

Psalm 72

Title: The Reign of the Righteous King

Author and Date: Solomon

Key Verses: Psalm 72:1-2

Type: Royal

Outline

- A. Bless the king (verses 1-17).
- B. Bless the Lord (verses 18-19).
- C. Conclusion (verse 20).

Notes

Title: “A Psalm of Solomon.” This psalm was either written by Solomon or for Solomon. Only this psalm and Psalm 127 are attributed to Solomon.

Summary: Psalm 72 is a royal psalm like Psalm 21 and 45. The royal psalms offer up prayers and praises for an earthly king like David or Solomon. In Psalm 72, the king (thought to be Solomon) wants to be a righteous king and he (or someone on his behalf) requests that God give him righteous judgments (verse 1). The reign of the king will be righteous (verses 2-7), universal (verses 8-11), beneficent (verses 12-14), and perpetual (verses 15-17). Psalm 72 closes with a doxology or blessing to the Lord God of Israel (verses 18-19). Verse 20 forms a conclusion to Book II of the psalms.

Verse 1: This psalm is a prayer request for the king (thought to be Solomon). Solomon is both a “king” and a “king’s son” (2 Sam. 7:14). This psalm may be about Solomon alone, or it may also be a prophecy about the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ (see especially verses 8, 11, and 17). Note that justice and righteousness come from God and are given to the king. These moral principles do not derive from man, but from God.

Verse 3: The mountains and the hills are referred to in a poetic way to describe the peace and justice that come to the people during the reign of the righteous king.

Verse 5: “They shall fear thee” are the people mentioned in verses 2-4. People, in general, respect and reverence (fear) a righteous and just king.

Verse 6: “He will come down like rain” is a reference to the blessing and benevolence of the righteous king. He will bring renewal and refreshment to the people.

Verse 8: “The River” is the Euphrates River. Compare the wording here with the boundaries of the Promised Land mentioned in Exodus 23:31.

Verse 9: Enemies licking the dust is a reference to their humble submission to the king.

Verse 10: The tribute from Tarshish (east coast of Spain) for Solomon is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 9:21 and the gifts of Sheba (southwestern Arabia; “gold of Sheba” in verse 15) and Seba (location unknown, possibly near Sheba or Ethiopia) are mentioned in 1 Kings 10:1-2.

Verse 17: The ultimate fulfillment of “all nations” blessed is found in the King Jesus (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). This has led some Bible students to believe that Psalm 72 is prophetic and Messianic, anticipating the coming of the King Jesus Christ (see also verses 5-8).

Verses 18-19: This is the longest of the five doxologies found in the book of Psalms. For a similar blessing, see Psalm 41:13 and 89:52.

Verse 20: This is the only psalm with a postscript: “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” These words may have been penned by an ancient compiler or editor of the psalms. They form a postscript to this psalm and a conclusion to Book II of the psalms. Fifty-five of the first seventy-two psalms are attributed in some way to David. Eighteen more psalms are attributed to David in Books III, IV, and V.

Questions

1. What request of God is made for the king (verse 1)?
2. How does the king treat various people (verses 2-4)?
3. What does the psalmist say of the mountains and the hills (verse 3)?
4. How is the reign of the king described (verses 6-7)?
5. How extensive is the king’s dominion (verse 8)?
6. What do people and enemies do to the king (verse 9)?

7. What do other kings do to the king (verses 10-11)?
8. What does the king do for the needy and the poor (verses 12-14)?
9. What do men do for the king continually and all the day long (verse 15)?
10. What happens in the earth during the reign of the king (verse 16)?
11. What is said of the king's name (verse 17)?
12. How are the Lord God of Israel and the earth described (verses 18-19)?
13. What are come to an end with this psalm (verse 20)?

Applications for Today

1. Justice and righteousness come from God and are given to the king. Pray that God would give the king (or other world rulers) righteous judgments today (verse 1). What are Christians supposed to do with respect to "the king" (1 Tim. 2:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13, 17)?
2. We should always try to be just and fair with the poor and needy. We should do what we can to help them, defend them, and save them (verses 2-4 and 12-14). Who are we to remember (Gal. 2:10; 6:10)? Who are we not to disrespect (Jas. 2:2-6)?
3. God does wondrous things (72:18). What are some wondrous works of God (Job 37:14-16; Psa. 78:4, 11, 32; 119:18, 27)?