

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

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“SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND”

We read in Psalms 110:1, “The Lord said unto my Lord, ‘Sit Thou at My right hand.....’”. Psalms 110:1 has become, through misinterpretation, one of the verses which has been used to put Jesus Christ in a position of being less than equal, in the minds of some, to God, or, in the minds of others, to God the Father. That is to say, most Christians have a vague idea of a large throne in heaven with a lesser throne to its right. The larger throne is, in their minds, for God and the smaller is for Christ. That picture suggests that somehow Jesus Christ is less than God, which, of course, is impossible because Jesus Christ **is** God. God can not be less than God. (John 18:20 is another of those verses which diminishes the fact of Who Christ is and is discussed in the paper on this web-site [“Jesus Christ Is Both Jehovah And The Manifestation Of Jehovah”](#)).

Let us examine Psalms 110 with a view towards correcting that misinterpretation. Before we do that we must address the difficulty of the interpretation and translation of Psalm 110:1. It has been said that the Hebrew word “Adoni” is **never** used of God. The paper on this web-site [A Study Of The Hebrew Word “Adoni](#) addresses this problem and will prove from Scripture that Ps. 110:1 does indeed refer to Christ as Son of God in some places and as Son of Man in others. Jesus Christ is Jehovah (please see the [paper](#) mentioned above for proof of that statement.) One of the titles of Jehovah is “Adoni”. That means that Christ/Jehovah, will conquer the enemies of Adoni, a title of Jehovah, Who is Christ. So Adoni will be at the right hand of Jehovah.

But Christ **is** Jehovah. If we interpret the phrase, “at the right hand of God” literally and see God sitting on a big throne with Christ on a slightly smaller throne at His right hand, we have placed Christ (as Jehovah) on the big throne and Adoni (which is a title of Jehovah/Christ) on the throne at His right hand. Jehovah and Adoni **are the same Person**, Adoni is simply a title. I trust that the reader can see that if we interpret the phrase literally, confusion reigns.

I suggest that we may eradicate all this confusion by seeing the truth of the phrase "sit Thou at My right hand". That truth is that the phrase must be figurative. That Jehovah/Christ is God, the one and only God (please see the paper on this web-site [The Trinity, Is God Three Persons In One?](#)).

I offer this paper to the student of God's Word as a study of the true meaning of this verse.

The central issue of the phrase "sit Thou at My right hand" is whether it is literal or figurative. That is to say, is Christ seated now at the right hand of God in heaven, or is there a more profound meaning to this statement than to just tell us where Christ is seated in heaven? I believe that there is a deeper meaning than **where** He is seated in heaven.

Before we get to that meaning, may I say, lest I am misunderstood, that I do indeed believe that Christ is in heaven. Having said that let us now go to the Old Testament and study the phrase "right hand". It is, in my opinion, very important to understand how the phrase was used in the Old Testament because that is how it would be understood by those living at the time of the writing of the New Testament. We will not study the passages that obviously refer to the literal right hand as opposed to the left, but only those verses that will help us in our study of the phrase found in Psalms. 110.

The first occurrence of the phrase is in Deut. 33:2, ".....from His right hand went a fiery law...". Let us consider this phrase in terms of whether it is to be understood literally or figuratively. The literal meaning is, obviously, that the "fiery law" came from God. The phrase "from His right hand" therefore is a figure of speech. It is the figure of speech Metonymy of Adjunct, which is defined in the Companion Bible, Appendix 6 as, "when something pertaining to the subject is put for the subject itself".

Figures of speech are used in order to enhance the literal meaning. How is the literal meaning enhanced by the figure of speech in this case? the fact that the law is described as "fiery" tells us that it came with power and it also hints of judgment if the law is not obeyed.

Psalms 16:8-11, "I have set the Lord always before me: Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy: At Thy right hand there are pleasures forever more". Note verse 8 where we read that "He is at my right hand". The writer is saying that God is always with him. He is using "at my right hand" as a figure of speech to emphasize the point. Note also verse 11 where we read that "at Thy right hand there are pleasures...". Here again, the literal meaning is that God gives pleasures. But the figure of speech Metonymy enhances the literal meaning with the phrase "at Thy right hand".

Psalms 17:7, “.....Thou that savest by Thy right hand”. It is, of course, God that saves, but the writer, by the Holy Spirit, enhances that thought by the figure of speech, Metonymy of Adjunct. “Thy right hand” is used for the saving power of God.

Psalms 20:6, “.....saving strength of His right hand”. Here the figure of speech employed in the phrase “His right hand” enhances the idea of the saving strength of God.

Psalms 48:10, “.....Thy right hand is full of righteousness”. Psalms 60:50, “.....save with Thy right hand....”. The phrase “Thy right hand” is the figure of speech Metonymy of Adjunct where “right hand” is used for God Himself. That is to say, it is not His right hand that saves, it is God Who saves.

Ps. 63:8, “.....Thy right hand upholdeth me”. Again, “Thy right hand” is used as a figure of speech for God Himself.

Ps. 74:10-11, “O God, how long shall the adversary approach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name forever? Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand?” It is clear in all the scriptures quoted above that the phrase “Thy right hand” is not to be taken literally, that it is put as a figure of speech to indicate God’s presence. That is to say, the question is literally, why does God withdraw Himself?

Ps. 80:14-15, “Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted....”. Again, literally, it is God Who plants.

Ps. 98:1, “He hath done marvelous things. His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory.” Here the phrase “His right hand” is used of God’s power unto victory.

Ps. 109:6, “Set Thou a wicked man over him (the wicked people of the previous verses) and let Satan stand at his right hand”. This verse is particularly helpful in our understanding of how the phrase “at his right hand” is to be understood. The Psalmist asks for Satan to stand at the right hand of a wicked man. It is clear, in my opinion, that to stand at one’s right hand is to stand in a **position of influence**. Again, we must take the phrase as a figure of speech, otherwise we learn only where the Psalmist asks for Satan to stand. When we interpret the phrase, as it should be, i.e. figuratively, we understand that Satan will occupy a position of influence.

Ps. 110:1, “The Lord (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (Adonai), ‘Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool’”. We have in this verse two phrases that are used as figures of speech, but not the same figure of speech. “At My right hand” and “Thy footstool”. The right hand of God, as we have learned from all the scriptures quoted above, refers, not

to place, but **to position**. It refers to a position of influence and strength. "Footstool" refers to His enemies in a conquered state.

Let us continue with verse 5 where we read, "The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath". Again, at the right hand of the Lord refers to a position of strength, not location.

Ps. 118:15-16, "... The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted". This verse is perhaps the most obvious in its need to be taken figuratively. It is clear that the right hand of the Lord is not to be exalted more than any other part of the Lord. But the phrase "the right hand of the Lord" is used to mean the Lord in whatever characteristic the context implies. In this verse it implies the position of power and of wrath.

Ps. 138:7, "...Thy right hand shall save me...". Ps. 139:10, "...Thy right hand shall hold me". It is God who saves, not His right hand.

Ecc. 10:2, "A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left". This is another case where the phrase must obviously be taken figuratively. Here the heart being at the right hand of the wise man indicates the position of influence.

Is. 48:13, "Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, My right hand hath spanned the heavens". Obviously, God created, "right hand" is used figuratively.

Hab. 2:16, "... the cup **of** the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory." In my opinion, the "of" in the phrase "cup **of** the Lord's right hand" is the Genitive of relation. That is to say, it means "the cup pertaining to...". The cup pertains to God's judgment.

Zech. 3:1, "Joshua...standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him". To say that the phrase "at his right hand" is simply a literal statement of fact, and means only the location in which Satan stood, greatly diminishes the meaning of this phrase. When we recognize that "at the right hand" is a position, not a place, then we understand that Satan occupies a position of power to resist the angel of the Lord.

Now that we see that "at the right hand" is a position, not a location, we are ready to go to the New Testament uses of the phrase "at the right hand". The first occurrence is found in Matthew 22:44 which is a quote from Psalms 110:1. This verse has been discussed above and the reader may recall that the context of this Psalm very definitely shows "at the right hand" refers, not to location, but to position.

Matt. 26:64, "You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One coming on the clouds of heaven". That the phrase is to be understood figuratively is obvious by the fact that the "Mighty One" is not also coming in the clouds. That is to say, if the phrase "the

right hand of the Mighty One” were to be taken literally as to location, then as the Son of Man came down from heaven the Mighty One would have to come down **with** Him. Otherwise He would not be literally at the right hand of the Mighty One.

Mark 12:36 is a quote from Psalms 110:1.

Mark 14:62 is the same as Matthew 26:64.

Mark 16:19, “... He was taken up into heaven and He sat at the right hand of God”. There is no question that Christ is in heaven, a literal location. That does not, however mean that the phrase “at the right hand of God” must also be taken literally. As we have seen thus far in our study, Mark would have understood the phrase as a figurative one.

Luke 20:42 is a quote of Psalms 110:1.

Luke 22:69, “.....from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of Almighty God”. This statement by our Lord comes as a response to the question asked by the chief priests, “Are you the Christ?” If our Lord was simply telling them where He would be it would really not answer their question. He told them so much more than **where** He would be. He told them by the phrase (which they would have understood from the Old Testament) that He would be exalted in His position.

Acts 2:25 is quoted from Psalms 16:8-11. “Because He is at my right hand I will not be shaken”. Please see the comments on that passage above.

Acts 2:33, “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear”. The word “exalted” is an obvious clue that the phrase is to be taken figuratively, as a position of honor and glory. If one takes this phrase literally none of that exaltation is understood.

Acts 2:34 is a quote of Psalm 110:1.

Acts 5:31, “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior”. This is the same phrase that we had read so many times in the Old Testament. Just as His “right hand” should be taken figuratively in the Old Testament, so must it be in the New Testament.

In Acts 7:55-56 we read of Stephan and his seeing “the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God”. The Greek word “kai” translated “and” in this verse can also be translated “even”. Because one can not really see glory, I believe that in this verse “kai” should be translated “even”. So Stephan saw the glory of God, **even** Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The fact that he saw Jesus **Who is the glory of God** suggests that “the right hand of God” is a position of glory, not a location.

Romans 8:34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ That died, yea rather, That is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us". The point of this verse is that Christ "maketh intercession for us". Does He do that because He has a certain place? I believe that Christ makes intercession because He has the right because what He did for sinners. Therefore, this verse uses the phrase "at the right hand" as a figure of speech.

Eph. 1:20-22, "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under His feet...". We see in verse 22 a quote from Psalms 110:1 which is definitely figurative. That is to say, "all things under His feet" refers to the fact that Christ has conquered all things, not to a literal placement of all things under His feet. This verse does speak of Christ's location above all principality etc. but to say that it speaks **only** of Christ's **location** is to greatly detract from the true meaning of this verse. The meaning is that He is **so much more** than all other things, not only that He is located above them.

Col. 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God". There is no question that Christ is seated in heaven. The question is whether the phrase "sitteth on the right hand of God" refers to where in heaven He is seated or whether Paul is writing of the position Christ holds in heaven. I believe it is the latter.

Heb. 1:3, "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". This entire verse centers on Who Christ is. He is the glory of God, He is the image of God, He is all powerful and He has purged our sins. It is highly unlikely that the writer of Hebrews goes from such a lofty theme to tell his readers **where** Christ is seated. I trust the reader will agree that in this verse also, the phrase "on the right hand of the Majesty on high" refers, not to location but to position.

Hebrews 1:13 is a quote from Psalms 110:1.

Heb. 8:1, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens". What are "the things which we have spoken" which the writer sums up? They are things that have to do with superiority of Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Note for example 7:26, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens". The phrase, "made higher than the heavens" is obviously meant to be taken figuratively. That is to say, He was made higher than anyone or anything on earth or in heaven. There are several things which point to the phrase "set on

the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” as referring, not to location, but to position. Let us examine Psalms 110 with a view towards correcting that misinterpretation. Verse 8:1 is the sum of the previous statements of the writer. Surely, Christ’s location is not the sum of those things. It is His position that is the sum.

Heb. 10:12, “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God”. The message of Hebrews 10 is that unlike the sacrifices of old which had to be offered over and over again, Christ offered one sacrifice and was finished. I believe that the contrast is being made between the ineffectiveness of the old and the effectiveness of the new. Therefore, once again, the writer is emphasizing **the position** of Christ and not His location.

Hebrews 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”. It is impossible to believe that the author of Hebrews was saying that Jesus Christ endured the cross and the shame that He is now literally located at the right hand of God. There is no Scriptural evidence to assume a literal throne, that too is figurative.

I Peter 3:22, “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him”. Angels and powers are not made subject to Christ simply because of where He is located. We must understand that “on the right hand of God” is a figure of speech emphasizing His position.

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