

The King's Dominion Psalm 72

Royal Psalms: None of Israel's kings close to the praise and expectations of this Psalm [pray]

If you may permit me one more Hamilton illustration...

One of the more humorous characters is King George III.

- His first song **"You'll be Back"** assumes England will win the Revolutionary War
- The next time he appears, singing **"What Comes Next?"** And he's irritated by his loss, and by the fact that England is fighting with France and Spain
- Then my favorite appearance is when he learns that President George Washington is stepping down as president. **He cannot fathom the idea of stepping down!**
- In **"I know Him"** he sings:

They say

George Washington's yielding his power and stepping away

Is that true?

I wasn't aware that was something a person could do

I'm perplexed

Are they going to keep on replacing whoever's in charge?

If so, who's next?

There's nobody else in their country who looms quite as large...

[A servant then whispers in King George's ear and he says]

John Adams?

I know him

That can't be

That's that little guy who spoke to me

He mockingly anticipates Adams' presidency, & wishes him luck as he sits on his throne.

When you read the history of Israel's kings, you read about one king replacing another.

But the promise of one reigning on David's the throne forever, is finally fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus is in charge, and he's never going to be replaced.

He is the King to end all kings. "He is the ruler of kings on earth" (Rev 1:5)

And **this Psalm looks ahead to **his universal dominion**.**

It paints, if you like, **a political fairy tale, that's actually true in Jesus' final reign.**

Can there really be just leadership?.. where the poor are cared for, the oppressed go free, everyone is prosperous, there is world peace, and this ideal king reigns forever?

- **Yes. It's coming. And it's for this we wait, That's Advent.**

We can break it down in five parts:

- (1) The King's Righteous Rule (1-4)
- (2) The King's Endless Rule (5-7)
- (3) The King's Boundless Rule (8-11)
- (4) The King's Gracious Rule (12-14)
- (5) The King's Famous Rule (15-17)

All of this should fill our hearts with hope and peace.

This passage is not quoted in the NT, but is very similar to the other Royal Psalms, and to Isaiah's Messianic vision of the King ruling justly, globally/gloriously (**Isa 11:1-5; 60-62**).

- In Jewish traditions, it was also viewed Messianically.
- What is being prayed for, at a special celebration, for this Israelite King, is only fulfilled in Jesus.

Notice the **Superscription**: "**Of Solomon**" but the end of the Psalm, "**the prayers of David**"

- There are a number of possible explanations for this.
- It could mean "authored by," "written for," or even "in the style of."
 - "of," or "to" or "for" are all possible translations.
- I like the view that it's **for Solomon** written by David; before David's death.
 - Verses 8-11, 15-17 seem to speak of Solomon's reign more than any. (2 Chron 9)
- But we can't be sure, and it's not all that important: for **the focus is in the King who will fulfill all of these ideals.**
- The perfect King wasn't David or Solomon; it is Jesus.

#1: The King's Righteous Rule (72:1-4)

The importance of his righteous character is displayed by the repetition of the word *righteousness* in these verses (**vv. 1, 2, 3**).

1: The King was to rule justly, reflecting the very nature of God who is just.

- He was to make just judgments/decisions.
- He was to do this by ruling with the law of God (Torah) ever before him.

2: This involved **right treatment of the poor.**

- The king's role in defending the vulnerable poor is emphasized throughout the OT (**Jer 22:15-17; Isa 11:4**)

Isa 11:3-4: He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

God is deeply concerned about those in need, and **his people are to reflect this concern.**

- **Psalm 41:1:** "Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him." "The one who mocks the poor insults his Maker" (**Prov 17:5**)
- We see **Jesus'** concern for the poor in all sorts of ways. (cf., **Luke 6:20; 14:12-14; Matt 25**)

3: Further, under the ideal king, there would be **peace** and harmony and blessing to the people.

- the word **prosperity is shalom.**

- As a result of a just rule, there would be **harmony, of well-being, flourishing, abundance**.
- By God's provision, **the very hills and mountains** of the land would be productive, as result of **righteousness** reigning.

4: He returns to the theme of **defending the poor**.

- **The rich and powerful are tempted to exploit the poor.**
- In **James 5:1-6**, James gives a scathing warning to the wealthy landowners, who were in control of much of Galilee and the wider Roman world. He rebuked them for their **greed and self-indulgence**, and the mistreatment of workers that led to the deaths of innocent, righteous people.
- **But a just ruler is characterized by a concern for the poor, the powerless, and the voiceless, and will not tolerate such abuse.**
- **He helps the poor and crushes their oppressors.**

- **Jesus' first text spoke about the liberty he came to bring to the poor (Luke 4/Isa 61); preaching them the gospel; and caring for them physically. He is the righteous king.**

Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

- "Good news to the poor" (Luke 6); care for them, gospel to them, life/hope.
- **Liberty for those who are oppressed" included: healing the sick, casting out demons, forgiving sins, his ethical teachings that promote social justice.**
- He is the righteous King.

#2: The King's Endless Rule (72:5-7)

5: As a result of a just rule, the people are to respond **in awe** of the king.

- This reverence was to continue **as long as creation lasted**, as long as the "sun endures... throughout all generations."
- **Williams: "Note the eschatological thrust here. No human king can receive perpetual worship. Only God's Son, the Messiah, can fulfill this promise down through all the generations of earth."**

6: A righteous ruler brings blessing, "like rain that falls on mown grass, like showers that waters the earth."

- **The people and the land prosper under the ideal king.**
- **At the beginning of Solomon's rule this happened to a degree, but eventually he was not viewed this way.** 1 Kings 4:25: "every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon's"
- **It is in Jesus Christ that we experience such refreshment and blessing forever.**
- **He will glorify us, and renew all of creation, as Paradise will be restored.**

7: He adds more poetic imagery to emphasize this blessed state [read]:

- His people flourish and experience peace continually.
- What a vision of the coming Kingdom.

- Isaac Watts, based *Jesus Shall Reign* (1719) from Psalm 72.

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does its successive journeys run,
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

*Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed.*

This hymn played a powerful role in Eric Liddell's life.

- He was the Scottish Olympic hero of the 1924 games (he won a gold medal)
- He went on to be a missionary to China.
- Many remember this departure from Edinburgh.
- His brothers and sisters escorted him from the Scottish Congregational Church to Waverly Station to catch the train. Multitudes were present.
- Before he boarded, he said, "Let our motto be 'Christ for the World, for the World Needs Christ,' he shouted.
- He then led in two verses of "Jesus Shall Reign."

What will cause a bright, athletic, successful young man, give it all for the nations, dying in a foreign country? This glorious vision of Psalm 72.

#3: The King's Boundless Rule (72:8-11)

8: This blessing will cover the earth: from sea to sea...ends of the earth"

9: He will ruler over all, and will receive tribute from the nations.

- **desert tribes** = nomadic people; they traditionally resist control.
 - o But even they will delight to honor the king.
- His **enemies** will also pay homage.

10: Areas in the far **West**: "Tarshish" (in Spain)

- "the isles" (of the **Mediterranean**, Isa 42:10) represent far Western areas.
- Area's in the **South**: "Sheba" in Arabia; "Seba" in Africa.
- Recall the glories of Solomon's international reign (1 Kings 4:21; 10:10; 2 Chron 9)
- The Queen of Sheba brings a whole entourage of gifts to him and his wisdom and riches "takes her breath way" (2 Chron 9.1); "I wasn't told the half" she said (9:6).
- Then we read of the kings of Arabia bringing gifts to Solomon (9:14), and how all the kings of the world were coming to hear his wisdom (9:23).
- But all of this pales in comparison to the boundless reign of King Jesus, who will receive praise from every people, language, tribe and nation.

James Montgomery also wrote a beautiful hymn based on Psalm 72, “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed.” Reflecting these verses, he wrote in 1821:

Arabia's desert ranger

To him shall bow the knee;

The Ethiopian stranger

His glory come to see;

With offerings of devotion

Ships from the isles shall meet,

To pour the wealth of ocean

In tribute at his feet.

11: The Psalmist concludes this section with a longing of universal praise: “Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him” and “All nations shall serve Him.”

- This praise is a picture healing of the nations.
- Where there was strife, there **is now peace, and praise to the King.**

Keller comments here: “The races and nations—always at war with one another—now offer themselves in service, not because they have been conquered but rather because they have been attracted like a magnet by the perfect justice and compassion of this king. No earthly king has ever been like this. This healing of racial strife and the elimination of poverty and injustice are the marks of God’s kingdom, but governments, even the best ones, don’t come close. Yet when Jesus was born, gifts were offered from afar, and when the church was established, the races began to be unified and the needy helped. The kingdom of God had entered history.”

We should pray for and work toward that kind of reconciliation and unity among races and classes, as the King’s people, and we should long to see the nations worship our King with us.

#4: The King’s Gracious Rule (72:12-14)

We return to the King’s care for the poor.

12: He will deliver the needy and the poor.

- He doesn’t crush them and take advantage of them.
- Their need is underscored by the fact that they “**have no helper.**”
- But when they call to the King he acts.

Job 29:12 (ESV): because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him.

13: In his grace and compassion, “he has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy”

- - **IGP female gendercide**

14: he saves them from oppression and violence.

- He values their lives!
- He redeems them (purchases) them; like God redeeming Israel from slavery.

We see this concern in Jesus who came to preach the Good News to the poor.

- He came to deliver people from cruel oppression and from of “legalistic religion and satanic domination.” (Williams)
- He cared for the whole person; forgiving sins, granting eternal life and healing bodies – and one day will heal the broken forever.

We as his people are to reflect the King’s concerns.

- We are to do what we can to alleviate suffering and oppression.
- We are to do what we can to save human lives.
- We are to do what we can to see people released from slavery.

#5: The King’s Famous Reign (72:15-17)

15a: After speaking of the King’s character and glory, the Psalmist asks for **this kind of king to live forever.**

- Of course, no king in Israel’s history lived up to these ideals, and they all died.
- But of the Messiah we say, “He shall reign forever!”

15b: In light of his greatness, the writer exclaims, “may gold of Sheba be given to him” – that is, may a proper tribute be given to him!

15c: The psalmist then envisions public prayers offered for him in the temple: “May prayer be made for him continually ... and blessings involved all the day”

- Our prayers are crystalized in the simple prayer, **“Your Kingdom Come” Maranatha**

16: The people are blessed under this king ...

- “**grain in abundance**”
- “**tops of mountains**” also produce fruit – unlikely places to grow things with their thin soil, but it’s “**waving**” like Lebanon”
- “**Fruit like Lebanon**” speaks of tall fruit trees like Lebanon’s cedars.
- Isaiah says of the Messiah that the, “**the Branch of the Lord,**” will be glorious, “and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing” (4:2).

17: The result of the King’s character and his blessing is that his name and his fame are extolled: “May his fame continue as long as the sun”

17b: “all nations shall call Him blessed.”

We see the promise to Abraham will be fulfilled in this Messiah. (see Gen. 12:2–3).

What a vision of the perfect King.

- **This is good government that everyone longs for.**
- When did this happen in Israel? It didn’t.

- Hast it ever? No.
- But it will!
- His fame will be extolled forever

Think about how many people and how many leaders **have disappointed you.**

- Even great one's disappointed God's people: Moses, David, Hezekiah.
- **But our King has never failed us; and he never will.**
- He is the Famous King.

Doxology (72:18-20)

18-19a: The vision of this Messianic King is so great that praise gushes out: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever."

- God does "**wondrous things**" (or "extraordinary").
- **He is to be praised for his wondrous acts – the greatest of all, sending Jesus into the world to give us salvation.**
- He is to be praised as the "God of peace," and "God of hope"

19b: The psalmist adds, "may the whole earth be filled with his glory"

- And we know one day **it will!** (**Hab 2:14; Isa 11:9**)

Right now, the world is filled with conflict, anger, violence, abuse, death, illnesses, viruses, corrupt governments, lies, betrayal, heartache.

- **But soon, our King will return and the glory of God will cover this earth!**

Final Reflections

This is truly prophetic and eschatological psalm that is fulfilled in Jesus.

Find peace hope today in....

- 1) Jesus' Righteous Rule (1-4)
- (2) Jesus' Endless Rule (5-7)
- (3) Jesus' Boundless Rule (8-11)
- (4) Jesus' Gracious Rule (12-14)
- (5) Jesus' Famous Rule (15-17)

He is the incomparable and irreplaceable King.

These longings for a righteous reign, this hope for gracious rule, for oppression to be removed, and the earth restored are realized in Jesus Christ.

And one day, our faith will end in sight and we will see this reality.