

PSALM 72

KING MESSIAH AND HIS KINGDOM

AUTHOR: David (for Solomon)

INTRODUCTION: The authorship of this psalm is disputed, since ancient manuscripts have a variation in the inscription; some read "a psalm of Solomon", indicating Solomon was the author, while others read "a psalm for Solomon", suggesting David wrote the psalm. From the context of the psalm itself, it seems more appropriate to take the psalm as one written by David for his son Solomon, whom he appointed king (1Kgs1:30), with a view to Solomon's greatest son Who would come (1Chr17:11), that is King Messiah. If David indeed authored the psalm, it is quite likely his very last.

The subject of this psalm is King Messiah, Who will be Solomon's Son (v1), and His coming (note the verbs in vv2-17 are in the future tense) reign of peace and righteousness. Thus, it is Christ's reign during the Millennium, or the Messianic Kingdom, that is in view in this psalm. The terms for the coming Kingdom, Millennial vs. Messianic, are equally valid, the one emphasizing the duration of the Kingdom, the other emphasizing the identity of the King.

The heavy emphasis on Christ (i.e., Messiah) as King may not have a familiar ring to the Christian today, who is typically much more comfortable with the NT than the OT. That portion of the NT directed to the Church (which excludes the Gospels and Revelation), rarely refers to Christ as King; the exceptions are 1Tim1:17 & 6:15, which really refer to Christ's eternal and universal reign as God rather than His coming reign as Messiah. This is because Christ's unique relationship to the Christian is that of Lord of the Church (1Cor1:2), Head of the Body (Col1:18), and Bridegroom of the Bride (2Cor11:2; Eph5:22-32); in the coming Messianic Kingdom we are to reign with Christ (Rev5:10). However, the relationship of the Messiah to Israel and the Gentile nations is always said to be that of King.

A PRAYER FOR KING SOLOMON/KING MESSIAH

[1] Here, the prayer of David is for the King (i.e., Solomon), and for the King's Son, that is Messiah (1Chr17:11). The pronouns (i.e., He, His) that follow in vv2-17 all refer back to the King's Son, Messiah, here in v1. King Messiah and His coming rule is the grand subject of this psalm. It is the coming, future rule of King Messiah on earth that is a prominent petition in the prayer that Christ taught His disciples to pray (Matt6:10).

Certainly David's initial petition for the King, that is Solomon, was fulfilled, as the LORD gifted to Solomon wisdom to judge, so that "there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee" (1Kgs3:12).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

- [2] Messiah's kingdom will be one in which He personally judges in righteousness (Isa9:7; Rev19:11). This cannot refer merely to Solomon, as his personal sin (1Kgs11:1-8) led to God's judgment of him in dividing the nation (1Kgs11:9-13).
- [3] Messiah's kingdom will be one of peace, with nations (under the figures of "mountains" and "hills") living in harmony.
- [4] In Messiah's kingdom, His justice will deliver the righteous, and all acts of unrighteousness will be judged. Righteousness will be enforced by the King with a rod of iron (Ps2:9; Rev19:15), and even unbelievers will 'feign obedience' to Messiah (Ps66:3).
- [5] This verse makes it clear that the fulfillment of the kingdom promised in the Davidic Covenant (2Sam7:16; 1Chr17:14) must be the Millennium, as the sun, moon and sea are all explicitly mentioned in this psalm (vv5-8) regarding the Messianic Kingdom, which won't exist in the New Earth (Rev21:1,23).
- The language here that links the duration of the Messianic Kingdom with the sun and the moon is an explicit connection of the New Covenant (Jer31:31-36) with the Noahic Covenant (Gen8:21-22; 9:9-17). Once the Messianic Kingdom is established, it will endure for 1,000 years (Rev20:1-6) until the present is dissolved by fire (2Pet3:10-13) and a New Earth is created (Rev21:1).
- [6] Figuratively, Messiah's reign of peace and righteousness will nourish and bless the world as rain showers do the earth. More literally, all lands will receive the rains necessary for abundant agricultural production (Amos9:13), contingent on obedience to King Messiah (Zech14:16-17).
- [7] Messiah's rule in the Millennial Kingdom will be God's solution to the age-long questions, 'Why do the righteous suffer, and the wicked prosper' (Cp. Hab1:1-4). In Messiah's kingdom, the righteous will be abundantly blessed, and the wicked will be immediately judged (Isa65:18-25).
- [8] While Messiah will certainly sit upon "the throne of His father, David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob, forever" (Luk1:32-33) in the Millennium, fulfilling the Davidic Covenant, His reign will extend over all nations as King of kings, and Lord of lords (Ps2:8; Amos9:11-12; Mic5:4; Zech9:9-10; 14:9; Rev19:15-16).
- [9] All inhabitants/nations of the Messianic Kingdom will submit to King Messiah (Philip2:9-10; Isa45:23; 60:12); believers will do so willingly, and unbelievers will do so either out of fear (Ps66:3) or compulsion (i.e., "His enemies shall lick the dust" pictures a victorious king putting his boot on the neck of a conquered enemy to force obedience).
- [10] Many Gentile nations having their own kings will exist in the Millennium, under the rule of Messiah as King of kings (Zech14:9; Rev19:16). All nations, however, will be required to come to Jerusalem to worship Messiah at the Feast of Tabernacles

(Zech14:16-19), will bring "presents" and "gifts" as tribute (see v15), which will include the offering of sacrifices (Isa60:7; Jer33:18; Ezek44:15; Zech14:21).

The three "kings" mentioned here are often wrongly identified with the "wise men", or Magi, of Matthew 2. The Magi were from Babylon, they were not kings, and their number is not specified.

Sheba was a Shemitic kingdom located in the Arabian peninsula (i.e., Asia), Seba was a Hamitic kingdom in southern, black Africa, and Tarshish is presumed to be a Japhetic kingdom (Gen10:2-3) of Europe (often Spain or Britain, through such an identification has problems with 2Chr9:21). Thus, this allusion to kings from Asia, Africa and Europe, descended from Shem, Ham and Japheth, is a figure (i.e., merism) denoting that the whole world will submit to and worship King Messiah. This does not, however, mean that all will be believers.

[11] This is the conclusion drawn from the figure of v10; namely, all nations (Jew and Gentile) will serve King Messiah in the Millennium.

[12] America was founded on the principle, "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all". This was a wonderful foundation, yet today America is as wicked and ungodly as Sodom. Why? Two problems: 1) sinful, largely unregenerate citizens, and 2) sinful, largely unregenerate leaders.

The Messianic Kingdom will be a virtual paradise on earth because the subjects of it will be predominately regenerate (all will be regenerate at the start), but more importantly because: 1) the King will be the perfectly righteous God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and 2) His administration will be comprised of resurrected and glorified saints (Cf. Jer30:9; Ezek37:24-25; Matt8:11; 19:28; 1Cor6:1-3).

In vv12-14, much emphasis is placed on King Messiah's care for the poor and needy in His kingdom. This has to be reconciled with the many other passages of Scripture put emphasis on fact that there will be abundant blessing and material prosperity for all in the Kingdom (e.g., vv16-17 of this psalm); with this in mind, these references to the "poor and needy" probably should be taken to mean simply that King Messiah will love and care for even the least in His kingdom (not that there will be "poor" in the kingdom as we think of today).

[13] The king of the Messianic Kingdom will be Christ, who is also the Redeemer of all who look to Him. In v14, "redeem" is the Hebrew *goel*, or 'kinsman-redeemer'.

[14] Every individual in the Kingdom will be "precious" to King Messiah.

[15] The phrase rendered "And He shall live" does not come through well in translation, but it is a Hebrew equivalent to the Babylonian/Persian 'O king, live forever!' (i.e., Dan3:9) or the English 'long live the king!', expressing love for the King and a desire to see His kingdom endure.

At Christ's first coming He was given the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt2:11). In the Messianic Kingdom He will be given gifts of only gold and incense (Isa60:6); myrrh speaks of death, which is forever behind Him.

- [16] The Messianic Kingdom will be one of abundant material blessing and prosperity for all (Cf. Isa65:21-23; Ezek34:26-29; Amos9:13-14).
- [17] King Messiah and His kingdom will endure forever; this will be the complete fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (1Chr17:12,14). That all men, including the Gentiles, will be "blessed in Him" will be a fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen12:3; Gal3:14-16).

CLOSING DOXOLOGY

- [18] What a wonderful kingdom is coming! For this, all praise is due Jehovah, the God of Israel, for His wonderful works.
- [19] Finally, in the Messianic Kingdom, "the whole earth" will be "filled with His glory". All nations will love and worship the LORD, their Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, and King, and as a result all will be blessed (Ps33:12).
- [20] This closing verse suggests, but does not demand, that David was its author. Psalm 72 closes Book II of the Psalter, with the majority of its psalms attributed to David. This closing does not indicate that David wrote all the psalms in Book II, nor that David did not write psalms in Books III-V (in fact, David wrote psalms included in all 5 Books of the Psalter).