

## Psalm 72

### My Translation

*Superscription:* Of / For Solomon

#### The Davidide in the Kingdom of God

- <sup>1</sup> O God, grant [your vision of] **justice** to (the) king!  
Moreover, [your vision of] **righteousness** to [his] successor(s)!<sup>1</sup>
- <sup>2</sup> Let him judge your people with [your] **righteousness**,  
and **your wretched ones** with [your] **justice**.<sup>2</sup>
- <sup>3</sup> Let [the] mountains offer up **peace** for the people,  
and [the] hills along with **righteousness**.
- <sup>4</sup> Let him establish **justice** for **the wretched** of the people,  
let him give deliverance to **those who are needy**,  
and let him crush **the oppressor**.

#### TEMPORAL EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- <sup>5</sup> Let him endure as long as the sun,  
and before the moon, throughout all generations.
- <sup>6</sup> Let him descend like rain upon mown grass,  
like springtime rains that shower the land.
- <sup>7</sup> May there be a flowering of **righteousness** in his days,  
and an abundance of **peace**, until the moon is no more.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- <sup>8</sup> May he exercise (his) rule from sea to sea,  
and from (the) River<sup>3</sup> to the ends of the earth.
- <sup>9</sup> May desert (tribes) kneel before him,  
and may his enemies lick (the) dust.

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<sup>1</sup>Justice and righteousness are the foremost characteristics of Yahweh's reign; cf. Pss. 96:13; 97:2, 6; 98:9; 99:4; 146:7.

<sup>2</sup>Note the chiasmic formation in vss. 1-2 through the use of "justice" and "righteousness."

<sup>3</sup>Either the Euphrates or the eschatological river that flows from the Jerusalem temple; cf. Ps 146; Ezk 47; Zech 9:10.

- <sup>10</sup> Kings of Tarshish and distant shores will bring gifts (to him);  
kings of Sheba and Seba will send regular tribute.  
<sup>11</sup> Just as all kings will fall prostrate before him,  
So all nations will serve him.

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*A Blessing for the World via the Davidide in the Kingdom of God*

- <sup>12</sup> Indeed he will deliver **(the) needy** who cry out unceasingly,  
**(the) wretched** for whom there is **no helper**.  
<sup>13</sup> He sheds tears over **(the) powerless** and **(the) needy**,  
and the lives of **(the) poor** he delivers.  
<sup>14</sup> Out of the midst of **violence** he **redeems** their lives;  
for their blood is of great worth in his sight.  
<sup>15</sup> O may he live!  
May gold from Sheba be given to him.  
May there be prayers continually on his behalf,  
and may he be blessed at all times.  
<sup>16</sup> May there be an excess of grain in the land;  
on the tops of the mountains let it wave.  
May its fruit be like (that of) Lebanon;  
and out of (the) cities just as the verdant land.  
<sup>17</sup> Let his name be forever,  
before the sun may his name be perpetuated.  
**May all the nations be blessed by him;**  
may they consider him supremely contented.

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- <sup>18</sup> Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel,  
who alone does wondrous things.  
<sup>19</sup> Blessed be his glorious name forever;  
*may the whole earth be filled with his glory.*  
Amen and Amen.<sup>4</sup>  
<sup>20</sup> The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>This is the editorial doxology that serves as the marker for the end of Book II of the Psalter.

<sup>5</sup>This is a secondary editorial colophon which appeared relatively early in the editing of the Psalter.

**My Reflections** (cf. Ps 82)

What is reflected in the psalm is a vision of the melding of heavenly rule with earthly politics through the Davidic monarchy. In such a compound vision, the foundation of the throne of the King and of the throne of Yahweh are predicated upon *the justice and righteousness of God*. Moreover, it is presumed in such a vision that Davidic kingship can, will, and must establish *shalom* in the land (*'ereṣ*) and upon the earth (*'ādāmā*) that reflects the will and rule of Yahweh.

Viewed historically, this compound vision in its political and religious aspects failed to deploy properly, whether in pre-exilic Israel or in the post-exilic Second Temple era. In its failure, we should remember that neither the monarchy nor the temple institution were expressions of Yahweh's ideal will. Yet they were institutions Yahweh allowed & even fostered as means to his ends.

In Ps 72, the emphasis upon Yahweh's (and thus his king's) concern for the administration of justice & righteousness particularly for the poor and the oppressed is marked. This emphasis implies the existence of a growing disparity between the "haves" and the "have-nots" under the burgeoning royal & temple bureaucracies as rural Israel faced forced transition toward urbanization.

The author employs this implied disparity to backlight his portrayal of the Kingdom of Yahweh fully deployed on earth. As such it showcases an imaginative hope for Yahweh's grand eschatological achievement. As our author understands it, this imaginative hope is certain to become reality via Davidic dynasty. With its arrival, Yahweh's promises to Abram for all the families of the earth will find their ultimate fulfillment.

Thus, the psalmist's theological grounding & eschatological imagination takes the Christian reader further in Yahweh's agenda for the world than the psalmist himself could ever know. In his person, Jesus of Nazareth embodied both aspects of the compound vision that informs Ps 72.