

TITLE: Prayer for The Good King

TEXT: Psalm 72:1-20 (NIV)

DATE: July 17, 2022

THEME: Solomon could not fulfill the coronation hopes of Psalm 72, only The true and good King can fulfill Psalm 72, only King Jesus. The King is alive, long live The King.

1 Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.

2 May he judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.

3 May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.

4 May he defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
may he crush the oppressor.

5 May he endure as long as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all generations.

6 May he be like rain falling on a mown field,
like showers watering the earth.

7 In his days may the righteous flourish
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

8 May he rule from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

9 May the desert tribes bow before him
and his enemies lick the dust.

10 May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores
bring tribute to him.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba
present him gifts.

11 May all kings bow down to him
and all nations serve him.

12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out,
the afflicted who have no one to help.

13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy
and save the needy from death.

14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence,
for precious is their blood in his sight.

15 Long may he live!

May gold from Sheba be given him.

May people ever pray for him
and bless him all day long.

16 May grain abound throughout the land;

on the tops of the hills may it sway.
May the crops flourish like Lebanon
and thrive like the grass of the field.
17May his name endure forever;
may it continue as long as the sun.

Then all nations will be blessed through him,
and they will call him blessed.

18Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.
19Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen and Amen.

20This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 72 is both common and unique. It is common because, like the other Psalms, it is a prayer. It is unique because it is a prayer for a specific person.
- B. Psalm 72 is a coronation prayer for likely written originally for Solomon near the time of his ascent to the throne of Israel.
- C. The sad life of Solomon.
 - A. Solomon starts well, but ends badly. At first, he's wise and God blesses him.

1 Kings 10:23-25

23King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.
24The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. 25Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

- ii. But Solomon disobeyed God and took 700 foreign wives and 300 foreign concubines.
- iii. Solomon's wives led him to worship false gods, and even built places of worship to his wife's god.
- iv. God becomes angry with Solomon, because his heart turned away from the Lord.
- v. Solomon's reign lasts 40 years, but he dies bereft and bitter.

1 Kings 11:1-8

1King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held

fast to them in love. 3He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.

7On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

9The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 1

II. Psalm 72 as coronation prayer for Solomon.

- A. Similarities with the ancient near-east coronation hymn of Ashurbanipal (669-631 BC).
 - i. Long life and long reign.
 - ii. Wisdom and understanding.
 - iii. An expanding kingdom.
 - iv. Prosperity, including cheap grain and oil.
 - v. Rain for crops.
- B. Solomonic themes in the Psalm.
 - i. Verses 3 and 7 talk about peace, Shalom, Solomon's name means peace.
 - ii. Verse 8 talks about his ruling from sea to sea as Solomon inherited a kingdom that ran from the Med in the west to the Red Sea in the east.
 - iii. Verse 9 through 10 reference tribes bowing down.
 - iv. Verse 10 discusses kings from distant shores paying tribute, and mentions gifts from Sheba.

III. The prayer expresses Israel's hope for the kind of king Solomon would be

- A. Rule with justice and righteousness (Verses 1 and 2)
- B. His responsibility to recognize that the people belong to God, not to the king.
- C. The king must express Godly character, and defend the afflicted, the poor, and children of the needy. (verse 4, 12-14)
- D. The king is also supposed to concern himself with the prosperity of the people. (Verse 7)

IV. The literary context of Psalm 72.

- A. Outline of the Psalter, it's broken into 5 divisions or movements. Book 1 (Psa. 1-41); Book II (Psa. 42-72), Book III (Psa. 73-89), Book IV (Psa. 90-106), and Book V (Psa. 107-150).
- B. Each movement in the Psalter adheres to a theme: Book I is mostly Psalms by David. Book II is also mostly Davidic Psalms, but tends to use Elohim as God's

name more than it does Yahweh. Book III has fewer Psalms by David and more by Asaph. Book IV begins with a Psalm by Moses and he is the prominent character in the Book. Book V is more jubilant and ends with celebration.

- C. The prelude to the Psalter are Psalms 1 and 2. Psalm 1 is a Torah Psalm. Psalm 2 is a royal or Kingship Psalm.
- D. Psalm 72 develops the role and character of the king mentioned in Psalm 2.
- E. Psalm 72 closes out the 2nd movement of the Psalter, and is therefore known as a “seam” Psalm.
- F. The doxologies of the “seam” Psalms are important to understanding the purpose of the Psalter.
 - i. Book 1. Psalm 41:13. **“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel From everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.**
 - ii. **Book 2. Psalm 72:18=20.** 18Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things. 19And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: And let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.
 - iii. Book 3. Psalm 89:52. Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen.
 - iv. Book 4. Psalm 106:48. 48Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: And let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD
 - v. Book 5. Psalm 145:21. 21My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.
 - vi. The final 5 Hallelujah Psalms. Psalms 146 to 150.

V. Who is Psalm 72 really about?

- A. How does Solomon measure up?
- B. He’s turned his heart away from the God of David and followed false gods.
- C. Verse 11 says: “May all kings bow down to him, and all nations serve him.” That didn’t happen, not even close.
- D. Verse 17 says, “17 “...Then all nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed.” Again, not even close.
- E. The human writer may have intended this as a coronation Psalm for Solomon, but it can only be about one person. Jesus Christ.

VI. Similarities and difference between King Jesus and King Solomon.

- A. There are very few similarities, and in the end one king is remembered mostly for a few accomplishments and many failures, and the other King changed the world we still live in.
- B. A man as opposite Solomon as it is possible to be — the impoverished preacher who never held political office, never entered religious orders, never served in the military, never educated in the way we think of education, never founded a school, never wrote a book, never led an army, never had an ounce of early power as we understand power; the man who was butchered as a blasphemer at age 33...

- C. Jesus is the most important human ever born. And for more than 2000 years, billions of people have called Him Lord.
- D. For the Christian, the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 72 will come in the 2nd advent when He returns to mete out justice, to right all wrongs, to crush the ultimate oppressors, the adversary, He comes to reign universally and eternally, and to reconcile all things to himself.

VII. The King is alive, long live The King.

- A. The expression, “The king is dead, long live the king” is an old one intended to announce the end of the old order and the beginning of a new one, and to demonstrate social and political continuity.
- B. Gilgamesh from Mesopotamian lore details the Assyrian view of life: ““Life, which you look for, you will never find. For when the gods created man, they let death be his share, and life withheld in their own hands.”
- C. But in Psalm 72:19, we read the Christian view. “19Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory.” This is the promise of Isaiah 66 and Revelation 21. A new heaven and a new earth. This is what is announced at the seventh trumpet in Rev. 11:15, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.”
- D. So, unlike the expression of earthly kingdoms, we can say, “The King is alive, long live The King.

VII. Application

- A. Do you recognize Jesus as King?
- B. Psalm 72 tells us the King should value Godly character, and so should all the people who belong to God. Do we seek to mirror the character of God?
- C. Psalm 72 is a prayer for the King, originally King Solomon. We should pray for our leaders. Do we?
- D. 1 Timothy 2:1. 1I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
- E. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:1 to pray for the salvation of our leaders because only the good news of Jesus Christ brings prosperity and peace.

VIII. Communion

IX. Benediction. Psalm 72:18-19

Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.

Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen and Amen.