
Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament

Herbert W. Bateman IV
Dallas, Texas

Old Testament scholars generally agree with form critics that Psalm 110 is a royal psalm because of its king motif,¹ but they disagree over the historical setting for the psalm. Throughout this century several proposals have been offered, debated, and rejected concerning the time frame, speaker, recipient, and life situation for the psalm. These are natural concerns for Old Testament scholars, but many New Testament scholars share similar interests, since portions of the psalm occur in the New Testament. Does the New Testament contribute to these historical discussions? If so, to what extent can the New Testament be used to identify the historical setting and the historically intended recipient of Psalm 110?

The Time Frame for Psalm 110

Scholars have proposed three time frames for Psalm 110: pre-Israelite, postexilic, or preexilic. Those who have proposed a pre-Israelite time frame suggest that Psalm 110 is a hymn converted from

¹ H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*, trans. T. M. Horner (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 23-24; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961, 1978), 1:lii; idem, *Psalms 1-59*, trans. H. C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 56; A. Weiser, *The Psalms* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 63; Kyle M. Yates, "Psalms," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody, 1962), 536; Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* (Amsterdam: Schippers, 1966), 3:78; Leslie Jacquet, *Les Psaumes et le Coeur de l'Homme: Psaumes 101 à 150* (Gemblox: Duculot, 1979), 3:214; Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 83; Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 245; Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2 vols., ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 1:784-88; W. A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 5:696.

or based on a Jebusite royal tradition. In defense of their proposal, they note that a royal priesthood existed in Jebus (Jerusalem) in Abraham's time (Gen. 14:18) and that David later conquered Jebus (2 Sam. 5:6-10; 1 Chron. 11:4-5).² Others appeal to Canaanite vocabulary and cultic parallels in Psalm 110. For instance Patton cites three examples of Canaanite word parallels, which Jefferson later reintroduces, to support the view that Psalm 110 originally was a Canaanite poem. The thought of sitting at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1a) is compared with "and he was seated on the right hand of mightiest Baal" (4 v 109-10). The "footstool" of El in Ugaritic, an important part of the royal furnishings (4 iv 29; 5 vi 12-13; 6 i 58), is compared with the "footstool" mentioned in several Old Testament texts (1 Chron. 28:2; Pss. 99:5; 110:1b; 132:7; Isa. 66:1). The verb "to smash" or "to shatter" (יָחַם) in Psalm 110:5-6 is cited as a poetic word used elsewhere only in Judges 5:26 (Song of Deborah); Numbers 24:8, 17 (Balaam's oracles); Deuteronomy 32:39 (Song of Moses); 33:11 (Blessing of Moses); Psalms 18:39; 68:22, 24; Job 5:18; 26:2; and Habakkuk 3:13.³

Although a sprinkling of Canaanite coloring and vocabulary exists in Psalm 110, the evidence is too meager to affirm that the psalm was converted from a Jebusite hymn or royal tradition. Even Mowinkel, who agrees the Canaanites possessed a cultic psalmography, argues, "on the basis of the scanty material, it is impossible for us to say how great the resemblance may have been between the Israelite version of the common stylistic tradition and the Canaanite one."⁴ He warns against "drawing premature conclusions from the evidence, especially concerning Psalm chronology and the date of the prevalence of Ugaritic influences on the Psalms."⁵ Even applying the

² J. H. Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944), 30, 37, 41; H. H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen 14 and Ps 110)," in *Festschrift: Alfred Bertholet* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 463-72; and H. G. Jefferson, "Is Psalm 110 Canaanite?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 73 (1954): 152-56.

³ Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms*, 29, 37, 41. Although Gordon's notation system for the Ugaritic texts is followed by Patton, Gibson's is followed here (J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978], xi). Jefferson's article is essentially a reproduction of Patton's work, and the third word parallel comes from Umberto Cassuto, "Biblical Literature and Canaanite Literature," *Tarbiz* 13 (1942): 211-12, which is cited by both Patton (*Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms*, 41) and Jefferson ("Is Psalm 110 Canaanite?" 154).

⁴ Sigmund Mowinkel, "Psalm Criticism between 1900 and 1935: Ugarit and Psalm Exegesis," *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955): 13-33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 26. Sabourin, who likewise believes the Canaanites contributed to Hebrew culture, offers another caution: "Since any reconstruction of the Canaanite cult and priesthood from the published Ugaritic texts is largely conjectural, restraint in that field is recommended" (Leopold Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study* [Leiden: Brill, 1973], 69).

royal priesthood of Melchizedek to a Jerusalem king (Ps. 110:4) does not support the contention that Psalm 110 is a pre-Israelite hymn.

Those who propose a postexilic time frame suggest that Psalm 110 is a Maccabean psalm on the basis of literary and historical evidence. On the one hand Treves proposes that Psalm 110 speaks of a "warrior-priest" who is identified as Simon Maccabeus through a literary acrostic.⁶ On the other hand Pfeiffer suggests the psalm was composed for Simon to confer on him and his descendants the "legitimate and permanent authority as ruling high priests (1 Macc. 14:25-49)."⁷ Though some evidence may support a Hasmonean time frame,⁸ many adamantly oppose this postexilic view for several reasons. First, the initial letter of Treves's acrostic starts not in verse 1a but in 1b.⁹ Second, the poor condition of the text in verses 3, 6, and 7 may also argue for a more ancient psalm.¹⁰ Third, verse 1 suggests that Psalm 110 is an oracle from Yahweh. Since divine prophecy had ceased during the Maccabean period (1 Macc. 4:46), "the free, almost startling, use of the divine name," according to Hardy, "scarcely belongs to [this] period."¹¹ Fourth, the kingship imagery in Psalm 110:1 does not fit Simon Maccabee. Simon was not a king. He was high priest, military commander, and governor (*ἀρχιερεὺς, στρατηγός, ἐθνάρχης*, 1 Macc. 14:41-42). Fifth, Psalm 110:4 ascribes the Melchizedek priesthood to the king, but the Hasmoneans were priests by birth.¹² Most likely a Levite would not claim his priesthood was after Melchizedek's order. Sixth, the לְיְהוָה superscription

⁶ According to Treves, the acrostic reads: $\text{שִׁמְעוֹן הַבְּרָא} = \text{Simon the terrible}$. The concept of "warrior-priest" is observed in the descriptions of the warrior (vv. 1-3, 5-6) who is a priest (v. 4) who leads his army (vv. 2-3, 7) and is quartered in Zion (v. 2) (M. Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms," *Vetus Testamentum* 15 [1965]: 81-90).

⁷ Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of the New Testament Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1949), 19. Pfeiffer declares elsewhere that "the contents of the psalm show the poem to have been the oracle by which Simon Maccabeus was solemnly confirmed in the office of leader and high priest in 141 B.C. (1 Macc. 14:41)" (Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941], 630).

⁸ Possible evidence favoring a postexilic view is 1 Maccabees 14:41, which describes Simon's appointment to the office of "governor and high priest forever." The Testament of Moses 6:1-2 refers to the Hasmoneans as powerful kings and priests of the Most High, and the Testament of Levi 8:2 refers to the Hasmonean kings as putting on priestly garments.

⁹ J. W. Bowker, "Psalm CX," *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1967): 31-41, and C. A. Briggs and E. G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, International Critical Commentary, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), 2:374.

¹⁰ E. R. Hardy, "The Date of Psalm 110," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 64 (1945): 385-90.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 385. Also see Josephus, *Against Apion* 1. 8; IV Ezra 14:44-47; and G. Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 73 (1961): 202-25.

¹² Briggs and Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2:374. First Maccabees 2:1-5 clearly indicates this fact.

argues against a postexilic date. Mowinckel asserts that לַיהוָה represents a strong testimonial to the probability that these psalms may have been written for David and used by him and other Davidic kings after him.¹³ Since some superscribed psalms reflect events in David's life (e.g., Pss. 7 and 51), and since David is an acknowledged author (2 Sam. 1:17-27; 23:1-7), it is probable that Psalm 110 is a pre-exilic psalm.

Most scholars view Psalm 110 as a preexilic psalm. "Today," says Kraus, "there is no longer doubt that Psalms 2; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; and 110 belong to the historical epoch of the time of the kings."¹⁴ In fact Kraus believes Psalm 110 may be dated in the earliest time of the kings because of the "extremely difficult and disputed state of the text" and the "ancient Hebrew prosody" that in his opinion may look back to a Canaanite situation.¹⁵ Mowinckel also considered Psalm 110 to be early. Though he argued that few psalms could be ascribed to David, he did determine that many psalms with the לַיהוָה superscription, including Psalm 110, were from a Davidic-Solomonic period.¹⁶ Dahood likewise argues for a preexilic 10th-century time frame for Psalm 110 based on verbal and conceptual resemblances to Psalm 2.¹⁷ Also the monarchical overtones in Psalm 110:1 indicate a preexilic period, since there were no Davidic kings after 586 B.C. In addition New Testament testimony clearly confirms that Psalm 110 is a preexilic psalm. Three writers place the psalm in a Davidic time frame (Matt. 22:43-45; Mark 12:36-37; Luke 20:42-44; Acts 2:34).

The Speaker of Psalm 110

Scholars have commonly discussed three options concerning the speaker of Psalm 110: Zadok and King David, a prophet, or David. The least accepted of these is Rowley's proposal that there were two speakers, Zadok and King David.¹⁸ Rowley insists Psalm 110 was

¹³ For Mowinckel's defense concerning the לַיהוָה superscription see *Psalmstudien*, 3:72-76. Also see Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 33-35, 43-46, and Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 22-23.

¹⁴ Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, and Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, trans. H. O. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 345, 347.

¹⁶ Mowinckel, "Psalm Criticism between 1900 and 1935: Ugarit and Psalm Exegesis,"

¹⁸ He notes that all royal psalms (Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 28, 61, 63, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144) are preexilic (Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas [New York: Abingdon, 1967], 2:152-58, n. 36, and *idem*, *Psalmstudien*, 3:72-76).

¹⁷ Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III:101-150*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 112.

¹⁸ Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen 14 and Ps 110)," 461-72, esp. 469-72, and

written shortly after David captured Jebus (Jerusalem) from the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:6-10; 1 Chron. 10:4-9). Zadok, a Jebusite priest, pledged the submission of Jerusalem to David, the recent conqueror of the city (Ps. 110:1-3). David in turn confirmed Zadok's Jebusite priesthood by accepting him and his descendants as priests for Israel (v. 4). Hence Zadok spoke blessings on David (vv. 5-7).

Several difficulties, however, may be seen in Rowley's proposal. First, as de Vaux points out, Zadok is not connected with the events surrounding Jerusalem's conquest. Zadok's connection with David came later with the ark and the tent (2 Sam. 15:25; 1 Kings 1:39).¹⁹ Second, no evidence exists that Zadok was a Jebusite priest. The similarity of the name Zadok with Melchizedek is coincidental.²⁰ Third, Gilbert and Pisano demonstrate that the sudden shift of persons in Psalm 110:4-5, a shift that Rowley identifies to support a transition from David to Zadok, is a common phenomenon in ancient poetry and thus does not necessitate a shift in speakers.²¹ Fourth, Rowley assumes the syncretism of Israel's priesthood and neglects the Aaronic priesthood established by God (Num. 3) and consecrated by Moses (Lev. 8:1-9:22). De Vaux's assertion, then, that Rowley's view "is an interesting hypothesis, but without foundation"²² is appropriate.

A currently popular and multifaceted option is that a prophet spoke Psalm 110. The prophet may have been any court prophet or poet who addressed the Israelite king at an annual autumn ritual typically celebrated throughout the ancient Near East. The prophet/poet may have spoken the psalm at an enthronement celebration (Gunkel, Mowinkel, Widengren, Cooke, Durham, Eaton), a New Year celebration (Bentzen, Porter), a covenant renewal celebration (Weiser), or a rainfall ceremony (Gammie).²³ However, in 1966

idem, "Melchizedek and David," *Vetus Testamentum* 17 (1967): 485. Also see A. Bentzen, *Studier over det Sadokidiske Prasesteskabs Historie* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads, 1931), 8-9.

¹⁹ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 2:331.

²⁰ H. H. Rowley, "Zadok and Nehushtan," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58 (1939): 113-41, esp. 130-31. De Vaux states that "it is safer to admit that we do not know where Zadok came from" (*Ancient Israel*, 2:374). Rowley admits that "the figure of Zadok has always commanded the interest of Old Testament students, and the problem of his antecedents has found no certain solution" (Rowley, "Zadok and Nehushtan," 113).

²¹ Genesis 49:8-9; Numbers 24:5-7; Hosea 10:9-10; Amos 9:7-8; and Micah 3:1-4 are a few examples cited by M. Gilbert and S. Pisano, "Psalm 110 (109), 5-7," *Biblica* 61 (1980): 343-56.

²² De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2:114. For further opposition to Rowley's view see Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study*, 130-32, and Bowker, "Psalm CX," 38-41.

²³ Gunkel, *The Psalms*, 23-24; Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:46; G. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum*; Franz Delitzsch—

Kitchen retorted, "Arguments for a uniform basic pattern of myth and ritual throughout the ancient Near East have been shown up as inadequate in more than one recent study."²⁴ These proposals also lack scriptural evidence to support the existence of the proposed festivals in Israel.

Others, however, suggest that a prophet spoke the psalm in celebration of David's new kingdom (Allen, Kirkpatrick, McKenzie).²⁵ Or the psalm may have been spoken by a prophet as a result of a triumphal victory celebration of Israel over her enemies (Dahood, Jacquet).²⁶ Chisholm tends to favor the possibility that a prophet of David's court composed the psalm "for David," which David used later for another occasion (viz., Solomon's coronation).²⁷ Kissane on the other hand suggests that a prophet addressed the future Messiah.²⁸ Though examples of divine oracles spoken by prophets to kings and other prophets do exist (2 Sam. 12:1-13; 1 Kings 13:1-32; Jer. 28:1-17; etc.), there is another option.

Vorlesungen 1952 (Stuttgart: K. Kohlhammer, 1955), 44; Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," 204, 211; Durham, "Psalms," in *Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman, 1971), 4:396; idem, "The King as 'Messiah' in the Psalms," *Review and Expositor* 81 (1984): 425-35; J. H. Eaton, "The Psalms and Israelite Worship," in *Tradition and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 250-55; A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (London: Lutterworth, 1955), 21-25; idem, "Cultic Use of the Story of the Ark," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67 (1948): 37-53; J. R. Porter, "2 Samuel VI and Psalm CXXXII," *Journal of Theological Studies* 5-6 (1954-1956): 159-73 (Bentzen's and Porter's articles deal primarily with the relationship of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 132, but appear to be foundations for their position); Weiser, *The Psalms*, 692-94; J. G. Gammie, "A New Setting for Psalm 110," *Anglican Theological Review* 51 (January 1969): 4-17. Kraus suggests an annually repeated enthronement celebration (*Psalmen*, 1:lxviii-lxx, 2:929-30; *Psalms* 1-56, 72-73; *Psalms* 60-150, 346-47).

²⁴ K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: InterVarsity, 1966), 104. For further support see Kitchen's entire chapter 5, "Hebrew Contacts with Near Eastern Religions," in *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 87-111.

²⁵ Allen, *Psalms* 101-150, 86. A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 664-65; J. L. McKenzie, "Royal Messianism," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 19 (1957): 25-52; J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay, *Psalms* 101-150, *Cambridge Bible Commentary* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 3:67.

²⁶ Dahood, *Psalms*, 3:112-13; Jacquet, *Les Psaumes*, 3:203.

²⁷ Chisholm points out that the New Testament "stops short of attributing authorship of the psalm to David. It states only that David spoke the words of Psalm 110:1, not that he was their original author." Chisholm, however, is open to the possibility of Davidic authorship (Robert B. Chisholm, "A Theology of the Psalms," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck [Chicago: Moody, 1991], 271-72, n. 23). Compare Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 129-32. VanGemeren likewise open-endedly contends that "the psalmist speaks of the promise of God pertaining to David and his dynasty" (VanGemeren, "Psalms," 697). Admittedly, this is a viable option.

²⁸ E. J. Kissane, "The Interpretation of Psalm 110," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 21 (1954): 105-14; *The Book of Psalms* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1954), 189. Also see Briggs and Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2:375-76, and Yates, "Psalms," 536.

A more favorable proposal generally suggested by older and present-day scholars alike is that David was both the author and speaker of Psalm 110.²⁹ Several factors suggest Davidic authorship. First, the superscription לְדָוִד supports the possibility that Psalm 110 was "by David." Of course, לְדָוִד does not always clearly indicate Davidic authorship. For instance "by David," "for David," "concerning David," or "for a Davidic collection" are all viable options, but Davidic authorship cannot be ruled out entirely.³⁰ Each psalm should be examined individually.

Second, David's skill in poetry and music is often recognized in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 16:15-23; 2 Sam. 1:17-27; 3:33; 6:5; 23:1-7; 1 Chron. 23:5; Neh. 12:36; Amos 6:5). The Apocrypha and Qumran and rabbinic literature repeatedly honor David for his poetic and musical contributions.³¹ Josephus even acknowledged that "David, being now free from wars and dangers, and enjoying profound peace from this time on, composed songs and hymns to God in varied meters—some he made in trimeters, and others in pentameters. He also made musical instruments, and instructed the Levites how to use them in praising God on the so-called Sabbath day and on the other festivals."³² Hence it was not beyond David's capability to produce a psalm. In fact many psalms have clear connections with events in David's life and no doubt were "by David."³³

29 E. W. Hengstenberg, *The Psalms*, trans. J. Thomson and P. Patrick, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867), 3:313-34, esp. 317; W. S. Plummer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks* (1867; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), 972; J. I. S. Perowne, *The Book of Psalms* (1878; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), 294-97; R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971), 163-69; J. Boyd, "The Triumphant Priest-King," *Biblical Viewpoint* 6 (November 1972): 99-110; Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 392; and Ross, "Psalms," 1:873. Chisholm and Bock are open to the possibility (see *supra*, n. 27).

30 Seventy-three psalms are attributed to David, but some of them are discredited because they appear to follow tradition and are not historically related to David (Pss. 34, 56). Glenn argues that on the one hand Davidic authorship for Psalm 139 cannot be based on the superscription לְדָוִד but that on the other hand Davidic authorship cannot be totally ruled out (Donald R. Glenn, "An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Psalm 139," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, ed. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg [Chicago: Moody, 1981], 166-67).

31 Sirach 47:8-10. Sanders contends that the Qumran community credited David with composing 3,600 psalms and hundreds of songs for offerings (J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11*, 136). In response to the question "Who wrote the Scriptures?" B. Bat, 14b records, "David wrote the Book of Psalms, including in it the work of the elders, namely, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Yeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah."

32 Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 8. 7. 3, § 305-6.

33 Two psalms clearly authored by David are Psalm 51, which reflects his sin recorded in 2 Samuel 11-12, and Psalm 57, which reflects an incident at Adullam (1 Sam. 22:1-2) or En Gedi (1 Sam. 24). See R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand

Third, when Jesus addressed Jewish leaders (Matt. 22:43-44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-44) and Peter addressed fellow Jews (Acts 2:34-35), David was credited as the speaker of Psalm 110. Granted, the New Testament does not explicitly state that David wrote Psalm 110. But he spoke it. A difference between words David spoke and words he wrote is possible (Pss. 2, 16, 32, 69, 109, 110).³⁴ And yet one need not insist on this distinction, but simply acknowledge that the possibility exists. The distinction, however, does not eliminate Davidic authorship. It may merely indicate that the New Testament does not address the issue, or it may be that the words "he spoke it" mean that "he wrote it." Perhaps speaking is emphasized because the psalms are liturgical. Hence it is possible that the New Testament points to Davidic authorship for Psalm 110, for it does identify David as the one who *spoke* the psalm. Clearly, then, the psalm has direct contact with David. The New Testament identifies Psalm 110 as a preexilic psalm that David himself spoke and possibly wrote. But of whom did David speak in the psalm? Who was the recipient?

The Recipient of Psalm 110

The one to whom David spoke Psalm 110 (i.e., the recipient) may be either a heavenly Lord, that is, the Messiah, or an earthly lord, that is, an earthly king in David's lifetime. The traditional view, supported by older and contemporary scholars alike, is that David addressed his messianic Lord, his divine Lord, in a directly prophetic manner.³⁵ Since the psalm, frequently quoted in the New Testament, is always applied to Jesus, the Messiah (Matt. 22:43-44;

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 978; Ross, "Psalms," 1:783; and VanGameren, "Psalms," 33-34, for other possible examples.

³⁴ Psalm 2 is cited in Acts 4:25-26 as having come from "the mouth of our father David" (also see Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5). Psalm 16 is introduced in Acts 2:25-28 by the words "David said" (cf. Acts 13:35). Psalm 32 is cited in Romans 4:7-8 as David's blessing. Psalm 69 is cited in Acts 1:16-20 as being "by the mouth of David," and in Romans 11:9-10 by the words "David said" (also see John 2:17; 15:25; 19:28-29; Acts 1:20; Rom. 15:3). "By the mouth of David" introduces the quotation of Psalm 109 in Acts 1:16-20. Psalm 110 is cited in Matthew 22:43-44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; and Acts 2:34-35, and all four passages mention that David spoke the psalm. Also see direct quotations in Hebrews 1:13; 5:6; 7:17; and 10:13.

³⁵ Hengstenberg, *The Psalms*, 3:314-17; Plummer, *Psalms*, 972; Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 296; Franz Delitzsch, "Psalms," in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. A. Harper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 5:183-88; idem, "Psalm CX: Its Form, Meaning, and Purpose," in *Studies in the Bible*, ed. J. M. Grintz, and J. Liver (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1964), 28; E. Burrows, *The Gospel of the Infancy and Other Biblical Essays* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1940), 91; Boyd, "The Triumphant Priest-King," 102; Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, 391-92; France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 166-67; Ross, "Psalms," 1:873; and D. L. Williams, *Psalms 73-150*, *The Communicator's Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 300.

Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13; 5:6; 7:17; 10:13), it is assumed by many to be a purely prophetic or messianic psalm.

This traditional view, however, is arrived at by two methodologically diverse approaches. One method used by MacKay to determine the character of the psalms is to ask of them, "Do they in the first place rank as historical or as prophetic writings?"³⁶ In an a priori fashion MacKay says a psalm is either historical or prophetic. If Christ quoted it, then it is prophetic. Payne expresses similar sentiments when he states emphatically that 13 psalms are "exclusively Messianic" (in Pss. 8, 72, 89, 109, and 132 Christ is spoken of in the third person; in Pss. 45, 102, and 110 He is addressed in the second person; and in Pss. 2, 16, 22, 40, and 69 He speaks in the first person).³⁷ Both MacKay and Payne read the Old Testament in light of the New, that is, the New Testament interprets the Old Testament. As Waltke puts it, "the New Testament has priority in 'unpacking' the meaning of the Old Testament."³⁸ In this approach the recipient of Psalm 110 is known primarily because the New Testament identifies or clarifies Him to be Jesus, the Messiah.

Another approach employed by those who view Psalm 110 as messianic says that the Old Testament author knew and understood that he referred to the Messiah. The New Testament supposedly plays little or no role in identifying the recipient. The Old Testament author clearly understood that Psalm 110 refers to Jesus. Evidently Delitzsch held this view when he wrote that "Ps. CX is Davidic, and . . . prophetic-Messianic, i.e., . . . the future Messiah stands objectively before the mind of David."³⁹ Kaiser maintains a similar position. He argues that Psalms 2, 22, 40, 72, 89, and 110 con-

³⁶ W. M. MacKay identifies "ten psalms which Christ takes authoritatively to Himself": Psalms 2, 31 (parallel Pss. 18, 25, 69, 102), 41, 82, 110, 118:22, 26. He views Psalm 110 as one of six that establish the deity of the Son in Hebrews 1 (Pss. 2, 45, 89, 102, 104, 110) (MacKay, "Messiah in the Psalms," *Evangelical Quarterly* 11 [1939]: 159-61).

³⁷ J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 259-60. For a more recent discussion of this approach see Williams, *Psalms* 73-150, 299-301.

³⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, "Is It Right to Read the New Testament into the Old?" *Christianity Today*, September 2, 1983, 77. Waltke should not be confused with precritical or noncritical expositors who, when they cite passages (especially from the Psalms) as direct prophecy, tend to neglect the historical significance of the passages (a neglect that cannot be charged to Waltke). He attempts to distance himself from these expositors, but he is not far removed from them, since he follows the same traditional approach, involving interpreting or clarifying the Old Testament in light of the New. The New Testament, he argues, is the basis on which the Old Testament is fully understood (Bruce K. Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms," in *Tradition and Testament*, 3-18).

³⁹ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 5:184. Also see Ross, "Psalms," 1:789, 873. A. Feuillet, "Les problèmes posés par l'exégèse des Psaumes Quatre Psaumes royaux (II, XLV, LXXII, CX)," *Revue Thomiste* 85 (1985): 5-37, esp. 32-35.

tain "promise" phraseology like the prophetic writings and therefore include "direct forecasts of a coming personal Messiah."⁴⁰ Kaiser adds that the authors did not give the time of fulfillment because that was unknown to them.⁴¹

Kaiser differs from MacKay in two areas. First, MacKay argues that the psalms are historically disconnected predictions, whereas Kaiser maintains they are connected to an existing historical promise, but with prophetic amplification to provide further revelation about that historical promise (i.e., Ps. 89 expands on 2 Sam. 7).⁴² According to Kaiser, the Old Testament prophetic authors based their prophecies on existing historical promises, and through divine oracles they understood not only the possible near results but also the distant climactic fulfillments. They were ignorant, however, of the time when their prophecies would be fulfilled. Second, MacKay and Waltke read the New Testament back into the Old for identification or clarification, whereas Kaiser claims to resist such an approach.⁴³

The use of Psalm 110 in the New Testament seems to support the view that David prophetically spoke to his messianic Lord. But is this the case? Since prophetic elements exist in Psalm 110 (vv. 2-3, 5-7) and since the New Testament applies only verses 1 and 4 to Jesus, should the recipient of the entire psalm be limited to Him? For several reasons it seems preferable to hold that David spoke Psalm 110

⁴⁰ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 131-32, 141. Based on 1 Peter 1:10-12, Kaiser argues that the prophets knew "(1) the Messiah would come; (2) the Messiah would suffer; (3) the Messiah would be glorified; (4) the order of events—the suffering would come first, and then the glorious period followed; and (5) this message had been revealed to the prophets for their day, also for a future generation such as the church of Peter's audience" (ibid., 19-21). Also see his "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 123-24; and idem, "The Single Intent of Scripture," in *Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer (Nashville: Nelson, 1978), 125-26. See Bock's interaction with Kaiser's treatment of 1 Peter 1:10-12 (Darrell Bock, "Review of *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* by Walter C. Kaiser," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29 [1986]: 488-90).

⁴¹ Kaiser, *The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, 20-23, 62-63; and idem, "The Abolition of the Old Order and Establishment of the New: Psalm 40:6-8 and Hebrews 10:5-10," *Tradition and Testament*, 24-26.

⁴² Kaiser, *The Use of the Old Testament in the New*, 133-31, 140-41, and idem, "Messianic Prophecies in the Old Testament," in *Dreams, Visions and Oracles: The Layman's Guide to Biblical Prophecy*, ed. C. E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 75-86.

⁴³ Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," 135; and idem, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, 66-69. Although Kaiser argues against interpreting the Old Testament in light of the New, he may be accused of doing so in a subtle way because he does not explain how subsequent revelation affects the New Testament authors' life situation and further understanding of the Old Testament.

to an earthly lord, that is, an earthly king of his lifetime. Indications in Psalm 110:1 and in David's life support such a claim. However, that does not prevent the psalm from being *applicable* to Jesus.

One factor that supports this view is an internal element in the psalm itself. David wrote in verse 1, "The Lord [יְהוָה] says to my lord [לַאֲדֹנָי]." The form "to my lord" (לַאֲדֹנָי) is never used elsewhere in the Old Testament as a divine reference.⁴⁴ Also none of the 138 forms of "my lord" (אֲדֹנָי)⁴⁵ and none of the 9 other prefixed forms of "my lord" (בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי, בְּאֲדֹנָי) is a divine reference.⁴⁶ Ninety-four percent of these 168 forms refer to earthly lords. The exceptions are when Joshua, Gideon, Daniel, and Zechariah addressed an angelic being as "my lord" (Josh. 5:14; Judg. 6:13; Dan. 10:16, 17, 19; 12:8; Zech. 1:9; 4:4-5, 13; 6:4). These observations lend further credence to the generally accepted fact that the masoretic pointing distinguishes divine references (אֲדֹנָי) from human references (אֲדֹנָי).⁴⁷ Furthermore, when "my lord" (אֲדֹנָי) and "Lord" (יְהוָה) are used in the same sentence, as in Psalm 110:1, "my lord" (אֲדֹנָי) always refers to an earthly lord.⁴⁸ Thus the phrase "to my lord" (לַאֲדֹנָי) apparently indicates that David was directing this oracle from Yahweh to a human lord, not to the divine messianic Lord nor to himself.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Excluding Psalm 110:1, לַאֲדֹנָי occurs 21 times in the Old Testament: men or women to men (Gen. 24:36, 54, 56; 32:5-6, 19; 44:9, 16, 33; 1 Sam. 25:27-28, 30-31), men to a king (2 Sam. 19:29; 1 Kings 1:2; 18:13; 20:9; 1 Chron. 21:3), and David to the king (1 Sam. 24:7).

⁴⁵ Men to angels (Josh. 5:14; Judg. 6:13; Dan. 10:16-17, 19; 12:8; Zech. 1:9; 4:4-5, 13; 6:4), men to men (Gen. 23:6, 11, 15; 24:12 [twice], 14, 27, 35-37, 39, 42, 44, 48-49, 65; 33:8, 13-15; 39:8; Exod. 32:22; Num. 11:28; 12:11; 32:25, 27; 36:2; 1 Sam. 30:13, 15), women to men (Gen. 24:18; 31:35; Exod. 21:5; Judg. 4:18; 1 Sam. 1:15, 26; 25:24-29, 31; 2 Kings 5:18; Ruth 2:13), men to a ranking official (Gen. 42:10; 43:20; 44:5, 7, 18-20, 22, 24; 47:18, 25), men or women to prophets (2 Kings 2:19; 4:16, 28; 5:20, 22; 6:5, 15; 8:12), men or women to kings (1 Sam. 22:12; 2 Sam. 1:10; 3:21; 9:11; 11:11; 13:32, 33; 14:9, 12, 15, 17 [twice], 18-19, 22; 15:15, 21 [twice]; 16:4, 9; 18:31-32; 19:20-21, 27-28, 31, 36-37; 24:3, 21-22; 1 Kings 1:13, 17-18, 20-21, 24, 27, 31, 36, 37 [twice]; 2 Kings 6:12, 26; 8:5; 10:9; 18:23-24, 27; Isa. 36:8-9, 12; Jer. 37:20; 38:9; 1 Chron. 21:3, 23; 2 Chron. 2:13-14; Dan. 1:10), David to the king (1 Sam. 24:9; 26:17-19; 29:8).

⁴⁶ Men to men (Num. 36:2; 2 Sam. 11:11), women to men (Gen. 18:12), men to a ranking official (Gen. 47:18), men or women to kings (1 Sam. 14:20; 19:28; 24:3; 2 Sam. 18:28); David to the king (2 Sam. 24:10).

⁴⁷ Jacquet, *Les Psaumes*, 3:214; G. V. Wigram, *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldean Concordance of the Old Testament*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 22; *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), s.v. "adhon; 'adhonai," by O. Eissfeldt, 1:62.

⁴⁸ Men or women to men (Gen. 24:12, 27, 42, 48; Num. 32:27; 36:2; 1 Sam. 1:26, 28; 25:26, 28-29), men or women to a king (2 Sam. 15:21; 24:3; 1 Kings 1:17, 36-37; 2 Kings 5:18), and man to angelic being (Judg. 6:13).

⁴⁹ Merrill contends that David was directing this psalm to himself. He states that אֲדֹנָי "no doubt became so fossilized and formulaic that a king could use it even of himself" (Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif" [Paper read

To whom then was David directing this oracle from God? At first glance it may seem difficult to think of the ideal king of Israel referring to anyone in his lifetime as his "lord." Yet David, whose portrayal in the Old Testament is far from ideal,⁵⁰ spoke Psalm 110 during his lifetime. The clearest references to a future Davidic king or the Messiah occur later in Israel's history.⁵¹ But when David looked to the future, he spoke of it as being found in his descendants (2 Sam. 22:51). In his lifetime David clearly referred to two kings as "my lord." After Samuel anointed David as king over Israel (1 Sam. 16:11-13), David often referred to King Saul as either "my lord" (24:6, 10; 26:18) or "my lord the king" (24:8; 26:17, 19). David continually viewed Saul as God's anointed, referring to him as "lord." When David fled from Saul to Gath, he also referred to Achish of the Philistines as "my lord the king" (29:8). Neither of these men, however, was the recipient of Psalm 110. Certainly Achish was not because he was a non-Israelite, and certainly Saul was not because Zion, the city of David (Ps. 110:2), had not yet been captured and be-

at the Evangelical Theological Society, November 1991), 1-11). However, he gives no biblical or extrabiblical support for this claim. Although Merrill appeals to Eissfeldt to support his claim that "'my lord' came to mean nothing more than 'I' or 'me' when employed by the royal speaker" (ibid., 6), it is not apparent to this author how Eissfeldt supported his claim, nor is any biblical support for Merrill's view evident in Even-Shoshan's *New Concordance of the Old Testament*. Merrill concludes that "there can be no doubt then that David in both Psalms 2 and 110, appears as a royal messianic figure" (Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif," 6, italics added). But lack of evidence causes at least some doubt that David spoke this psalm to himself.

50 L. G. Perdue, "Is There Anyone Left in the House of Saul . . . ?" Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30 (1984): 67-84.

51 Old Testament references to a future Davidic king include Isaiah 9:6-7; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11; Jeremiah 30:9; 33:17-18; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25. Intertestamental literature includes a number of references to a future Messiah. In "The Dreams" (ca. 165-161 B.C.), Messiah is a military leader who helps liberate Judea from the Seleucids (1 Enoch 90:14b); who dwells among his people, is righteous, and has authority over all people (90:37); and in whom Yahweh is pleased (90:39). In "The Parables" (ca. 105-64 B.C.), Messiah is a heavenly preexistent Messiah (1 Enoch 46:1-3), who is seated on a throne (45:3; 61:8-9; 69:29), exalted by all (1 Enoch 48:5-6; 51:1-3; 52:4; 62:1-9), and who will reside on a transformed earth among his righteous people (45:4-5; 52:5-9). In the *Psalms of Solomon* (ca. 70-45 B.C.), Messiah is a Davidic Messiah (17:4, 21; 18:7) who rescues Jerusalem from Gentiles (17:22-25) and who is a righteous ruler over Israel and all nations (17:30-32, 36, 40-43; 18:7-8). In the Qumran literature the Messiah is a Davidic and priestly Messiah (CD 7:18-20; 1QS 9:11; 1QS^a 3:20-21; 1QM 5:1; 4QFlor 1:1-13). For a recent rejection of Qumran's view of two Messiahs see Lincoln D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46-49. Also see W. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon" (2:639-70); E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch" (1:5-89), in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983); and George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Salvation without a Messiah: Developing Beliefs in Writings Ascribed to Enoch," in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 58-62.

cause the promise of 2 Samuel 7 was directed to David *after* Saul's death. The only other earthly king whom David may have called "my lord" is Solomon. In fact after Solomon was coronated, he sat "on the throne of the Lord" (1 Chron. 29:23).⁵² Before David died, he allocated the throne to Solomon, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has granted one to sit on my throne today while my own eyes see it" (1 Kings 1:48).⁵³ Thus the one whom David called "my lord" in Psalm 110:1 may well have been his son Solomon.

What was the occasion for David's addressing this psalm to Solomon? Many view Psalm 110 as a hymn for the coronation of a Judean king, even though they cannot settle on a specific Judean king.⁵⁴ Gaster, for example, sees the psalm reflecting eight aspects of a coronation: (1) the king is enthroned (v. 1a), (2) the footstool is placed in position (v. 1b), (3) the scepter is handed to the king (v. 2), (4) the attendant crowd signify their allegiance (v. 3a), (5) the king is invested and anointed (v. 3b), (6) the king is consecrated as priest (v. 4), (7) the king is assured of military success (vv. 5-6), and (8) a chalice is proffered (v. 7).⁵⁵ This interpretation, however, forces the psalm to symbolize more than what is intended.⁵⁶ Also this view seems to neglect the possible existence of a holy war motif.⁵⁷ Nev-

⁵² Compare the parallel language of 1 Chronicles 29:23 with Psalm 110:1.

⁵³ Compare 1 Chronicles 28:1-8; 29:20-25. Solomon immediately took action as king and was honored as king by Adonijah while David was still alive (1 Kings 1:49-53). König and Gundry also appeal to 1 Kings to suggest that David wrote Psalm 110 to legitimize Solomon's kingship in keeping with Nathan's oracle (E. König, *Die messianischen Weissagungen des Alten Testament* [Stuttgart: Belser, 1923], 149-50, and Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* [Leiden: Brill, 1975], 228).

⁵⁴ See supra, n. 23, for a list of scholars who maintain that the psalm was spoken by a prophet during an annual autumn festival.

⁵⁵ T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (reprint, Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1981), 2:780-81. Driver likewise suggests an enthronement ceremony (G. R. Driver, "Psalm CX: Its Form, Meaning and Purpose," 17-31).

⁵⁶ Although he may overstate his case, Brettler contends "nothing decisively indicates a coronation setting for the psalm as a whole or for any of its parts" (Marc Z. Brettler, *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* [Sheffield: JSOT, 1989], 138).

⁵⁷ The holy war motif is evidenced by symbolic warlike terminology: "A footstool for your feet" symbolizes complete subjugation of a conquered people (Josh. 10:24; Isa. 51:23). "Your mighty staff" marks authority, symbolizing conquest (Isa. 14:5; Jer. 48:17). "Your people will be willing" describes a willingness to fight (Judg. 5:2, 9; 2 Chron. 17:13-19, esp. 17:16). "Your young men will come to you like dew at dawn" describes the numerous volunteers who will be available and fresh for battle. In Psalm 110:5-7 the king is the warrior and Yahweh stands as Protector (cf. Pss. 16:8; 109:31; 121:5). Yahweh promises to fight alongside the king and prophetically promises "to judge" (יָדֹן), "to heap up" (הֵלֵךְ), and "to smite" (יִדָּן—Num. 24:8; Ps. 18:39 = 2 Sam. 22:39) His enemies. The prophetic perfects indicate victory's certainty. "Therefore he will lift up His head" is a metonymy of adjunct indicating victory in battle (Pss. 3:3; 27:6; 140:9). For a discussion of "The Holy War" see de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 1:258-67.

ertheless Psalm 110's coronation overtones are explicitly evident in verse 1a.

Solomon was being directed by the Lord (יהוה) through David to sit at His right hand (ימיני), a recognized place of honor in the ancient Near East. In both Ugaritic poems and Egyptian icons, sitting at the right hand of a god symbolized authority.⁵⁸ Unlike Canaanite kings and Egyptian pharaohs, Hebrew kings were not perceived as gods. They were recognized, however, as having a significant place of honor in the kingdom of Israel because Yahweh had chosen them and given them authority to be His vice-regents.⁵⁹ Whereas Yahweh's throne is in heaven (1 Kings 8:27-30; Pss. 2:4; 80:1-15; 89:5-18), the vice-regent ruled over Israel and was dependent on Yahweh (Pss. 80:17; 89:20-24). Yahweh, "the Divine King" of Israel enthroned in heaven, gave the Davidic king, "the earthly king" of Israel, a special place of honor and authority to rule over Israel as His vice-regent. And as noted earlier, Solomon sat on the Lord's throne (2 Chron. 29:23). Thus David addressed this divine oracle from Yahweh to the new vice-regent over Israel who was now his "lord," the Lord's anointed.

Can this view be supported in Scripture? If David spoke this psalm to Solomon, the Lord's vice-regent, specifically when did David do so?

David presented Solomon before the people of Israel and anointed him as king twice. Merrill suggests that Solomon was anointed the first time around 973 B.C. (1 Chron 23:1) and was coregent with David until 971 B.C. He was anointed a second time in 971 B.C. at the close of an assembly by the people and then sat on the throne as sole regent (1 Chron. 29:22b-23).⁶⁰ This second coronation seems to correspond to the events recorded in 1 Kings 1:32-35, 43-45 (cf. 1 Chron. 29:22b-23), in the year David died.⁶¹ If this is true,

⁵⁸ Keret "was seated at the right hand of the mightiest Baal" (Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 61-62). Pharaoh Horemheb was seated at the right hand of his god, Horus (O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* [New York: Seabury, 1978], 262-63). For other examples see D. M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, ed. R. A. Kraft (New York: Abingdon, 1973), 52-58; Jacquet, *Les Psaumes*, 3:214-15; and Kraus, *Psalms* 60-150, 349.

⁵⁹ First Samuel 9:17; 16:6-12; 2 Samuel 7:11b-17; 1 Kings 9:4-5; 1 Chronicles 28:5-7; 2 Chronicles 9:8; 13:8; Psalms 2:6-7; 72:1-20; 89:3-4, 20, 29. See Chisholm's discussion on the vice-regent status of the Davidic king in Israel and its ancient Near Eastern background (Chisholm, "A Theology of the Psalms," 266-67, esp. n. 18).

⁶⁰ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 244, 248; idem, "1 Chronicles," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1:612-17; idem, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament* (Nutley, NJ: Craig, 1966), 255.

⁶¹ Merrill argues for a linkage between 1 Chronicles 29:22b and 1 Kings 1:32-40 (*Kingdom of Priests*, 248). Also see R. Braun, *1 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary

David had plenty of time to prepare for and execute a full legitimate coronation of Solomon before his death. Psalm 72 may also be a psalm for Solomon's coronation (see Ps. 72:1, 20). Some think Solomon had full freedom to rule during his coregency with David because David was incapable of ruling and was even senile.⁶² But these ideas are speculative and difficult to prove. Thus it seems reasonable that Psalm 110 refers to Solomon's second coronation in 971 B.C. when David abdicated his throne to his son Solomon.

Conclusion

The New Testament is a foundational factor in determining that Psalm 110 is a preexilic psalm spoken by David. However, what part does the New Testament play in determining the recipient of the psalm? This question raises the hermeneutical issue of the use of the Old Testament in the New which Bock calls "a 'hot' issue in evangelical circles."⁶³ Three questions about the use of the Old Testament in the New relate to the topic discussed in this article.

First, should the New Testament always be the determining factor, as MacKay and Waltke would say, in seeking to identify the recipient of Psalm 110? No, the New Testament certainly defines the psalm's unique significance as it pertains to the ultimate Referent, Jesus Christ, but it does not "unpack" all the psalm's meaning. Clear historical connections with David's world are evident in the psalm, connections that are *applicable* also to Jesus Christ.

Second, is it true, as Kaiser states, that David knew and understood that this psalm predicted the coming of the Messiah? The answer is yes in that David viewed his son Solomon as the "messiah," that is, the anointed one. Solomon was the first to fulfill God's promise in 2 Samuel 7, which was applicable to every succeeding Davidic king who ruled as Yahweh's vice-regent over Israel (1 Kings 9:4-5; 1 Chron. 28:5-7; 2 Chron. 13:8). He was an earthly "messiah," the Lord's anointed. On the other hand the answer to the question is

(Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 289; C. F. Keil, *1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah*, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. A. Harper, 10 vols. (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 301-3. Wood, however, suspects that Adonijah's attempt to usurp David's throne occurred during David's 37th or 38th year of reign and thus views 1 Chronicles 22:6-23:1 as corresponding to 1 Kings 1:1-2:9 (Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970], 284-85).

⁶² H. Jagersma, *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 111-12, and Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Old Testament History* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 271-72.

⁶³ Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New, Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142 (1985): 209-23. Also see Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New, Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142 (1985): 306-19.

no in that David did not speak the psalm to the Messiah, the divine Lord. The New Testament authors applied Psalm 110 in light of their own context, which involved a more developed understanding of the Messiah and growing understanding of God's revelation.

Third, is it accurate to say that Psalm 110 is a typological-prophetic⁶⁴ psalm rather than a purely prophetic psalm? The answer this author suggests is yes. Speaking typologically, there is a recognized pattern in Yahweh's enthronement of one Davidic king after another in keeping with God's promise to David (2 Sam. 7:11-16). Jesus noted of Himself that "something greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31). Thus Jesus is God's ultimate choice. Speaking prophetically, Jesus is also the unique fulfillment of God's promise to David. There is no other Davidic king like Jesus Christ. He is the anointed Messiah, the son of David (Matt. 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44), and He is the Messiah for whom Israel had been waiting since their return from Babylon. He is literally in Yahweh's presence and at His right hand (Acts 2:24-33; 5:31; 7:55-56; Eph. 1:20-21; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 2 Peter 3:22). His authority extends over the earth and in heaven over angels, authorities, and powers (Eph. 1:20-21; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9-10; 2 Peter 3:22). He is "Lord" in the sense that He shares the name of Yahweh and distributes His salvific benefits to those who believe (Acts 2:14-36;⁶⁵ Col. 1:15-2:6; Heb. 1:5-13). Consequently New Testament writers rightly *applied* Psalm 110 to Jesus Christ in keeping with David's original utterance.

Thus it seems more than reasonable to suggest that Psalm 110 is a typological-prophetic oracle of the Lord from the preexilic time period. David prophetically spoke the psalm to his "lord," Solomon, when Solomon ascended to the Davidic throne in 971 B.C. Psalm 110 was then applied in the New Testament to Jesus Christ as the ultimate and unique Davidic King and Lord.

⁶⁴ Typological-prophetic refers to a pattern and promise present in an Old Testament text so that a short term event pictures and mirrors an ultimate and unique fulfillment in the New Testament. See Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 49-50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.