

## **Psalm 72**

1. *Give the king your judgements, O God,  
and your righteousness to the son of a king.*
2. *Then shall he judge your people righteously and your poor with justice.*
3. *May the mountains bring forth peace,  
and the little hills righteousness for the people.*
4. *May he defend the poor among the people,  
deliver the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.*
5. *May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,  
from one generation to another.*
6. *May he come down like rain upon the mown grass,  
like the showers that water the earth.*
7. *In his time shall righteousness flourish,  
and abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.*
8. *May his dominion extend from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.*
9. *May his foes kneel before him and his enemies lick the dust.*
10. *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute;  
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts.*
11. *All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do him service.*
12. *For he shall deliver the poor that cry out, the needy and those who  
have no helper.*
13. *He shall have pity on the weak and poor; he shall preserve the lives  
of the needy.*
14. *He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence,  
and dear shall their blood be in his sight.*
15. *Long may he live; unto him may be given gold from Sheba;  
may prayer be made for him continually and may they bless him all  
the day long.*
16. *May there be abundance of grain on the earth, standing thick upon the hilltops;  
may its fruit flourish like Lebanon and its grain grow like the grass of the field.*
17. *May his name remain for ever and be established as long as the sun endures;  
may all nations be blest in him and call him blessed.*

Righteousness and peace shall flourish:  
**till the moon shall be no more.**

Psalm 72 is a royal psalm, composed for the accession to the throne of a crown prince.

The son of his predecessor in the divinely chosen line, the new king is the human agent through whom God's justice reaches the nation. The psalmist prays that the royal justice will fill both society and nature.

'May the mountains bring forth peace, and the little hills righteousness for the people.' The king's intimate relationship to God makes him the bearer also of prosperity and fertility to the land.

'May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, like the showers that water the earth.'

The nation flourishes in his prosperity, and the psalmist prays for his long life.

Then he prays that the king may be blessed with victory, worldwide dominion and wealth.

The river is the Euphrates, Tarshish is probably on the Spanish coast (mentioned also in Jonah), the isles are those of the Mediterranean. Sheba is in Southern Arabia and Seba, probably in Ethiopia. These stand for the foreign and exotic. The king in David's line will have

worldwide dominion, as God has sovereignty over the whole world and its history.

This all reminds us of King Solomon, who asked for wisdom, an understanding mind to govern the people and an ability to distinguish between good and evil. Then, because he hasn't asked for them, he is given, not only wisdom, but also riches and honour for the whole of his life.

The Coronation service makes it clear that the power of the sovereign is delegated by God for the service of the nation, and the crown jewels are symbols of that.

So, a leader is expected to be just in legal matters (judge your people righteously), in economic policy (defend the poor), in health (deliver the children of the needy). The leader must also defend the country (crush the oppressor). Above all, a leader is there to serve.

in Jesus Christ we see all this being fulfilled. In his dealings with people he revealed the justice of God towards all, whether they were rich or poor. He stood up for people who were oppressed or pushed out. He came to show that the love of God extends to all, not only to the rich and powerful, but equally to those who are poor and those who have no voice.

That is how we are to be, too, to be a people of justice and love to treat other people in the way that Jesus did, realising that God is sovereign over the whole world, and that we, whoever we are, are part of his creation.

## **Prayer**

Lord, in whose hands are the destinies of the nations: we pray for all who exercise the power of government over the peoples. Make them defenders of liberty and champions of justice; and so rule in their hearts that they may also be lovers and makers of peace; through him who is the Price of Peace, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**