

Sunday, May 6, 2018
Did You Know?

The Most Quoted Verse

The most frequently quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament is Psalm 110:1:

The LORD says to my lord:
“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.”

It's probably not what you expected. A more likely candidate would have been Genesis 1:1 on the creation, or Genesis 15 on the Abrahamic promise, or even Psalm 23 on the Good Shepherd. How does Psalm 110:1 take first prize? This verse is quoted in Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42, Acts 2:34, Hebrews 1:13. The verse is partially quoted in Mark 16:19, 1 Corinthians 15:25, and Hebrews 10:12, and alluded to in many more.

What makes this such an important verse? Let's first look at what it's saying. King David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is writing these words at around 1000 years before the coming of Christ. In this verse, he presents a dialogue between two lords, actually three lords. The first lord is 'The LORD'. Whenever we see LORD in all capital letters in our English Bibles it's a reference to God, the Father's personal name, YHWH. The second lord is David. David, as king, is also a kind of lord. The third lord is found at the end of the first line, in the word, 'lord'—lowercase. This is the Hebrew word Adonai, which is the word for God.

One thing must be logically true. YHWH and Adonai must be different persons, otherwise God would be speaking to himself, which would not make sense. YHWH is speaking to David's Lord, his Adonai. We all know who YHWH is. This can be none other than the God of Israel, the one who spoke from the burning bush, where he declared himself to Moses as, "I Am" which is what YHWH means. As well, this Adonai must be greater than the great King David, as he calls him "my lord". The question is, "How can David, a monotheist, one that believes with all his heart that God is one, claim two lords in this short sentence?"

This all depends on who this "Adonai" is; who is David's Lord? This "Adonai" is given the exalted status of sitting at the right hand of YHWH. God will defeat all his enemies and use them like a footstool as Adonai sits at the right hand.

The Jews understood the Messiah to be a descendent of King David. Jesus questions the Jewish leaders, asking, "How is it then that David calls him 'Lord'? If, then, David calls him 'Lord' how can he be his son (descendent)?"

David received the incredible promise from God regarding his son, "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" and "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:13,16). Sometime after this event and the writing of this psalm, David understood that his son would be the divine Messiah. I think we could say that David understood God to be one, who existed in at least two persons, perhaps three. I think he also understood that this divine Messiah would assume two natures as God and man. David's head must have exploded at the discovery. This verse is so often quoted because it reveals to the reader of the Bible that Jesus is the god-man, the Messiah promised to David.

Soli Deo Gloria.
Pastor Peter