



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

PSALMS: SONGS FOR LIFE TOGETHER •

PSALMS OF ROYALTY • PSALM 72:1-20 • 5/28/2023

MAIN POINT

Psalm 72 is one example of a Psalm of Royalty, whose subject matter was that of Kingship. God's true king was to exhibit righteousness, justice, and concern for the poor and the oppressed.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever seen an optical illusion where the image at first appears to be one thing, but if you look closely, you see a different image altogether?

Is there a particular song or movie that has taken on more meaning for you as you have gotten older? If so, what? How do time and experience change the way we view things?

One well-known optical illusion contains both a picture of a rabbit and a duck. The pictures are “both, and” —they present two truths at once. Such is the case with the psalm we will study today. Two towering mountain peaks of truth stand before the reader in this psalm. Each summit represents the reign of a mighty king. One is near and great; the other is far away, yet even more grand. The first is the reign of Solomon who ruled over Israel; the second is the reign of Christ who reigns over all the earth. The former kingdom is temporal; the latter is eternal. The first is regional; the second is universal. The first is the son of David, Solomon; the second is the Lord Jesus Christ, a greater Son of David.

UNDERSTANDING

This psalm is a royal psalm that celebrates the Davidic line and asks for God’s blessing. It begins with the inscription “of Solomon.” This could mean that it was written by Solomon, or it could have been written to Solomon, perhaps by David. Either way, this psalm points to the true and better King from the line of David, Jesus Christ.

READ PSALM 72:1-7.

What are some characteristics that you admire in leaders, or those who are given power to rule over you?

The king celebrated in this psalm is one who would rule with righteousness and justice. How should looking to human kings lead us to long for the one true King?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2. What responsibility do we have to hope for this kind of character in our leaders?

The Davidic line was meant to point to Jesus. It was instituted after the fall of Saul to have kings that pursued God's heart. As such, the king was supposed to rule over the people with charity, righteousness, equity, and justice. The problem with this was that most of the kings in this line would fail. They did not live up to the standard set forth in this psalm. This is an ideal that we should hope to find in all leaders, since the authority to lead comes from God. Unfortunately for the Davidic line and for us today, there are no perfect kings. We need the true Son of David to come and rule over us. Reading this psalm shows us both the sorrow of the many who have missed the mark, as well as the glory of the One who didn't.

READ PSALM 72:8-14.

These verses describe the worship that the Davidic king would receive and the reason he would receive it. What is significant about the specific places that are mentioned in verses 9-11?

How would a Jew during the time this was written have thought about these places? Why would it be strange for a Jewish king to receive worship from the kings of the places mentioned? How has this been accomplished?

Where else in the Bible do we see this theme of the nations coming to worship the one true God? How do we see this today? In what sense does this refer to a future reality that hasn't yet been fully realized?

In addition to being a powerful king, we see a king filled with grace and compassion (vv. 12-14). Why are strength and compassion not mutually exclusive traits? How does one feed into the other?

The places described here were kingdoms outside of Israel. While good kings expanded Israel's borders, they were never anything close to the dominion described here. Yet the true Son of David is the One to whom all the nations look. He asks and God hands Him the nations (Ps. 2:8). Around His throne are a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages crying out, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" His power and compassion are limitless. His rule is the one we want.

READ PSALM 72:15-20.

Earlier the psalmist wrote about the nations that would worship the king; now, in verse 17, he asked that the king would bless the nations. How are both of these requests fulfilled in Christ?

Think about your own prayer life. How far do your prayers extend? Are you asking for God to do work in the nations? If not, why not, and how can you start?

Name represents reputation and fame. It is significant that the name of the king and the name of Yahweh are intertwined in praise. This prayer captures the both/and of this psalm. Israel wanted the respect of the nations, and hopefully their king would have it. Jesus Christ has it already. He does not need to ask for it, yet there are people who do not worship Jesus among the nations. The mission of the church is to proclaim His worth among all the peoples of the world. We do this through going to them and by praying for them. Just as Israel prayed for their king's dominion and rule, we should pray for the dominion and rule of King Jesus.

APPLICATION

How has the truth about Jesus become more clear to you the longer you have known Him? How has this affected your reading of Scripture?

What do we want our immediate community to know about our King? How can we tell them?

Is there a particular country that God has placed on your heart? How can you pray for that country this week? Where will you find information about its people?

PRAYER

Close by praying Psalm 72 for the nations. Ask that God would make Himself known among all the peoples of the world. Ask that they would see Him as the one true King and give Him their praise.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 72:1-20

72:1-2. Solomon began by interceding, Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. The words justice and righteousness are used synonymously as requests for God-given abilities to be granted to this king that would lead to equity, fairness, and rightness. Solomon's duty was to dispense divine justice as a judge, defending righteous people who were unjustly attacked by evil men. Prophetically, Jesus Christ is the divine protector of his people, both in this age and in the age to come.

72:3. The mountains , which represent the most dominant aspects of the kingdom, as well as the little hills, meaning those lesser parts, would know peace or a sense of prosperity. If the king reigned in righteousness , blessings would result for everyone under his rule.

72:4. As the divinely appointed guardian of God's people, the king would defend the afflicted who suffered unjustly and save the children of the needy who were attacked by ungodly men. He would crush all evil leaders and their ruthless followers who tried to harm God's people. In the end, Christ would crush Satan, the greatest oppressor.

72:5-6. Looking beyond time to eternity future, the people boasted that this king would endure through all generations. This looks far beyond the reign of Solomon, a mortal man, to an eternal reign that would never end (cp. Dan. 4:34-35; Luke 1:30-33)—the reign of Christ Jesus. He would be like rain falling on a mown field, pouring his blessing on his people, refreshing, renewing, and replenishing them like showers watering the earth.

72:7. In Solomon's time the righteous would flourish and know divine blessing. Prosperity would be theirs. This divine favor would abound until the moon was no more. Again this refers to a time beyond Solomon's day, or the regime of any human ruler. It looks ahead to the eternal reign of God's Son, Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:15).

72:8-9. The people were glad that their king would rule from sea to sea. This refers to the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and beyond. Likewise, this king would reign from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. Ultimately, this points to the universal kingdom of Christ over all the earth during his millennial reign (Rev. 20:1-10) and eternal state (Rev. 21:1-22:5). Even the desert tribes of the Arabian desert would bow before him and lick the dust.

72:10-11. The kings of Tarshish (present-day Spain), Sheba (southern Arabia), and Seba (northern Africa) would bring him tribute and gifts. This homage did occur in Solomon's day (1 Kgs. 4:21; 10:1,23-24; Isa. 60:4-7), but it also looks ahead, ultimately, to the worship of kings in the eternal state (Rev. 21:24). In that day all kings as well as all nations over which they rule will come before the glorified Christ and bow down and serve him (cp. Phil. 2:10-11).

72:12-14. With divine love guiding him, this king would deliver the needy. He must undertake their cause because they had no one to speak for them. This king would take pity on the weak and the needy. In fact, he would save the needy from death at

the hands of ungodly men. He would rescue innocent, godly people who had suffered oppression and who had been victimized by violence. Heaven's righteous king will come to their aid because precious is their blood that has been shed in martyrdom for his kingdom.

72:15. Anticipating his own reign, as well as future kings of Israel, Solomon shouted to God, Long may he live! This verbalized the desire of the people. Further, he asked for tribute from Sheba and prayer and blessing from the people.

72:16-17. The phrase May his name endure forever, is a request that the name of Christ might be honored as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, a promise that finds fulfillment in Christ alone.

72:18-19. The psalmist exclaimed, Praise be to... the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. These wonderful deeds had been performed by God on behalf of the king. With a worldwide vision for God's greatness, Solomon concluded, May the whole earth be filled with his glory The supremacy of this king and the greatness of his kingdom deserved the greatest praise. Amen and Amen are the heartfelt affirmations of Solomon and the people.

72:20. The phrase This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse is an editorial notation that marks not only the end of Psalm 72 but the conclusion of the second section of the psalms (Pss. 42-72). This conclusion corresponds to the shorter endings of the other four books (Pss. 41:13; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6).