

PSALM 072

The Reign of the Righteous King.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (5-31-95).
- B. A Psalm of Solomon. "Glory and Grandeur of Messiah's Reign"
- C. The superscription says a psalm OF Solomon. Does it mean a psalm written by Solomon, or a psalm about Solomon? The content of the psalm seems to fit the latter. Henry H. Halley, *Pocket Bible Handbook*, p. 236, suggests that the psalm describes the peaceful and glorious kingdom of Solomon, "But some of its statements, and its general tenor, can allude only to the Kingdom of ONE Greater than Solomon." I have used Halley's title for the psalm.
- D. The Jews' concept of the Messiah was of an earthly king who was a combination of David and Solomon--a powerful conquering king like David, with the peace, honor, wisdom and glory of Solomon. Therefore, the description of God's suffering Servant of Isa. 52:13-53:12 could not really be accepted.
- E. Coffman gives seven comparisons of Solomon to Christ that I believe are very helpful when studying this psalm:
 1. Just as the First Israel had its most glorious extent under Solomon; so shall the Second Israel, the Church, through Christ, attain to eternal glory in Christ.
 2. Solomon was A son of David; Jesus Christ is THE SON OF DAVID.
 3. Solomon reigned over the earth from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea; but Christ's dominion is "to the uttermost parts of the earth.
 4. Solomon's wisdom was known all over the world; but "in Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden."
 5. Solomon's reign was one of peace; and Christ our Lord is the Prince of Peace, "And of the increase of His government and of peace, there shall be no end."
 6. Solomon sat upon the literal throne of David in Jerusalem; but Christ, risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, is seated upon the Throne of David in heaven (Ac. 2:30-31).
 7. Kings and rulers of all the world of Solomon's day honored him and brought presents to him. In Christ's kingdom, "The kings of the earth bring their glory into Christ's kingdom" (Rev. 21:24); and even in the manger at Bethlehem the kings of the earth brought unto Christ gifts of gold, and frankincense and myrrh.
- F. Coffman says that there are even more contrasts than similarities and that is the reason we can view this psalm both as "of Solomon" and "of Christ." He quotes H.C. Leupold: "The ancient Jewish interpretation is indicated by the Targum rendition of the opening line, 'O God, give the precepts of judgment to King Messiah.'"
- G. Some have suggested that Solomon put this psalm in the mouths of the people soon after becoming king, while others such as John Calvin and Matthew Henry attributed the psalm to David as his prayer on behalf of Solomon.
- H. Regardless of who actually wrote it, it seems to have been for the people to praise Solomon and also to give a prophetic picture of the "ONE Greater than Solomon."
- I. Coffman discusses the psalm under seven headings:
 - I. Prayer that the King may be Just and Compassionate (72:1-4).
 - II. The Immortal, Pre-existent, Universal Ruler (72:5-8).
 - III. The Extent of His Dominion (72:9-12).
 - IV. The Righteousness and Justice of His Reign (72:13-16).
 - V. A Prophecy of Blessings in Christ (72:17).
 - VI. The Doxology (72:18,19).
 - VII. The annotation of 72:20.

THE TEXT.

- 72:1** Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the king's son.
- 2** May he judge Your people with righteousness
And Your afflicted with justice.
- 3** Let the mountains bring peace to the people,
And the hills, in righteousness.
- 4** May he vindicate the afflicted of the people,
Save the children of the needy
And crush the oppressor.
- 5** Let them fear You while the sun *endures*,
And as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- 6** May he come down like rain upon the mown grass,
Like showers that water the earth.
- 7** In his days may the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace till the moon is no more.
- 8** May he also rule from sea to sea
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 9** Let the nomads of the desert bow before him,
And his enemies lick the dust.
- 10** Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
- 11** And let all kings bow down before him,
All nations serve him.
- 12** For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help,
The afflicted also, and him who has no helper.
- 13** He will have compassion on the poor and needy,
And the lives of the needy he will save.
- 14** He will rescue their life from oppression and violence,
And their blood will be precious in his sight;
- 15** So may he live, and may the gold of Sheba be given to him;
And let them pray for him continually;
Let them bless him all day long.
- 16** May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains;
Its fruit will wave like *the cedars of Lebanon*;
And may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth.
- 17** May his name endure forever;
May his name increase as long as the sun *shines*;
And let *men* bless themselves by him;
Let all nations call him blessed.
- 18** Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel,
Who alone works wonders.
- 19** And blessed be His glorious name forever;
And may the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen, and Amen.
- 20** The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

COMMENTS.

A. Prayer that the King May be Just and Compassionate.

These verses sound very similar to the tone of the Beatitudes with which Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount in Mt. 5:1-12.

[v1] "...and Your righteousness to the king's Son." This can be understood several different ways depending on whom one accepts as the author. If we believe that David wrote it of Solomon, he would be asking God's judgments upon himself, and His righteousness upon Solomon. If Solomon wrote it for the people to sing about himself, he would be the king and would seek blessings for his son. If it is Messianic, it would be asking for blessings upon God's Son. It may well be that more than one meaning is desired, as both Solomon and Christ are intended.

[v2] “He will judge Your people with righteousness...” In some Bibles, the translators have a marginal note that the phrase “He will” can be translated “Let him” throughout this psalm. The latter might be especially appropriate if David wrote it for Solomon, and the former if it refers to the Messiah.

[v4] “He will bring justice to the poor...he will save the children of the needy...” This is a common theme of the prophets in describing the proper rule of kings and characterizes the Christ best of all.

B. The Immortal, Pre-Existent, Universal Ruler.

The future tense is used in all four of these verses. This would be unusual if it was written by Solomon about himself, but natural if written by David about Solomon, or written by either about the Christ. Coffman suggests that “there is precious little in this paragraph that can intelligently be applied to Solomon or to any other except the Blessed Messiah.” I have to agree with that evaluation.

[v5] “They shall fear...as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.” This refers to immortality rather than to Solomon’s life.

[v6,7] These statements could have a very limited application to Solomon, but have their full application in the Messiah.

[v8] “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.” These expressions refer to the whole earth. See Zech. 9:10. Zechariah is clearly speaking of the Messiah in the context and the same language in this psalm also seems to be of the same import.

C. The Extent of His Dominion.

[v9,10] These verses could possibly be applied to Solomon, although we have no record of any from Tarshish, a Phoenician colony on the south coast of Spain, having contact with Solomon. But the Queen of Sheba, from the southern Arabia, came to Solomon to hear his wisdom. Seba was in Ethiopia and I do not know of any influence that Solomon had over it.

[v11] This could only be applied to Solomon in an accommodative sense of hyperbole or exaggeration. But it is a typical description of the Messiah.

D. The Righteousness and Justice of His Reign.

[v13] “He will spare...will save the souls of the needy.” Again, this might be applied in a very limited sense to Solomon, but it naturally brings our mind to the salvation of the Messiah. The “saving” or “redeeming” of souls by Solomon could only apply to physical life on earth, as is referred to in 72:14.

[v15] “...prayer also will be made for Him continually...” Some suggest that this could only apply to Solomon since Christ does not need our prayers on His behalf, but we do often pray, “Your will be done.” We are to also exalt His name with praise and thanksgiving.

E. A Prophecy of Blessings in Christ.

[v17] “His name shall endure forever...” This seems to mean more than that the name would be in recorded history.

“...men shall be blessed in Him...” This is not in the context of his rule in the nation of Israel, but in the sense that “His name shall endure forever.” Therefore, it is an eternal blessing that is referred to.

“...all nations shall call Him blessed.” All nations do not hallow or bless the name of Solomon. It is only the Messiah that has this kind of praise.

F. The Doxology.

[v18,19] As at the end of Book I of the Psalms, we have a doxology followed with a double Amen. See Psa. 41:13. We do not believe these were a part of the psalms that they were appended to, but were probably added by the godly men who compiled and organized the various psalms into the five divisions.

G. The Annotation of Verse 20.

Most scholars treat this verse as a notation added to Book II of the Psalms. But Matthew Henry understood it as a reference to the last two psalms. He considers the doxology and verse 20 to be David’s close of not only this psalm, but that this was the last psalm that he wrote.

“We shall see how earnest David is in this prayer, and how much his heart is in it, if we observe:

1. How he shuts up the prayer with double seal: "AMEN and AMEN; again and again I say, I say it and let all others say the same, so be it. Amen to my prayer; Amen to the prayers of all the saints to this purport--Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come."
2. How he even shuts up his live with this prayer, v20. This was the last psalm that ever he penned, though not placed last in this collection; he penned it when he lay on his death-bed, and with this he breathes his last: "Let God be glorified, let the kingdom of the Messiah be set up, and kept up, in the world, and I have enough, I desire no more. With this let THE PRAYERS OF DAVID THE SON OF JESSE BE ENDED. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." *Matthew Henry's Commentary*. Vol. III, p. 510.

This gives an example of how differently scholars look at a particular passage.