

The Messianic Psalms Psalm 72

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Our talk today is on Psalm 72. There are many who say that this psalm is not a Messianic Psalm as there are no direct quotes found in the New Testament from Psalm 72. When we read in Isaiah chapter 11 verses 1-5 and Isaiah chapters 60-62, we see in them an identical picture of Psalm 72, the King and his realm, the coming Messiah and His rule in a future age. Therefore, we can surely say with great confidence that we have in our passage today, that “a greater than Solomon is here.” Psalm 72 is a prayer of David for a successful reign of his son, Solomon, who is taking up the throne. But it’s also looking forward to the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus, the One who indeed is “great David’s greater Son” (see Revelation 22:16). Solomon would have been in the presence of his father David near the end of David’s life and would have heard his father pray these words for him. When we read 1 Kings 3:1-15, we see that Solomon certainly understood the huge responsibility he had as the anointed king of Israel and of the way in which he was to govern his people, Israel.

As we look into this psalm and delight in the way that the Lord Jesus Christ will rule in a coming age here on earth, we should pray for kings and queens, and those who govern our lands at the present time, that their rule should reflect the perfection of the King of kings.

We will divide Psalm 72 into 7 sections to help us contemplate the perfection of the reign of the coming Messiah. The Rule of Righteousness, The Benefits of His Rule, The Extent of His Rule, The Compassion of His Rule, The Prosperity of His Rule, The Fame of His Rule and finally the Response to His Rule.

1. The Rule of Righteousness, verses 1-4

“Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king’s Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor.”

Solomon opens with the righteousness of the king’s rule. We read in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, that every new king was supposed to write out by hand a copy of the Law of God, so that he would always remember how God expected him to rule. Here we find Solomon praying to God to grant him, as Israel’s king, the ability to be a righteous ruler, one who would take care of his people. The earthly kings of Israel, and all those who have ruled down throughout the history of the world, have all failed to follow God’s instructions of how a king should rule. Even Solomon, who asked for wisdom to understand God’s ways and had a successful reign for many years with his people living in peace, failed in his later life to live up to God’s standard. Three times in the opening verses of Psalm 72 we read that the characteristic of the perfect ruler is righteousness. In a

righteous government, justice flows from the top down to every level of society. It is in such a society that the poor and needy are taken care of. It is those, who are abused and afflicted, and who have no power or ability to confront an oppressor, that the righteous king will take care of.

Before any king can govern peaceably, the oppressors have to be brought to judgement. Solomon, in his early reign, had to deal with Adonijah, Shimei, and Joab. You can read about this in 1 Kings chapter 2. So too, when the Lord Jesus comes back to reign, He will deal with the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, and those who show allegiance to them (see Revelation 13 to 15). After all the enemies of God are dealt with, then an everlasting time of peace and prosperity will be found on the earth.

The mountains and hills of verse 3 can be looked at in various ways. Mountains in scripture are sometimes pictures of governments. So we can see during Messiah's reign, that the national governments are the mountains, and all the local administrations are the hills; and they all will be in accord with the One who rules righteously. In Solomon's day, those who passed on the news throughout the Land did so from mountain top to mountain top. So the message on earth at Messiah's time will be that of peace. Solomon's name means Peace. The time during his reign was one marked out by peace and all the children of Israel lived in peace. We read in Isaiah 9:6, that the Lord Jesus was and is the Prince of Peace.

2. The benefits of His rule, verses 5-7

“They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more.”

We see from v.5, that when a people submit to the righteous rule of God, it is for their benefit, and it brings a time of rejoicing. We read in Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” And in Proverbs 29:2, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan.” Solomon realised that, if he ruled in the fear of God, then his people would be blessed. Not only during Solomon's reign, for we see in these verses One who will endure forever, and the blessings will continue for all generations. Blessings flow to the subjects of kings who rule in righteousness. We get a lovely picture of how that blessing is dispersed to the people in grass that has been newly mown. If there is a dry spell, grass is vulnerable for the sun can scorch it, but it says, “He shall be like showers.” The thought here is not of a heavy downpour, but more like how a sprinkler works in your garden, gently dropping water over a large area.

The thought here too, is that it is not contained to a small part of the earth, but it covers the whole earth. The parched roots of new mown grass are revived as they drink up the moisture and the green shoots come forth in abundance. In the early years of Solomon's reign, he ruled righteously, and Israel benefited from it. Christ's day will be a time when both men and all creation shall be at peace. We can read about this in Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 65:18-25. It will be at a time when the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the young child will play with the snake. What a wonderful time it will be when the true Messiah reigns and the people respect and honour Him! Not a short time, like the reign of men, but one that lasts forever.

3. The extent of His rule, verses 8-11

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.”

In these verses, there are hints as to the extent of Solomon's rule, who out of all the kings of Israel, reigned over more of the Promised Land than any of the others. But these verses also prophetically tell us of a King, where the extent of His reign is far greater than any of the empires mankind has ever known. The measurement of "from sea to sea and from the rivers to the end of the earth" would suggest that in the time of Messiah's reign, that it will be a universal kingdom. Israel will dwell in all of the Land that was promised by God to Abraham in Genesis 15:18-21, and which is defined in Ezekiel 47:13-23. The whole earth will come under the administration of the Lord Jesus in that coming age. All peoples of the earth will come and pay homage to Him and will be subject to Him. Those from Tarshish, where Jonah was trying to flee to from the presence of God, a far distant land, possibly Spain; and those from Sheba and Seba, the kingdoms of the South, all will bring their gifts and presents to Him.

4. The compassion of His Rule, verses 12-14

"For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight."

How beautiful are the words of these three verses for they show out the compassion of the One who rules righteously! There has never been an earthly ruler in the history of mankind who has shown relief to those unjustly afflicted and who will set free all those who are oppressed. There are thoughts in this psalm of the personal reign of the King and none more so than in the language of these verses. He will deliver, He will have pity, He will spare, He will save, and He will redeem. The One who is the Lord of Glory is the One who came to Calvary to set the sinner free by his redemptive work on the cross. He is the One who will come again after the Great Tribulation period and gather all peoples around Himself. He will bless all mankind for they are precious in His sight.

5. The Prosperity of His Rule, verses 15-16

"And He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, and daily He shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, on the top of the mountains; its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; and those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

At the inauguration of the King in 1 Samuel 10: 24, the people chanted, "Long live the King." In relation to the Messiah, it is a statement of assurance that the King and the Kingdom will be preserved forever. Gifts of gold will be brought by some nations, and others will offer prayer and praise for and to the King of kings. The earth will bring forth its produce in abundance, even on the mountain tops. Those normally barren places will bring forth food. You can just picture the whole earth with fruit trees laden with fruit; and the fields of golden corn waving in the breeze, just like the cedar trees of Lebanon. Not only will the earth flourish, but its population will increase, and everyone will have sufficient to satisfy all their needs. What a lovely picture of harmony, peace, and prosperity under Messiah's rule!

6. The Fame of His Rule, v.17

"His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed."

What a contrast this millennial time is compared to when the Lord Jesus came to earth as the Saviour. Then His own people rejected Him. At His trial they said,

““Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”” (John 19:15).

They chose a thief and a robber. But when He comes and defeats the oppressor and sets up His kingdom upon earth, there will be the universal acclaim that His name will endure forever, and He will receive all the glory. Philippians 2:9-11 tells us,

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The millennium reign of the Messiah is the final earthly phase of His Kingdom. It will last until the end of time. But His Kingdom is everlasting and so it will go on into eternity. Men will be blessed in that future age. Not only will mankind be blessed, but the nations will see that the King is delighted with all his work, and they will be able to say that He is happy, that is, “call Him blessed.” If you want to be blessed by the Lord today then you need to confess your sin to Him, bow your knee to Him, and own Him as your Lord and Saviour. “Behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

7. The Response to His Rule, verses 18-19

“Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.”

When we read Psalm 72 and understand that it is talking about the King of kings, then there is only one response, and that is praise to God for such a King. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:28,

“Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

In the disciples’ prayer in Matthew 6:9-10, the Lord teaches them to pray,

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Should we not also pray for this messianic rule to take place, and so that men will praise the One who does these wonderful things prophesied in this psalm; and will praise His name forever. At this present time, men and women are obsessed with climate change and the idea that man will eventually destroy the earth. We know from what we have read here and in other books of the Bible that everything is in God’s hands and we can say with certainty that the earth will be restored when the Lord Jesus comes back to this earth to rule. This causes the believer to be at peace and not to be anxious about the future.

Psalm 72 v.20 finishes the second Book of the Psalms, and it is fitting, that as the King of kings sits upon the throne, that David's prayers are ended. It is interesting that, at the close of this psalm, Solomon refers to his father not as King David, but as the son of Jesse. In respect to the Messiah, who is Great David’s greater son, there is that humbleness and meekness whenever either David and Solomon are compared to the Lord Jesus. They each had to fade into the background and bring their worship to the One who is, indeed, the King of kings.

Psalm 72 speaks of the time after the church has been taken up into heaven, when the Spirit of God has departed from this earth. There is time of the tribulation period when Satan is let loose and tries to destroy God’s earthly people, Israel. Then the Lord Jesus will come again defeat the foes and set up His kingdom on earth. This is known as the millennial or 1000 year reign.

We live in the day of God's grace when we have the opportunity to respond to the invitation of the Lord Jesus to come to Him to have our sins forgiven, and to become part of His church, here on earth. We look forward to the day when He will call us home to Heaven to be with himself. Our prospect is a heavenly prospect where we will form part of the Bride of Christ. We will reign with Him in that coming millennial time. We know Jesus as our Lord but not as our King. It will be those on earth that follow Him during that 1000 year reign that will own Him as their King. He is and always will be the King of kings.

This hymn written by J Montgomery sums up Psalm 72 :

Hail to the Lord's anointed !
Great David's greater Son :
When to the time appointed
The rolling years shall run,
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

The heavens - which now conceal Him
In counsels deep and wise
In glory shall reveal Him
To our rejoicing eyes ;
He who with hands uplifted
Went from this earth below,
Shall come again all gifted,
His blessings to bestow.

He shall come down like showers
Upon the new-mown grass,
And joy and hope, like flowers,
Spring up where He doth pass.
Before Him, on the mountains,
Shall Peace, the herald, go ;
And righteousness, in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing,
Outstretched His wide dominion
O'er river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion,
Or dove's light wing can soar.

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk on Psalm 72, talk number T1272, in our series on the Messianic Psalms.

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