



Messiah: His Redemptive Career

In the first tract of this series we saw that the Eternal God is a triune being who is called in the Scripture the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the second message we learned that the one who is usually designated as the second person of the Trinity, the son, was scheduled to enter the world by virgin birth and to give His life a ransom for all who will accept Him. It is proper in this, the third message, to examine what might properly be called Messiah's redemptive career. In this brief study I can call attention only to the bare outline of His activities as set forth in three passages of Scripture.

The first is Genesis 49:10:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come; And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.”

Jacob looked out into the future to the period which he termed “the latter days” and described the condition of his descendants. A study of the term: “the latter days” shows that that expression refers to the time beginning with the first advent of the Messiah and continuing as long as the sun, moon, and stars remain in their courses.

According to this promise, the ruling and governing authority continues in the tribe of Judah until He who is called Shiloh — the Hebrew Messiah — makes His appearance. Since every vestige of governmental function and authority passed away from Judah with the destruction of the nation in 70 A.D., Messiah, according to this passage, made His appearance prior to that event. It was utterly impossible for Him to make His first advent after that calamity since the Scriptures cannot be broken: therefore we must conclude that He came into the world prior to that catastrophe.

This passage, likewise, tells us that all the nations of the world will render loving, filial obedience to Him. When He came nineteen hundred years ago, we know that the nations did not accept His authority. Since every word that God has spoken will be fulfilled accurately, we are safe in arriving at the conclusion that at some future time all nations will render this obedience to Him.

In this passage there are two pivotal points which may be described as the first and the second appearances of King Messiah. Here, however, there is nothing said about the period which intervenes. In the original passage we catch the first gleam of what may properly be called Messiah's redemptive career. To make this plain, may I call attention to a simple little illustration? The artist begins his work by doing what is technically called “blocking out” the portrait. This is accomplished by a very few strokes of his brush. In the language of this

illustration I would say that Jacob blocked out the career of King Messiah in Genesis 49:10. We may be certain that the Holy Spirit, who placed the brush of inspiration in Jacob's hand, later placed the same in the hands of other servants of God who finally completed the portrait of the longed-for Messiah and Savior of the world.

King David, the ideal ruler of Israel, was the inspired writer to whom God entrusted the task of giving us a full and complete outline of Messiah's scheme of redemption in that very important passage of Scripture — Psalm 110:1-3:

Jehovah saith unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
Thy people offer themselves willingly In the day of thy power, in holy array:
Out of the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

Speaking dramatically, I would say that when the curtain rises in this psalm, immediately we recognize the scene as one laid in Jerusalem in the first century of the Christian Era. The actors on the stage are King Messiah and the populace. Those playing the most important parts are the rulers of the nations who become definitely hostile to King Messiah.

Upon this turn of affairs God in heaven speaking to King Messiah, whom David designates as his Lord, invites Him to leave the earth, to ascend to His right hand, and to remain there until He, the Almighty puts those hostile ones under His (Messiah's) feet.

The word that is rendered *saith* in verse 1 has a special meaning, indicating a divine revelation which God makes to a man. This fact becomes immediately apparent by an investigation of the context of every occurrence of the word in the Old Testament.

Although the necessary inference from this word is that the one addressed by the Almighty is a man, David spoke of Him as being his Lord. The word rendered *my Lord* has different meanings in the Old Testament. Sometimes it was applied to an angel; at times it was used to refer to men: and on still other occasions it was the title addressed to the Almighty. Since it has these three different significations, it becomes necessary for one to study carefully the facts of every context where it occurs in order to find its special meaning there. What do the facts of this context in Psalm 110 indicate? When we remember that God invited this one to come and sit at His right hand, that this language is from the ancient East, and that oriental monarchs in the time of David never allowed anyone to sit at their right hand except those who were their equals, we conclude that this man concerning whom David was speaking is equal to God himself.

In view of all these facts, we are driven to the irresistible conclusion that King Messiah is God in human form. From Isaiah 7:14, which declared, “therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” we see that God enters the world by virgin birth. This passage from the Prophets makes clear how this one who is a descendant of David is at the same time God in human form.

Thus in this first scene of Psalm 110 we see King Messiah, the God-man, in Jerusalem surrounded by a hostile element. This passage does not tell us to what extent their enmity drives them. This information must be gathered from other statements found in the Scriptures bearing upon this point. I may say, however, that from various passages of the Prophets we see that their enmity drives them to demand the execution of King Messiah. From Psalm 16 and other passages we learn that the Father foretold His resurrection and that decomposition and decay would not prey upon His body.

When Messiah is thus executed and raised from the dead, at the invitation of God He ascends to heaven and takes His seat at the right hand of the Almighty. During this period of His reception and entertainment in heaven, the Father, overruling in the affairs of men and disciplining the people of Israel because of their rejection of Him at His first coming, brings them to the point that they will finally accept Him most enthusiastically when the time arrives for Him to return to the earth.

We may never be able to harmonize the two doctrines of God's sovereignty and overruling providence with that of man's freedom of choice. We are to accept them, even though we cannot explain the seeming contradictions. When we reach glory, all of these mysteries will be cleared to our perfect satisfaction and joy.

When in the providence of God the nation of Israel who rejects Messiah at His first coming is brought to the point that she is willing to accept Him and to acknowledge His Messiahship, He will return to the earth and establish His glorious reign in the city of Jerusalem. This thought is expressed in verses 2 and 3 of this psalm.

Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people offer themselves willingly
In the day of thy power, in holy array: Out of the womb of the morning
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

According to verse 2, Messiah at His second coming is to reign in Jerusalem, the very place where He was rejected at His first appearance upon earth. The Hebrew people will (according to verse 3) most enthusiastically accept Him at the time of His second appearance. This thought is expressed in the following statement:

Thy people offer themselves willingly In the day of thy power.”

When the Hebrew race is providentially brought to its extremity, it will call upon Him for deliverance. The statement, “Man's extremity is God's opportunity,” is certainly true. As long as men feel that they can battle for themselves, can solve their problems, and can shape their own destinies, they do not realize their utter dependence upon God; hence it becomes necessary for the Lord to bring some corrective or punitive experience into the life of the individual or the nation in order to make it realize its utter dependence upon Him. In such crises all of us instinctively call upon God for deliverance. Such is the forecast given by various prophets concerning Israel of the future.

When the nation is thus brought to the point that it will accept King Messiah and plead for Him to return, He will do so. At that time He will lift the curse from the earth, will restore Edenic conditions, and will place Israel in her rightful position as head of the nations through whom His mercy, grace, and truth may flow out to the four corners of the earth. When God called Abraham originally, He declared that it was His good pleasure to bless all nations through his descendants. The gifts and the callings of God are not repented of. He never turns from any of His plans, even though He may, humanly speaking, be delayed in carrying them out, because of man's lack of surrender and his disobedience. Hence we may be certain that God will yet use Israel in bringing world-wide blessing in the great Millennial Age.

From this psalm we see that the redemptive career of Messiah consists of the following experiences: (1) He appears upon earth; (2) he is rejected by the Hebrew people; (3) at the invitation of God He ascends to heaven and takes His seat at the right hand of the Almighty; (4) He remains there until God brings Israel to the point that she is willing to accept Him; (5) Messiah, at the invitation of Israel to return, comes back to earth and establishes His glorious reign throughout the world.

Friends, if you have never accepted this Savior, will you not receive Him at this moment and yield your life to Him?