

Psalms 89:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

Analysis

Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. God responds to the king's cry (v. 26) with an extraordinary promise of exaltation. **I will make him my firstborn** ('āp-'ānî bə-ḵôr 'et-tə-ně-hû, אֶפְיָאֵנִי בְּכֹרֶתְנֶהּ) bestows the status of bəḵôr (בְּכֹרֶת), the firstborn son who receives double inheritance, family headship, and covenant blessings (Deuteronomy 21:17). This is adoptive language—God 'makes' or 'appoints' the Davidic king as firstborn, conferring privileged status not by natural birth but by divine decree.

The term "firstborn" carries profound theological weight. Israel itself was called God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). Now the Davidic king represents Israel as God's firstborn. **Higher than the kings of the earth** ('el-yôn lə-mal-ḵê-'ā-reṣ, לְמַלְכֵי-אֲרָץ) employs 'elyôn (עֶלְיוֹן), "highest" or "most exalted"—the same word used for God Himself as "El Elyon," God Most High. The Davidic king is elevated above all earthly monarchs in rank, authority, and honor.

No historical Davidic king fully realized this status—but Jesus Christ does perfectly. Paul declares Christ "the firstborn over all creation" (Colossians 1:15) and "the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18), given "the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). Revelation 1:5 calls Him "the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." This verse awaits its complete fulfillment when Christ reigns supreme over all earthly kingdoms.

Historical Context

David never achieved absolute supremacy over all earthly kings, though he did subdue surrounding nations and received tribute from many (2 Samuel 8). Solomon's wealth and wisdom made him renowned among kings (1 Kings 10:23-24), yet he remained one among many. The exile shattered any illusion of Davidic supremacy. This promise seemed to fail—until Jesus. At His first coming, He was 'King of the Jews' crucified by Rome. At His second coming, He will be 'KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS' (Revelation 19:16), the ultimate firstborn exalted over every earthly power.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God 'makes' the Davidic king His firstborn—how is this adoptive status a pattern for believers' adoption in Christ (Romans 8:29)?
2. How does Christ's status as 'firstborn over all creation' and 'ruler of the kings of the earth' fulfill this ancient promise to David?
3. In what ways is Christ already 'higher than the kings of the earth,' and in what ways is this still awaiting complete fulfillment?

Interlinear Text

אֶרְבִּי	אֶנִּי	בְּכֹרִי	אֶתְּנֶה הוּא	עָלַי וְ	לְמַלְכֵי
H637	H589	him my firstborn	Also I will make	higher	than the kings
		H1060	H5414	H5945	H4428

אֶרְצָא:
of the earth
H776

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 1:15 (Parallel theme): Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Colossians 1:18 (Parallel theme): And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Revelation 19:16 (Kingdom): And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Psalms 2:7 (Parallel theme): I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Romans 8:29 (Parallel theme): For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Numbers 24:7 (Kingdom): He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

Psalms 72:11 (Kingdom): Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

Isaiah 49:7 (Kingdom): Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

Exodus 4:22 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: