

HEBREW ROOTS

“The Right Hand of Power”

וְיָמֵי לַיְחָ

Mark 14:62 is one of the most overt truth claims Jesus ever made. There is no wonder when looking into the Hebrew roots of this proclamation of the Messiah that the High Priest would respond so negatively (Mark 14:63-65). On its face, the statement seems a straightforward proclamation when reading it in Greek and is not unlike many other claims Jesus made. However, when one reads the Hebrew roots of this text, one is immediately confronted with how dense and strong this single verse is. Hebraisms are those elements of Hebrew grammar and vocabulary that show up in the Greek text. They inform the reader of intent and energize the text with context. Luke's writing contains more Hebraisms than any other writer in the New Testament. However, there is no more powerful example of a Hebraism than in Mark 14:62.

This term “right hand of power” is accurately exegeted only through the lens of Psalms 110. By Jesus saying this, He claimed a substantial Messianic fulfillment of expectations derived from Psalm 110 and Daniel 7:13 in His claim. There was no doubt now who Jesus claimed to be. One cannot remove the Hebrew roots from this text lest one removes the whole as well. These were men who were heavily influenced by apocalyptic literature and thinking.

Apocalyptic literature has distinct characteristics. The genre holds little or

no hope for the world through political processes of any kind. It is characterized by doom. The only hope for the world is that God is in control. The evil oppression of the present is temporary and is being allowed to transpire only because of “divine passives,” that is, God is passive for the moment concerning correction of what is transpiring. However, at the appointed time he will come with supernatural intervention in an “eschatological moment.” He will not “flow” into the stream of history. He will crash in. Unapologetically. He does not merge, but rather intersects.¹

They longed and wanted this Messiah who would “crash in.” This is what Jesus was saying that He was accomplishing by bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. This was a statement that spoke directly to the Kingdom being established on earth. A kingdom of authority and power. The post-Apostolic teachers have erroneously and spuriously interpolated this passage in Mark 14:62 as denoting a triune godhead. This is not what the “Son of man sitting on the right hand of power” meant then or now.

The title by which our Lord most frequently describes Himself is “the Son of man.” Only in Daniel 7:13 is there any application of this title to the promised Messiah. In Daniel, however, the term is simply

descriptive; the passage merely asserts that the Judge at the Last Day would be one that wore a human form.²

The passage of Psalm 110 is the most quoted Old Testament passages in the New Testament. (Matt. 22:44, 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62; Lk 20:42-43, 22:69; Ac 2:34-35; Hb 1:13, 5:6, 7:17, 21 and 10:13). If one is to look at passages that allude to Psalm 110, the list grows arguably longer. Some scholars believe that this passage was alluded to more than thirty times,³ making it the single most quoted verse of the Old Testament. In Acts 2:33 Stephen sees Jesus at the “right hand of God”. This means that to see Jesus on the “right hand of God” is to see Jesus as a visible attribution of an invisible God. To “sit on the right hand of God” is an anthropomorphic descriptive that is closely related to Daniel's “Son of man.” The most authoritative Greek Lexicon attributes all of the New Testament usages of the term “right hand” when applied in the context of Jesus next to God to the “symbolic” application as opposed to the literal or geographical.⁴ There is a literal definition of the word, which states an actual separate thing or actual place instead of the other side or other hand. The Greek word in the literal distinctive is δεξιός, right as opposed to the left in a frame of reference, right when used with a noun (cf. Lk 6:6, Ac 3:7, Matthew 25:33).

However, in every single instance where the word δεξιός is applied to the relation of Jesus Christ with God, it is used as a descriptive symbolism and not a distinctive (literal or geographical). Greek scholars place every instance and reference to Jesus at the “right hand of God” in the symbolic designation of the word usage and not the literal (cf. Ro 8:34, Eph 1:20, Col 3:1, Hb 10:12, 1 Pt 3:22).⁵ Ancient writers often used this phrase to mean a place of high importance or solemnity. The plural δεξιάι is used in Homer of pledges given in good faith with the right hand.⁶ The early church also saw this Hebraism as verbiage steeped in honor or power and not designating a second personage. וְיָמֵי לַיְחָ seen of a position at the right hand of an eminent person especially a royal figure as a king's right hand as emblematic of prestige (cf. Psalm 138:10). It is clear that David saw in revelation both the Lord of Glory and the Messiah when he prophesied and said, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” (Mt 22:44; Ps 110:1). He prophesied that God of heaven would robe Himself in the flesh and come through the loins of David to conquer all that was wrought in the world by sin and bring power to the weak and broken. That he would bring salvation to a world enslaved by sin through the Davidic Covenant. This never was meant or understood in its original context to mean a secondary designation of a triune God. David saw the fulfillment of the long-awaited covenant. This is “The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David” (Matt. 1:1). In Mark 14:62, Jesus was announcing that he was the long-awaited Messiah now declared openly, He continues this astounding truth claim by also stating that He will be “coming in the clouds of heaven.” He is the Mighty God. [\[1\]](#)

Endnotes

- 1 Wilson, Nathaniel J., *Apostolic Pentecostal Theology* (Sacramento, CA: Insignia, 2016), 372
- 2 Thomson, John, B.D., *Books Which Influenced Our Lord And His Apostles*, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1891) 14
- 3 Norris, David S, PhD, *I AM: A Oneness Pentecostal Theology* (Hazelwood, MO: WAP Academic, 2009), 266
- 4 Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 217.
- 5 Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 218.
- 6 Homer *Iliad* 2, 341-4, 159



Douglas Walker
Calgary, Canada