

Psalm 110:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Analysis

This verse introduces the second major theme of the psalm: the Messiah's priesthood. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power' presents a voluntary covenant community responding to the Messiah's authority. The word 'willing' (Hebrew 'nedavim') emphasizes free-will offering and eager participation, not coerced obedience. 'In the day of thy power' refers to the day when the Messiah's authority is fully manifested and acknowledged. 'In the beauties of holiness' (Hebrew 'behidarei kodesh') is a phrase of profound theological weight. 'Beauties' (hidrah) suggests splendor, glory, and magnificent display - the holiness of the Messiah is not stark and forbidding but radiantly beautiful. 'Holiness' (kodesh) indicates set-apartness and separation from sin, emphasizing the Messiah's moral and spiritual purity. The image is of a holy priesthood adorned in priestly garments, specifically the beautiful vestments prescribed for the high priest. 'From the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth' employs poetic language suggesting perpetual vitality and renewal - like morning dew, the Messiah's youth and vigor are constantly renewed. This verse presents the Messiah not only as a conquering king but as a glorious high priest before whom a willing people serve in holy worship.

Historical Context

The theological context for this verse includes the Levitical priesthood's establishment under Aaron and the subsequent development of high priestly

theology. Psalm 3 shifts the psalm from purely kingly themes to priestly ones, suggesting the Messiah would fulfill both roles - combining the offices of king and priest. This combination was revolutionary in Israelite theology, as the roles were typically kept separate (Saul's failure was partly his attempt to usurp priestly functions). However, the Messiah's simultaneous kingship and priesthood aligned with the promises to David's house and with Melchizedek, who was both priest and king of Salem (Genesis 14:18). The early church explicitly developed this theme in Hebrews 5-7, which presents Jesus as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, superior to the Levitical priesthood. The phrase 'from the womb of the morning' uses birth imagery that connects to other Messianic passages like Psalm 2:7 ('Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee'). The 'beauties of holiness' would remind Jewish worshippers of the high priest's magnificent ephod, breastplate, and other vestments that displayed God's glory.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does the Messiah need to be both a king and a priest, and what does this dual office accomplish that either role alone could not?
2. How does the voluntary willingness of the Messiah's people differ from the forced obedience of earthly kingdoms?
3. What is the significance of the Messiah's priesthood being displayed 'in the beauties of holiness' rather than in stern judgment?
4. In what ways does Christ's priesthood differ from the Levitical priesthood, and what is the meaning of His being 'after the order of Melchizedek'?
5. How does the perpetual 'dew of thy youth' (suggesting renewal and vitality) relate to Christ's resurrection and eternal priesthood?

Interlinear Text

עָמָק	גַּדְבָּת	בַּיּוֹם	בְּיַלְבָּד	בְּכָבְדָּרִי	בְּכָבְדָּרִי	קְדָש
Thy people	shall be willing	in the day	of thy power	in the beauties	of holiness	
H5971	H5071	H3117	H2428	H1926		H6944
מִרְבָּחָם	מִשְׁמָרָת	לְבָבָךְ	לְבָבָךְ	טַל	טַל	יְלָדָתֶיךָ
from the womb	of the morning	H0		thou hast the dew	of thy youth	
H7358	H4891			H2919		H3208

Additional Cross-References

Judges 5:2 (Parallel theme): Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

Hebrews 13:21 (Parallel theme): Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Titus 2:14 (Parallel theme): Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Ephesians 1:4 (Holy): According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (Holy): For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Psalms 96:9 (Holy): O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

2 Corinthians 8:12 (Parallel theme): For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

2 Corinthians 13:4 (Parallel theme): For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

2 Corinthians 8:16 (Parallel theme): But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

Revelation 7:9 (Parallel theme): After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

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