

Saturday, December 15th, 2012

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Scripture:

Psalm 72

- 1 Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
- 2 May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
- 3 May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- 4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.
- 5 May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- 6 May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.
- 8 May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 9 May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.
- 10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts.
- 11 May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.
- 12 For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
- 13 He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
- 14 From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.
- 15 Long may he live!
May gold of Sheba be given to him.

May prayer be made for him continually,
and blessings invoked for him all day long.

16 May there be abundance of grain in the land;
may it wave on the tops of the mountains;
may its fruit be like Lebanon;
and may people blossom in the cities
like the grass of the field.

17 May his name endure forever,
his fame continue as long as the sun.
May all nations be blessed in him;
may they pronounce him happy.

18 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.

19 Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.

20The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended.

Devotional:

Arguably, three interpretative avenues lead into the province of this "royal" Psalm 72. One way understands it as David's prayer for the flourishing of his son Solomon's reign. Many commentators remember that Psalm 72 is recited at the coronation of the kings and queens of England. According to another way of interpretation, some Jews and many Christians interpret this psalm as messianic. Early on, Christians understood Psalm 72 as forecasting Jesus, David's heir, as Messiah whose coming reign will endure like the sun and moon. Peace and righteousness will abound. Lesser powers will bow to his wisdom. Even people living in cities will blossom. Most significantly, however, this Messiah will be an advocate for justice, not just a vague, generic justice, but justice for the poor and for "those who have no helper." Might there be a third way into and out of Psalm 72? Is it not an edict to any person in any position of authority – teachers, parents, union stewards, CEOs, judges, stock brokers, civil servants, pastors, coaches, presidents -- to "give deliverance to the needy" even while overseeing the "prosperity of the people"?

Prayer:

We await your coming again, Lord Jesus. While we wait, give us an unwavering passion for your Kingdom's agenda to "seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly" with you. Amen