

The Just King

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 72

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Canadian Thistle (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-11)

II. The Just King

Psalm 72

A Psalm Of Solomon.

¹Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's Son.

²He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice. ³The mountains will bring peace to the people, And the little hills, by righteousness. ⁴He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, And will break in pieces the oppressor. ⁵They shall fear You As long as the sun and moon endure, Throughout all generations. ⁶He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, Like showers *that* water the earth. ⁷In His days the righteous shall flourish, And abundance of peace, Until the moon is no more. ⁸He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. ⁹Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, And His enemies will lick the dust. ¹⁰The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. ¹¹Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him.

¹²For He will deliver the needy when he cries, The poor also, and *him* who has no helper. ¹³He will spare the poor and needy, And will save the souls of the needy. ¹⁴He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; And precious shall be their blood in His sight. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶There 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. ¹⁷His 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.

¹⁸Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! ¹⁹And blessed *be* His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory. Amen and Amen.

²⁰The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

A. Petition (1 cf. 1 Kgs 3:1-15, 28)

B. A Universal Reign of Justice and Peace (vv. 2-11 cf. Gen 3:14; Ps 94:20)

One of the earliest pictures of the coming Messianic king is *Melchizedek* (Gen 14:18ff). Paul informs us that *Melchizedek* was a type, a picture of the Messiah (cf. Heb 7:1-3). His name *Melchizedek* means "*king of _____*" and he was the *King of Salem*, the *King of _____*. The Messiah will bring *justice* and *peace* to earth.

B'. A Universal Reign of Justice and Peace (12-17)

Spurgeon writes: "*Here is an excellent reason for man's submission to the Lord Christ; it is not because they dread his overwhelming power, but because they are won over by his just and condescending [merciful] rule*" (2:230).

A'. Petition (18-19)

III. Application

¹⁰Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. ¹²Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. (Ps 2:10-12)

A. God's Vengeance and Governing Authorities (Rom 13:1-7)

³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. (Rom 13:3-4)

The proper role of *rulers* is to be a *terror to evil works* and a *boon to good works* (3). The civil authority is *God's servant* (4a), summoned to enforce justice and righteousness. As rulers *execute wrath on him who practices evil*, they serve as God's _____ (4b) – instruments of God's just wrath who help suppress the lust for personal vengeance (cp. Eccl 8:11).

B. Governing Authorities and God's Authority (cf. Dt 16:18-20)

Every ruler, as a *minister of God*, is accountable to God Himself (cf. Ps 2:10). Civil authorities are to *reward the good* and *punish the evil* (13:3). So who defines *good* and *evil*? _____! Civil authorities are not a law unto themselves but subject to *God's sovereign authority* wielded by His *Messiah, Jesus*, revealed in *His moral law*. John Calvin writes:

By the terms righteousness and judgment, the Psalmist means a due and well-regulated administration of government, which he opposes to the tyrannical and unbridled license of heathen kings, who, despising God, rule according to the dictates of their own will... From the words we learn by the way, that no government in the world can be rightly managed but under the conduct of God, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If kings possessed in themselves resources sufficiently ample, it would have been to no purpose for David to have sought by prayer from another, that with which they were of themselves already provided. But in requesting that the righteousness and judgment of God may be given to kings, he reminds them that none are fit for occupying that exalted station, except in so far as they are formed for it by the hand of God.

C. The Christian Hope for All Kings and Nations (Zech 9:9-10; 1 Tim 2:1-4)

What is the Christian hope for all kings and nations? It is that they will, through the righteous reign of God's Messiah Jesus who now sits at God's right hand and rules over all, gradually come to worship and serve Jesus, the King of kings. So Zechariah summons us to rejoice using the words of Psalm 72(9:9-10):

⁹*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'*

How will Jesus accomplish this? By His Word and Spirit through the witness of His people. So let us pray that He would do so. Remember Paul's exhortation:

¹*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2:1-4)*

IV. Conclusion