

1 Corinthians 15:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Analysis

For he must reign (δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν)—The verb dei (δεῖ, "it is necessary, must") indicates divine necessity, not mere possibility. Christ's reign is God's ordained plan, fulfilling Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The present infinitive basileuein (βασιλεύειν, "to reign") indicates ongoing royal authority.

Till he hath put all enemies under his feet (ἄχρι οὗ θῇ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ)—This quotes Psalm 110:1, the Old Testament's most-cited text in the New Testament. The imagery of enemies hypo tous podas ("under the feet") depicts ancient Near Eastern victory ceremonies where conquered kings were literally placed under the victor's feet (Joshua 10:24). Christ's session at the Father's right hand (Hebrews 1:3, 10:12-13) is active reign, progressively subduing enemies until final victory.

Historical Context

Psalm 110:1 was understood messianically in Second Temple Judaism. Jesus cited it to prove Messiah's divinity (Matthew 22:41-45). Early Christians saw Christ's ascension as enthronement, inaugurating his conquering reign. This verse grounds Christian confidence in history's direction—Christ is subduing all opposition, and will not stop until victory is complete.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that Christ 'must' reign—how does this divine necessity give Christians confidence?
2. Who or what are the 'enemies' Christ is currently subduing during his reign?
3. How should Christ's active reign shape Christian engagement with culture and society?

Interlinear Text

δεῖ	γὰρ	αὐτοῦ	βασιλεύειν	ἄχρις	οὗ	ἄν	θῆ
must	For	he	reign	till	G3739	he hath put	G5087
G1163	G1063	G846	G936	G891		G302	
πάντας	τοὺς	έχθροὺς	ὑπὸ	τοὺς	πόδας	αὐτοῦ	
all	G3588	enemies	under	G3588	feet	he	
G3956		G2190	G5259		G4228	G846	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 110:1 (Parallel theme): The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Matthew 22:44 (Parallel theme): The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Hebrews 1:13 (Parallel theme): But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Ephesians 1:22 (Parallel theme): And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Acts 2:34 (Parallel theme): For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Mark 12:36 (Parallel theme): For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

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