
The Promised Kingdom

Psalm 72

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Introduction

Last Wednesday around 9:30 p.m. the Turner family got a shot to see a total lunar eclipse. They told us that the next lunar eclipse will not occur until 2010. And so out the door we went. Into the 10 degree air we looked up and saw a cloudless sky in which God's creation was on display. What a sight to see; the full moon passing into Earth's shadow and changing in appearance to a reddish tinge.

This was quite pleasant for each of us to see. But something else caught my attention. Lisa yelled out the door as we were gazing into the sky. She said, "just below and over to the left you can see Saturn". Saturn? Brittany and I looked up again and noticed a speck of light just where Lisa had said. We were looking at Saturn – a pin prick of light. All we could see was a speck of light. Its diameter was around 1/16 of an inch. No dazzling colors or rings. Just a bit of light.

But this bit of light is the sixth planet from the Sun and the second largest in the solar system having a diameter on which more than 9 Earths could line up across! This bit of light also looked motionless. But it is not. Saturn goes around the Sun very slowly, but spins on its axis extremely fast. A Saturn year lasts for more than 29 Earth years, but a Saturn day only lasts a little over 10 hours.

As we were staring at this speck of light, the wind near its equator was blowing at approximately 1,000 miles an hour (over 4x the speed of the violent tornado that tore Xenia into pieces April 4th, 1974). I wonder what Galileo was thinking in 1610 when he peered at it through his telescope.

He like I didn't initially know that this bit of light had breathtaking rings that are huge yet tiny: the main rings could cover almost the entire distance between Earth and the moon yet they are less than a half-a-mile thick. And those beautiful rings that show up in pictures are not solid either. They are made up of particles of ice, dust and rock.

Yes, Brittany and I enjoyed the planet gazing experience last Wednesday night. But did we appreciate on that chilly Wednesday night that we were looking at "The Jewel of the Solar System" that's more than 800 million miles away!

Sometimes I wonder if we look at Jesus Christ this way; a way that could be summarized as "just a bit of light". When in reality He is the Jewel not merely of the Solar System but of the entire universe.

This morning we will think together over a Psalm that represents the promised Kingdom. We will see in this psalm King David, King Solomon and people living in the 10th century BC. But if we stop there, we will have only looked at a bit of light. As we keep looking at Psalm 72, I hope that we will all see the brightness and beauty and bigness of what it truly is.

To come away with the soul-satisfying view of Ps.72 we will need God's help. Let's pray.

Five facets of the promised Kingdom¹

When the Bible talks about the kingdom it generally talks about three things. It talks about God's people, God's place and God's rule. From the Garden of Eden to the Promised Land to Jesus Christ we see that God's people were to live in God's place gladly under God's rule.

In Psalm 72 we pick up this pattern by noticing the transferring of David's rule over to his son. His son Solomon will need God's gifts of wisdom and righteousness and power if he is to rule God's people in a way that pleases God and benefits His people.

The Righteous King of the promised kingdom

v.1-7

In verse one David petitions the Lord for himself and his son Solomon. He asks for the enablement to judge righteously and that this righteous rule would be passed on to the next generation.

Psalm 72 is talking about the promised kingdom. What I want us to see are the facets (elements) of this promised kingdom. And I want us to see these facets in such a way that when we leave here today, we will not see the promised kingdom like I saw Saturn on Wednesday – a bit of light. Rather, my prayer is that all of us will view the kingdom as the Jewel of the Universe. And when we view it as the Jewel of the Universe, daily life begins to change.

To that end, notice with me the first facet of the promised kingdom found in v.1-7. Listen to see the righteous King as I read v.1-7. **<read text>**

Judging righteously

2

The righteous king is described in six ways. The first of which is found in v.2.

Verse two describes the king's role as a protector and judge of the poor. King David and King Solomon were to judge righteously for the wellbeing of the defenseless. This depiction of the king judging righteously is beautifully displayed in 1Kings 3. In that passage King Solomon has just received the throne. He is pictured as a loving king whose desire is nothing less than God-pleasing. He asks the Lord for wisdom to govern his people wisely. God answers his prayer in much greater ways than he imagined. God made him the wisest of men and crowned him with honor and riches. The case of the baby that Solomon threatens to divide in two is a world-famous demonstration of the king's extraordinary God-given gift of wisdom.

In verse two we see a righteous king judging righteously.

Providing prosperity

3

This righteous king is not only described in terms of judging. In v.3 we see him providing prosperity. This picture of hills and mountains bearing prosperity for the people is a lovely sight. When the king was gladly under the rule of God, God blessed the land and it brought forth much prosperity.

¹ The outline of this message and some of its insights were taken from or shaped by Warren Wiersbe in his commentary "Be Worshipful".

The word here for prosperity in v.3 is shalom. Some of you will know this Hebrew word as meaning “peace/wholeness”. The text communicates the effects of a righteous king ruling righteously over God’s people. They were experiencing shalom – a peace from the surrounding enemies and a peace free from worry. This is a peace that flourishes in the context or climate of righteousness (cf. v.2; see also Isa.32:17).

The righteous king as we notice here is *providing abundant peace*.

Defending the needy

4

Next, in v.4, we look at the righteous king defending the needy. What a picture of tenderness and care for those who are vulnerable. As King David conveyed the kingdom to his son, we watch the righteous king in 1Kings 3 caring for a prostitute and her baby. We notice how he governed for the broken hearted and cared for those who were exploited. We see how God gave a powerful man a heart for the weak and a desire to use his authority to give deliverance to the children of the needy.

The righteous king in light of this verse is *defending the needy*.

Crushing the oppressor

4

We also see the righteous king crushing the oppressor. In the last part of verse 4 we get an indication of his power to do justice against those who oppress his people. Reading 1Kings 3-10 will give you a rich perspective on the righteous king crushing the enemies and expelling the oppressors from the land of prosperity and peace.

The righteous king in light of this verse is *crushing the oppressor*.

Reigning endlessly

5

The descriptions of the righteous king keep going as we pay attention to v.5. Here we come to a description that makes us pause. Phrases like “while the sun endures” and “as long as the moon throughout all generations” talk about the righteous king’s period in office. Reigning endlessly is how long the people desired the king to reign.

The righteous king as seen in v.5 is *reigning endlessly*.

Refreshing the broken

6-7

Dropping down to v.6-7 we come to the end of the description of the righteous king in the promised kingdom. Here we see him refreshing the mown over. The metaphor of “rain that falls on the mown grass” communicates something of the king and something of his people.

First the king is depicted as rain that falls. We are to sense the effects of the righteous king upon his people. It is refreshing, in other words, to have him as the king.

Next we are to sense what his people were experiencing. “Mown grass” describes brokenness; a sense of cut off or cut down and stripped away. The righteous king loves his people and will bring back to life those who are beaten down and losing hope.

The righteous king according to these verses is *refreshing the broken*.

This is a glorious picture of the unified kingdom whose king reigned with power and pity. God promised David an endless dynasty (cf. 2Sam.7). And in this dynasty a

righteous king would provide a government in which righteousness would flourish, people would be protected, peace would be enjoyed, the oppressor is crushed and the downtrodden are refreshed.

What a king and what a kingdom these verses depict.

The world-wide scope of the promised kingdom

v.8-11

As we take this jewel of the promised kingdom and turn it to see another facet of its beauty, we come to v.8-11. Another element or facet of the promised kingdom is its territory and authority. Listen to see this as I read v.8-11. <read text>

To the ends of the Earth

8

The world-wide scope of the promised kingdom can be viewed as we notice the bookends of this stanza or movement; v.8-11. In v.8 we come to the phrase “to the ends of the earth” and in v.11 we read “all nations serve him”. These ways of describing both the territory and the authority of the righteous king are mapped out for the reader in v.9-10.

To the desert tribes (Arabia)

9

According to verse 9 we see the righteous king overseeing the desert tribes. This likely is Arabia located east of the promise land.

To Tarshish (Italy)

10

Next we come to verse 10 and see the righteous king’s rule extending to Tarshish. Likely we are seeing his reign extending Northwest up to Italy.

To the coastlands (Mediterranean)

10

We drop down in v.10 and notice that the righteous king’s governance expands to the coastlands which are out to the Mediterranean Sea.

To Sheba & Seba (Egypt)

11

We follow the scope of his power and authority in v.11 over to Sheba and Seba. This is locating the king’s supremacy even down into Egypt.

To all nations

11

And finally, the last part of v.11 provides a phrase that can be found all over the O.T. The righteous king’s scope of control goes out to all the nations.

The compassionate reign in the promised kingdom

v.12-14

To be dazzled by the promised kingdom we need to gaze at another facet of the jewel. In v.12-14 we see the compassionate reign in the promised kingdom.

Listen as I read these verses. <read text>

The king over Israel was looked upon as a shepherd who was to lovingly care for God’s flock. We see this in another Psalm that reads “He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand” (Ps.78:70-72; see also Eze.34).

Delivers the needy

12

As we look at the promised kingdom from this facet we get the sense of compassion. First in v.12 we see the king delivers the needy. O the mercy; the wonderful mercy we sense in this verse. The righteous king compassionately reigns to deliver the one who has no helper. This weak one in v.12 senses the compassionate reign of the king and cries out to him for help. And he receives mercy in time of need.

The king of this promised kingdom *delivers the needy*.

Pities the weak

13

The compassionate reign of the righteous king in the promised kingdom can also be viewed in v.13. He pities the weak. Great compassion and forgiveness and sympathy are expressed in this verse. We see the king's heart in this facet. He is moved by his people. He is moved into action by the weakness of his people.

The king of this promised kingdom *pities the weak*.

Redeems their lives

14

Lastly, we come to verse 14 and see a compassionate reign over the lives of the poor. The word "redeem" or rescue gives us the sense of a kinsman redeemer that we see beautifully in the book of Ruth. How a noble and strong man fulfills the Levitical law and rescues a widowed outcast whose resources were nothing. And having rescued her he takes her as his wife for life. What a story. What a glimpse into the compassionate reign in the promised kingdom.

The king of this promised kingdom *redeems his people*.

An endless blessing in the promised kingdom

v.15-17

So far we've seen much of this promised kingdom. But this is not all. God's covenant with Israel assured them of peace and prosperity as long as the rules of the people obeyed His commandments (cf. 2Sam.7:11-16). As King David and Solomon ruled over God's people righteously look what happened.

The next element or facet of the promised kingdom we see in this Psalm is found in v.15-17. An endless blessing in the promised kingdom comes now to our attention. Listen as I read these verses. **<read text>**

Increasing love

15

This endless blessing according to v.15 is witnessed in the phrase "Long may he live". Long live the king was a song the people would recite to the righteous king. Here we can see in the promised kingdom increasing love for the king.

Increasing crops

16

We also can see the prosperity of the kingdom by noticing the flourishing crops of verse 16. Much success, much privileged circumstances, much wealth are springing forth in this promised kingdom.

Increasing people

16

Look also at the latter part of v.16. May people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! Countless people are coming to life and rejoicing under the righteous rule of the righteous king.

Increasing Fame

17

As a result of this explosive growth, the king's fame extends as seen in v.17. Verse 17 is fascinating as we notice how the Abrahamic covenant moves toward and lands on the Davidic king. The king's renown is extending forever and ever and ever.

Increasing Happiness

17

This extension of his glory makes the king's people all the happier. They are blessed as they call their king blessed.

This facet of the kingdom demonstrates the immense increase in the following ways: affection for the king, privileged circumstances from the king, in the number of the king's people, fame of the king and happiness among the king's people.

The promised kingdom disclosed in front of our eyes this morning is breathtaking.

An endless praise in the promised kingdom

v.18-20

But it is not over with yet. In v.18-20 we come to the last facet of the promised kingdom. We have seen thus far that the promised kingdom 1) has a righteous king 2) that it has a world-wide scope 3) and one can find compassionate reign in this dominion 4) and that endless blessings are located in the kingdom.

Now we come to the end and find that there is an endless benediction in the promised kingdom. *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.*

All these blessings we have seen in Solomon's kingdom were now reflected back upon the one who gives all this prosperity and pleasure. The LORD is receiving endless praise from the king's people. This is the goal of all the richness of the kingdom. We end our time looking at the promised kingdom by noticing the aim for all these rich mercies.

The LORD is worshipped for all the gifts the people enjoy. They know from whom all these blessings come. They know that these blessings in the promised kingdom are to advance the LORD's renown all over the world. The promised kingdom we've looked at this morning is all about the LORD and his glory!

By way of conclusion, we've seen the Davidic covenant and how it was to be transferred onto David's son. And as the son lived under the rule of the Lord, the Lord would bless his people richly. The king would be honored and the people happy as they lived under the Word of God. **Conclusion**

Historically, we read about Solomon receiving all the wisdom needed to govern God's people righteously. 1King 4 describes life under the wise rule of God's anointed. Solomon rules

over Israel and the nations. In 1Kings 5 we are told about Solomon's rule over the nations and how the Gentiles praise the king by giving him their wealth, skills and allegiance. In 1Kings 6 God is with his people. The building of the Temple and the promise and presence of the Lord are retold for us. 1Kings 8 tells the story of the magnificent dedication of the glorious Temple.

1Kings 10 gives us a breathtaking view of Solomon the king. The Queen of Sheba comes to investigate the rumor of Solomon's reign. Her breath, it says, was taken away as she noticed his wisdom and the splendor of his rule. The Queen's praise echoes the language of Deuteronomy 4. She recognizes the wisdom and justice of Solomon's kingdom and the happiness of his people. What she had heard was unbelievable but it was only half the truth. The report she heard was not just of Solomon, but his relation to the Name of the Lord.

So, is Psalm 72 about King Solomon and his kingdom?

1Kings 11 we begin to watch things fall apart. Solomon takes many wives – a direct violation to the Word of God. God had warned Israel not to intermarry with other nations because “they will surely turn your hearts after their gods”. And this is precisely what we see happen to Solomon and the people under his rule. Their hearts were not fully devoted to God. And a heart turned to other gods is a heart turned away from the Lord. According to Genesis 12, God's promise to Abraham was that through his offspring all peoples on the earth would be blessed. Is Solomon a blessing to the nations?

From that point onward, the kingdom did not remotely look like Psalm 72. It became divided. It was overthrown. God's king was dethroned. God's people were removed. It all looks rather horrible and hopeless.

Our hearts may become restless as we think:

- Who will reign righteously and judge perfectly? (see Isa.9:7; 11:4-5; Jer.23:5,6)
- Who will fulfill the promise of an endless dynasty? (see 2Sam.7:16; Lk.1:31-33)
- Who will bring and be “shalom” to us? (see Romans 5:1-8; Eph.2:14)
- Who will provide God's people with righteousness? (see Romans 4)

No – Solomon was not the anointed who would fulfill and express fully Psalm 72. It has been written to cause the Israelites to look forward (cf. Micah 4:1-5). It has been written for our instruction to locate this righteous king over this promised kingdom in the person of Jesus Christ (cf. Isa.2:1-4; Dan.7:13-14; Rev.17:14; 19:16). His kingdom brings the blessings of salvations and eternal prosperity. And people from all nations come to listen to His word – the gospel. His people model life in response to His word – the gospel. This lifestyle attracts people to the words of Jesus. They, like Queen Sheba, will have their breath taken away as they glimpse the glory of the King through his people.

The applications from this text are limitless. They apply to evangelism, for personal growth in grace, for biblical counseling and discipleship. Psalm 72 is rich for missions and the Great Commission to his church. We can see the exciting prospect of helping the poor and caring for needs.

Yes there is much in Psalm 72. But the vital use of this text has not yet been discussed.

I believe that the basic battle in the Christian life is one of sight. We read a text. We listen to it expounded. We hear some applications. We go home. Only to do it again next week.

I wonder – are we like Brittany and I on that frosty Wednesday night who could only see a bit of light when in reality we were looking at the Jewel of the Solar System?

To experience a heart transformation leading to life change

- *Gaze much at Jesus Christ and His Kingdom – Bible reading*
- *Get much from Jesus Christ in His Kingdom – Biblical praying*
- *Go hard after Jesus Christ and His Kingdom – Biblical discipleship*
- *Go on with Jesus Christ until His Kingdom – Biblical perseverance*
- *Grace others with Jesus Christ in His Kingdom – Biblical ministry*
- *Glory always in Jesus Christ in His Kingdom – Biblical worship*

May all of us do all of this so that we will say with the psalmist:

Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory!

Amen & Amen!



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