment is clearly visible. He has given us up onto a reprobate mind. According to Romans that is one of the early stages of judgment. Normally His hand restrains depraved sinners from getting worse (as a blessing to the church), but there comes a time (especially when the church is backslidden) when He gives the nation up. He lets them go. When that happens, they enter into a free fall

¹⁴ Joseph Balyeat, *Babylon, The Great City Of Revelation* (Sevierville, TN: Onward Press, 1991), p. 192

into depravity. The irrationality of woke corporations that promote gender fluidity even if it means losing hundreds of millions of dollars, and the irrationality of politicians who promote wokeness is evidence of their being given up unto a reprobate mind. Even the latest atrocity of a national budget is evidence of a reprobate mind. How else can you explain the stunning irrationality that gets reported every day in the news?

Verse 5 says that these judgments of Christ flow from heaven – “The Lord is at Your right hand.” But the rest of the passage indicates that His work from God’s right hand *affects the earth*. It affects kings, nations, places, bodies, heads of countries. *This is very tangible stuff*. God used Rome to smash Israel in the first century, and He used others to smash Rome. The last 2000 years of history is a series of smashings from Jesus. You need to read history through Biblical eyes. And I don’t believe that we can be exempt. That is why I am so passionate about calling family, church and culture back to God. If the church ceases to be salt, light, and leaven in society, God will judge. Without repentance we are history.

But the encouraging thing about these judgments is that they are usually *redemptive* judgments that drive pagans to the Gospel. In fact, most judgments down through history have been used redemptively by the Lord to save multitudes. Praise God! So all is not lost. There are more Christians today than ever. Actually, there are more Reformed people today than there were fifty years ago. There are more people who take His law seriously and who believe His promises seriously today than fifty years ago. That’s a good sign. Judgment on rebels often results in the purification of the church.

So the rest of the Bible calls us to be in agreement with His judgments. Don’t try to avoid them. Those judgments are advancing His kingdom. Don’t disagree with verses 5-6 as if such judgments can’t produce anything good. For some people this is the hard part. But it is imperative that we agree with Christ’s judgments.

The easiest way to be in agreement with His judgments (and it is a God-authorized way) is by praying the imprecatory Psalms against His enemies. Revelation 8 promises that should the whole church do so, there would be immediate responses of judgment from Christ. It describes a censer of incense filled with the prayers of the saints, and verses 5 and 6 of Revelation 8 say, “Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightning’s, and an earthquake.” So the judgment comes from heaven (just like in this Psalm), *but it affects earth* (just like in this Psalm). And then it describes regiment after regiment of angelic warriors being sent into battle. If Jesus is the General, and we are the volunteers of His army, then we too must take up the spiritual weapons that He has given to us and ask for His judgments. I believe that when we seriously do so, we will see the advancement of God’s kingdom as we have never seen it before in our lifetime.

VIII. Christ Will Gain The Final Victory (vv. 5-7)

And the last point is that ultimately Christ will gain the victory. (We’ve already been saying this, haven’t we?) Verse 4 says that God has sworn to it. His very integrity is at stake. His very truthfulness is at stake. He cannot break His oath. That’s what I am banking on.

But look at the symbol portrayed in verse 7. It says, “He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head.” It’s a picture of exhausted battle-weary soldiers drinking from the brook after a successful battle, and then rising in triumph. Christ is pursuing the enemies until He can stop fighting, drink from the brook metaphorically, then lift up His head in triumph over them. But that means that even His volunteers must be just as dedicated. Here’s how Isaiah 42 words it: “He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law.”

God never said Christian conquest would be easy; sacrifices are involved. Sanctification is not easy; sacrifices are involved. Spiritual warfare is always difficult, and we are in a war with the world, the flesh and the devil. Our sword is the Bible and our armor is described in Ephesians 6 and our power is the Holy Spirit. But this verse gives us the comfort that Christ is leading the battle and that He has no intentions of giving up and going back to camp until He has completely vanquished every foe. He will not settle for half-baked victories that so many Christians settle for. He calls for total submission of everything to the Lordship of Jesus.

One of the professors at Westminster Seminary was asking his daughter what the book of Revelation teaches, and her answer was pretty good. The girl said, “Jesus wins!” But many Amillennialists (while affirming that He wins at the Second Coming) deny that He wins in history - other than producing sanctification in His rapidly decreasing church. For example, Richard Gaffin says, “Until Jesus comes again, the church ‘wins’ by ‘losing’.”¹⁵ And he goes on to try to prove that we are going to lose, lose, lose and only spiritually win from those losses. And he puts “wins” in quotation marks because losing sure doesn’t seem like winning.

But this Psalm assures us that Jesus will win *in* history by putting all enemies under His feet. And we need to keep that firmly in mind. During those times when we grow discouraged in our growth in holiness, remind yourself that Jesus wins and He is on your side; He’s for you. Remind yourself that He won’t give up on us until He has brought us all the way to glory as a bride without spot or wrinkle. Don’t give up on yourself.

And when you are tempted to grow discouraged about Christ’s battle against *other* enemies, remind yourself that 1 Corinthians quotes this psalm and interprets the enemies as all rule, all authority, all power, and all things in this world; and Paul says that Christ is not going to give up until those things become Christian. This psalm should be a tremendous encouragement to us. Let’s pray.

Father, thank you for guaranteeing Christ’s victory. Thank you for your judgments. Thank you for your salvation which is offered to all, full and free. We do not want to worship a God made in our own image. We want to see you as you are, and glory in your plan for history. Thank you for giving us the privilege of being volunteers. We seek your power to do so in

¹⁵ Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “Theonomy and Eschatology,” in *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*, p. 216

holiness. We seek your wisdom for our work. We devote our lives to your cause. In Jesus name. Amen.

Let's close, by singing Spurgeon's Battle Hymn - a hymn that applies this Psalm to our individual lives. We must glory in having every enemy within us being subdued under Christ's feet.

A Battle Hymn Forth to the battle rides our King; He climbs the conquering car; He fits His arrows to the string, and hurls His bolts afar. Convictions pierce the stoutest hearts, they smart, they bleed, they die; Slain by Immanuel's well-aimed darts, in helpless heaps they lie.

Behold, He bares His two-edged sword, and deals almighty blows; His all-revealing, killing Word 'twixt joints and marrow goes. Who can resist Him in the fight? He cuts through coats of mail. Before the terror of His might the hearts of rebels fail.

Anon, arrayed in robes of grace, he rides the trampled plain, With pity beaming in His face, and mercy in His train. Mighty to save He now appears, mighty to raise the dead, Mighty to staunch the bleeding wound, and lift the fallen head.

Victor alike in love and arms, myriads around Him bend; Each captive owns His matchless charms, each foe becomes His friend. They crown Him on the battle-field, they press to kiss His feet; Their hands, their hearts, their all they yield: His conquest is complete.

None love Him more than those He slew; His love their hate has slain; Henceforth their souls are all on fire to spread His gentle reign. Charles H. Spurgeon