

## 6. PSALMS

The Messianic Psalms have various authors. David composed half of the Psalms; other major contributors are the sons of Korah and Asaph. Many Psalms are Messianic, giving prophetic details about the Messiah's person and activities during his first and second comings into the world. See Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 72, 87, 89, 102, 110, 118. They speak about his birth, betrayal, agony, death, resurrection, ascension, and what concerns us here; his coming glory, his battle against the nations, and his worldwide reign from Zion.

The book of Psalms is not just a Jewish songbook where songs composed over hundreds of years were thrown together in any fashion. There are five sections, each section terminating with a doxology. There are identical Hebrew words that connect one Psalm to the next, but the most significant thing is that Messianic prophecy pervades the whole book. David's name is mentioned in nearly half the Psalms and many of them are regarded as prophetic, although it may only be a small part of the Psalm that relates to the Messiah. Jesus said that everything written about him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled (Lk 24:44). A few Psalms are comprehensively Messianic: 2, 22, 45, 97, 110, and are acknowledged in the NT to be so. For our purposes here, we are restricted to end-times Messianic activity; not the ministry, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus at his first coming. Six Psalms or parts thereof will be examined.

### **Nations will conspire against the Lord and his Messiah**

Why is there an uproar among the nations?

Why are the peoples plotting in vain?

The Earth's kings are preparing for war

and the rulers are gathering together against the Lord

and against his Messiah, saying:

Let us break their chains and untie their ropes.

He who is enthroned in heaven laughs,  
the Lord mocks them.  
He will rebuke them in his anger,  
and terrify them in his wrath, saying:  
I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.

I will declare what the Lord commanded me, saying:  
You are my Son, today I have become your Father.  
Ask me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance,  
the entire Earth as your possession.  
You will break them with a rod of iron,  
you will smash them as pottery is smashed.

Therefore, you kings, get smart.  
Be warned, you rulers of the Earth.  
Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate with trembling.  
Kiss the Son so that he doesn't get angry  
and you die on the way,  
for his wrath flares up suddenly.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him (Ps 2:1-12).

It is the Day of the Lord. The nations are raging and plotting in vain against God and his Messiah just as they are doing today (2024). They surround the holy city of Jerusalem, ready for the battle of Armageddon. The Messiah hasn't arrived yet, but during the preceding years, the world's attention is drawn to Jerusalem. This will be a world war, the Gentile nations against Israel, but why? What is their purpose? Speaking prophetically for God, Ezekiel says: "I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel" (Ezek 39:2). So, this battle will happen according to God's plan. Then, there is another reason: "Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the Dragon, out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet. They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty" (Rev 16:13-14). These armies, which are numbered at 200 million, come from the direction of the Euphrates River, the gateway to the East, and they are

brought to the place called Armageddon, which is related to a city called Megiddo, strategically placed along the main highway from Egypt to Syria.

The Psalmist says their purpose is to tear off the chains with which the Lord and his Messiah have bound them. It is a rebellion against God's authority, against the claim by Israel to be God's chosen people and the rightful owners of the promised land. There are other considerations. Gog's armies are allied with Muslim nations, Iran, Sudan, and Libya, who have always laid claim to Jerusalem as their second most holy city. In addition, the Antichrist by this time will have set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God.

Whatever the politics of the situation, God sees this battle as a rebellion against his authority and against all that belongs to him; his world, his people, his land, his city, and his Church. This is war, and despite the tragedy of the situation, the Lord laughs and ridicules them. He declares that he has installed his king (the Messiah) on Zion, his holy mountain. He is the creator and sovereign over the universe. It was at Jesus' resurrection that God declared him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, but not until Jesus returns is he installed as King of kings and Lord of lords on David's throne. He is begotten as God's regent, king in the coming kingdom of God.

God rebukes the nations and says he has installed his king on Zion his holy mountain. He begat Jesus into earthly royalty when he raised him from the dead saying: "Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the entire Earth your possession." The Messiah's rule will be characterized by peace and righteousness, but as he restores his ungodly subjects to that condition, he will rule them with a rod of iron. There will be no mercy shown to offenders under the Messiah's rule. He will shatter them like pottery. So they are advised to get smart and serve the Lord with fear, to rejoice at the honor of being permitted to serve such a great God, but at the same time, to tremble and pay due homage to him.

## **Messiah's kingdom is forever**

God, you will sit on your throne forever and ever,  
the scepter of your kingship is a scepter of justice.  
You love righteousness and hate wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
with joy more than your companions (Ps 45:6-7).

These verses are quoted in Hebrews to show the superiority of the human Messiah above angels (Heb 1:8-9). The angels are never called God. The word “God” in the first line is vocative, a form of address, imputing deity to the Messiah. Compare Isaiah 9:6, where the Messiah is called Mighty God. His kingship is forever and is characterized by righteousness. Nations will praise him forever and ever (vs 17). The context is here on Earth, not in heaven. The word ‘forever’ in an earthly context means as long as the heavens and earth exist.

Some see the bride (vs 9) as the community of God’s people, and ultimately the Church, the wedding being the eschatological banquet described by several prophets (cf. Rev 19:6-9). The Messiah is Lord of the Church who will submit to him, while the nations praise him forever.

## **The Messiah will reign from sea to sea**

The righteous will flourish in his day  
prosperity will abound until the moon ceases to exist.  
May he rule from sea to sea,  
from the Euphrates River to the furthest parts of the earth.  
Desert tribes will come and bow to him,  
his enemies will lie prostrate before him.  
The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores pay tribute to him.  
the kings of Sheba and Seba bring him gifts.  
All kings will bow down before him, all nations will serve him.  
(Psalm 72:7-11).

This psalm of Solomon is a prayer for his own reign which blends into the worldwide rule of the Messiah. The Jewish Targum (an Aramaic paraphrase made in the first century BC) interprets the king as the Messiah. The Lord had promised David that the kingdom of a certain offspring of his (the anointed one) would continue forever, so this was a constant hope. The righteous will flourish under the Messiah’s reign and peace will prevail. He will rule the whole world and all the nations will submit to him. Even the kings of Spain and Yemen, the remote West and remote East, will bring tribute to the Messiah at Jerusalem.

Psalm 72 describes the reign of an ideal king, the reign of a king who is God's regent, reigning with God's authority, doing what is right and just, and resulting in peace and prosperity for everyone. His reign is both universal and eternal and everybody, small and great, recognizes his authority and willingly submits to his gracious rule. *All* kings will fall down before him and *all* nations will serve him.

The future tenses are sometimes translated as optative, but the Septuagint and many modern versions retain the future. If the psalm is Messianic, the future tense is more appropriate.

## **The Messiah will arrive in power and glory**

The Lord reigns! Let the Earth rejoice  
let the numerous islands be glad!  
Clouds and thick darkness surround him;  
righteousness and justice are his throne's foundation.  
Fire goes before him  
and consumes his foes who surround him.  
His lightning lights up the world;  
the Earth sees it and trembles.  
The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,  
before the Lord of all the Earth.  
The heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
And all peoples see his glory.  
All idol worshipers are put to shame,  
All those who boast in graven images.  
Worship him, all you gods!  
Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad  
because of your judgments, Lord.  
For you, Lord, are the high over all the earth;  
you are exalted far above all gods (Ps 97:1-9).

Psalm 96 finishes with the statement that the Lord will come to judge the earth and its people fairly and reliably. Now in Psalm 97, he has arrived. He has come to reign as king. He is Jesus the Jewish Messiah. This is the visible arrival of the Lord, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole world, including the islands of the sea and all its coastal areas, should rejoice because he comes to rule the world with righteousness and justice.

But he comes in judgment on the Day of the Lord to fight against his enemies at the battle of Armageddon. Thick clouds surround him as he descends from the sky, and fire, in the form of bolts of lightning, precedes him and consumes his enemies. The earth quakes at the visible presence of Almighty God, mountains crumble, cities fall, and islands disappear (cf. Rev 17:17-21). The powerful events in the sky proclaim the righteousness of God's administration of justice, and all the people see his power, glory, and majesty.

Zion and the towns of Judah will rejoice because the Messiah has arrived to give them victory and to usher in the Messianic reign. He descends to the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4)

### **The Messiah will crush kings on the day of his wrath**

The LORD told my lord to sit at his right-hand  
until he makes his enemies his footstool.

The LORD will extend your authority from Zion, saying:

Rule amid your enemies.

Your troops will volunteer on the day you exert your authority.

Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you  
like dew in the early morning.

The LORD has sworn and will not renege, saying:

You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord is at your right hand;

he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

He will judge the nations, heaping up their corpses  
and massacre the rulers of the whole earth.

He will drink from a brook along the way,

and so he will hold his head up high (Ps 110:1-7).

The LORD (the Father) tells David's Lord (the Messiah) to sit at his right hand (in heaven) until he makes his enemies (on earth) his footstool. Jesus quoted this Psalm to the Pharisees as evidence that the Messiah was divine. He said: If David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son? (Mt 22:45). The inference is that the Messiah is not only a son of David; he is also the Son of God.

The Messiah sitting at God's right hand means that God has delegated kingship to him. Jesus told his disciples that God had given him all authority in heaven and on Earth (Mt 28:18). Who are the enemies and

how are they made his footstool? The enemies are the wicked on earth who become his footstool, as he judges and crushes the rulers of the whole earth at his return. Jesus the Messiah is called the Son of God and is regarded in Scripture as deity, but being himself in submission to God. Every knee will bow to him, while he in turn, after defeating the enemies, will deliver the kingship back to the Father.

The Messiah will be God's regent on earth. He is the visible image of the invisible God. His earthly throne is David's throne in Jerusalem. As Jesus will reign as God's regent on earth, it is not surprising that he currently sits on the throne with the Father. He intercedes for us there and is above all powers. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to him but he doesn't rule on Earth until he sits on an earthly throne. Many NT verses declare that Jesus is presently seated at the right hand of God, but none of them suggests that he has begun his Messianic reign. He has the status of King of kings and Lord of lords, but his earthly reign has not yet begun. He has made us a kingdom of priests, but we are not reigning yet either. Jesus is waiting until the time when God will defeat his enemies. The world empires and their rulers are still in charge. When Jesus returns, he will sit on his own throne, the throne of David. That will mark the beginning of the Messianic reign on Earth, and the time when the saints will reign over the Earth (Rev 5:10).

The point is that he will reign as God's regent over the earth. That is the battlefield where the enemies are to be defeated. This is a job for the God-man, Jesus, and for his servants whom he has saved from the world and who will reign with him from the Holy City, the heavenly New Jerusalem. Israel will be God's nation on earth organizing the temple worship for all nations.

The Messiah will rule from Zion, his scepter is the symbol of his authority. His troops that he will have on the day of his power when he comes to crush the kingdoms of the world and establish his worldwide kingdom, will consist of the newly resurrected saints who will rise and come to him in holy white garments as dew covers the ground in the morning. Compare the Messiah's coming (Rev 19:14), where the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, follow the Lord on white horses. Isaiah compares the revitalizing dew that gives new life to the grass with resurrection:

Your people who died will live (Lord); their bodies will rise,  
Those who dwell in the dust will wake up and shout for joy.  
Your dew is like the dew of the morning,  
the corpses that are in the ground will come out (Isa 26:19).

When the saints rise from their graves, holy and immortal, they will be forever with the Lord and ready to serve him in whatever capacity.

The Messiah is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The significance here, as expounded in Hebrews 7, is that this is a new age, with a new covenant and a new priesthood to accompany it. The Mosaic law will no longer be in force. When there is a change in the priesthood, there is a change in the law as well. Jesus' substitutionary death has eternal value and supersedes all the old sacrifices and their ritual. However, many prophets (Isa 61:6, 66:21-23, Jer 33:17-22, Ezek 40-48, Zech 14:20-21) declare the continuation of the Levitical priesthood during the millennium in whatever form that should take. A priest draws people near to God and makes them acceptable to him. Our high priest is seated at the right hand of God and he lives forever. He offered himself without blemish to God once and for all to bear the punishment for our sins. His blood purifies us and enables us to serve God willingly and acceptably with thanksgiving.

Psalm 110:7 may seem out of place, but it is a metaphor for enduring and final triumph. The battle is won, and the Messiah refreshes himself and holds his head high as the victor, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. As he told his disciples, all authority in heaven and on Earth has been given to him. After this victory, the prayers of the saints over the millennia will finally be realized:

Your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

## **The Lord has chosen Zion where he will create a power base for his Messiah**

The LORD swore an oath to David,  
It is reliable, he will not renege:  
I will put one of your descendants on your throne.

...

For the Lord has chosen Zion,  
He wants it to be his dwelling, saying:  
I will remain in this place forever and ever.  
I will stay here for that pleases me.  
I will bless her with abundant provisions;  
I will satisfy her poor with food.  
I will clothe her priests with salvation,  
and her godly inhabitants will sing joyfully.  
There I will raise up a powerful descendant of David,  
there I will prepare a lamp for my anointed one.  
I will clothe his enemies with shame,  
but his crown will shine on his head (Ps 132:11, 13-18).

The oath sworn by the Lord to David is from 2 Samuel 7:12-13. God would one day set a certain son of his on his throne in a future dynasty. This son (the Messiah) would build a house or community for God, and God would establish his throne and his kingdom forever. Jesus said he would build his Church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (Mt 16:18).

God did not choose a Messiah who would live in a vacuum. As he is a human being and his future kingdom is here on Earth, his throne will be here on Earth, not in heaven. He will rule from Zion, the seat of the Davidic throne because the Lord has chosen Zion and has desired it to be his dwelling place.

The Lord loves Zion's gates more than all of Jacob's other dwellings. Glorious things are said about you, city of God" (Ps 87:2-3).

This future Zion is to be identified with Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel. There the Messiah will dwell, and from there he will govern the world. The Lord's temple will be there with the Levitical priesthood. The presence of God is now associated with his regent, the Messiah, rather than with the ark of the covenant as it had been in the Tabernacle and Solomon's temple. There the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples and the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious (Isa 11:10). The Lord said he would rise on Zion and his glory will appear over her. The nations will come to her light and kings to her brilliant light, and the wealth of the nations will be brought to her (Isa 60:2-3, 5).

God will abundantly bless Jerusalem's food supply so that the poor are satisfied. The priesthood will be agents of spiritual salvation and the saints will ululate; they will emit cries of joy in response to God's great mercy. It will be there in Jerusalem that God will make a horn grow for the house of David and a permanent light for his anointed one, the Messiah. The horn sprouting up can be compared with the shoot coming from the root of David. His enemies will be ashamed, while the Messiah's crown will sparkle because of his victory and success. Amillennialism denies the existence of a millennium, even an earthly Messianic reign of any length, but God has chosen Jerusalem to be the Messiah's resting place and all of Israel will be saved as his earthly people. He will take care of the poor and rule from sea to sea.