

W I D I

A TIME FOR RENEWAL



THE EVENT
HORIZON OF
ADVENT

The Christmas season shows us
our redeemed past and hopeful future.

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I ONCE HEARD SOMEONE CLAIM that if you could enter a black hole and reach the event horizon, you would see into the past and future simultaneously. My attempts to wrap my head around this have not yet been successful. I'm no physicist, but I do understand what it is like to stare at my past or to try to see into my future.

Typically, this causes problems. Looking to the past often leads to regret, shame, or depression about what has happened and cannot be changed. Looking to the future often leads to worry, fear, or anxiety about what may happen. The reason for this, I think, is that my gaze is focused solely on myself. In contrast, Christ calls us out of ourselves to look to him. During the Advent season we are invited to look to the past at what Christ has done, even as we look to the future hope of what he will do when he comes again.

David had his eyes set upon Christ when he composed Psalm 110. In the opening lines, God speaks to someone that David calls, "my lord." In other words, God is talking to King David's king. This King of Kings is our Savior, Jesus Christ (Acts 2:34–36). The psalm paints a portrait of Christ as victor over God's enemies, ruler of the nations, powerful, vibrant, and just. As if this picture wasn't magnificent enough, the psalm adds another layer to the image: Christ is also a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews explains why this is significant: "[Melchizedek is] without father or mother, without

genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever” (Heb. 7:3). Christ is an eternal priest, unlike the Levitical priests of the Old Testament, a perfect and continuous mediator, intercessor, and advocate between God and his people.

In this poem, David invites us to focus our thoughts, our affections, and our desires on a vision of the priest-king Jesus Christ. As we look into the past and behold the birth, life, suffering, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ we are drawn out of our regret, shame, and depression. Christ is king; he has the power to ensure there is nothing that has happened to us, or by us, that God will not use for good (Rom. 8:28). Christ is our priest; all our shame and guilt has been dealt with on the cross. More than that, Christ has conquered death and the Holy Spirit who brought Christ to life dwells in us, giving us new life and hope for the future. Our worries, our fears, and our anxieties are put into proper perspective when we look to Christ and remember that just as he came once, he will come again to destroy evil, uphold justice, and save his people.

For a psalm so full of violent imagery—enemies made into a footstool, shattered kings, corpses filling the nations—David ends on a surprisingly calm note. In the midst of judging the nations the priest-king stops to take a break. The final portrait David paints for us is of Christ, pausing to take a drink of cool, refreshing water from a brook, then lifting up his head (v. 7). His pause indicates that the end of all things is not yet upon us. We stand in our present moment—the event horizon, if you will—between the first and second coming of Christ. Rather than obsessively staring at our own past or future, through this psalm, Christ invites us to look at him to find forgiveness, identity, peace, security, and hope in what he has done for us in the past, and in what he will do when he returns in the future to establish his reign as priest and king, once and for all. ■

R E F L E C T



David invites us to focus our thoughts and desires on Christ. How can you practically shift your focus from yourself to Christ during this Advent season?



Reflect on your own tendency to dwell on the past or worry about the future. How does dwelling in the words of Psalm 110 reshape your perspective?