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JESUS'S REDEFINITION OF PSALM 110:1 IN MARK: AN INTERTEXTUAL STUDY

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Abstract

Psalm 110:1 portrays an enthroned king to whom the Lord has pledged victory. It stands out as the most frequently quoted and alluded passage in the New Testament. Many scholars, acknowledging the NT's utilization of Ps 110:1, focus on establishing how this psalm aligns with and finds fulfillment in Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus Himself referenced this passage in Mark 12:36 and 14:62 when addressing questions about His messianic identity. While this article follows this common trajectory, it also diverges by exploring the nuance that, while Jesus applied Ps 110:1 to His messianic vocation, His self-perception of the Messiah's mission differs from the prevailing notion of a triumphant enthroned king in Ps 110:1. In the psalm, the king's victory follows His enthronement and is achieved by military force. In contrast, the Markan Jesus secures His path to victory and enthronement through enduring shame and a humiliating death (8:31; 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34), representing a defeat from a socio-political standpoint but a victory from a divine perspective.

Keywords: redefinition, inner-biblical resuse, enthronement, victory, and messiah/Messiah

1. Introduction

A plain reading of Ps 110 depicts an enthroned king to whom the Lord pledges victory. Yet the review of the scholarship in Ps 110 reveals that the

passage contains several difficult problems, such as various textual issues,[1] imprecise *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm,[2] loose identification of the figure "my lord,"[3] and the alleged New Testament's (NT) miss application of Ps 110:1 to Jesus.[4] These problems indicate that Ps 110 is a very complex passage,[5] as Hans-Joachim Kraus puts it: "No other psalm has in research evoked so many hypotheses and discussions as Psalm 110."[6] In turn, this complexity serves as a caveat to the reader to read the text responsibly.

In this study, I do not intend to offer conclusive answers to the above-mentioned problems—these issues will continue to be debated in the future. Rather, I will pursue the context of Jesus's use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 and 14:62 and explicate how He redefined the concept of a victorious-con-

1 All verses of Ps 110:1 have variants, especially v. 6 with six different variants.

2 See John Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord?: Another Look at Psalm 110:1," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 10 (2005): 103–23. Regarding the historical context behind the psalm, Allen Ross mentions four possible historical situations based on the suggestions by different scholars: (1) the early time of David (perhaps, it makes a reference to an enthronement of a king or a coronation ceremony after the victory is achieved, or a pre-battle celebration which assures the king of his future victory), (2) the monarchy period from David to Azariah, (3) the early post-exilic period, when Zechariah prophesied about the unification of the priesthood and kingship, and (4) the late post-exilic period during which Simon Maccabeus converges the role of king and priest. Of these, the first is the most likely option for him. See Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms, 90–150*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 3:340.

3 The major interpretations of "my lord" are the Israelite king (David or Solomon) and/or the Messiah, see Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150*, AB 17A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 113.

4 John Goldingay (*Psalms: Psalms 90–150*, BCOT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 3:291–93) is a good representative of those who see the tension between the new context of Ps 110:1 in the NT and its original context in Psalms. He states, "Mark 12:35–37 reflects how it would be understood messianically in Roman times, and on that basis some of its verses are applied to Jesus (e.g., Acts 2:34–35), though as a whole it does not fit him, and most of its application to him in the NT requires to be understood in a way that would not correspond to its meaning in any OT context."

5 The use of Ps 110:1 in the NT by quotation and allusion counts 21x (or 22x with the long ending of Mark 16). As a quotation, see Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43; Acts 2:34–35; and Heb 1:13. As an allusion to an idea of sitting at the right hand (using κάθημαι or καθίζω), see Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. As an allusion using only the phrase "right hand," see Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55–56; Rom 8:34; and 1 Pet 3:22. The search is based on the textual apparatus of how NA28 connects the passages with the expression "right hand" to Ps 110:1.

6 Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald, A Continental Commentary (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993), 345.

quering royal enthroned king of Ps 110 in Mark.[7] Following this track, this study will contribute to the inner-biblical reuse of Ps 110:1, particularly in the gospel of Mark. However, to achieve the said purpose entails the establishment of the context of Ps 110. Here I will also briefly interact with the elusive issue of the *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm and on the various proposals in which "my lord" is interpreted by different scholarly opinions.

2. The Context of Psalm 110

The Hebrew Bible is taken as the basis of the exegesis of Ps 110.[8] Here I focus my attention on the literary context with emphasis on the enthronement and victory motifs, the nature of the psalm, and the description of "my lord." The goal is to obtain confidence in the context of Ps 110, which is crucial for its inner-biblical reuse in Mark 12:36 and 14:62. Once this foundation is built, I will establish the context of Jesus's use of Ps 110:1 in Mark.

2.1 The Text of Psalm 110

The text of Ps 110 is full of textual difficulties,[9] but this study assumes the reading in the HB. Thus far, the textual notes of Ross, Allen, and Hossfeld

[7] The comments by Rikk Watts on the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 and 14:62, along with the allusion to the Son of Man in Dan 7, is insightful (Rikk E. Watts, "Mark," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. Greg K. Beale and Donald A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 220–23, 233–35). Nonetheless, Watts did not explore the prominent theme, victory, in Ps 110 in connection to the victory of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

[8] The question of whether the Markan Jesus used the Hebrew text or the LXX in His quotation of Psalm 110:1 is intriguing. Comparing Mark 12:36 with Ps 110:1 in the LXX (109:1) suggests that Jesus used the LXX, except for ὑποκάτω ("under") instead of ὑποπόδιον ("footstool") in the LXX (Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016], s.v. "Mark 12:36"). However, it is not fully certain that the Markan Jesus used the LXX over the Hebrew text, as the LXX aptly translates the Hebrew (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 436–37). The theological significance remains regardless of the source. Since the LXX is a translation of the HB, the Hebrew text should be the basis for context. It is worth noting that majority of commentators on Mark do not seem to be bothered with identifying the precise source of the text in Mark 12:36, whether it is derived from the LXX or Hebrew.

[9] Because of the textual difficulties, some emendations were made as reflected in William P. Brown, "A Royal Performance: Critical Notes on Psalm 110:3aγ–b," *JBL* 117.1 (1998): 93–96. Cf. Thijs Booij, "Rule in the Midst of Your Foes!," *VT* 41.4 (1991): 396–407.

have been helpful in this regard.[10] I find no need to discuss the text-critical issues further, at least not in this article, although this study acknowledges that v. 3 with six different variants, is difficult to translate. The following is my proposed translation of the psalm:

1a A psalm of David,
1b *the* oracle of the Lord to my lord:
1cα "Sit at my right hand
1cβ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
2a The Lord will stretch forth your mighty scepter from Zion,
2b "Rule in the midst of your enemies."
3aα Your people will offer themselves willingly
3aβ in the day of your power, in holy array;
3b from the womb of the dawn, your youth is for you *as* dew.
4a The Lord Himself has sworn and will not change:
4bα "You are a priest forever,
4bβ according to the order of Melchizedek."
5a The Lord *is* on your right hand,
5b He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.
6a He will judge among the nations,
6b He will fill *them with* corpses,
6c He will shatter *the* head (chiefs) over the broad earth.
7a He will drink from the brook by the way,
7b therefore He will lift up *His* head.

2.2 The Literary Context of Psalm 110

The passage begins with a superscription לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר ("a psalm of David" [v. 1]). The said superscript is a standard marker for most of the Davidic psalms.[11] What follows is the content of the psalm (vv. 1b–7), which many

[10] Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:337–39; Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC 21 (Nashville: Nelson, 2002), 110–11; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Eric Zinger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2011), 144–45.

[11] Jerome L. Skinner, "The Historical Superscription of Davidic Psalms: An Exegetical, Intertext-ual, and Methodological Analysis" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2016), 352–56. Other scholars represented by Goldingay (*Psalms*, 3:291) say that Ps 110 was written by a court prophet or minister, possibly Gad or Nathan, portraying David as the psalmist. However, this study assumes Davidic authorship because the super-

scholars have divided into two sections (vv. 1–3, 4–7),[12] while a minority sees three (vv. 1–3, 4, 5–7).[13] Scholars who label vv. 1–3 as "the oracle of the Lord to the king" appear to compartmentalize the oracle within the reach of vv. 1–3,[14] thus implying that vv. 4–7 are less than an oracle. Conversely, those who argue that each section contains an oracle can be misleading,[15] as it suggests three distinct oracles. On the contrary, the entire psalm is just one coherent oracle, introduced with נְאֻם יְהוָה (v. 1b). The unity of the psalm is also further substantiated by the victory languages/motifs, which form an *inclusio*, appearing at both the beginning (v. 1, enemies under the king's feet) and end (v. 7, the king lifts up his head [more details in the next section]) of the passage.

2.3 Enthronement and Victory Motifs

Whatever literary structure one may see in Ps 110, the motifs of enthronement and victory—which are prominent in the psalm—presumably remain recognizable. I find myself in harmony with the scholars who observe a twofold section of the psalm, but with a slight modification. I consider v. 1b as the starting point of the first section (vv. 1b–3) because it parallels in almost perfect equilibrium with the second section (vv. 4–7). The opening of both sections begins with statements of declaration: "the oracle of the Lord," which can also mean "the Lord says/said" (v. 1b), and "the Lord has sworn…" (v. 4a).[16] After this, the divine order of the Lord that constitutes

scription "a psalm of David" does not exclude it, and Jesus and Peter attributed Ps 110:1 to David (Mark 12:35–37; Acts 2:14–36; cf. 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13).

12 The above division of Ps 110 is supported by the majority of biblical scholars, e.g., Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 5:697; Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73–150*, NAC 13 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2019); 342–43; Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 834.

13 E.g., Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:344; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 346; Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 16 (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 427–31.

14 See Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:293; Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 751.

15 See Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 346; Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, FOTL 15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 263; John F. Brug, *Psalms 73–150*, 2nd ed., The People's Bible (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001), 161.

16 Kraus considers three oracular sayings in the passage (Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 346). The first is the statement, "Sit at my right hand until I have made your enemies a footstool for your feet!" (Ps 110:1). The second, "On the holy mountains, from the womb of the

the royal status to "my lord" follows: "sit at my right hand" (a reference to the king's enthronement, v. 1cα) and "you are a priest forever…" (the king becomes a priest as well, v. 4b). Then the ensuing portion of each section, which contains the victory motif (vv. 1cβ–3, 5–7),[17] is noticeable in the following ways: enemies as footstool of the feet (v. 1cβ), rule in the midst of enemies (v. 2b), people willingly offer themselves in the day of the king's power (v. 3a), the Lord is at your right hand (an idea of strengthening the king for battle, v. 5a), kings be shattered (v. 5b), judgment on the nations (v. 6a), fill the nations with corpses (v. 6b), the chief(s) be shattered (v. 6c), and "lifting up the head" (v. 7b).

Noticeably, a large portion of the psalm deals with the victory motif. In fact, victory language makes an *inclusio* of the psalm as v. 1 closes with the phrase "enemies as footstool of your feet" and v. 7 with "lift up his head." To make this point work, there is a need to explain why the said phrases connote victory. In the phrase "enemies as footstool for your feet" (v. 1cβ), the term "footstool" (הֲדֹם) appears six times[18] in the HB and is always in construct with the feet of Yahweh, except in Ps 110:1, which connects הֲדֹם with the feet of "my lord." Based on the occurrences of הֲדֹם, the footstool of the Lord's feet is mainly associated with Zion and the ark[19] in the sense of rest. However, the imagery of footstool under feet in ANE sources indicates

rosy dawn, I have begotten you like a dew" (v. 3). And the third, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek!" (v. 4). This observation at first glance is brilliant because all oracular sayings directly concern the identity of the king. Nevertheless, in v. 3, the "I have begotten you" (יְלִדְתֶּיךָּ) assumes the same vocalization of that in Ps 2:7 (יְלִדְתִּיךָ), which the Masoretes distinguished from each other: they saw the יְלִדְתִּיךָ in Ps 2:7 as coming from ילד ("be born" or "beget"), while the יְלִדְתֶּיךָּ in Ps 110:3 is from יַלְדוּת ("childhood" or "youth"). Moreover, in v. 3, it is not certain as to who the speaker is, the psalmist or God? It seems that the clear direct speeches of the Lord in the psalm are in v. 1c, v. 2b, and v. 4b, rather than in vv. 1, 3, and 4 as suggested by Kraus.

17 My segmentation of the victory motif reflects that of VanGemeren, "Psalms," 697, who sees the victory motif in Ps 110:2–3 and vv. 5–7, following the promise in v. 1 and v. 4, respectively. However, I differ from him slightly because "enemies as footstool of your feet" (v. 1cβ) is a very strong victory language. In fact, this is the most decisive, for it connotes a complete subjugation of the enemy. For the ANE background, see John H. Walton et al., *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 553.

18 See 1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 110:1; 132:7; Isa 66:1; and Lam 2:1.

19 Psalm 110:1 aside, see footstool of God's feet (e. g.) I. Conrnelius, "הֲדֹם," *NIDOTTE*, 1:1011–12.

subjugation of the enemies.[20] This practice is also attested in Josh 10:24, where the leaders of Israel have trampled under their feet the neck of the five kings defeated in battle (Josh 10:16–43). In Ps 110:1, the enemies are said to be footstool "*for* your feet" (לְרַגְלֶיךָ).[21] Here, the inclusion of the preposition לְ clarifies that enemies are assigned "for" the feet of the enthroned king, perhaps as rest for his feet, which is the net effect of a complete subjugation of the enemies.

On the other hand, the phrase "lift up his head" (Ps 110:7b) is an image of victory. While the poetic act of drinking from the brook has been understood in various ways (allusion to Gideon's men drinking from a river, a reference to the ceremonial accession of the king, and symbol for a rich provision),[22] there is a consensus that such language, along with the "lifting of head," signals victory.[23] However, there is also a need to determine whether it is Yahweh or "my lord" who has gained the victory in v. 7.

Psalm 110:5–7 is perhaps the most difficult section, as far as identifying the grammatical subject is concerned. I consider Yahweh as the subject of

[20] For example, the painting from a tomb in *Abd el Qurna* (c. 1400 B.C.) depicts Pharaoh with nine enemies as a footstool under his feet. Carl Richard Lepsius, *Denkmaler aus Agypten und Athiopien* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1853), plate 69a. For more information, see Heinz-Josef Fabry, "הֲדֹם," *TDOT* 3:325–34.

[21] In the HB, the combination of הֲדֹם and רֶגֶל appears only six times (1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 110:1; 132:7; Isa 66:1; Lam 2:1). It should be noted that it is only in Ps 110 that רֶגֶל (in combination with הֲדֹם) appears with preposition לְ.

[22] Some see an allusion from Ps 110:7a to Judg 7:6 which describes Gideon's men drinking from the river. See Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 431; VanGemeren, "Psalms," 5:700. Others associate the act of drinking with the ceremonial accenssion of the king, which alludes to 1 Kgs 1:38–40. See Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:298; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 352–53. Still others interpret drinking from the brook as a reference to rich provisions. See Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 118; Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:357–58.

[23] The combination of the verb רוּם ("raise," "lift up," or "be high") and the noun רֹאשׁ ("head") appears only in Ps 3:4; 27:6; 110:7. In 3:4 and 27:6, Yahweh is agent of the action in lifting (רוּם) the head of the psalmist, and both texts use the said combination in context of victory. However, in 110:7 (within vv. 5–7), Yahweh as agent of the action is clear only in vv. 5–6, but in v. 7, the implied actor of the verbs יִשְׁתֶּה ("he will drink") and יָרִים ("he will lift up") seems not Yahweh, but the priest-king in v. 5. If both 3:4 and 27:6 use יָרִים רֹאשׁ as an imagery of victory, then likely, in 110:7 the expression is used in the same context as well (vv. 5–6). Cf. Geoffrey Grogan, *Psalms*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 84. Nordheim says that "'drinking foreign water' is a hostile, provocative act as sign of superiority over the conquered people … and 'lifting up the head' is a sign of the final triumph" (Miriam von Nordheim, *Geboren von Der Morgenröte? Psalm 110 in Tradition, Redaktion Und Rezeption*, WMANT 118 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2008], 110–11).

the actions in vv. 5–6 and "my lord" in v. 7.[24] In other words, the implicit victory both in v. 1cβ and v. 7b is attributed to the enthroned "my lord." However, one should note that in the flow of the psalm, the psalmist positions Yahweh's act of enthroning the king ("sit at my right hand," v. 1cα) after the prophetic formula (v. 1b). Evidently, the victory motif (vv. 1cβ–3, 5–7) ensues only after the Lord's act of constituting the royal status to "my lord" (vv. 1cα, 4b). There seems to be more of having an enthroned king than of victory in that the necessity of having a king is secured first; only then is victory presupposed. Without an enthroned king, victory can hardly be conceived. Simply put, Ps 110 depicts an enthroned king who is bound to triumph based on the pledge of Yahweh. This must have given hope and encouragement to the psalmist, and by extension, to the intended audience, for to have a king means to have someone who will fight the battle for the people (cf. 1 Sam 8:20).

2.4 The Nature of the Psalm

The psalm is introduced by the expression and prophetic formula נְאֻם יְהוָה ("the oracle of the Lord" [v. 1b]), which can also be rendered "the Lord says/said." This expression is abundant in the prophetic books,[25] but in Psalms it appears only in 110:1. Its usage in the passage implies that the psalm is authoritative[26] and is prophetic in nature.[27] Hence, it can be categorized with prophecy, specifically a messianic prophecy.[28]

[24] Other scholars, as represented by Hossfeld and Zinger, *Psalms 3*, 150–52, see Yahweh as the subject both in vv. 5–6 and v. 7. However, this study follows Kidner (*Psalms 73–150*, 430–31), Ross (*A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:357–58), and Goldingay (*Psalms*, 3:296–99), who consider Yahweh as the subject in vv. 5–6 and "my lord" in v. 7.

[25] The distribution of the occurrences נְאֻם יְהוָה in prophetic books is as follows: Isa 21x, Jer 167x, Ezek 4x, Hos 4x, Joel 1x, Amos 16x, Oba 2x, Mic 2x, Nah 2x, Zeph 5x, Hag 12x, Zech 20x, and Mal 1x. Before the Israelite monarchy period, it appears only in Gen 22:16; Num 14:28; and 1 Sam 2:3.

[26] Writing on נְאֻם, Coppes states, "This root is used exclusively of divine speaking. Hence, its appearance calls special attention to the origin and authority of what is said" (Leonard J. Coppes, "נְאֻם," *TWOT* 2:541–42).

[27] For Lee, the prophetic formula נְאֻם יְהוָה sets the tone of the psalm (Peter Y. Lee, "Psalm 110 Reconsidered: Internal and External Evidence in Support of a NT Hermeneutic," *Reformed Faith Practice* 2.2 [2017]: 26).

[28] James Mays puts it as follows: "In style and content it is similar to sayings of the prophets" (James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation [Atlanta: John Knox, 1994], 350–55). Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms, 1–41*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 1:164–66, argues that Ps 110:1 is a direct messianic prophecy. Cf.

Crucial to understanding Ps 110 is recognizing its central themes. As mentioned above, Ps 110 depicts an enthroned king ("my lord") whom Yahweh promises victory. Since enthronement and victory appear to be dominant themes in Ps 110, this can then be categorized as a royal and/or enthronement psalm.[29] When compared with other psalms, according to Ross, this type of psalms deal more openly with Yahweh's rule or His reign over all the world, enemies, and created things—through His human king considered as His "son."[30] It should be noted that Yahweh, speaking concerning "my lord's" sitting at Yahweh's right hand in Ps 110:1, has a parallel idea in Ps 2:6, where Yahweh says, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Psalm 2:7, on the other hand, alludes to 2 Sam 7:4–17, though the allusion focuses only on the adoption of David's offspring (the promised king for David's throne) as God's son in 2 Sam 7:14.[31] The reuse, in this sense, suggests that the promise made to David's dynasty in 2 Sam 7:4–17 is assumed in Ps 2. The latter, though, clarifies that God's son is the מָשִׁיחַ ("the anointed," v. 2), king of Zion (v. 7), and ruler of the nations (vv. 7, 9, 12).

Although the reuse of 2 Sam 7:14 in Ps 2:6 expands God's promise concerning the future of the Davidic dynasty,[32] it does by no means establish the dependence of Ps 110 on Ps 2. While the two passages are interralated

Barry C. Davis, "Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm?," *BSac* 157.626 (2000): 162–73; Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord?," 119–22.

29 "Royal psalms" is one of the five categories of Psalms according to Hermann Gunkel. See Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967). Gunkel identifies the following as royals psalms: Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, and 144. Other passages are seen as related, such as, Ps 47, 93, and 96–99, but are called enthronement psalms. See Philippus Jacobus Botha, "The 'Enthronement Psalms': A Claim to the World-Wide Honour of Yahweh," *OTE* 11.1 (1998): 24–39.

30 Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 1:157, 164–68.

31 "At the heart of the covenant is the concept of *sonship*; the human partner in the covenant is *son* of the covenant God, who is *father*. This covenant principle of sonship is a part of the Sinai Covenant between God and Israel. The covenant God cares for Israel as a father cares for his son (Deut 1:31) and God disciplines Israel as a father disciplines a son (Deut 8:5)" (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50,* WBC 19 [Dallas, TX: Word, 1998], 67). I argue that Israel as the son of God does not develop only from the Sinaitic covenant between God and Israel. Israel as a nation that emerged from Abraham, with whom God promised to become a great nation, has already been considered as the firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22–23) before the covenant at Sinai. On the ANE's idea of the newly installed king as the deity's son, see Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 340–41.

32 Edward J. Kissane, "The Interpretation of Psalm 110," *ITQ* 21.2 (1954): 105–6.

in terms of linguistic similarities,[33] their connection lies instead in the shared theological focus. Both psalms emphasize divine kingship and messianic prophecy. Psalm 110 depicts an enthroned king, whom Yahweh promises victory, highlighting themes of enthronement and triumph (110:1–2, 3, 4–7).[34] Similarly, Ps 2 portrays Yahweh, establishing His king on Zion and declaring him His son, underscoring divine rule and authority (2:1–9).[35] These psalms together emphasize Yahweh's sovereignty and the significance of His anointed king, who will eventually subdue His enemies.[36]

Given that Israel's kingdom came under various geo-political powers long after David's reign, even until Jesus's first advent, it seems arbitrary and thus not likely cogent to mount David's coronation[37] or Solomon's enthronement by David as the *Sitz im Leben* of Ps 110:1. If so, the direct messianic nature of the psalm can be used as a control in matters of addressing the question about the historical situation of the psalm and the interpretation of the "my lord" figure in Ps 110:1. In other words, the historical situation and interpretation of "my lord" must cohere with the plausible application/fulfillment of Ps 110:1 if it be read with a prophetic overtone.

2.5 The "My Lord" Figure

The oracle of the Lord is addressed "to my lord" (לַאדֹנִי) (Ps 110:1b). Insofar, the crux of the interpretive problems of the psalm is the difficulty in identi-

[33] There are some terms common between Ps 110 and Ps 2, which resonate with each other, such as; גּוֹי ("nations," 2:1, 8; 110:6) and מְלָכִים ("kings," 2:2; 110:7), יָשַׁב ("sit," 2:4; 110:1), אַף ("anger," 2:5, 12; 110:5), צִיּוֹן ("Zion," 2:6; 110:2), including the interchange of the divine titles יְהוָה and אֲדֹנָי. Other linguistic links, though, are ambivalent in the sense that they do not cohere in a logical sense. This is true with the terms קֹדֶשׁ ("holy," 2:6; 110:3), יוֹם ("day," 2:7; 110:3, 5), יַלְדֻתִיךָ ("birth," 2:7, "youth," 110:3), אֶרֶץ ("earth," 2:8; 110:6), and דֶּרֶךְ ("way," 2:12; 110:7). Note that these linguistic links by no means necessarily establish the dependency of the latter passage upon the former.

[34] See also *Alan Kam-Yau Chan, Melchizedek Passages in the Bible: A Case Study for Inner-Biblical and Inter-Biblical Interpretation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 155.

[35] Chan, *Melchizedek Passages in the Bible*, 155.

[36] In Ps 2, the nations, led by kings who gather against the Lord and His anointed, will ultimately be defeated (vv. 1–3, 8–9). Similarly, in Ps 110, the subjugation of enemies is depicted through the imagery of "enemies as footstool" of the feet of Yahweh's king (v. 1) and the king lifting his head in triumph (v. 7).

[37] E.g., Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif," *BSac* 150.597 (1993): 54–55.

fying "my lord." Scholars propose three major views: Merrill holds a Davidic view,[38] Bateman IV supports a Solomonic interpretation,[39] and Kidner advocates a direct messianic application.[40] I will briefly comment on these interpretations after dealing with the description of "my lord" in Ps 110.

There are major and minor descriptions of "my lord" in Ps 110. The major descriptions come from Yahweh's three direct speeches (vv. 1c, 2b, 4b). Yahweh's first speech reads: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies as a footstool for your feet" (v. 1c). The phrase "right hand" (יָמִין,[41] v. 1) conveys an idea of honor (cf. Gen 48:13–14).[42] In Ps 110:1, the sense of honor comes along with power/authority, and "my lord's" authority/power is noticeable in Yahweh's charge that he should rule in the midst of his enemies (v. 2).[43] One may agree with Hossfeld's opinion, that "my lord's" sitting at

[38] From a socio-cultural perspective the title "Lord" (אָדוֹן) is a fitting address to someone who is superior. Merrill argues that the title became so formulaic that even the king could use it for himself. His main argument is that the psalmist and אֲדֹנִי in Ps 110:1 are the same. For more information, see Merrill, "Royal Priesthood," 55–56.

[39] Bateman IV avers that Hebrew pointing makes a distinction between אֲדֹנִי (*ădōnî*) for human lord (except when it refers to an angelic being) and אֲדֹנָי (*ădōnāy*) for deity. When the two appear together in the same sentence, the former always refers to an earthly lord, while the latter to the Lord. See Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," *BSac* 149.596 (1992): 448–51 (including notes). Having established this, Bateman IV argues that since David used "my lord" only two times during his lifetime, for King Saul and King Achish of the Philistines, it could not refer to the former because of the connection between Ps 110 to 2 Sam 7, and also it could not be applied to the latter because King Achish is a pagan king (Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," 448–51). Thus, the logical reference of "my lord" in Ps 110 is Solomon, and the description of the enthronement might refer to the second coronation of Solomon. Nevertheless, for Bateman IV, the psalmist looked at Solomon as a kind of messiah, which is also the case of others who reigned after Solomon (Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," 452–53).

[40] Kidner uses the NT lens to interpret "my lord" in Ps 110. He points out that Jesus repeated two times "David himself" and used the idea that David spoke in the Holy Spirit concerning his lord, arguing that David spoke the enthronement oracle to the messianic king (Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 426–27).

[41] For an overview on how יָמִין is used in the OT, see J. Alberto Soggin, "יָמִין," *TDOT* 6:99–101.

[42] Frederic Clarke Frederik, "יָמִין," *NIDOTTE* 2:466–91. A good example is Bathsheba's sitting at the "right hand" of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:19). Although her sitting at Solomon's right hand does not mean exaltation to the throne, it implies power or authority (cf. Ps 45:9).

[43] Cf. 1 Kgs 2:12; 1 Chr 29:23; Dan 7:9–14. The socio-cultural context of the OT, particularly in ancient Israel, often links honor with positions of authority and power. In many instances, individuals in positions of honor, such as kings, leaders, and priests,

Yahweh's right hand implies, first and foremost, that Yahweh is in the position of honor. Further, he mentions that Yahweh's sitting on the throne depicts His universal royal rule (cf. Ps 9:8; 99:1; Isa 6:1). He concludes that "my lord's" sitting at the right hand "is a participation in the exercise of YHWH's own royal rule."[44] Hossfeld's idea that Yahweh allows another being to reign with Him finds support in other books, where a human king sat on the throne of Yahweh's kingdom (1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 29:23; 2 Chr 9:8; 13:8; cf. Dan 4:25 [v. 22 MT]). However, it should be admitted that there is no OT passage with similar language as in Ps 110:1. While it is arbitrary to insist that "my lord's" sitting at the right hand refers to his enthronement—because of the brevity of the text and lack of descriptions—the reuse of Ps 110:1 in the NT, particularly in the post-resurrection event, is indicative of Jesus's enthronement in heaven (Acts 2:34; 7:55; cf. Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). If so, the reuse of Ps 110:1 in the NT bolsters a direct messianic interpretation of Ps 110:1. Nevertheless, if Ps 110:1 be viewed apart from its use in the NT, it can be said that "my lord" serves as a co-regent of Yahweh (v. 1cα). He is in power and will ultimately put Yahweh's enemies in subjugation.

Although scholarly discussion associates "sit at my right hand" with the enthronement motif, there is a division among scholars on what setting (time and type) is depicted in the enthronement of Ps 110. Regarding the time setting, Bateman IV mentions three possible periods: [45] the pre-Israelite (Jebusite tradition),[46] the pre-exilic (era of Israelite kings),[47] and the post-exilic (Maccabean period).[48] As to the type of enthronement, festival enthronement, coronation after the battle is won, and even pre-battle ceremony, are

held significant power within their communities. The honor bestowed upon them was often a reflection of their authority and influence. See, for instance, the intersection of honor and authority in the narrative of Solomon with the two mothers before his courtroom (1 Kgs 3:16–28).

44 Hossfeld and Zinger, *Psalms* 3, 147.

45 Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," 438.

46 John H. Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944), 30, 37, 41; Helen G. Jefferson, "Is Psalm 110 Canaanite?" *JBL* 73 (1954): 152–55.

47 See Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 345–47; Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:340–41.

48 There are two strands here: First, Ps 110 refers to the post-exilic period not long after the return from the captivity of Babylon. This view connects Ps 110 to Zech 6:9–14 (Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return: Book V, Psalms 107–150*, JSOT 258 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998], 142–51). Second, Ps 110 refers to the Maccabean period, where one person took the priest-king role (Bernhard Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 2nd ed., KHC 14 [Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck], 1922), 254–56. Cf. Marco Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms," *VT* 15 (1965): 81–90.

among the suggested proposals.[49] While we cannot be precise on the time setting and the type of enthronement of Ps 110:1 because of the lack of clarity and descriptions, suffice it to say that the passage depicts a prophetic enthronement of "my lord."[50] This enthronement, back in the psalmist's (David) mind, assumes the framework of which he was accustomed in his days.

The second speech states, "Rule (רְדֵה) in the midst of your enemies" (Ps 110:2b). In this speech, "my lord" (v. 1b) continues to be the recipient of Yahweh's command. The term רְדֵה ("rule")[51] in v. 2b along with מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ ("mighty scepter")[52] in v. 2a evoke an idea of kingship, though in the strictest sense there is no word for king (מֶלֶךְ) in the passage.

In the third speech the Lord pronounced, "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4b). This declaration is introduced with Yahweh's irrevocable promise, "the Lord has sworn" (v. 4a), highlighting the certainty of the pronouncement. Noticeably, the Lord's declaration to "my lord" alludes to Gen 14:18–20,[53] where Melchizedek is described as both king and priest, and thus, the priest-king role of "my lord" in Ps 110 is evoked. In the Bible we do find evidence that some kings took part in

[49] Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms,* 3:340–42; Hossfeld and Zinger, *Psalms 3*, 144–45; and Klaus Homborg, "Psalm 110,1 im Rahmen des judäischen Krönungszeremoniells," *ZAW* 84 (1972): 243–46.

[50] See especially Acts 2:34; 7:55; cf. Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

[51] The term רְדֵה appears twenty-five (25x) in the OT. The gloss indicates dominance by force, and it is often connected to rule by the concept of מׇשׇל. See William White, "רָדָה," *TWOT* 2:833. Its initial use is linked to man's rule over God's creation (Gen 1:26, 28). However, the word is generally used for man's dominion over someone (Lev 25:43), groups (Num 24:19), region (1 Kgs 5:4), rather than God's dominion, with the exception in Ps 72:8. In Psalms, the root appears four times, and only in 110:2 is it applied against the enemies. However, in other books, there are occurrences of רְדֵה against enemies or opponents (Num 24:19; Isa 14:2). It should be noted that in Psalms, God's rule or dominion (as an action) favors מׇשׇל (e.g., 22:29; 89:10; 103:19; 106:41) and מֶלֶךְ (47:9; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1), except רְדֵה in 72:8, where the psalmist prays/wishes: "May he rule (רְדֵה) from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth" (NIV).

[52] Goldingay takes מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ as a metonymy for the powerful king commissioned by God (Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:294). The phrase מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ literally means "scepter of your might" which can be rendered as "mighty scepter" in attributive genitive. For an overview of the syntax of the genitive, see Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8–12.

[53] Psalm 76:2 [3, MT] parallels Salem with Zion. The Genesis Apocryphon (1 QapGen 22:13) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.10.2 [1:180]) make a connection between Salem and Jerusalem. For a short discussion on the possible location of Salem and how it became attached to Jerusalem, see Michael C. Astour, "Salem," *ABD* 5:905; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1998), 316.

priestly functions in some sense (1 Sam 13:8–14; 2 Sam 6:14, 18; 2 Chr 24:17; 26:16–21; 1 Kgs 8:14),[54] including wearing the ephod (2 Sam 6:14). But their role does not encompass that of a priest, as priesthood in the Israelite community follows certain traditions. Apart from Melchizedek, it is only Jesus whom Hebrews described as both priest and king (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17). Thus, the Hebrews' appropriation of Melchizedek's priest-king role to Jesus further supports the interpretation that the "my lord" figure in Psalm 110 refers to Jesus, highlighting His unique messianic vocation, which encompasses the role of a priest.

As to the minor descriptions of "my lord," the victory sections of the psalm (vv. 1cβ–3, 5–7) project him as a victorious king. Yahweh is the main agent of the king's victory in physical-political battle, as the psalm presented Him as the agent of putting (אָשִׁית) the enemies under the king's feet (v. 1cβ), stretching forth (יִשְׁלַח) the king's mighty scepter (v. 2), shattering (מָחַץ) the kings and heads of the people (vv. 5, 6c), judging (יָדִין) the nations (v. 6a), and filling (מָלֵא) the space with corpses (v. 6b). However, "my lord" is not totally passive. He is charged to rule in the midst of the enemies (v. 2b). Importantly, Yahweh is said to be in his right hand (v. 5a). Putnam states that when the Lord is in someone's right hand, He is there to strengthen (Ps 16:8; 63:9 [8 in MT]; Isa 41:1, 13), defend (109:31), and grant victory (Ps 110:5).[55]

In the psalm, the preposition of יָמִין changes from לְ (לִימִינִי "at my right hand") in v. 1cα to עַל (עַל־יְמִינְךָ "on your right hand") in v. 5a. With Yahweh on the right hand of "my lord," the priest-king is depicted as strengthened for battle. Thus, we expect him to get into a fight against enemies. Surprisingly, Yahweh does the fighting (vv. 5b–6).[56] What follows is even more striking, because after Yahweh has fought, it seems that it is "my lord" who appears in the triumph scene, lifting up his head after drinking from the brook (v. 7). However, if we keep in mind what it means for the Lord to be on the right hand of the king (v. 5a), then the king's poetic victory (v. 7)

[54] For more information, see Carl E. Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests?" in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. by Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 75–86.

[55] Frederic Clarke Putnam, "יָמִין," *NIDOTTE* 2:467.

[56] One may agree with Brueggemann who mentions that Yahweh's actions in vv. 5–6 "bring to mind the historical tradition of the great victories YHWH brought the people in early Israel. YHWH gloriously defeated those who opposed the covenant people; in Psalm 110 YHWH promises such victories for the ruler of the covenant people" (Walter Brueggemann and W. H. Bellinger, *Psalms,* NCBC [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 480).

could be seen as the anticipated result of Yahweh's implied act of strengthening "my lord" for battle (v. 5b). Therefore, "my lord" is not only a victorious king; importantly, he is a warrior who fights with Yahweh.

2.3 A Brief Critique

Having described "my lord" in Ps 110, this study argues that the Davidic and Solomonic interpretations on the identity of "my lord" are not convincing. It is very hard to advocate any of the above interpretations when the passage lacks more detailed descriptions. As to the Davidic interpretation, for it to be true, Ps 110:1 would require a speaker other than David—believed to be the psalmist in this passage—to identify David as "my lord." Jesus attributes the speaker in Ps 110:1 to David (Matt 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; cf. Acts 2:25). Of course, this argument may seem simplistic, but this is also the most biblically supported,[57] unlike the suggestion that Zadok was the speaker in Ps 110:1, who spoke of "my lord" as referring to David, which is difficult to establish.

Concerning the Solomonic interpretation, the perpetual priesthood that Yahweh pronounced upon the king in Ps 110:4 poses a major problem. It is true that Israelite kings on some occasions functioned as priests besides their role as king (2 Sam 6:14, 18; 24:17; 1 Kgs 8:14),[58] but this does not fit with the language of Ps 110:4. The clause "you *are* priest" is verbless (אַתָּה־כֹהֵן), and anticipates a stative הָיָה (*hayah*) "to be" between אַתָּה־כֹהֵן. The force of the Lord's pronouncement is on the identity of the king, which is more of a state. Thus, the king by *state of being* is a priest, forever priest in Melchizedek's order (Gen 14:18–20). Apparently, Solomon does not come close to this identification.

[57] Cf. Harold H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok," in *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet*, ed. Walter Baumgartner et al. (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1950), 461–72.

[58] Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:296–97, notes that the kings' performance of priestly functions is natural because "they were heirs to the position of the king of Jerusalem as it obtained before Jerusalem was an Israelite city, when its king was also its priest." See also Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 113–14; Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests," 75–86; John Westerdale Bowker, "Psalm 110," *VT* 17.1 (1967): 31–41. For different interpretations of Ps 110's reference to Gen 14:18–20, see Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament: Unter besonderer Bercksichtigung der Geschichte der Psalmenexegese dargestellt und Kritisch Gewrdigt* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 235, especially note 3; H. E. Del Medico, "Melchisédech," ZAW 69 (1957): 167; T. H. Gaster, "Psalms," *Journal of the Manchester University Egyptian and Oriental Society* 21 (1937): 41.

The messianic interpretation is thus far the most natural and biblical reading. The mention of נְאֻם in Ps 110 suggests that the psalm belongs to the prophetic category. Hence, its fulfillment in the messianic era resonates with its prophetic nature.[59] It should be noted that in the Bible, Ps 110:1 is reused only in the NT.[60] Thus, it calls for a messianic interpretation. The question is whether David viewed the messiah as a divine being or merely an ideal human. Aloisi is inclined to the former, arguing that God might have revealed to David who the messiah is, but it is not written in the Scripture.[61] Although it is true that the OT is not covert about a divine messiah as hinted in, e.g., Isa 9:6 (v. 5 MT and LXX),[62] this view appears to be lost from sight in the landscape of the NT people's messianic expectations, as they looked forward to a geo-ethnic political messiah from David's lineage.[63] As far as the

59 Jesus's application of the psalm to Himself (Mark 12:36; 14:62) appears to argue that He is the figure pointed to by "my lord" in Ps 110:1. However, Ps 110:1 is not just about who "my lord" is, but also what Yahweh envisioned him to do, namely to "put enemies under his feet." Mark 14:62 points to Jesus's exaltation. Peter (allusion) and Stephen (echo) use Ps 110:1 in reference to Jesus's exaltation after His ascension (Acts 2:34–35; 7:55).

60 See Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM, 1971), 692–97; Carl Fried-rich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *A Commentary of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 692–96; James Swetnam, "Psalm 110,1 and New Testament Christology: A Suggested Interpretation," *MelT* 50.1 (1999): 37–55. Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 179, notes that Ps 110 is rarely referenced during the intertestamental period. For possible influence of Ps 110 in early Jewish sources, see, e.g., Dead Sea Scrolls, 11Q13; Semilitudes of *1 Enoch* 37–71; *Testament of Job* 33:3.

61 Arguing that David was conscious of a divine messiah, Aloisi reasons that "David may have known more about the Messiah than was recorded in Scripture or revealed to Israelites in general at that time…. David may have received new revelation about the Messiah in connection with the composition of this psalm" (Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord?," 120).

62 John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 244–48. For a natural (non-divine) reading of the messianic passage, see George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, I–XXXIX*, ICC (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1912), 164–77.

63 Examples are as follows: (1) Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 8:27–30), but when Jesus told His disciples that He as the Son of Man will suffer and die and be raised after three days, Peter rebuked Him (8:31–9:1). Peter's dislike of a messiah that will eventually die merely shows his belief in a political messiah. This understanding is also reflected in the request of the two sons to Zebedee to sit with Jesus on the throne, one at the right hand and the other at the left of Jesus (10:37). (2) The scribes viewed the messiah according to the OT expectations as the Son of David (12:35). (3) Nathanael perceived Jesus to be the Son of God, the king of Israel (John 1:43–51). (4) The wise

Gospels are concerned, it seems hard to trace a belief in a divine messiah held by the people in the pre-resurrection period,[64] with the exception of John the Baptist[65] and Jesus Himself. Writers of the NT who associate the "my lord" figure of Ps 110 with a divine messiah, did so only after the post-resurrection event,[66] and thus, their view of Jesus was influenced by the truth of His resurrection and what this event revealed about His messianic identity.

If we have to stress a possible divine messianic interpretation within the context of Ps 110, the word הֲדֹם "footstool" in v. 1 is perhaps insightful. As had been pointed out above, the said term occurs only six times in the HB and is always in combination with Yahweh's feet (1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 132:7; Isa 66:1; and Lam 2:1), except in Ps 110:1, which links the term with the feet of the enthroned king. If הֲדֹם in general expects divine feet, could it be that the הֲדֹם of "my lord's" feet in Ps 110:1 hint at divine feet and thus supports a divine messianic interpretation? Nevertheless, if הֲדֹם is such an important concept implying the deity of the messiah, then its Greek equivalent ὑποπόδιον could have been consistently used by the Gospel writers in Jesus's quotation of Ps 110:1. The fact is, only Luke used it.[67]

men considered Jesus as the king of the Jews (Matt 2:1–12). (5) For the woman at the well, the messiah had the ability to tell all things (John 4:25). (6) Others identified the messiah based on the Davidic lineage and his origin from Bethlehem (John 7:41–42).

64 There are some references that can be connected to the messiah in the Second Temple literature. For example, 4Q246 II, 1–5, describes the "son of man" as God's son who will rule his eternal kingdom and will judge in truth and in peace. 4Q174 *frag.* 1, I, 10–11, presents him as a Davidic figure who will save Israel. While the messianic identity of the figure referred to here is clear, it is not totally clear whether in these references there are enough direct hints that can support for the claim of a divine Messiah.

65 In the four Gospels, John the Baptist's view of Jesus as a divine Messiah is most evident in the Gospel of John. In John 1:19–34, religious leaders question John about the Messiah. He denies being the Christ (v. 20) and explains that he is preparing the way for the Lord, alluding to Isa 40, which speaks of Yahweh's coming. John identifies Jesus as the returning Yahweh ("he who comes" in vv. 15, 27, 30). Additionally, John refers to Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:34, cf. v. 49), a messianic title from 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7. While "Messiah" doesn't automatically imply divinity, John perceives Jesus as both divine and Messiah, linked to the coming God of Isa 40. Furthermore, John 1:29 describes Jesus as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, alluding to Isa 53 (vv. 6–7). Thus, John the Baptist identifies Jesus as both the coming God and the suffering servant of Isaiah's prophecies.

66 See Acts 2:34–35; 7:55; Rom 8:44; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; 1 Pet 3:22.

67 The LXX of Ps 110:1 translates הֲדֹם as ὑποπόδιον. However, the Markan and Matthean Jesus use ὑποκάτω to express "under" your feet (Mark 12:36cγ; cf. Matt 22:44), while the Lukan Jesus followed the LXX's rendering (20:43; cf. Acts 2:35; Heb 1:13; 10:13).

3. The Context of Psalm 110:1 in Mark

Jesus quoted or alluded to Ps 110:1 twice in Mark (12:36; 14:62).[68] In both texts, Ps 110:1 is used on the issue of his messianic identity.[69] Moreover, both uses are located in the final literary division of Mark (11:1–16:8).[70] The first is mentioned in Jesus's confrontation in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44), while the second is found in the passion narrative (14:1–16:8).[71]

3.1 Psalm 110:1 in the Text of Mark 12:35–37

The text of Mark 12:35–37 is without text-critical problems, though there is a variant between ὑποκάτω ("under") and ὑποπόδιον ("footstool") in v. 36.[72] The former is preferred,[73] as it conveys a more direct sense of subjugation, while the latter uses a metaphor, depicting subdued enemies as the resting place for "my lord's" feet. However, this variant is a minor one and does not complicate the syntax and semantics of the surrounding words (see the passage below).

35aα And Jesus answered and said,
35aβ as he taught in the temple;
35bα "How can the scribes say
35bβ that the Christ is the son of David?
36a David himself said in the Holy Spirit;
36b "*The* Lord said to my lord;

[68] If the long ending of Mark 16 is preferred, then Mark 16:19 can be included in the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark. However, this study opts for a shorter ending of chap. 16 (vv. 1–8). Thus, the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 16:19 will not be explored in this study.

[69] For a short overview of some uses of the Psalms in the Gospel of Mark, see Timothy J. Geddert, "The Use of Psalms in Mark," *Baptistic Theologies* 1.2 (2009): 115–16.

[70] For scholars who place the final literary division of Mark in 11:1–16:8, see Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 426; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 311.

[71] Boring divides the final major section of Mark (11:1–16:8) into three sections based on the genre: chaps. 11–12 (narrative), chap. 13 (discourse), and chaps. 14–16 (narrative) (Boring, *Mark*, 311).

[72] For a short discussion of the use of ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον, see Roger L. Omanson and Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), s.v. "Mark 12:36."

[73] See NA28 and UBS5.

36cα 'Sit at my right hand,
36cβ until I put your enemies under your feet.'"
37a David himself called him lord,
37b and so how is *he* his son?
37c And the great crowd heard Him gladly.

The text in v. 36 contains a quotation from Ps 110:1. Jesus's actual quotation of the said psalm in Greek reflects the rendering of the MT—which is aptly translated in the LXX—with modifications. In turn, it can be said that the quote in the passage reflects the LXX as well.[74] Whether the Markan Jesus used the passage based on the MT or the LXX, we cannot be sure. Besides, the identification of the exact source of the quotation does not alter the approach of this study—to use the rendering of Ps 110 and its context in the MT in order to illuminate its reuse in Mark. Below is a table of comparison between Mark 12:36 in Greek and Ps 110:1 in the MT, demonstrating how Mark slightly modifies Ps 110:1.

Table: Comparison between Mark 12:36 and Ps 110:1

Mark 12:36	Text	Psalm 110:1	Text
36a	αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ	1a	לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר
36b	εἶπεν κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου·	1b	נְאֻם יְהוָה לַאדֹנִי
36cα	κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,	1cα	שֵׁב לִימִינִי
36cβ	ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου	1cβ	עַד־אָשִׁית אֹיְבֶיךָ
36cγ	ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου.	1cγ	הֲדֹם לְרַגְלֶיךָ

The parallel passages show slight modifications. First, the Markan Jesus interprets the superscript לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר ("a psalm for David") in the MT to mean that it was David himself who expressed the psalm, as He puts it in Mark 12:36a: αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ ("David himself said in the Holy Spirit"). The addition of ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ is seen by several scholars as an emphasis on the inspiration of the psalm.[75] Second, Jesus used

[74] See Adela Yarbro Collins and Harold W. Attridge, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2007), 580.

[75] Τῷ Δαυιδ ψαλμός εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (Ps 109:1, MT 110:1). Collins argues that the phrase "in the holy spirit" means David's prophetic status; thus, implying that Jesus took Ps 110:1 as if it were a Scripture (Collins and Attridge, *Mark*, 579). See also Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–*

ὑποκάτω to express "*under* your feet" (Mark 12:36cγ; cf. Matt 22:44) in place of הֲדֹם in the MT (ὑποπόδιον in LXX) to express "*footstool* of your feet" (cf. Luke 20:43; Acts 2:35; Heb 1:13; 10:13). The reason for Mark's use of ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον, the equivalent of the MT rendering, is not clear. Suffice it to say that he used it as well in Mark 6:11 when Jesus mentions dust under feet (ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν). This usage is almost the same in 12:36, except for the change of the second person plural in the previous to the singular in the latter. Likely, Jesus's preference for ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον seems to shy away from integrating the idea that enemies are a footstool of the feet, which is the net effect of a complete subjugation in the context of Ps 110:1. Nevertheless, ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν in 12:36 is still capable of conveying the idea of subjugation.

3.2 The Literary Context of Mark 12:35–37

The first quotation of Jesus from Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 appears in the final dispute between Jesus and the religious leaders (12:35–37). The passage above makes clear that the quotation is used when Jesus answered His own question to the interlocutors concerning the identity of the Christ (χριστὸς, "messiah").[76]

To gain a better understanding of the dispute on the messianic identity in Mark 12:35–37, it is important to have an overview of the narrative context of Jesus's conflict with His opponents in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44).[77] The narrative context in 11:1–12:44 contains five series of disputes, all happening in the temple: the question on Jesus's authority (11:27–33), the issue of paying taxes to Caesar (12:13–17), the question on marriage at the resurrection (12:18–27), the inquiry about the greatest commandment (12:28–34), and the

16:20, WBC 34B (Nashville: Nelson, 2008), 273; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 376; Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996), 236–37.

[76] The term "messiah" comes from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ which means "anointed one." Its equivalent in Greek is χριστὸς, translated as "Christ," "messiah," "anointed one." See Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed. (2014), s.v. "χριστὸς."

[77] Support for the literary development of Jesus's confrontation in Jerusalem, see Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 165–66; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 306.

question regarding the identity of the messiah (12:35–37). These controversies did not develop from a vacuum but emerged from Jesus's provocative actions in the previous sections, namely: Jesus's veiled messianic entry into Jerusalem (11:1–11) and His act of cleansing the temple (vv. 12–25).

In Mark 11:1–11, the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem, as described in vv. 7–10, echoes the arrival of the eschatological king (Messiah) who brings salvation and universal rule (vv. 7–8; cf. Zech 9:9–10), and alludes to a triumphant celebration of national victory (Mark 11:9–10; cf. Ps 118:26 [117:26 LXX]).[78] The Jews, who valued the prophetic significance of Zech 9:9–10 in relation to their national expectations, would have understood that Jesus's manner of coming to Jerusalem is an enactment of Zechariah's eschatological king, bringing salvation and establishing universal rule.[79] Furthermore, the quotation from Ps 118:26 reinforces the idea of the victorious arrival of the eschatological king. Thus, in Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem, He veiledly displayed His messianic claims.

However, Carson asserts that it is not the manner of Jesus's coming to Jerusalem but rather His act of cleansing the temple (11:12–25) that serves as the backdrop, setting the stage for the ensuing disputes.[80] Within this narrative, there is an intercalation where the cursing of the fig tree (vv. 12–14) and the consequences of that curse, along with the lessons derived from it (vv. 20–25), sandwich Jesus's act of cleansing the temple (vv. 15–19). This act symbolizes the judgment upon unfaithful Israel and foreshadows the impending destruction of the temple.[81] Psalms of Solomon 17:21–27 associates the cleansing of the temple with the coming of the Davidic messiah.[82] Additionally, Hurtado notes that "in ancient Jewish expectation, the mes-

78 France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 434.

79 See also Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 262.

80 "Jesus' public entry into the city, with its messianic overtones (11:1–11), sets the stage for the confrontation; and the cleansing of the temple (11:12–19), a strike at the heart of Judaism, forces the issue" (D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 171).

81 The point of the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14) including the result (vv. 20–25) and the cleansing of the temple (vv. 15–19) is the same. Jesus's actions in vv. 12–25 are real, on the one hand, in that they really happened in the narrative context. On the other hand, His actions are symbolic in that they point to the judgment upon the unfaithful Israel. Israel, like the fig tree, appeared to be nice and healthy, but is fruitless. Thus, judgment will fall on Israel and its sacred space. See James A. Brooks, *Mark*, NAC 23 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 180.

82 Schnabel, *Mark*, 305–6.

siah was sometimes understood as rebuilding or refurbishing the temple, making it the seat of his kingdom."[83] If the messiah's cleansing of the temple referred to in Pss. Sol. 17:21–27 sheds light on the situation, then Jesus's act of cleansing the temple in Mark 11:12–25 conveys His messianic identity, albeit indirectly. Subsequently, the narrative unfolds with the emergence of the five series of controversies.

The first controversy revolves around the question of Jesus's authority (11:27–33). In this dispute, the chief priests, scribes, and elders[84] pose their inquiry to Jesus: "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" (v. 28, ESV). Their question arises directly from Jesus's veiled messianic actions in vv. 1–11 and 12–25, establishing a connection to His messianic identity. In response to their query, Jesus skillfully counters by asking about the origin of John the Baptist's baptizing authority—whether it is from heaven or from man (v. 30).[85] Faced with this counter-question, the opponents slyly reply, "We do not know" (vv. 31–33a), prompting Jesus's subsequent silence (v. 33b).

In the next section (12:1–12), Jesus confronts the religious leaders with a pointed attack through the parable of the tenants. The intensity of the dispute grows as opponents actively seek to arrest Him (v. 12). This leads to the second controversy (12:13–17), where the Herodians are dispatched to present a trap question to Jesus regarding the payment of taxes to Caesar (v. 14). Jesus's sagacious response, advocating the rendering of what is due to both Caesar and God, elicits marvel from those present (v. 17).[86] The third controversy unfolds (12:18–27), with the Sadducees entering the scene and posing a question to Jesus about marriage at the resurrection of the dead.

[83] Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark*, UBCS (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 208.

[84] The groups, namely, chief priests, scribes, and elders, appear first in Mark 8:31, which deals with Jesus's first passion prediction. They are mentioned next in 11:27 when they question Jesus's authority. They appear also in the arrest of Jesus in 14:43. And finally, they are present at Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin in 14:53.

[85] In Jesus's questions to the opponents in Mark 11:30, the term "heaven" is a circumlocution for God. See Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 526.

[86] Cf. Luke 20:25–26. It is unclear in what manner the opponents marveled at Jesus's response. Their amazement might not have stemmed merely from His statement that people ought to give to Caesar what is due to him, which could suggest Jesus's lack of nationalistic zeal. Rather, their astonishment could have been provoked by His proclamation that one needs to give to God what is due to Him, directing people, as God's image bearers, to offer ultimate loyalty to God. See also Lamar Williamson, *Mark*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox, 1983), 219.

Jesus's response concludes with a direct challenge to the Sadducees' denial of the resurrection (v. 27).[87]

In the fourth controversy (12:28–34), a scribe emerges, questioning Jesus about the greatest commandment. Unlike the questions in the previous dispute, which were designed to ensnare Jesus, the fourth one takes a positive turn as the scribe sincerely asks about the greatest commandment (v. 28). He engages with Jesus and offers sincere comments (vv. 32–33) following Jesus's response (vv. 29-31).[88] Up to this point, Jesus has effectively silenced His opponents (v. 34).[89] However, this moment of silence sets the stage for a final dispute (vv. 35–37), where Jesus takes the initiative and queries the scribes about the identity of the messiah,[90] pushing the controversy further. In doing so, Jesus circles back to the primary concern of the first dispute—the question of the messianic identity (or Jesus's authority, 11:27–33). While He had previously responded prudently, now He provides a definitive answer, thereby framing the series of disputes with questions directly addressing the identity of the messiah (11:27–33; 12:35–37). However, it should be noted that He did not make explicit claims to be the Messiah.

Having set the stage by establishing the context of the controversies, I will now provide a brief analysis of Mark 12:35–37. Gundry has outlined a chiastic structure for this passage,[91] which I follow with some modifications to enhance our understanding of the literary flow.

87 In Mark 12:27, the phrase "God of the living" contrasts with the statement that God is not a "God of the dead." Within the context of Mark 12:18–27, "God of the living" is specifically connected to the statement that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 26). Although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are already dead, it is significant that God is described as the "God of the living," implying that in this context Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are deemed alive in some sense in His perspective. While this description of God adumbrates His resurrecting power in the eschaton (1 Thess 4:16–17; 1 Cor 15:51–53), this could also mean that "reality" in Hebraic thought is not merely based on what eyes and hands respectively see and touch. It is true that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still await resurrection, but the Markan Jesus describes them as if they are presently alive as hinted by οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων (Mark 12:27).

88 Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 543.

89 The silence of the opponents indicates that the debates had come to an end and Jesus was victorious (Hurtado, *Mark*, 208; Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark*, 332). However, Lane remarks that the silence of the opponents only leads to the next conflict scene (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 434).

90 See also Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:738.

91 Robert H. Gundry, *A Commentary for His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 719.

A And (καὶ) Jesus, having answered and said, as He taught in the temple (35a),
  B "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son (υἱὸς) of David (35b)?
    C David himself said (αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν) in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord (κυρίῳ) (36ab)
      D Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet (36c).
    C[1] David himself called (αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ λέγει) him lord (κύριον) (37a),
  B[1] so how is he his son (υἱός) (37b)?"
A[1] And (καὶ) the great crowd heard him gladly (37c).

The chiastic structure is built upon a solid linguistic correspondence between the parallel segments, particularly in BB[1] and CC[1], with the exception of the D segment (center of the chiasm).[92] The parallelism between v. 35a and v. 37c makes sense only in the use of the καὶ at the opening of the clauses and in the logical sense between Jesus's teaching at the temple (v. 35a), which the people heard gladly (v. 37c). From what can be observed in the structure, the content of the fifth dispute (vv. 35b–37b) is framed by two rhetorical questions about the Son of David (B and B[1]). Lane points out that "those questions are calculated to provoke thoughtful reflection upon the character of the Messiah in the perspective of the OT witness to his lordship."[93]

The question posed by Jesus in v. 35b ("How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?") reflects the prevailing belief of both the scribes and the community regarding the regal Davidic messiah,[94] identified as the Son of David due to his Davidic lineage.[95] It is noteworthy that the title "Son of David" appears only three times in the Gospel of Mark. Bartimaeus uses it twice when pleading with Jesus for healing (10:47–48; cf. Rom 1:1–4), and Jesus employs it as well when challenging the views of His opponents about

92 See the linguistic elements in the structure, especially BB[1]CC[1].

93 Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 436.

94 In Jewish apocalyptic expectations, there are variations of messianic views: messiah as king, messiah as priest, and the righteous messiah by the Qumran community.

95 In the OT, the messiah is described as the stump of Jesse (Isa 11:1), the branch of David/Jesse (e.g., Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5–6; Zech 3:8; 6:12). In the rabbinic writings (e.g., *b. 'Erub.* 43a; *b. Meg.* 17b; *b. Ketub.* 112b) and Pss. Sol. 17:21, the Davidic descent of the messiah is maintained. See Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 272. Contrarily, Gundry argues that the biblical reference to the messiah as the Son of David is not solid (Gundry, *Mark*, 718, 723).

the messiah.[96] Importantly, Jesus's question to the scribes does not discredit the concept of the Messiah as David's son but rather exposes its inadequacy,[97] as seen in vv. 36–37b.

In v. 36 Jesus references Ps 110:1 stating, "The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.'" Subsequently, in v. 37, He elucidates that if David addresses the one seated at the right hand of God as "Lord," then how can this individual also be David's son (v. 37b)? Aligning with Bock's perspective, one may concur that David designates the messiah as "Lord" due to their shared authority to rule. Furthermore, the socio-cultural connotations of the title "lord" imply a position of superiority.[98] Consequently, Jesus's intent in quoting Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:35–37 appears clear—He posits that the messiah surpasses the conventional Davidic understanding, thereby challenging and rectifying the prevailing perception of the Messiah. Jesus concludes the dispute with this assertion, and the crowd receives His message with approval (v. 37c).[99] If those present during the exchanges had synthesized the events in context, they might have comprehended that Jesus was indeed the messiah[100]—one who

[96] Although Jesus in Mark 12:35–37 does not claim that He is the messiah, the Son of David, it appears that the Markan narrator expects his audience to pick up that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, who is the Son of David, because of its connection to Jesus as the Son of David in Bartimaeus's confession (Mark 10:47–48). For sources dealing with different views of the messiah, see Marinus de Jonge, "Messiah," *ABD* 4:777–88; Trevan G. Hatch, "Messianism and Jewish Messiahs in the New Testament Period," in *New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Text of the New Testament*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell (Provo, UT: RSC/BYU, 2019), 71–85; Micheal F. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?: The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009); Stanley E. Porter, *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, MNTS (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[97] Allen Black, *Mark*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), s.v. "Mark 12:35." In contrast, France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 483) seems to argue for the opposite as he puts it, "Yet the thrust of this pericope seems to be at least to devalue this title, if not to disavow it altogether."

[98] Darrell L. Bock, *Mark*, NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 313.

[99] R. Alan Cole says that the gladness of the crowd expresses delight at the discomfiture of the scribes (and opponents in general) (R. Alan Cole, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 2 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989], 275). However, I argue that the crowd's gladness is rather a conscious response to the profundity of Jesus's teaching (12:17, 37; cf. 1:27; 2:12; 9:15).

[100] Within the section of Jesus's way to Jerusalem (Mark 8:22–10:52), Bartimaeus acknowledged Him as the Son of David (10:28, 47). Jesus's confrontations in Jerusalem, particularly His entry to the city (11:1–11) and actions of cleansing the temple (11:12–25),

is far superior to the archetypal Davidic messiah, and thus, could have confessed with Mark that Jesus reigns as hinted by the loaded prologue statement "Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" (Mark 1:1).[101] It is noteworthy that, despite the absence of an explicit messianic claim in Mark 12:35–37, the implied distinction underscores the elevated messianic designation of Jesus.

If, according to Jesus, the Messiah holds a superior status compared to the conventional understanding rooted in Davidic terms, one may question the significance of such a distinction. Does this not render the concept of "the least and the great" meaningless, especially in light of Jesus's rebuke to His disciples who sought elevated positions in his kingdom (10:35–45)? Watts, in his analysis, points out that the central concern in Mark 12:35–37 revolves around the implications of "the messiah being David's Lord." The focus lies less on divergence in Jesus's perception of the messiah compared to that of Israel,[102] as suggested by some scholars.[103] Watts' subsequent exposition suggests that the Messiah, as identified with Jesus, being recognized as David's Lord, implies a divine nature. This interpretation is based on the inner-biblical reuse observed between Mark 1:11 and Ps 2:7, the consistent use of the "Son of Man" referencing Dan 7 in relation to Jesus (Mark 2:10, 28; 8:38; 10:45; 14:62), Jesus's demonstration of divine prerogatives (2:5–7), and His authoritative rebuke of spirits along with the performance of miraculous acts (4:39–41; 6:49–52).[104]

While the aforementioned reasons may lend support to the arguments for Jesus's divine identity, they appear somewhat detached from the narrative context. Consequently, I align with scholars who posit that in Mark

covertly depict His messianic identity. His question to the scribes further elaborates the identity of the Messiah (12:35–37).

101 Commenting on Mark 1:1, N. T. Wright asserts that Mark's prologue subverts Roman imperial ideology by portraying Jesus as the rightful King, thereby posing a challenge to Caesar's rule. See N. T. Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2012), 67–69. Similarly, Richard Horsley argues that Mark 1:1 offers a political critique of Roman authority, presenting Jesus as the true Son of God in contrast to Caesar, who also claimed this title. See Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 14–16. Cf. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 138–41.

102 Watts, "Mark," 221–22.

103 E.g., Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 332–33; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 376–77. Cf. Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), says that Jesus is greater than the messiah in Davidic term because He is not just the Son of David, but also "lord" (He is "lord" because He is the Son of God).

104 Watts, "Mark," 221–22.

12:35–37, Jesus presents a distinct perspective on the messiah compared to the conventional belief held by the Jews. In Jesus's view, the Messiah transcends the category traditionally ascribed to David. However, Jesus refrains from providing explicit clarification within the narrative context of 11:1–12:44, leaving the audience to infer the implications of His statement.[105]

In a broader narrative context, Jesus consistently underscores the idea that, He would undergo suffering and death (with the title "Son of Man" used interchangeably with "Messiah" in Mark 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34),[106] but His death would provide ransom for many (10:45). Examining the perspective of "the least and the great," introduced by Jesus in 10:35–45, it becomes evident that the Messiah/Son of Man (Jesus), who will offer His life for the people, occupies a preeminent position, described as greater and foremost. This characterization aligns with the notion that "He came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (v. 45). Jesus's act of service implies that He takes the form of a servant, demonstrating the role of the least. This ultimate act of service, giving His life for many, is what elevates Him to the status of the greatest. Through His willingness to serve and sacrifice, Jesus anticipates His eventual victory and enthronement, as implicitly conveyed in 16:60–62.

3.3 Psalm 110:1 in Mark 14:60–62

In a further instance, Jesus invokes Ps 110:1 during the exchange with the high priest in Mark 14:62, as delineated in the dialogue presented in vv. 60–62. The allusion to Ps 110:1 ensues from the high priest's interrogations, prompting Jesus to respond to the accusations leveled against Him (v. 60). Jesus's reticence (v. 61a) prompts a follow-up question from the high priest (v. 61bc), leading to Jesus's eventual response in v. 62, which includes allusions drawn from the OT. From a text-critical perspective, vv. 60–62 exhibit no discernible textual issues, although they incorporate allusions to the OT.[107] This study, however, concentrates solely on the allusions in v. 62, derived from Dan 7:13 and Ps 110:1.[108]

[105] See also David E. Garland, *Mark*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 478.

[106] See the first few paragraphs of section 3.2.

[107] Mark 14:61 contains echoes and allusions to Isa 53:7; Pss 38:14–16; and 39:9–10.

[108] The sequence of the allusions in Mark 14:62 follows this way: Dan 7:13 ("Son of Man") + Ps 110:1 ("sitting at the right hand" of power) + Dan 7:13 ("coming with the clouds of heaven").

60a And the high priest stood up in the midst,
60b he asked Jesus, saying:
60cα "Do you have no answer,
60cβ what is it that these men testify *against* you?"
61a But He remained silent and answered nothing.
61b Again the high priest asked and said to Him;
61c "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed?"
62a And Jesus said;
62b "I am,
62cα and you will see the Son of Man,
62cβ seated at the right hand of power,[109]
62cγ and coming with the clouds of heaven."

3.4 The Literary Context of Mark 14:60–62

The inquiry into Jesus's messianic identity in Mark 14:60–62 constitutes a pivotal element within the Passion narrative (14:1–16:8),[110] specifically within the trial of Jesus (vv. 53–65). This immediate section comprises several units: vv. 53–54, 55–59, 60–62, and 63–65.[111] Setting the stage for the trial, vv. 53–54 depict Jesus in the Sanhedrin before the high priest, chief priests, elders, and scribes (v. 53). The appearance of the chief priests, scribes, and elders together recalls their initial appearance in 8:31, coinciding with Jesus's first Passion prediction (cf. 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34).[112] It is noteworthy that the fulfillment of this prediction unfolds through various stages.[113]

Examining the narrative context, from Jesus's confrontation in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44), the progression seamlessly leads into the Passion narrative (14:1–16:8),[114] albeit momentarily interrupted by Jesus's eschatological dis-

[109] Many scholars believe that the use of "power" (δυνάμις) is a circumlocution for "God." See for example, France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 611; Stein, *Mark*, 684.

[110] Swete provides an overview outline of the passion: "(1) the official rejection of the Messiah by the Sanhedrin, (2) His violent death, (3) His victory over death" (Henry Barclay Swete, ed., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, CCGNT [London: Macmillan, 1898], 178).

[111] See also Strauss, *Mark*, 652.

[112] "From 8:31 to the end (16:8), the Gospel of Mark becomes an extended 'Passion Narrative,' and the necessity of Jesus's death is emphasized" (Stein, *Mark*, 401).

[113] See note 84.

[114] I find myself in harmony with Rhoads and Michie with regards to the development of the narrative context that leads to the execution of Jesus, though they did not mention major narrative blocks as I did. See David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as*

course (13:1–37). Crucially, the chief priests, scribes, and elders—the same groups that questioned Jesus's authority regarding His messianic identity in the initial dispute (11:27) of 11:1–12:44—reappear during His arrest (14:43), conduct the trial before the Sanhedrin (vv. 53–54), and ultimately deliver Him to Pilate (15:1). In the broader narrative context, the explicit response Jesus provides to the question of messianic identity in 14:60–62 stands as the climactic point in the series of disputes between Jesus and the religious leaders.

As the narrative unfolds in 14:55–59, the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin exhibit a determined resolve to condemn Jesus. Their concerted efforts to find credible witnesses for this purpose prove futile (vv. 55–56).[115] Faced with the absence of convincing testimony, the high priest takes matters into his own hands, seeking to compel the issue by directing questions at Jesus that ultimately address His messianic identity (vv. 60–62).[116] In the initial question, the high priest ostensibly seeks Jesus's response to the accusations leveled against Him (v. 60), but Jesus remains silent (v. 61a). The subsequent query, however, is more direct. When the high priest poses the question a second time, inquiring whether Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed (v. 61b), Jesus affirms, stating, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (v. 62). Stein notes that Jesus's response comprises two distinct parts. The first part, the declarative "I am" statement, effectively concludes the messianic secret, addressing the question of whether He is the Christ.[117] The second part incorporates allusions from Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13,[118] providing additional elaboration on Jesus's messianic identity.

Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 82–83.

115 Scholars have quickly recognized that Jesus's trial was not fair because "while the charge was not yet decided, the verdict was!" (John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002], 427; Stein, *Mark*, 681; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 604). For reasons why the trial was invalid and unfair, see Stein, *Mark*, 68–82.

116 France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 608) mentions that the question of the chief priest in v. 60b (οὐκ ἀποκρίνῃ οὐδὲν τί οὗτοί σου καταμαρτυροῦσιν) should be seen as double questions: the first posing a challenge to the silence of Jesus, and the second is designed to call for Jesus's response. However, he adds, "But to take it as a single question, with the τί doing duty for a relative … while grammatically awkward, would achieve the same sense."

117 Stein, *Mark*, 684.

118 Stein, *Mark*, 684.

Consequently, Jesus's unequivocal response became the basis of the high priest's charge of blasphemy against Him (Mark 14:63–65).[119] However, the precise nature of this charge remains somewhat ambiguous. It is not explicitly stated whether the high priest accuses Jesus of blasphemy for professing to be the Christ, the Son of God (Blessed) as hinted in His "I am" statement or for claiming to be the "Son of Man," or both. Aligning with Schnabel's perspective, one might posit that Jesus's alleged blasphemy is most plausibly associated with His self-identification with the authority of the enthroned royal figure in Ps 110:1 and the authoritative figure resembling the Son of Man in Dan 7:13. This association is rooted in Jesus's claims of being seated next to God in heaven, forming the basis for the high priest's charge of blasphemy.[120]

Jesus's response to the high priest's question in Mark 14:62 encompasses deliberate allusions from Ps 110:1, evident in the use of the phrase "sitting at the right hand," and from Dan 7:13, as indicated by the reference to the "Son of Man" coming with great clouds. The term "Son of Man" appears fourteen times in the Gospel of Mark, reflecting three distinct emphases: His authority (2:10, 28), His experience of suffering and death,[121] and His subsequent exaltation (8:38; 13:36; 14:62). Notably, the transition from "Christ" to "Son of Man" occurs only twice—both instances involve the confession that Jesus is the Christ, immediately interchanged with the Son of Man (8:29–31; 14:61–62). This interchange suggests that Jesus's understanding of the "messiah" is intricately linked with His understanding of the "Son of Man," with the latter being His preferred self-designation for specific reasons.

Firstly, it appears that Jesus's replacement of "Son of Man" for "Christ" serves to redefine the conventional image of a political-warrior messiah, transforming it into a figure characterized by humility and vulnerability.[122] This notion of a messiah is emphasized in Jesus's journey, particularly as it unfolds in His approach to Jerusalem (8:22–10:52).[123] During this period, Peter makes a significant confession, affirming Jesus as the Christ (8:29), the

[119] Blasphemy (βλασφημία) is defined as "speech that denigrates or defames," see BDAG, s.v. "βλασφημία." On different grounds of blasphemy, see Schnabel, *Mark*, 385–86.

[120] Schnabel, *Mark*, 386.

[121] Mark 8:31, 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21 (2x), 41.

[122] Against those who say that the Son of Man title in Mark makes a reference to the messianic and divine identity of Jesus, Evans asserts that Jesus applied the title to Himself using its generic meaning, humanity (cf. Ps 8:4), except when the Son of Man has a direct link to Dan 7:13 (Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, lxxiii–viii).

[123] The section on the way of suffering and glory in Mark 8:22–10:52 is enclosed by two sections of healing of blind men. In other words, it opens and closes with the sections

long-awaited messiah anticipated to bring deliverance to Israel. However, Jesus disappoints Peter by revealing that the "Son of Man"—replacing the title "Christ"—will undergo suffering and death (8:31). Peter's subsequent rebuke (v. 32) reflects a reluctance to relinquish the notion of an ideal regal messiah, envisaged as a triumphant warrior.[124]

Despite Peter's resistance, Jesus reiterates His impending Passion three more times, emphasizing the Son of Man's (in lieu of Christ) suffering and death (9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34). Crucially, Jesus underscores that through surrendering His life in death, He will provide a ransom for many (10:45).[125] This awareness of His death vocation[126] is reiterated two more times in the Passion narrative (14:21, 41). Consequently, Jesus's redefinition of the messianic identity—shifting from a regal figure in Ps 110:1 to a messiah who conquers not through physical force but through sacrificial death—transforms the conventional notion of victory, reframing it as a triumph from a divine perspective despite its apparent defeat in socio-political terms.

Secondly, Jesus's use of the term "Son of Man" serves as a forward-looking anticipation of His imminent exaltation in glory, particularly in the face of His trial before the Sanhedrin with death looming. This deliberate use of the of the title serves to balance the frequent emphasis on the "Son of Man" in association with His impending death.[127] The profound portrayal of Jesus's exaltation in Mark 14:62 is articulated through deliberate allusions to Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13.

of Jesus's healing of a blind man: the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–30) and the healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52).

124 The belief in a political and victorious messiah is also reflected in the request of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They requested Jesus to let them sit, one at the right hand and the other at the left, when Jesus would sit in glory (10:35-40). Jesus's initial answer to this request is appropriate, "you don't know what you are asking" (v. 38a). It is interesting that at Jesus's crucifixion (a form of exaltation), two robbers were with Jesus, one at His right and one at His left (15:27). Indeed, James and John had missed essential points in their understanding of Jesus's messianic identity.

125 Although there is no direct connection of τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν in Mark 10:45 to Isa 53, the sacrificial suffering of the Yahweh's servant and his ψυχὴ (נֶפֶשׁ)—mentioned three times in Isa 53 (vv. 10–12)—given to death for people's (our) sins, transgressions, and iniquities, implies such a connection.

126 The Markan author does not totally forego the description of a conquering messiah as Jesus engaged in conquering all kinds of peoples' maladies and diseases (e.g., 1:29–34; 1:40–2:12), raising the dead to life (5:21–43), and driving out evil spirits and demonic forces (1:21–28; 5:1–20; 9:14–32). He is still a warrior and a conquering messiah, albeit in different terms—not as a messiah being a political-warrior.

127 See Mark 8:31–32; 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34; 14:21, 41.

While the contextual relevance of Ps 110:1 has been established previously, it is essential to note that the context of the "coming" of the "Son of Man" in Dan 7:13 does not pertain to Jesus's arrival on earth but rather to His enthronement. In Dan 7:13–14, although the "Son of Man" is depicted as coming with the clouds, there is no descent on earth.[128] Instead, He approaches the Ancient of Days (v. 13) and subsequently receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom (v. 14).

In the context of Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin, the assembly seeks a verdict leading to His condemnation and death. Jesus statement in Mark 14:62—with deliberate allusions to Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13—speaks not of His vindication within the Sanhedrin's legal court but of His exaltation before the Ancient of Days.[129] To use the language of Dan 7:13–14, it refers to His exaltation in heaven at the right hand of God, as Luke applies Ps 110:1 to Jesus's exaltation in Acts 2:33–34 and 7:55–56.

It should be noted that in Dan 7 the intervention of the Ancient of Days leads to the destruction of the beast and the little horn, while other beasts having been stripped of power, are allowed to still live for a short time more (vv. 9–12, 22, 26). Only after this the Son of Man approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence to receive authority, power, and glory, thereby to vindicate His people (vv. 13–14, 22, 27). Applying this context to Mark 14:62, it becomes evident that the reference to Jesus's enthronement presupposes not just God's judgment and victory over His enemies, but most importantly, the vindication of God's people under the Roman regime, and by extension, under the power of sin and Satan. Nonetheless, instead of believing His messianic claim and siding with Him, the high priest and the religious leaders use it as the ground for Jesus's condemnation. In doing so, it appears that they and others who oppose Jesus, the Messiah, align themselves with the forces represented by the beasts and the little horn in Dan 7, and thus are destined for defeat. Meanwhile, Jesus is destined to be exalted in glory, participating in Yahweh's universal and cosmic rule.

This theological framework finds explicit support in Acts and Hebrews, where figures such as Peter and Stephen (2:32–35; 7:52–56) and the author of Hebrews (e.g., 1:3, 13; 10:12) explicitly appropriate the fulfillment of Ps 110:1 to the enthronement of Jesus, an event occurring shortly after His resurrection. The combined allusions from Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 in Mark

[128] See also France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 611–12. He states that there is an increasing awareness among scholars that the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of glory does not in any case point to Jesus's coming to earth.

[129] Schnabel, *Mark*, 385.

14:62,[130] therefore, serve to reinforce Jesus's messianic identity, emphasizing a rule that transcends the limited scope of a nationalistic political messiah within the earthly realm.

4. Conclusion

Psalm 110:1 portrays an enthroned king with whom Yahweh pledges victory. The psalmist (David), along with the intended recipients, likely found encouragement in the hope conveyed by this psalm, as the prospect of having a king implies a figure who actively defends and fights for God's people (cf. 1 Sam 8:20), and thus ensuring their stability and continued existence. Categorized as a prophetic psalm through the expression נְאֻם יְהוָה ("the oracle of Yahweh"), Ps 110:1 resonates with Yahweh's covenant with David, promising him of an everlasting kingship from his lineage, whom He designates His own son (2 Sam 7:14).

As a recognized messianic psalm, Ps 110:1 finds particular relevance in its application to Jesus in the book of Mark. The Markan Jesus reuses Ps 110:1 only in Mark 12:36 and 14:62, where questions revolving around His messianic identity arise. The use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 underscores the surpassing greatness of the Messiah over the ideal Davidic figure, whose rule is confined within temporal and spatial limitations. This transcendent dimension of Jesus's messiahship is further elucidated through the combined allusions to Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 in Mark 14:62, where Jesus aligns Himself with the "Son of Man" depicted as seated at the right hand of power, arriving with great clouds of heaven to stand before the Ancient of Days and receive dominion, glory, and a kingdom. This enthronement scene serves to articulate Jesus's authority within the context of Yahweh's universal and cosmic rule. Consequently, Jesus's messiahship stands apart from a

[130] It is not difficult to see the allusion to Dan 7:13 in Mark 14:62, but the allusion to Ps 110:1 needs explanation. In the HB, the phrase "sit at the right hand" comes from two words: יָשַׁב ("sit" or "dwell") and יָמִין ("right hand" or "southward"). This combination appears only four times in the HB. Two passages describe "sit at the right hand." In 1 Kgs 2:19 Bathsheba is described as sitting at Solomon's right hand, and Ps 110:1 portrays "my lord's" as sitting at the right hand of Yahweh. The other two passages speak of "southward to the inhabitants" (Josh 17:7) and living in the south (Ezek 16:46). With this information, the only possible passages that is alluded to in Mark 14:62 are 1 Kgs 2:19 and Ps 110:1. Of these, I argue that Ps 110:1 is the reference of the allusion in Mark 14:62, as it had been quoted previously in 12:36. Besides, in both passages in Mark where sitting at the right hand of God/power are mentioned, the context revolves around the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.

narrow, nationalistic political understanding, as His rule extends beyond the confines of time and space, encompassing a more expansive and transcendent scope.

However, Jesus fully understood what it takes for Him to be enthroned in glory. In Mark, He consistently underscored the inevitability that the "Son of Man"—shifting from the title "Messiah" or "Christ"—would endure suffering and death (Mark 8:31–32; 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34). His deliberate sacrifice, giving up His life, carries the profound purpose of providing ransom for many (10:45). In what might appear as Jesus's moment of apparent defeat, He strategically triumphs by drawing people closer to God. This transformative perspective is further elucidated in the subsequent exaltation of Jesus in glory, as depicted in Acts 2:32–35; 7:52–56; Heb 1:3, 13; and 10:12.

In effect, Jesus deviates from the traditional trajectory of the regal messianic figure found in Ps 110:1, notably diverging from the victory motif grounded in physical or military force. Consequently, Jesus's use of Ps 110:1 in Mark's gospel appears to represent a deliberate redefinition, aligning it with His unique self-perception of His messianic vocation.

For Jesus's audience in Mark's Gospel, this means that Jesus is not merely the Messiah par excellence but a divine figure enacting Yahweh's rule over His people. His reign is aptly substantiated by the allusion to Daniel's "Son of Man," who comes on the clouds receiving dominion and a kingdom (Dan 7:13). Meanwhile, His reign is characterized by full security and peace, without intrusion from enemies, as reflected in Ps 110:1, where the king sits at Yahweh's "right hand" with enemies placed "under his feet." For those living under the oppressive Roman Empire, this message offers hope and assurance that they will ultimately triumph with Jesus. By extension, for those who identify with the Messiah, there is the prospect of sharing in Jesus's victory. However, this participation requires a willingness to follow in Jesus's footsteps, even to the point of embracing suffering and, if necessary, death. According to Jesus, this is the true path to victory and glory.