

Advent 2019

*“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! “May they be secure who love you!””
(Psalm 122:6 ESV)*

*“May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!”
(Psalm 72:2 ESV)*

*“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.”
(Psalm 146:3 ESV)*

*“Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!”
(Psalm 80:19 ESV)*

A Prayer For The Perfect King

December 8th, 2019

Psalm 72

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Introduction:

Good morning church! So good to see you. Open your Bibles please to Psalm 72; that’s on page 485 in your pew Bibles. This is the second Sunday in Advent 2019. As I mentioned last week it has been the practice of the church to use the 4 Sundays leading up to Christmas to think about the COMINGS of Jesus Christ by means of which he accomplishes everything associated with our redemption.

This year we are working our way through the Advent Psalms. These Psalms were of course, originally about David or Solomon or the worship experiences during the time period of David and Solomon but they were understood – even when they were first written as pointing BEYOND David and Solomon to the ULTIMATE SON OF DAVID who would come.

We talked this last week – David is like an arrow shot at the sun. The same can be said about Solomon the son of David. These are ARROWS SHOT AT THE SuN. They point us in the right direction before ultimately falling short.

That is the intended function of this Psalm – Psalm 72.

We believe that it was written for Solomon's Coronation – either by Solomon himself or possibly by his father David, who was still alive – but either way - it is a prayer for Solomon – but it also looks beyond Solomon for the Greater King who is still to come.

Derek Kidner puts it this way:

“As a royal psalm it prayed for the reigning king, and was a strong reminder of his high calling; yet it exalted this so far beyond the humanly attainable (e.g. in speaking of his reign as endless) as to suggest for its fulfilment no less a person than the Messiah, not only to Christian thinking but to Jewish.”¹

So it's not just Christians who understand this Psalm as ultimately referring to the coming Messiah – it is Jews too. This is the King that we need – and this is the King that is coming; thanks be to God!

Hear now the Word of the Lord, beginning at verse 1:

OF SOLOMON.

¹ Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!

² May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!

³ Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!

⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!

⁵ May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!

⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!

⁷ In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!

⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

⁹ May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust!

¹Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15 of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 273.

¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!

¹¹ May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

¹² For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.

¹³ He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴ From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.

¹⁵ Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day!

¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field!

¹⁷ May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!

¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! (Psalm 72:1–19 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

The first thing we see Solomon asking for here - for himself and for the Greater Son of David that would follow, is that God would:

A Prayer For The Perfect King:

1. Endow him with justice and righteousness

You can see that in verses 1-2:

“Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!” (Psalm 72:1–2 ESV)

Now to our ears that might sound like Solomon is praying selfishly here – give me JUSTICE God! But it’s clear from the context that he wants to RECEIVE in order to give.

Give me JUSTICE God – that I might judge your people with righteousness.

That’s a good prayer – and we see that prayer answered in Solomon’s life and reign. He had DIVINE WISDOM when it came to settling matters of justice. Do you remember the story of the two prostitutes who came to Solomon because there was a dispute about the custody of a little baby that both women claimed was theirs? The story is in 1 Kings 3. Basically, what happened was, there were two prostitutes sharing an apartment. They both had little babies and apparently, the two moms and the two little babies were all sharing one giant bed. Well during the night one of the prostitutes rolled over and accidentally smothered her baby. She woke up and she freaked out and she took her baby and she swapped it for the living baby of the other prostitute. In the morning there was a huge fight. Whose baby was alive? Whose baby had died? They brought the matter to Solomon and this is what he said:

“Bring me a sword.” So a sword was brought before the king.²⁵ And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.”²⁶ Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, “Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death.” But the other said, “He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him.”²⁷ Then the king answered and said, “Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother.”²⁸ And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice. (1 Kings 3:24–28 ESV)

Are you seeing that?

When even a prostitute can get justice from the King – you are living in a very blessed kingdom indeed.

That is the ARROW SHOT AT THE SUN. And in the Gospels we see that arrow beginning to descend on the person of Jesus Christ, don’t we?

Who can forget his wisdom and kindness when another lowly woman – the woman caught in adultery was brought before him. Do you remember how the King acted wisely and justly on that day?

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.⁷ And ... he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” (John 8:6–7 ESV)

That was quite a display of wisdom and justice!

How would you like to live in a kingdom like that? How would you like to live under a king like that?

Well – one day you will – if you are in Christ.

The eternal kingdom begins with the Final Judgment. The Apostle John in Revelation 20 says:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. (Revelation 20:11–12 ESV)

The Eternal Kingdom begins with PERFECT JUDGMENT. Everything hidden will be brought to light. Everything stolen will be restored 4 fold. According to the Wisdom and Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

That’ll be a good day.

The second thing Solomon prays for here is that God would give to the King prosperity – and give THROUGH the King prosperity.

2. Give him prosperity and fruitfulness

You can see that in verse 3 of Psalm 72.

By the way notice the order again – we spoke about this last week. The Bible assumes, that all things being equal, a good world and an honest effort will result in abundant prosperity. But of course, all things are not equal. The world is fallen, so work is hard and the people are wicked and therefore:

“The fallow ground of the poor would yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.” (Proverbs 13:23 ESV)

So we have to have JUSTICE before we can have PROSPERITY – but having prayed for justice, Solomon now prays for prosperity. These things go together.

They certainly did in the reign of Solomon.

The Bible says that Solomon was so rich – and his Kingdom was so rich – that in his day, silver was like nothing.

“All King Solomon’s drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.” (1 Kings 10:21 ESV)

You would throw your silver out into the streets in the days of Solomon.

Well if that’s the arrow then what’s it going to be like in the Kingdom of the Son?

We get a picture of that at the end of the Bible don’t we?

In Revelation 21 the Apostle John got a tour of the New Jerusalem. He says:

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.”
(Revelation 21:10–11 ESV)

He goes on to say in verses 19-21:

“The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” (Revelation 21:19–21 ESV)

That sounds ok doesn't it?

By the way this is an INTENTIONAL echo of the glory days of Solomon. In Solomon's day silver was as nothing – but in Jesus' day you are going to walking on streets of gold – are you seeing that?

When the perfect King sits on the throne there will be wide spread, all encompassing, never before seen PROSPERITY FOR ALL PEOPLE. Silver is going to be as nothing – GOLD is going to be as nothing because God is a good God brothers and sisters, and he never meant for you to be poor.

The third thing Solomon prays for here is that by him God would deliver the needy.

3. By him deliver the needy

Like a lot of Jewish writing and speaking this prayer has a bit of a circular pattern to it – Solomon addresses this theme twice. You can see it first in verse 4 and then again in verses 12-14.

Obviously – this was an important aspect of being the perfect King.

The Perfect King leaves none of his people in bondage.

You've heard the expression: “A rising tide floats more boats”? Well the same principle applies to the perfect king. As the king rises up he brings the poor and the needy with him.

Well, obviously that was true of Solomon.

The Jews never had it so good as they had it under Solomon.

When Solomon dedicated the temple he acknowledged that fact in his prayer. He said:

“Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant.” (1 Kings 8:56 ESV)

Did you catch that?

During the reign of Solomon the people of Israel had it all. They had EVERYTHING GOD had promised to give them. We often talk about how the reign of Solomon was the HIGH WATER MARK for the people of God in the Old Testament. They were literally on top of the world! As the KING WAS LIFTED UP he brought all the people of God along with them.

Well, if that’s true for the ARROW – how much more is it true of Christ?

When HE WAS RAISED UP he brought ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD WITH HIM!

Paul talked about this all the time. He said in Ephesians:

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”
⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:8–10 ESV)

Jesus came down to LIFT US UP!

Whatever liberty and whatever elevation you experienced under Solomon multiply that a THOUSAND FOLD. That is what you will experience in the Eternal Kingdom. You will be the head and not the tail. You will RULE and JUDGE and REIGN.

Not because you are anything but because HE IS EVERYTHING!

Where the HEAD GOES the BODY WILL FOLLOW – so Solomon prayed for the head to be exalted.

Fourthly, Solomon also prayed that the King would bring renewal.

4. Through him bring renewal

The kingdom under David had been on a wartime footing. David was a man of blood and he was more or less constantly at war. That wasn't wrong – that was all part of God's plan – but war takes a toll on the land. When soldiers are out fighting they are not home planting. So the land suffered and so Solomon prayed that his reign would bring renewal.

“May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!” (Psalm 72:6 ESV)

And that was true to a great extent during the time of Solomon. 1 Kings 4:25 says:

“And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.” (1 Kings 4:25 ESV)

Do you see that? Under Solomon they didn't have war. David had defeated all their enemies. So the soldiers beat their swords into ploughshares and they tended and lived off the land. Every man under his vine and under his fig tree – all the days of Solomon.

That sounds good doesn't it?

But again – that is just the foretaste!

That is the just the appetizer!

In Solomon's day they were still under the curse – but in Jesus day every trace and remnant of the curse will be OBLITERATED. We sang that last week didn't we? In Joy To The World it says:

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found.²

Jesus comes to OBLITERATE THE CURSE – and to unlock the productive power of the universe.

We get a picture of that in Revelation 22:

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1–2 ESV)

Do you see that? Everything is coming back to life! The land! The people! Everything! He comes to make his blessings flow – far as the curse is found. Joy to the world – the Lord is come!

The fifth thing Solomon prays for here is for the King to have a universal dominion.

5. May his dominion be universal

You know this verse, even if you don't know that you know this verse. Look again at verse 8:

“May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!” (Psalm 72:8 ESV)

Now what is that?

That of course is the verse from which we get our national motto. *A mari usque ad mare* is Latin for “from sea to sea”. It was intended as a double entendre. It expressed the national aspiration at the time to stretch our political boundaries from the Atlantic all the way to the

² Isaac Watts, 1719. Verse 3.

Pacific - while at the same time expressing the quieter aspiration of our founding fathers to see the entire country of Canada resting peacefully under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the eternal Kingdom.

God make it so!

Like all the petitions we have looked at so far, this petition was answered to a limited extent in the reign of Solomon. Look at verse 10:

May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! (Psalm 72:10 ESV)

Well of course that did happen – to some extent. We think of the visit of the Queen of Sheba; that story is told in 1 Kings chapter 10. The Bible says that the Queen of Sheba:

“She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones.” (1 Kings 10:2 ESV)

Verse 10 goes on to say:

“Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones.” (1 Kings 10:10 ESV)

So this actually happened! Many scholars point to this as **THE** HIGH WATER MARK – the ABSOLUTE PINACLE – THE HIGHEST POINT in the MOST EXALTED PERIOD OF OLD TESTAMENT ISRAELITE HISTORY.

But if you are a Bible reader, then you know, that it was all downhill from here. This is LITERALLY WHERE THE ARROW began to turn and fall to the earth.

In the very next chapter – 1 Kings 11 – we are told:

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women ... his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. (1 Kings 11:1–4 ESV)

So Solomon was not the Perfect King.

He pointed us in the right direction – but he ultimately fell short.

Solomon was not Jesus! He was not even David! And so at the very height of his power and international acclaim his DOMINION began to DECLINE.

But not so with Christ.

Listen to what the Bible says in Revelation 21 about the Eternal King in his Royal City. It says:

“the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Revelation 21:24–27 ESV)

Do you see that? There will be no corrupting influences and therefore no declension or decline. The Kingdom of the Christ will reach its ZENITH and KEEP RIGHT ON GOING. His DOMINION WILL INCREASE IN PERPETUITY – and his tenure and his reign will know no end.

And that is the sixth thing that we see Solomon praying for here.

6. May his reign be everlasting

“Long may he live” (Psalm 72:15 ESV)

“May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun!” (Psalm 72:17 ESV)

When you have a good king you want his reign to last forever.

If a bad king were to rule forever that would be hell – but if a good king were to reign forever that would be heaven.

And so will it be.

The Angel Gabriel said to Mary:

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:30–33 ESV)

That was an answer worth waiting for!

And then lastly in Psalm 72 we hear Solomon praying for all people to be blessed in and through this Perfect King.

7. May all people be blessed in him

“May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! ... Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!” (Psalm 72:17–19 ESV)

All the Royal Psalms operate under the assumption that the Promises made originally to Abraham would be channeled through the coming of THE KING. Perhaps no Psalm states this more clearly than Psalm 2 which says:

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” (Psalm 2:10–12 ESV)

Solomon – in a very limited way – began to fulfil this promise. The Queen of Sheba received answers to all her questions, the Bible says. But there is more to life than answered questions – isn't there?

And for these other blessings we must look to the coming of the Perfect King.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:

“For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” (2 Corinthians 1:20 NKJV)

Do you understand what he is saying there?

He is saying – JESUS IS THE PERFECT KING!

Jesus is the One through WHOM all the blessings of God now flow.

Therefore, blessed are all those who take refuge in him!

Response:

So what is the right response to this marvelous journey that we have taken this morning from one end of the bible to the other?

What are we supposed to do with this NEWS that Jesus is the PERFECT KING? That Jesus is the one who lifts up the needy and sets free the captive? That Jesus is the one who gives justice to the poor. That Jesus is the one who brings prosperity and renewal to the earth? That Jesus is the one whose DOMINION will perpetually increase and whose REIGN and RULE WILL NEVER END?

What are we supposed to DO WITH THAT INFORMATION?

Simple:

Kneel.

Kneel before this perfect King.

Kiss the Son – lest he be angry and you perish in the way.

For his wrath is quickly kindled – but blessed are all those who take refuge in him.

The King is here!

And the King is coming!

Thanks be to God! Let's pray together!