

PSALM 72

The foregoing psalm was penned by David when he was old, and, it should seem, so was this too; for Solomon was now standing fair for the crown; that was his prayer for himself, this for his son and successor, and with these two the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended, as we find in the close of this psalm. If we have but God's presence with us while we live, and good hopes concerning those that shall come after us that they shall be praising God on earth when we are praising him in heaven, it is enough. This is entitled "a psalm for Solomon:" it is probable that David dictated it, or, rather, that it was by the blessed Spirit dictated to him, when, a little before he died, by divine direction he settled the succession, and gave orders to proclaim Solomon king, ^{<HEB>}1 Kings 1:30, etc. But, though Solomon's name is here made use of, Christ's kingdom is here prophesied of under the type and figure of Solomon's. David knew what the divine oracle was, That "of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," ^{<HEB>}Acts 2:30. To him he here bears witness, and with the prospect of the glories of his kingdom he comforted himself in his dying moments when he foresaw that his house would not be so with God, not so great not so good, as he wished. David, in spirit,

- I.** Begins with a short prayer for his successor (v. 1).
- II.** He passes immediately into a long prediction of the glories of his reign (v. 2-17). And,
- III.** He concludes with praise to the God of Israel (v. 18-20). In singing this psalm we must have an eye to Christ, praising him as a King, and pleasing ourselves with our happiness as his subjects.

^{<HEB>}PSALM 72:1

PRAYER FOR SOLOMON

A psalm for Solomon.

This verse is a prayer for the king, even the king's son.

I. We may apply it to Solomon: *Give him thy judgments, O God! and thy righteousness; make him a man, a king; make him a good man, a good king.*

1. It is the prayer of a father for his child, a dying blessing, such as the patriarchs bequeathed to their children. The best thing we can ask of God for our children is that God will give them wisdom and grace to know and do their duty; that is better than gold. Solomon learned to pray for himself as his father had prayed for him, not that God would give him riches and honour, but a wise and understanding heart. It was a comfort to David that his own son was to be his successor, but more so that he was likely to be both judicious and righteous. David had given him a good education (^{<204B}Proverbs 4:3), had taught him *good judgment and righteous*, yet that would not do unless God gave him his judgments. Parents cannot give grace to their children, but may by prayer bring them to the God of grace, and shall not seek him in vain, for their prayer shall either be answered or it shall return with comfort into their own bosom.

2. It is the prayer of a king for his successor. David had executed judgment and justice during his reign, and now he prays that his son might do so too. Such a concern as this we should have for posterity, desiring and endeavouring that those who come after us may do God more and better service in their day than we have done in ours. Those have little love either to God or man, and are of a very narrow selfish spirit, who care not what becomes of the world and the church when they are gone.

3. It is the prayer of subjects for their king. It should seem, David penned this psalm for the use of the people, that they, in singing, might pray for Solomon. Those who would live quiet and peaceable lives must pray for kings and all in authority, that God would give them his judgments and righteousness.

II. We may apply it to Christ; not that he who intercedes for us needs us to intercede for him; but,

1. It is a prayer of the Old-Testament church for sending the Messiah, as the church's King, King *on the holy hill of Zion*, of whom the King of kings had said, *Thou art my Son*, ^{<406}Psalm 2:6, 7. "Hasten his coming to

whom all judgment is committed;” and we must thus hasten the second coming of Christ, when he shall *judge the world in righteousness*.

2. It is an expression of the satisfaction which all true believers take in the authority which the Lord Jesus has received from the Father: “Let him have all power both in heaven and earth, and be the Lord our righteousness; let him be the great trustee of divine grace for all that are his; give it to him, that he may give it to us.”

~~PS~~ PSALM 72:2-17

THE KINGDOM OF MESSIAH

This is a prophecy of the prosperity and perpetuity of the kingdom of Christ under the shadow of the reign of Solomon. It comes in,

1. As a plea to enforce the prayer: “Lord, *give him thy judgments and thy righteousness*, and then *he shall judge thy people with righteousness*, and so shall answer the end of his elevation, v. 2. Give him thy grace, and then thy people, committed to his charge, will have the benefit of it.” *Because God loved Israel, he made him king over them to do judgment and justice*, ~~498~~ 2 Chronicles 9:8. We may in faith wrestle with God for that grace which we have reason to think will be of common advantage to his church.

2. As an answer of peace to the prayer. As by the prayer of faith we return answers to God's promises of mercy, so by the promises of mercy God returns answers to our prayers of faith. That this prophecy must refer to the kingdom of the Messiah is plain, because there are many passages in it which cannot be applied to the reign of Solomon. There was indeed a great deal of righteousness and peace, at first, in the administration of his government; but, before the end of his reign, there were both trouble and unrighteousness. The kingdom here spoken of is to last as long as the sun, but Solomon's was soon extinct. Therefore even the Jewish expositors understand it of the kingdom of the Messiah.

Let us observe the many great and precious promises here made, which were to have their full accomplishment only in the kingdom of Christ; and yet some of them were in part fulfilled in Solomon's reign.

I. That it should be a *righteous government* (v. 2): *He shall judge thy people with righteousness.* Compare ^{<2104>}Isaiah 11:4. All the laws of Christ's kingdom are consonant to the eternal rules of equity; the chancery it erects to relieve against the rigours of the broken law is indeed a court of equity; and against the sentence of his last judgment there will lie no exception. The peace of his kingdom shall be supported by righteousness (v. 3); for then only is the peace like a river, when the *righteousness is as the waves of the sea*. The world will be judged in righteousness, ^{<4473>}Acts 17:31.

II. That it should be a peaceable government: *The mountains shall bring peace, and the little hills* (v. 3); that is (says Dr. Hammond), both the superior and the inferior courts of judicature in Solomon's kingdom. There shall be *abundance of peace*, v. 7. Solomon's name signifies *peaceable*, and such was his reign; for in it Israel enjoyed the victories of the foregoing reign and preserved the tranquillity and repose of that reign. But peace is, in a special manner, the glory of Christ's kingdom; for, as far as it prevails, it reconciles men to God, to themselves, and to one another, and slays all enmities; for he is our peace.

III. That the poor and needy should be, in a particular manner, taken under the protection of this government: *He shall judge thy poor*, v. 2. Those are God's poor that are impoverished by keeping a good conscience, and those shall be provided for with a distinguishing care, shall be judged for with judgment, with a particular cognizance taken of their case and a particular vengeance taken for their wrongs. *The poor of the people, and the children of the needy*, he will be sure so to judge as to save, v. 4. This is insisted upon again (v. 12, 13), intimating that Christ will be sure to carry his cause on behalf of his injured poor. *He will deliver the needy* that lie at the mercy of their oppressors, *the poor also*, both because they have *no helper* and it is for his honour to help them and because they cry unto him and he has promised, in answer to their prayers, to help them; they by prayer *commit themselves unto him*, ^{<5104>}Psalms 10:14. *He will spare the needy* that throw themselves on his mercy, and will not be rigorous and severe with them; he *will save their souls*, and that is all they desire. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Christ is the poor man's King.

IV. That proud oppressors shall be reckoned with: *He shall break them in pieces* (v. 4), shall take away their power to hurt, and punish them for all

the mischief they have done. This is the office of a good king, *Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos* — *To spare the vanquished and debase the proud*. The devil is the great oppressor, whom Christ will break in pieces and of whose kingdom he will be the destruction. *With the breath of his mouth shall he slay that wicked one* (²³¹⁴Isaiah 11:4), and shall deliver the souls of his people *from deceit and violence*, v. 14. He shall save from the power of Satan, both as an old serpent working by deceit to ensnare them and as a roaring lion working by violence to terrify and devour them. *So precious shall their blood be unto him* that not a drop of it shall be shed, by the deceit or violence of Satan or his instruments, without being reckoned for. Christ is a King, who, though he calls his subjects sometimes to resist unto blood for him, yet is not prodigal of their blood, nor will ever have it parted with but upon a valuable consideration to his glory and theirs, and the filling up of the measure of their enemies' iniquity.

V. That religion shall flourish under Christ's government (v. 5): *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure*. Solomon indeed built the temple, and the fear and worship of God were well kept up, for some time, under his government, but it did not last long; this therefore must point at Christ's kingdom, all the subjects of which are brought to and kept in the fear of God; for the Christian religion has a direct tendency to, and a powerful influence upon, the support and advancement of natural religion. Faith in Christ will set up, and keep up, the fear of God; and therefore this is the everlasting gospel that is preached, *Fear God, and give honour to him*, ^{641E}Revelation 14:7. And, as Christ's government promotes devotion towards God, so it promotes both justice and charity among men (v. 7): *In his days shall the righteous flourish*; righteousness shall be practised, and those that practise righteousness shall be preferred. Righteousness shall abound and be in reputation, shall command and be in power. The law of Christ, written in the heart, disposes men to be honest and just, and to render to all their due; it likewise disposes men to live in love, and so it produces abundance of peace and beats swords into ploughshares. Both holiness and love shall be perpetual in Christ's kingdom, and shall never go to decay, for the subjects of it shall *fear God as long as the sun and moon endure*; Christianity, in the profession of it, having got footing in the world, shall keep its ground till the end of time, and having, in the power of it, got footing in the heart, it will continue there till, by death, the sun, and the moon, and the stars (that is, the bodily senses) are darkened.

Through all the changes of the world, and all the changes of life, Christ's kingdom will support itself; and, if the fear of God continue as long as the sun and moon, abundance of peace will. The peace of the church, the peace of the soul, shall run parallel with its purity and piety, and last as long as these last.

VI. That Christ's government shall be very comfortable to all his faithful loving subjects (v. 6): *He shall*, by the graces and comforts of his Spirit, *come down like rain upon the mown grass*; not on that which is cut down, but that which is left growing, that it may spring again, though it was beheaded. The gospel of Christ distils as the rain, which softens the ground that was hard, moistens that which was dry, and so makes it green and fruitful, ^{<250>}Isaiah 55:10. Let our hearts *drink in the rain*, ^{<307>}Hebrews 6:7.

VII. That Christ's kingdom shall be extended very far, and greatly enlarged; considering,

1. The extent of his territories (v. 8): *He shall have dominion from sea to sea* (from the South Sea to the North, or from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean) *and from the river Euphrates, or Nile, to the ends of the earth*. Solomon's dominion was very large (^{<102>}1 Kings 4:21), according to the promise, ^{<0158>}Genesis 15:18. But no sea, no river, is named, that it might, by these proverbial expressions, intimate the universal monarchy of the Lord Jesus. His gospel has been, or shall be, preached *to all nations* (^{<1244>}Matthew 24:14), and the *kingdoms of the world shall become his kingdoms* (^{<6115>}Revelation 11:15) when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in. His territories shall be extended to those countries,

(1.) That were strangers to him: *Those that dwell in the wilderness*, out of all high roads, that seldom hear news, shall hear the glad tidings of the Redeemer and redemption by him, *shall bow before him*, shall believe in him, accept of him, worship him, and take his yoke upon them. Before the Lord Jesus we must all either bow or break; if we break, we are ruined — if we bow, we are certainly made for ever.

(2.) That were enemies to him, and had fought against him: *They shall lick the dust*; they shall be brought down and laid in the dust, shall bite the ground for vexation, and be so hunger-bitten that they shall be glad of dust, the serpent's meat (^{<0085>}Genesis 3:15), for of his seed they are; and

over whom shall not he rule, when his enemies themselves are thus humbled and brought low?

2. The dignity of his tributaries. He shall not only reign over those that dwell in the wilderness, the peasants and cottagers, but over those that dwell in the palaces (v. 10): *The kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, that lie most remote from Israel and are the isles of the Gentiles* (⁴⁰⁰⁵Genesis 10:5), *shall bring presents* to him as their sovereign Lord, by and under whom they hold their crowns and all their crown lands. They shall court his favour, and make an interest in him, that they may hear his wisdom. This was literally fulfilled in Solomon (for *all the kings of the earth sought the wisdom of Solomon, and brought every man his present*, ⁴⁰²³2 Chronicles 9:23, 24), and in Christ too, when the wise men of the east, who probably were men of the first rank in their own country, came to worship him and *brought him presents*, ⁴⁰²¹Matthew 2:11. They shall present themselves to him; that is the best present we can bring to Christ, and without that no other present is acceptable, ⁴⁰¹¹Romans 12:1. They *shall offer gifts*, spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, offer them to Christ as their God, on Christ as their altar, which sanctifies every gift. Their conversion to God is called the *offering up*, or *sacrificing, of the Gentiles*, ⁴⁵¹⁶Romans 15:16. Yea, all kings shall, sooner or later, *fall down before him*, either to do their duty to him or to receive their doom from him, v. 11. They shall fall before him, either as his willing subjects or as his conquered captives, as suppliants for his mercy or expectants of his judgment. And, when the kings submit, the people come in of course: *All nations shall serve him; all shall be invited into his service; some of all nations shall come into it, and in every nation incense shall be offered to him and a pure offering*, ³⁰¹¹Malachi 1:11; ⁴⁶⁰⁹Revelation 7:9.

VIII. That he shall be honoured and beloved by all his subjects (v. 15): *He shall live; his subjects shall desire his life (O king! live for ever) and with good reason; for he has said, Because I live, you shall live also; and of him it is witnessed that he liveth, ever liveth, making intercession*, ³⁰⁰⁸Hebrews 7:8, 25. He shall live, and live prosperously; and,

1. Presents shall be made to him. Though he shall be able to live without them, for he needs neither the gifts nor the services of any, yet to him *shall be given of the gold of Sheba* — gold, the best of metals, gold of Sheba, which probably was the finest gold; for he that is best must be served with the best. Those that have abundance of the wealth of this world, that have

gold at command, must give it to Christ, must serve him with it, do good with it. *Honour the Lord with thy substance.*

2. Prayers shall be made for him, and that continually. The people prayed for Solomon, and that helped to make him and his reign so great a blessing to them. It is the duty of subjects to make prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for kings and all in authority, not in compliment to them, as is too often done, but in concern for the public welfare. But how is this applied to Christ? He needs not our prayers, nor can have any benefit by them. But the Old-Testament saints prayed for his coming, prayed continually for it; for they called him, *He that should come.* And now that he has come we must pray for the success of his gospel and the advancement of his kingdom, which he calls praying for him (Hosanna to the Son of David, prosperity to his reign), and we must pray for his second coming. It may be read, *Prayer shall be made through him,* or for his sake; whatsoever we ask of the Father shall be in his name and in dependence upon his intercession.

3. Praises shall be made of him, and high encomiums given of his wisdom, justice, and goodness: *Daily shall he be praised.* By praying daily in his name we give him honour. Subjects ought to speak well of the government that is a blessing to them; and much more ought all Christians to praise Jesus Christ, daily to praise him; for they owe their all to him, and to him they lie under the highest obligations.

IX. That under his government there shall be a wonderful increase both of meat and mouths, both of the fruits of the earth in the country and of the people inhabiting the cities, v. 16.

1. The country shall grow rich. Sow but a *handful of corn on the top of the mountains,* whence one would expect but little, and yet *the fruit of it shall shake like Lebanon;* it shall come up like a wood, so thick, and tall, and strong, like the cedars of Lebanon. Even upon the tops of the mountains the earth shall bring forth by handfuls; that is an expression of great plenty (⁽¹⁴⁴⁷⁾Genesis 41:47), as the grass upon the house top is said to be that wherewith the mower fills not his hand. This is applicable to the wonderful productions of the seed of the gospel in the days of the Messiah. A handful of that seed, sown in the mountainous and barren soil of the Gentile world, produced a wonderful harvest gathered in to Christ, fruit that shook like Lebanon. The fields were *white to the harvest,*

☞John 4:35; ☞Matthew 9:37. The grain of mustard-seed grew up to a great tree.

2. The towns shall grow populous: *Those of the city shall flourish like grass*, for number, for verdure. The gospel church, the city of God among men, shall have all the marks of prosperity, many shall be added to it, and those that are shall be happy in it.

X. That his government shall be perpetual, both to his honour and to the happiness of his subjects. The Lord Jesus shall reign for ever, and of him only this must be understood, and not at all of Solomon. It is Christ only that shall *be feared throughout all generations* (v. 5) and *as long as the sun and moon endure*, v. 7. 1. The honour of the princes is immortal and shall never be sullied (v. 17): *His name shall endure for ever*, in spite of all the malicious attempts and endeavours of the powers of darkness to eclipse the lustre of it and to cut off the line of it; it shall be preserved; it shall be perpetuated; it shall be propagated. As the names of earthly princes are continued in their posterity, so Christ's in himself. *Filiabitur nomen ejus — His name shall descend to posterity*. All nations, while the world stands, shall call him blessed, shall bless God for him, continually speak well of him, and think themselves happy in him. To the end of time, and to eternity, his name shall be celebrated, shall be made use of; every tongue shall confess it and every knee shall bow before it.

2. The happiness of the people if universal too; it is complete and everlasting: *Men shall be blessed*, truly and for ever blessed, *in him*. This plainly refers to the promise made unto the fathers that in the Messiah all the nations of the earth should be blessed. ☞Genesis 12:3.

☞PSALM 72:18-20

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

Such an illustrious prophecy as is in the foregoing verses of the Messiah and his kingdom may fitly be concluded, as it is here, with hearty prayers and praises.

I. The psalmist is here enlarged in thanksgivings for the prophecy and promise, v. 18, 19. So sure is every word of God, and with so much

satisfaction may we rely upon it, that we have reason enough to give thanks for what he has said, though it be not yet done. We must own that for all the great things he has done for the world, for the church, for the children of men, for his own children, in the kingdom of providence, in the kingdom of grace, for all the power and trust lodged in the hands of the Redeemer, God is worthy to be praised; we must stir up ourselves and all that is within us to praise him after the best manner, and desire that all others may do it. *Blessed be the Lord*, that is, *blessed be his glorious name*; for it is only in his name that we can contribute any thing to his glory and blessedness, and yet that is also *exalted above all blessing and praise*. Let it be blessed for ever, it shall be blessed for ever, it deserves to be blessed for ever, and we hope to be for ever blessing it. We are here taught to bless the name of Christ, and to bless God in Christ, for all that which he has done for us by him. We must bless him,

1. As the Lord God, as a self-existent self-sufficient Being, and our sovereign Lord.
2. As the God of Israel, in covenant with that people and worshipped by them, and who does this in performance of the truth unto Jacob and the mercy to Abraham,
3. As the God *who only does wondrous things*, in creation and providence, and especially this work of redemption, which excels them all. Men's works are little, common, trifling things, and even these they could not do without him. But God does all by his own power, and they are wondrous things which he does, and such as will be the eternal admiration of saints and angels.

II. He is earnest in prayer for the accomplishment of this prophecy and promise: *Let the whole earth be filled with his glory*, as it will be when the *kings of Tarshish, and the isles, shall bring presents to him*. It is sad to think how empty the earth is of the glory of God, how little service and honour he has from a world to which he is such a bountiful benefactor. All those, therefore, that wish well to the honour of God and the welfare of mankind, cannot but desire that the earth may be filled with the discoveries of his glory, suitably returned in thankful acknowledgments of his glory. Let every heart, and every mouth, and every assembly, be filled with the high praises of God. 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 a 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 ever shuts up his life with this prayer, v. 20. 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.”