

## PSALMS 109 AND 110

ver. 5; as much as to say: *This—the long string of curses*—is how they *recompense* me for my past kindness; the allusion taking on a striking verisimilitude when the known kindness of David for the house of Saul is recalled, and when we think how easily Shimei the Benjamite might in his bitterness have exaggerated some oversight on David's part to shew his wonted kindness to some member of Saul's family: the addition *from Jehovah* in ver. 20, being a recognition such as we have in 2 Sam. 16:5-13, that David's enemies had been permitted by Jehovah to do him this wrong, leaving the wrong remaining as wrong, the cursing being still theirs and not his. (6) On the background of his enemies' cursing there is something peculiarly lifelike and pathetic in the unrestrained prayer which he pours out before Jehovah as to his whole position: his position, as he is driven from Jerusalem, is indeed desperate, and he may well pray for *rescue*; he is *poor and needy*, and will soon be glad to accept of hospitality from one of his subjects; his *heart* was *wounded within him*, as well it might, with memories of Uriah and Bathsheba recalled, the revolt of Absalom staring him in the face, and now the cursing of Shimei to add bitterness to his cup. These verses, 20-25, compel us to think of David's journey up the slope of Mt. Olivet. Then there is the distinct recognition of Divine chastisement, lying behind the cursing (ver. 27) and as we read on, *They will curse, but thou wilt bless*, we feel certain that the lips that utter these words of resignation are not the same as those which have just been cursing so very fiercely.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. There is a "key which opens this psalm to general edification". What is it?
2. Give and discuss at least two of the reasons given for attributing the curses to David's enemies.
3. What circumstance in David's life best fits this psalm?

## PSALM 110

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

A Revelation, THROUGH DAVID TO his "lord," the Messiah.

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ANALYSIS

(See the lines prefixed to the Stanzas of the Psalm.)

(Lm.) By David—Psalm.

(1. David records a Revelation concerning his lord.)

- 1 The revelation<sup>1</sup> of Jehovah to my lord<sup>2</sup>:—  
“Sit thou at my right hand  
until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.”

(2. Foretells that a Commission will be given to his lord.)

- 2 Thy sceptre of strength<sup>3</sup> will Jehovah stretch forth out of  
Zion:—  
“Rule thou in the midst of thy foes.”

(3. Describes the Appearance of the Army of his lord.)

- 3 Thy people are most willing<sup>4</sup> in thy day of warfare:<sup>5</sup>  
in holy adorning<sup>6</sup> out of the womb of the dawn  
to thee [cometh forth] the dew of thy young men.

(4. Proclaims an Oath addressed by Jehovah to his lord.)

- 4 Sworn hath Jehovah and will not regret:—  
“Thou art a priest to the ages  
after the manner of Melchizedek.”

(5. Portrays the Overthrow of the Foes of his lord,  
and his lord's consequent Exaltation.)

- 5 The Sovereign Lord<sup>7</sup> at thy right hand  
hath crushed<sup>8</sup> in the day of his anger kings,  
6 He judgeth<sup>9</sup> among the nations—full of dead bodies!  
hath crushed the head over a wide land:

1. “Utterance, declaration, revelation”—O.G. “Oracle”—Del., Per. “Utterance”—Br. For use and misuse of the formula, cp. Jer. 23:31-33.

2. Heb.: *'adoni*.

3. = “Thy strong sceptre:” cp. Ps. 2:9.

4. Heb. pl. abstract of intensification: “willingnesses.”

5. “Of thy power. Or, *of thy host*; in either case the meaning being, on the day when thy forces muster for battle”—Dr. “Of thy host”—Br. “In the day that thou warrest”—Per. “In the day of thy warfare”—Del.

6. Ml.: “In stateliness of holiness.”

7. Heb. (M.T.): *'adonai*. In some cod. “Jehovah”—Gn.

8. Or: “shattered.”

9. Or: “will judge.”

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7 An inheritance on the way he maketh it,<sup>10</sup>  
therefore he exalteth the<sup>11</sup> Head.

(Nm.)<sup>12</sup>

## PARAPHRASE

### PSALM 110

Jehovah said to my Lord the Messiah,<sup>1</sup> "Rule as My regent—I will subdue Your enemies and make them bow low before You."

2 Jehovah has established Your throne<sup>2</sup> in Jerusalem<sup>3</sup> to rule over Your enemies.

3 In that day of Your power Your people shall come to You willingly, dressed in holy altar robes.<sup>4</sup> And Your strength shall be renewed day by day like morning dew.

4 Jehovah has taken oath, and will not rescind His vow, that You are a priest forever like<sup>5</sup> Melchizedek.

5 God stands beside You to protect You. He will strike down many kings in the day of His anger.

6 He will punish the nations, and fill them with their dead. He will crush many heads.

7 But He Himself shall be refreshed from springs along the way.

## EXPOSITION

This psalm being ascribed to *David*, we have a prescriptive right to endeavour to interpret it accordingly; and the measure of our success may be regarded as confirming or discrediting this superscription.

Ver. 1. *The Revelation of Jehovah to my lord.*—As a *revelation*, the psalm as a whole and its leading announcement in particular may be expected to make a disclosure unknown before. We already know of the choice of David in preference to Saul; of his anointing and ascension to the throne of Israel; of his prophetic gifts; of the covenant made with him, through

10. So Br. (with very slight emendations).

11. Or: "a."

12. See Ps. 111 (beginning).

1. Implied. In Matthew 22:41-45, Jesus applies the words to Himself.

2. Literally, "The Lord will send forth the rod of your strength out of Zion."

3. Literally, "from Zion."

4. Literally, "in holy array."

5. Literally, "after the manner of."

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Nathan the prophet, touching his sons as destined heirs to his kingship: which covenant, therefore, must have made him aware of the continuance of his kingdom under other rulers than himself. It was not to be his privilege to carry the Representative Kingship with which he was invested to its climax, by bearing it for ever, or by himself bringing all nations into perfect obedience to Jehovah. He would have to bequeath his throne to his sons, some of whom, Nathan suggested to him, would probably prove unworthy of that honour. He himself, in any case, was not the Messiah. So much we knew from previous Divine communications to David. But we did not know—however naturally we might have conjectured it—that David's royal line would at length be consummated in the person of one of his race to whom he himself would own allegiance and whom he would willingly call his "lord." But this is implied in the first line of the psalm. David shall have such an heir—an heir whom he can call his "lord"; and inasmuch as a living son can exercise no lordship over a dead father,—even as, on the other hand, a dead father cannot give allegiance to an as yet unborn son,—we are irresistibly carried forward to Resurrection days; unless, indeed, David is not to die until this his Greater Son appears. We find ourselves, therefore, to say the least, well within the scope of a revelation—a disclosure—a discovery.

But this discovery, though made *through* David, directly concerns David's *lord*—his Messianic Son. This, precisely, is what David here tells us. He does not say: *The revelation of Jehovah UNTO ME*, but *The Revelation of Jehovah to MY LORD*; that is, to MY SON, THE MESSIAH. In short, then, we have here a revelation *to* the Messiah; and being a revelation written down and preserved until the Messiah's days, will it not, in the event of his reading it, become at once a revelation *for* him and a revelation *to* him? Jesus of Nazareth believes himself to be David's Messianic Son: his nation are about to reject him, meantime this revelation comes to him—to his notice, to his reflection, to his need. All who truly believe in the *kenosis*—the self-emptying—of which the Apostle Paul (Phil. 2) speaks, cannot fail to become aware that already the atmosphere of the psalm has become charged with intense spiritual emotion. No wonder that, on receiving this revelation, Jesus is so profoundly moved that, to the Pharisees, he can only put questions!

So far we are assured that a revelation to the Messiah is coming, but are not told what it is. Of this the next words inform

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us: *Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.* This informs us that the Messiah will have foes; but, that instead of at once contending with them and overcoming them, he is to be taken out of their midst; to be so taken, by being invited to a post of highest honour; in short, to be exalted to the right hand of Jehovah in heaven. We say, advisedly, "in heaven,"—first, because we know that heaven is the place of Jehovah's fixed abode (1 K. 8:30, etc.); and, secondly, because it is not easy to see how a mere elevation to the right hand of the sacred *ark in Jerusalem* could have the effect of removing the Messiah from the midst of his enemies. Here, again, it is not without emotion that we conceive of Jesus of Nazareth receiving such an invitation from Jehovah. For him to take in its purport, could fall nothing short of his discovering something of "the joy set before him," fitted to embolden him "to endure the cross, its shame despising."

But this elevation is not to be for ever: it is for a definite object; and, therefore, for such time as the accomplishment of that object shall require: *Until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.* It is JEHOVAH who undertakes to reduce Messiah's foes to such a humiliating condition. The foes are spoken of collectively and as a complete class. And the subjugation is to be thorough. Jehovah promises that he will bring down the Messiah's enemies to *abject submission* to his, the Messiah's, will. They shall be publicly humiliated—totally crushed. They shall be able to rise in rebellion no more. Their being made *a stool for the Messiah's feet* cannot mean less than this.

Ver. 2. *Thy sceptre of strength will Jehovah stretch forth out of Zion.* It is Jehovah who will place the Messiah's enemies under his feet; but, not necessarily and to the end of the process, without the Messiah's participation. *Thy sceptre of strength* is, naturally, the Messiah's sceptre; although, still, it is Jehovah who stretches it forth out of Zion, the which continued activity of Jehovah is to be carefully borne in mind. *What* sceptre, then, is this? And *whence* is it to be wielded? The phrase *Thy sceptre of strength* is of the same meaning as "Thy strong sceptre;" for the Hebrew tongue delights in using abstract nouns of quality where we mostly use adjectives. Messiah, then, is to wield "a strong sceptre;" that is, to exercise a strong rule, to enforce obedience, to compel submission. We are entitled to say: Messiah's "strong sceptre" is the "iron sceptre" of Psalm the Second, otherwise the practice of comparing scripture with

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scripture might as well cease. Now, an "iron sceptre" is the fit emblem of PHYSICAL FORCE. This, therefore, the Messiah will have at command, and will employ. Yet will he do this strictly under Jehovah's direction, pushing his dominion through openings which Jehovah has made, and forcing submission by means which Jehovah will supply. It is Jehovah who is to *stretch forth* Messiah's "strong sceptre." Moreover, also, that sceptre is to be stretched forth *out of Zion*. And therefore its enforcing activity is to start from Zion. Its holder and wielder is to be located in Zion. But *what* "Zion" is this? It is the earthly Zion. And is this movement, by consequence, a descent of enforcing power from heaven, and its centralisation on earth? It can be nothing else;—for this sufficient reason, that never once in the Old Testament does "Zion" mean heaven, or is "Zion" located in heaven. No real or imaginary figurative use of "Zion" or "Jerusalem" in the New Testament can control us here. We are, in this psalm, on Old Testament ground, and must therefore keep to the Old Testament use of words. Hence the legitimate inference is, that, in the meantime, the centre of Messianic activity has been transferred from heaven to earth. The Messiah is now again "in the midst of his enemies;" which agrees with the commission here given him: *Rule thou in the midst of thy foes*. It would be more like a parody than a fair exegesis of these words to make them equivalent to—"From thy safe retreat in heaven, at the right hand of Jehovah, where thine enemies cannot reach thee, nor for a moment suppose they can reach thee, rule thou in the midst of thy foes." The *power* might be in the midst of the foes, but the *Presence* would not be—the *Manifested Presence*; without which—how are the unbelieving enemies,—who, as such, do not believe that there *is* a Messiah concealed in the skies,—to connect the power on the earth with the Presence in heaven? No: plainly, the Messiah's special *refuge-and-waiting* session at the right hand of Jehovah, in heaven, IS AT AN END, and he is once more "in the midst of his foes" on earth: in Zion, the historical Zion, the only Zion of which the Old Testament knows anything, the very Zion in which long ago the Father declared he would enthrone him (Ps. 2). Being in Zion, in the midst of his foes, he there wields his iron sceptre; and Jehovah will see to it that its enforcing activity shall be *extended*, at least over a *wide land*; and undoubtedly, ere its triumphs cease, be stretched forth "from the River unto the Ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:10).

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Ver. 3. But the Messiah, now seated in Zion, has a *people*, who are here described in strikingly beautiful and suggestive terms. They are *most willing*: they are *volunteers* in the service of Zion's king; for, by general consent, this is the force of the abstract plural of intensification (*willingness*), here employed. They are not mercenaries; they spring to their feet with alacrity when the time comes for them to offer their services. The seasonableness of their volunteering is expressly noted; for they thus come forth for service just when their services are needed, or when at least the offer of them seems fitting to the time: *in thy day of warfare*—"the meaning being, on the day when thy forces muster for battle" (Dr.). David's lord, the Messiah, therefore, *has* a "people," who with alacrity press into his service "on his day of warfare"; i.e., the day when his warfare breaks out "in the midst of his foes." How long they have been his "people" is not stated: they are his people now when his "forces muster for battle," and they act in character *as* his people by volunteering for service now that the time for warring has come.

Their appearance is next described: that is, if we follow the Massoretic text—they appear *in holy adorning*, as it were in priestly robes. If, however, with some able critics we prefer the various reading which (substituting an "r" for a "d," the difference in Hebrew being very small) yields the very dissimilar clause *On the holy mountains* instead of "In holy adorning," then we find in this phrase a notification of the *place where* these volunteers gather: they gather on the holy mountains—about Jerusalem, naturally—for we know of no other "holy mountains"; and this seems strikingly agreeable with the circumstance that the Messiah has now fixed his headquarters in Jerusalem, since it is *from thence* that his strong rule is to be "extended." Still, it is not certain that this various reading is to be preferred, for a reason to be given in a few moments. Hence, for the present, we leave that an open question, by saying: If the word is *harre*, then the rendering must be—*On the holy mountains*; but if *hadre*, then the proper English is—*in holy adorning*. We wish to find out precisely—if we may—who these "people," these Messianic "volunteers," are: does this clause say they are a priestly people; or does it indicate the place of their gathering? Let us follow on with the text, in the hope of coming near to an answer.

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*Out of the womb of the dawn, Thou hast (or to thee cometh forth) the dew of thy young men.* Sudden and striking, bright and beautiful, and wholly unexpected, as a revelation of innumerable dew-drops in the morning when the sun rises, is the appearance of this army of volunteers. They are born out of the foregoing night. They suddenly start forth as the Messiah's allies "on the day of his warfare," when his "strong sceptre" is about to be "stretched forth out of Zion" by Jehovah. So far our text leads us. Still it does not define, beyond doubt, who this "people" are.

But just here comes in a remarkable text from the prophet Micah (5:7) which looks as if it might have been written as a commentary on this verse of our psalm. The reference is to "the Shepherd of Israel." That this Shepherd should appear as a deliverer from ASSYRIA, will not hinder students of prophecy from associating him with the final deliverance of Israel from the Gentile world-power, first represented by Assyria. But here is the language in question:—"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, As dew from Jehovah, As myriad drops on plants, Which tarrieth not for man, Nor waiteth for the sons of Adam." Even so far, the parallel is very striking; and already begins to make us question whether the "volunteers" of our psalm are not this very "remnant of Jacob in the midst of many peoples," quietly awaiting the auspicious morning of Messiah's manifestation in Jerusalem. How greatly the quiet deposit of them "among many peoples" seems to add to the formidableness of their presence, provided they are destined to be *more aggressive than "dew"*: the very thing of which the prophet immediately proceeds to assure us: "And the remnant of Jacob"—the same remnant—"shall be among the nations"—the same position, stated in duplicate: "among the nations, in the midst of many peoples:" in what character? as gentle "dew" merely? nay! "as a lion among the beasts of the jungle, As a young lion among flocks of sheep, Who if he passeth by, both treadeth down—and teareth in pieces—and none can deliver." How wonderfully, though poetically, do those features of the psalmist's description here reappear, which intimate that in spite of their "holy adorning" and their fresh and brilliant beauty, the newly revealed army of volunteers are volunteers of a king whose iron sceptre is now, on this "his day of warfare," to be "stretched forth" by Jehovah "out of Zion"! We tenaciously adhered, a little way back, to the fact



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that, although the "iron sceptre" was the Messiah's, yet it was JEHOVAH who would stretch it forth from Zion to the ends of the earth. And is not this our reward—namely, to discover in this "remnant of Jacob" the very means by which Jehovah will extend that resistless sway of which the psalmist had spoken?

Thus, then, we appear to be absolved from any need to push further our quest after the Messiah's volunteering people as referred to in the third verse of our psalm. They are the "remnant of Jacob" "among the nations," "in the midst of many peoples," sustaining the well-known characteristics of "dew"—"that tarrieth not for man," and of "lions" from whose downtreading and tearing prowess the sheep cannot escape. If the provision of such a people for the crisis is not a stretching forth of Messiah's strong sceptre out of Zion to the ends of the earth, we should like to know by what more striking and powerful metaphor such an idea could be conveyed. For the present, then, we are well content with the Massoretic text, which spells with a "d" and not with an "r"; and so are prepared to rest in the descriptive clause "In holy adorning" as applied to the "remnant of Jacob"; rather than "On the holy mountains," which would have confined their gathering to a single spot. Such volunteers are a thousand times more formidable where they are, scattered among the nations; unnoticed, forgotten, trampled under foot; and yet able,—in the strength of Jehovah their God and in their newborn enthusiasm for their Anointed King newly seated in Zion,—to utter a roar which shall make all the continents of the world tremble. By what means Jehovah will clothe this scattered "remnant of Jacob" with garments of "holy adorning," so that like Jehoshaphat's Levites of old (2 Ch. 20:19-22) they shall go forth singing to the battlefield, perchance to find the foe already demolished, we know not; but if Jehovah here declares that he will so stretch forth his Messiah's strong sceptre to the ends of the earth, we can calmly await the fulfilment. The morning which shall witness that army's birth has not yet dawned. We are the more content to abide by the "holy adorning" clause of the Massoretic Hebrew text, in that, besides its immediate application to the Messiah's volunteers, it gives forth in advance something of the fragrance of the Messiah's own Kingly priesthood, with the revelation of which a march has now to be stolen upon us. The Volunteer Army is ready, so far as the psalm itself is concerned: ready, in that with more or less of vividness it now stands before the mental eye of the sympathetic reader.

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But meanwhile a promotion has come to the Messiah during his absence in heaven at Jehovah's right hand. An immeasurable honour has been conferred upon him.

Ver. 4. *Sworn hath Jehovah, and will not regret: THOU art a priest to the ages After the manner of Melchizedek.* Note that this statement is not made in terms which describe a proceeding now to take place, but in terms which express accomplishment already completed. The words are not—"Jehovah sweareth," or "now proceedeth to swear"; but *Jehovah hath sworn*. The constituting mandate (or *oath*), making the Messiah priest, has already been uttered; and, having regard to the place occupied by this report of that mandate, we may reasonably conclude that the priestly instalment took place in heaven, when the Messiah sat down at Jehovah's right hand. Of this instalment, however, no details are given. They are left over for a Christian Writer to supply; and right worthily has the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews supplied all necessary details; as to the grounds on which this honour was conferred on the Messiah—how he who now is made priest had previously offered himself as a sacrifice,—and as to the abolishing effect of this decree on the Levitical priesthood. No such details, be it well observed, are here given. The installing announcement alone is here made, in briefest terms, and as of an event already accomplished. This last point is the matter to be emphasised here. The new King has come to Zion; has received his commission to subdue and humiliate his foes; and his army of volunteers is ready. At this juncture the action of the poem is stayed, to make way for this brief and authoritative announcement of the accomplished fact of the installation of David's "lord" into a Kingly Priesthood resembling that of Melchizedek. Now, as the action of the psalm is immediately resumed as soon as ever this heavenly event is proclaimed; as the strong sceptre of the Messiah is immediately stretched forth out of Zion; and as the foes are immediately put beneath the Messiah's feet,—the proper effect of the interpolated priestly announcement is to call attention to *the kind of King* which earth receives in now submitting to the all-subduing Messiah. In sitting on David's throne, which is his own earthly throne in Zion, David's "lord" sits there as a priest upon his throne: as at once priest and king, exercising simultaneously and harmoniously the functions of both offices,—perfectly representing and effectuating Jehovah's rule over men, and as perfectly representing and presenting men's need to Je-

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hovah. He will thus, in his own person, give a strong lead to Israel in becoming, according to her original mission (Exo. 19), "a kingdom of priests" to all nations. He will thus become the Antitype of the "Sign-men," Joshua and his friends in the prophecies of Zechariah, by permanently bearing both offices (Zech. 3:8, 6:9-15). He will thus, far surpass his father David, who once or twice in a passing way, served as a High Priest to the priests of Israel (2 S. 6:5, 14, 1 Ch. 15, 16). Especially will he thus become, to the whole earth and for ever, what Melchizedek was for a short while to a small area around Salem of old (Gen. 14).

Vers. 5-7. The climax of the whole psalm comes at last. The climax is a crisis. The crisis is a battle which decides the fate of the world by subduing it to the final reign on earth of its Priestly King. The whole psalm leads up to this terrible crisis. The first verse characterises it as the time of bringing Messiah's enemies beneath his feet, until which the invitation extends to sit down at Jehovah's right hand in heaven. The second verse centralises the crisis in Zion. The third verse definitely names it Messiah's "day of warfare." The fourth verse, as we have said, stays the action of the psalm for the purpose of announcing an already accomplished heavenly fact. Having done this, the fifth verse unmistakably resumes the action of the psalm by further naming the coming day as Jehovah's *day of anger* and by plunging into the actual crushing of the foes, giving us to witness STROKE AFTER STROKE of Jehovah's activity in fulfilling the promise made at the outset to David's "lord." The first stroke is the crushing of kings. The second stroke is the filling of the nations, or of the battle-field of the nations, with dead bodies. The third stroke is the crushing of an individual *head*, who, however, is head *over a wide land*. These three strokes complete the down-treading action of the psalm—complete the overthrow and trampling underfoot of Messiah's foes—complete the rescue of Messiah's inheritance. The single remaining verse celebrates the victory.

We have characterised this as a "terrible" crisis, and so it is. But, unless words are to be tortured, it is THE CRISIS OF THE PSALM: moreover, it is the crisis of the Bible—of other psalms, as the second with its dashing in pieces, the forty-fifth with its sharp arrows in the heart of the king's enemies whereby peoples fall under him, the seventy-second where the king's enemies are made to lick the dust; and of the prophecies generally, such as

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Isaiah Second, Twenty-fourth, Sixty-third, Sixty-sixth, and others too numerous to be mentioned; of several significant places in the Gospels and the Epistles, reappearing with an accession of heavenly terror in the Apocalypse. It is a "terrible" crisis, but no daring criticism can root it out of the Bible. And, though "terrible," it seems to be a *needful* crisis. For, truly, the witness of nineteen centuries seems to declare that it may be absolutely needful that Jehovah's PHYSICAL FORCE through means of Messiah's *iron sceptre* should maintain and enforce the moral suasion of many foregoing centuries. And, once more, though "terrible," thank God it will be *final and efficacious*. For, thereby, the Messiah will "speak peace to the nations" in terms which will compel war to cease and clear the way for gentler forces to operate to the ages.

Ver. 5. Before noticing, in a little detail, the three strokes of displeasure with which the foes of the Messiah are actually made his footstool, it is desirable to assure ourselves that those three strokes are here attributed to JEHOVAH HIMSELF rather than to the Messiah. Whether this is the case, turns upon the nice and rather critical question—Who is intended by "*The Lord at thy right hand*" of ver. 5? Is it Messiah on Jehovah's right hand, or is it Jehovah on the Messiah's right hand? And, as involved in this broader question, is the narrower one—Who is the person whose *right hand* is here spoken of? In other words, to whom is this line (with the following lines) addressed? If Jehovah is addressed, then "the Lord at his right hand" will be the Messiah—"The Messiah hath crushed kings," &c.; whereas, if the Messiah is addressed, then it will be Jehovah who crusheth kings, &c. Now, notwithstanding the plausibility of the contention that the word A-D-N-I should be pronounced *adhoni* ("my lord"), and so be regarded as a repetition of the word standing at the end of the first line of the psalm, yet as this would probably necessitate another change, which neither the Hebrew text nor the ancient versions sustain, "My lord at HIS right hand"; we shall do well to pause and look well to the context, before we decide this nice point. Now the opinion is here submitted, that the better conclusion is: That the Messiah is here directly addressed, and therefore that "the Lord at Messiah's right hand" is Jehovah. And, though this may be said to involve a change of their relative position—so that, in ver. 1, Messiah is seen on Jehovah's right hand; and, in ver. 5, Jehovah is discovered on the Messiah's right hand,—yet there can be no valid

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objection to this. The scene has changed, and with it the relative positions; and there is nothing whatever incongruous, but rather everything befitting, that in heaven the Messiah should be on Jehovah's right hand, and on earth Jehovah should be on the Messiah's right hand; especially as this very representation has already and so lately been made as in vers. 30, 31 of the next preceding psalm: "I will thank Jehovah . . . because he taketh his stand at the right hand of the needy." There is therefore plainly nothing incongruous, if in this place, the representation is, that Jehovah, here, on earth, on "*the day of Messiah's warfare*," takes his stand at the Messiah's right hand to direct and aid him in overthrowing his foes, and letting the world and all future generations see that it was JEHOVAH'S hand that did it. And as, on the one hand, there is nothing incongruous to be alleged against this conclusion, so on the other there are these reasons to be urged in its favour: (1) that the vowel-pointing of the Massoretic text can stand—*Adonai—Sovereign Lord*, equivalent to Jehovah; (2) that those codices which actually have Jehovah (see *Gn.* under text) will be substantially correct; (3) that no change further on in the line, from "thy" to "his" will be required; and (4)—most weighty reason of all—that continued prominence will thereby be given to the feature made prominent at the beginning of the psalm, That it is emphatically JEHOVAH who places the Messiah's enemies beneath his feet. *He* does this, because he it is who provides the Messiah with his wonderful army of volunteers, he it is who crushes kings, judges nations, crushes the head over a wide land. This then may be regarded as provisionally settled, that the fifth verse opens by declaring that Jehovah, on the Messiah's right hand, does the things that follow, to each of which we may now devote a moment's attention.

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, *crushes Kings*—literally *hath crushed*, the well-known perfect tense of prophetic certainty. Then there *are* "kings" in the final opposition raised against the Messiah's wielding his strong sceptre out of Zion. There *are* "kings" who have not shewn the "prudence" urged upon them in the Second Psalm. They will have dared an impious, desperate thing; and for it they will be "crushed."

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, *judgeth* (*proceedeth to judge, will judge*) among the nations,—the tense being here changed to the so-called "imperfect," more exactly, the initiative, incipient or incomplete, precisely suited to indicate a further

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and perhaps prolonged process. No details, saving one, are here supplied as to the nature of this judging among the nations. The one which is supplied is sufficiently startling: throughout the nations which are being judged, or on the battlefield to which the nations gather, there is a filling of the places of conflict (or the one battlefield) with the slain—the dead bodies—the corpses—the *g'wioth*. Let him who dares, attempt to spiritualise and thereby evaporise this! Beware how you minimise the Divine wielding of Messiah's "iron sceptre"! This is the second stroke. The third follows.

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, *hath crushed* (again the perfect of certainty) *the head over a wide land*. The rebellious *kings* have a "head": the infatuated *nations* have a head. That "head" has become "head"—"over a wide land," or has gone up to do battle, "over a wide country." The student of prophecy does not need to inquire who that head is. Even the thoughtful reader who has got no further than this psalm may surmise that here at last is the key that unlocks the secret of that "throne of iniquity" which so unaccountably started out into prominence in Ps. 94: "Can the throne of engulfing ruin be allied to thee, which frameth mischief by statute?" It would not be surprising if the instructed Bible student were to exclaim without more delay: "Yes! I see: this other *head* that is to be crushed is none else than Antichrist or the Man of Sin or the Lawless One whom 'the Lord Jesus is to destroy by the breath of his lips and to paralyse with the brightness of his coming.'" Nor would he be wrong. Nevertheless, it may be a useful throwing of ourselves upon Old Testament testimony, if we simply confirm our apprehension by yet another reference to it as set forth by the prophet Isaiah (30:29-33):—"A song shall ye have, As in the night of hallowing a festival, And gladness of heart as when one goeth with the flute To enter the mountain of Jehovah Unto the Rock of Israel." Language, this, which appears as if expressly framed to suit those "Volunteers," coming forth "out of the womb of the dawn," "robed in holy adorning" of which we read in the third verse of this psalm. "Then will Jehovah cause to be heard the resounding of his voice, And the bringing down of his arm shall be seen, In a rage of anger, And with the flame of a devouring fire, A burst, and downpour and a hailstone! And at the voice of Jehovah shall Assyria be crushed, With his rod will he smite, And it shall come to pass that every stroke of the staff of doom which Jehovah shall lay

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upon him shall be with timbrels and with lyres, when with battles of brandished weapons he hath fought against them. For there hath been set in order beforehand a Tophet, yea the same for the king hath been prepared, He hath made it deep, made it large,—The circumference thereof is for fire and wood in abundance, The breath of Jehovah like a torrent of brimstone is ready to kindle it.” Assyria first—Assyria last: that came out in the quotation from Micah. The overthrow of Sennacherib a type—the overthrow of Antichrist the antitype. But note, as the supreme thing in relation to our psalm, the activity of Jehovah: Jehovah’s voice—Jehovah’s arm—Jehovah’s rage—Jehovah’s rod Jehovah’s strokes of doom—Jehovah’s enkindling breath; and say whether it does not read as if expressly intended to be a commentary on our Psalm—on Jehovah’s opening revelation to David’s “lord” our Messiah. Here is the king—the “head” king of iniquity; here is the day of anger; here, the making of the Messiah’s foes a stool for his feet. Ye forthcoming army of volunteers, yet to spring sparkingly forth from the womb of the dawn! get ready your flutes and timbrels and lyres; for although the slaughter will be terrible, yet the joy will be great, and the songs that will be evoked will continue to resound through the after ages.

Ver. 7. After the battle, the restoration of the inheritance! And so, by the help of Dr. Briggs, we read from a critically emended text: *An inheritance on the way he maketh it, Therefore he* (Jehovah still, as all along so far in these concluding verses) *exalteth the Head*—the true Head, the Messiah, the rightful Head of a ransomed and delivered world. Of course, if anyone choose to abide still by the Massoretic Hebrew text,—down to the last verse and to the minutest letter, including the editorially supplied vowel points, he can do so with very little disturbance to the general effect; and, bringing the Messiah to the front as an exhausted warrior, snatching a refreshing drink of the book by the way, and then lifting up his head to pursue the flying foe and so completing his conquest—to which he will naturally give a fitting explanation. But probably a goodly contingent even of conservative critics will prefer the more dignified and commensurate ending suggested above, especially when they discover the minuteness of the changes involved, probably imperilling not more than a single consonant in the original text, in the process of copying which such an error might easily be made. An excellent, dignified, and adequate

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conclusion to the psalm, will certainly be realised if we thus read and expound the seventh verse. *An inheritance on the way* (at once) *he* (Jehovah) *maketh it*, (namely) *the wide land* rescued from Antichrist, or even the whole earth occupied by the nations previously mentioned as having to pass through Jehovah's refining judgment; handing it over to him, the Messiah, in pursuance of the offer of the Second Psalm—"Ask of me, and I will give nations as thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as thy possession." Thus will Jehovah make good the very last line of the psalm also: *Therefore* (and thus) *he* (Jehovah) *exalteth* the (rightful and all worldly) *Head* (of the world redeemed by him, even the Messiah, David's long-looked-for *lord*: to whom and for whom this sublime and significant revelation was made by the Holy Spirit speaking by David).

The references to this psalm in the N.T. demand a brief notice. "No psalm is more frequently quoted and alluded to in the N.T. It was, as we have seen, quoted by our Lord (Mat. 22:44, Mk. 12:36, Lk. 20:42, 43); and His use of its language as recorded in 26:64 (=Mk. 14:62, Lk. 22:69) clearly involved (since its Messianic significance was acknowledged) and assertion of His Messiahship in answer to the High-priest's adjuration. Ver. 1 is applied by St. Peter to the exaltation of Christ in his Resurrection and Ascension (Acts 2:34, 35) and is quoted in Heb. 1:13 to illustrate the superiority of the Son to Angels. Cp. also Mk. 16:19, Acts 5:31, 7:55, 56, Rom. 8:34, I Cor. 15:24ff, Eph. 1:20, Col. 3:1, Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 13, 12:2, I Peter 3:22, Rev. 3:21. Ver. 4 serves as the basis of the argument in Heb. 5:5ff, 6:20, 7:17ff concerning the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical priesthood"—Kp. in "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." In accordance with the lofty outlook of some of these references, it would not have been improper to render the second line of this psalm—"Sit thou enthroned at my right hand," only that such a prominence given to heavenly kingship would have been a little beyond the scope of the psalm, and was by no means demanded by the Hebrew word employed. Carefully followed, the context suggests no more than honour, rest, and waiting; in exact accordance with Heb. 10:13 ("waiting henceforth"). In point of fact, the Son of David is also the Son of God; and the heavenly honour, rest, and waiting secured by his session at the right hand of God, are coincident with heavenly activity, in other



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capacities and for other ends than those brought into view by the psalm. In like manner, it would probably have been premature, had we, in seeking for the "volunteers" of ver. 3, referred to the army seen in heaven in Rev. 19. The coincidence is indeed striking, especially as between the "holy adorning" seen by the psalmist and the "fine linen, white and pure" described by the seer in Patmos. The happy medium to be desired in adjusting the revelations of the Old and New Testaments is to make haste slowly; not to hurry the elder scriptures into disclosures quite beyond their scope, nor yet to overrule, and far less to suppress or make of no effect their communications.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This psalm is to be a "revelation". Just what is involved in the use of this word?
2. This revelation consists in what fact?
3. To whom is this revelation to be given? When? Under what conditions? With what result?
4. The phrase "sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet" moves the Messiah from earth to heaven. How?
5. Who is to conquer the enemies of the Messiah? How?
6. What is meant by the phrase "Thy sceptre of strength"?
7. Are we now moved from heaven back to earth? There can be no spiritual meaning to the "Zion" here mentioned. Do you agree? Discuss.
8. King Jesus is ruling with a rod of iron out of Jerusalem in the midst of His foes. Is this to be a real circumstance? Discuss.
9. Who are "his people" as in vs. 3? Before you attempt an answer discuss the three characteristics of "his people." These qualities should characterize "his people" today.
10. What a beautiful figure of speech: "out of the womb of the dawn, Thou hast the dew of thy young men." How do Christians well compare with dew? i.e. real "new creatures in Christ Jesus".
11. A reference in Micah (5:7) is used by the writer to interpret this part of verse three. Does it fit? Discuss.
12. "The people of God"—indeed the "army of God" according to Rotherham is "the remnant of Jacob". These are scattered "among the nations"—plainly put—: are these Christian Jews who are scattered among the nations and

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who will one day be called (or caught up) to Jerusalem to fight in the bloody battle of God? Discuss.

13. In verse five we are asked to believe that God is moved to the Messiah's right hand. Do you accept this thought? Please, please, read some other commentary in addition to this one on this point.
14. "The climax is a crisis" in this psalm. What is it? The crisis of this psalm is the crisis of the Bible i.e., according to the writer. Discuss.
15. The three strokes of displeasure by which the Messiah's foes are made the footstool of His feet are here described (in vs. 5). What are they?
16. The "crushing of head" refers to the "man of sin". Do you agree? Discuss.
17. What happens after this great battle? Discuss.

## PSALM 111

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of Jehovah.

### ANALYSIS

The Psalm is composed of Ten Verses: vers. 1-8 have Two Clauses each, Initialled by 16 successive letters of the Hebrew Alphabet; and vers. 9 and 10 have Three Clauses each, Initialled by the 6 remaining letters of the Alphabet: thus making, in all, 22 lines; and employing the entire alphabet as initials. The First Verse states the THEME of the psalm, and the Last Verse supplies the THEME for the Next Psalm; so that the Second of the pair Begins where the First Ends.

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(P.R.I.) Praise ye Yah!

- 1 I will thank Jehovah with a whole heart,  
In the council<sup>1</sup> of the upright and the congregation.
- 2 Great are the works<sup>2</sup> of Jehovah,  
Studied by all who take pleasure therein.
- 3 Majestic and stately<sup>3</sup> is his work,  
And his righteousness standeth fast for aye.

1. Or: "confidential gathering"—Dr.

2. Or: "doings."

3. MI. or: "majesty and stateliness."