



PSALM 72

A Royal Psalm

This is Holly with Presence Point and welcome to our *Psalms for Shepherds* series. Today, we're in *Psalm 72*, one of only two psalms credited to Solomon. In this psalm, he asks that God bless him as he takes over as king for his father, David. As you'll hear in a moment, Solomon uses what can certainly seem like extravagant language in this request. After all, he asks that God help him endure like the sun. Bring kings to the earth to offer him tribute. And for his rule to extend to the ends of the earth. Yet, the psalm also indicates that the king was not just to receive acclimation, but was to judge God's people in righteousness. And defend the helpless of society; the afflicted, the weak, and the needy.

Since the king is the focus of this psalm, it is in fact known as a royal psalm. It's unique among the royal psalms, however, because it emphasizes the king's role in defending and protecting the weakest in society. An important rule we, as shepherd leaders in today's world, must not forget. And that other royal psalms do not mention.

As you'll hear in the last verse, this psalm also stands at an important point in the Psalter. Right between books 2 and 3. You see, while the *Book of Psalms* is one book in our Bibles, there are actually five sections in it. And chapters 42 to 72 make up the second section. It's important to note that the sections or books were not divisions made by translators or editors, like the chapter and verse numbers were of the Bible, but were actually in the text itself. As the concluding psalm in each of these sections has wording that indicates it's wrapping up a section or a book. You'll hear that delineation in verse 20 of this psalm.

As Solomon's father did, Solomon ultimately points to the greatest descendant of King David, Jesus the Messiah, who perfectly fulfills the image of the king in this psalm, including modeling for us a concern for the helpless of society. Please join me in reading *Psalm 72*.

Give your love of justice to the king, O God,
and righteousness to the king's son.

² Help him judge your people in the right way;
let the poor always be treated fairly.

³ May the mountains yield prosperity for all,
and may the hills be fruitful.

⁴ Help him to defend the poor,

to rescue the children of the needy,
and to crush their oppressors.

⁵ May they fear you as long as the sun shines,
as long as the moon remains in the sky.

Yes, forever!

⁶ May the king's rule be refreshing like spring rain on freshly cut grass,
like the showers that water the earth.

⁷ May all the godly flourish during his reign.

May there be abundant prosperity until the moon is no more.

⁸ May he reign from sea to sea,
and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

⁹ Desert nomads will bow before him;
his enemies will fall before him in the dust.

¹⁰ The western kings of Tarshish and other distant lands
will bring him tribute.

The eastern kings of Sheba and Seba
will bring him gifts.

¹¹ All kings will bow before him,
and all nations will serve him.

¹² He will rescue the poor when they cry to him;
he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them.

¹³ He feels pity for the weak and the needy,
and he will rescue them.

¹⁴ He will redeem them from oppression and violence,
for their lives are precious to him.

¹⁵ Long live the king!

May the gold of Sheba be given to him.

May the people always pray for him
and bless him all day long.

¹⁶ May there be abundant grain throughout the land,
flourishing even on the hilltops.

May the fruit trees flourish like the trees of Lebanon,
and may the people thrive like grass in a field.

¹⁷ May the king's name endure forever;
may it continue as long as the sun shines.

May all nations be blessed through him
and bring him praise.

¹⁸ Praise the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does such wonderful things.

¹⁹ Praise his glorious name forever!

Let the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and amen!

¹⁹ This ends the prayers of David, son of Jesse.

Now, while you might think there's nothing in this particular psalm for 21st century leaders, after all, there's probably no one listening to this *Psalms for Shepherds* that's an actual king, as I read through it and studied these verses, I was drawn more and more to what Solomon references twice, maybe even three times in this psalm. It is the responsibility of the king, or leader, as shepherd, to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors. To rescue the poor when they cry to Him, to help the oppressed who have no one to defend them, to feel pity for the weak and the needy and rescue them. And to redeem them from oppression and violence because, he says, for their lives are precious to Him.

Dear fellow shepherd leader, are you defending those less fortunate than yourself? Are you rescuing the children of the needy and crushing their oppressors, in 21st century, appropriately? Are you looking the other direction and hoping that others will fill that gap? Are you helping those who have no one to defend them? Are you rescuing the weak and the needy? Are you doing what you can, am I doing what I can, to redeem them from oppression and violence. Are their lives precious to us?

I'd like to encourage you to take a moment in silence and solitude, and ask the Father that question, your Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd. Ask if there are means that you have to employ that you have not implemented? If there are ways that you need to be a more effective under-shepherd in this space? Whether it's the oppressed in society or the weak and the needy in your own organization, be encouraged today to stretch yourself. And be reminded of Solomon's admonition to himself, and potentially to you and me, as we shepherd the flock in our care.

Thank you for joining me to explore *Psalms 72*. May you live deeply into your calling this week.