

Psalm 110:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Analysis

This verse shifts from the Messiah's cosmic position to His dynamic rule and victory. 'The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion' depicts God extending His power through the Messiah from the holy city. The 'rod of strength' (Hebrew 'mateh oz') is a metaphorical scepter representing royal authority and power; rods were instruments of both leadership and judgment. 'Zion,' the symbolic center of God's kingdom, indicates that the Messiah's rule emanates from the holy city and covenant community. 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies' presents an active, immediate rule conducted while enemies remain present and hostile. Unlike verse 1 where enemies will eventually become a footstool, verse 2 describes ruling 'in the midst of' enemies - establishing dominion despite ongoing opposition. This captures the tension between the 'already' of Christ's ascension and the 'not yet' of final conquest. The Messiah does not wait for enemies to disappear before ruling; His reign is exercised in real time among hostile forces. The Hebrew verb 'rule' (redeh) carries connotations of shepherding and guidance as well as dominion, suggesting the Messiah's rule is not merely coercive but also protective and directive.

Historical Context

This verse would have resonated with Israelite kingship theology, where the monarch received the 'rod' (scepter) as a symbol of divine appointment. The sending of the rod 'out of Zion' connects to the promise given to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16, where God covenanted to establish an eternal dynasty. However, the

universal scope of the rule ('in the midst of thine enemies') exceeds any historical Israelite king's dominion. Early Christian interpreters understood this as describing Christ's spiritual kingdom, which operates despite worldly opposition and hostility. The reference to ruling 'among enemies' proved particularly relevant to the persecuted early church, which faced Roman opposition yet proclaimed Christ's sovereignty. Paul cited the concept of subduing enemies in 1 Corinthians 15:25 while discussing Christ's final victory. The phrase 'the rod of thy strength' also connects to the prophetic tradition where rulers wielded divine power to execute justice (Psalm 2:9, Isaiah 11:4). In medieval and Reformation theology, this verse supported the doctrine of Christ's present heavenly intercession and His future return to establish visible universal reign.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does ruling 'in the midst of' enemies differ from the complete subjugation described in verse 1, and what does this reveal about God's redemptive timeline?
2. What is the significance of the Messiah's rule originating from Zion, and how does this relate to the restoration of David's throne?
3. In what sense does Christ 'rule' in the midst of contemporary enemies who oppose His gospel?
4. How did the early church apply this verse to their experience of persecution while believing in Christ's sovereignty?
5. What does it mean theologically that Christ's rule precedes the final subjugation of all enemies?

Interlinear Text

מַטָּה אָזֶב יִשְׁלַׁח יְהִי מֵצֵא זָהָר

the rod of thy strength shall send The LORD out of Zion rule

H4294

H5797

H7971

H3068

H6726

H7287

אַיִלָּה בְּקָרְבָּן

thou in the midst of thine enemies

H7130

H341

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 48:17 (Parallel theme): All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!

Romans 1:16 (Parallel theme): For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

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