



The manner of Messiah's rule

Psalm 72:12-20

Glorious things have been spoken concerning the kingly rule of the Messiah who is to come. He will be far greater than either David or Solomon or than these two together. No king will ever be like Him. His eternal Kingship will rule all men and He will be victorious over every enemy.

A beneficial rule

The question will naturally arise: What king of King will He be? Will His hands drip with the blood of those whom He has slain in battle? Will His riches as a King mean that He has impoverished all those over whom He rules? The Psalmist now goes on to tell us something of the nature of Messiah's rule. It is clearly shown to be a very beneficent rule. David had been cruel to the nations and peoples whom he had vanquished (2 Samuel 12:31). Solomon, in his later years, had exacted an enormous amount of taxes from his own people. Are they herein types of the Messiah and His reign? By no means. His reign is not going to be ushered in by great armies which conquer all peoples. He is not going to come with the exhibition of tremendous power whereby He forces men to bring obedience to Him. His reign will take the needy into consideration. He will deliver the needy when he cries out for deliverance. He will consider the poor that have no helper; i.e., no one has ever bothered about them. They have always been the downtrodden. Now, with the rule of Messiah, they will have a real Helper. This is a King who will be moved to pity by the plight of the poor and needy. Think of it! Other rulers have despised these poor and needy ones. They had no defense. They had no one to take up the cudgels for them. They were always the lonely ones. He will rescue them and save them. They have a real champion in the Messiah who comes to reign.

Oppression and violence had always followed them everywhere. They were the victims of fraud. Because they were defenseless, everyone took advantage of them. This situation ends with the coming of the Messianic reign. Their blood will be precious in the sight of their Savior. He will give them protection and will no longer allow anyone to take advantage of them. The prosperous day of their opponents has come to an end. The Messiah is One to be reckoned with and He has cast His lot with the poor and needy.

The reign of the Messiah will be a reign of righteousness. Whether people are poor or rich, whether they are needy or self-sufficient, He will rule over them in such a manner that the law of God and His will will be honored. God had demanded righteousness from those whom He had given a place of authority over others. Many of these rulers had not been obedient to this rule. This number included David and Solomon. However, when Messiah comes, His rule will be just. This will be seen especially in the way in which He will treat the poor and needy. These have always had to bear the brunt of the difficulties which came on people because of unjust rule. Although David and Solomon are types of the Christ to come, they will not begin to live up to the rule which He has set for Himself. The Antitype is much greater than any type! The Messiah is unique.

Grateful subjects

What will the reaction be of the people over whom He rules? Of course, they will be overwhelmed by His goodness. They will call out to Him: "*O King, live forever!*" This is the proper translation of the beginning of verse 15. This was also the usual oriental expression to a king, whether he was good or bad. But, here the people mean it with all their hearts. His rule is the kind they have been wishing for throughout their lives. Now that it has finally come — let it never stop! To Him will be given of the gold of Sheba. The people willingly bring their tribute to such a King. He will be

enriched as no one has been before. The people will see to it that He has all the riches He might ever desire in order that He may carry out all His plans. This King will be borne upon the prayers of His people. Later the Apostle will command the church that they are always to remember their earthly ruler in their prayers. This has often been difficult for God's people when someone occupied the throne who was a godless man. When Messiah comes with His beneficent rule, the prayers of His people for Him are spontaneous. He is in their thoughts all the time! He will also hear the jubilation of this people all the time because they rejoice that they have such a King. This people is happy. This people is blessed. May this King live forever. May His Kingdom have no end. Never has a people been so favored by the One who rules over them.

Unparalleled prosperity

It is indeed glorious that the people have such a high conception of their King so that they bring Him more honor than has ever been paid to another monarch. However, there is more to it. Not only do these people sing His praises and rejoice in Him, they have not only found a Helper in the time of need but are also prospering as no other people. His beneficent rule elicits their admiration and their devotion. His just rule is also blest so abundantly that words fail to describe the blessing it will be for His people. The spiritual blessings which will come on the people as a result of Messiah's rule are clear to all. However, the Psalmist now speaks of the material wealth which will be given to the people because of the favored reign of Messiah. The land of Palestine is fruitful — in places. It is the land which flows with milk and honey. But, there are also barren places in this land. Part of it is desert. Part of it is mountainous. At times the patriarchs had to leave the country because of *famine*. The Psalmist now speaks of the abundance of grain which there is to be in the land. How abundant? The grain will grow up the sides of the mountains to the very top in the days of Messiah, so that when the wind passes over it, it will sound as the wind in the branches of a forest! It will sound like Lebanon! This is the kind of situation which has never been experienced before. So great is the prosperity of the people of God when Messiah is their King. Nor is it restricted to the fields of grain. The dwellers in the cities shall also share in the tremendous wealth which His reign brings. Their numbers will increase so that the people will be as the grass of the earth. The promise had been made to the fathers that a numerous race would come forth from them. They would be in number as the grains of sand of the seashore or as the stars of the heavens. This will be fulfilled when Messiah has taken up the sceptre. When He has mounted the throne the people will flourish, their numbers will not be known.

All the blessings of life are connected to Messiah's reign. Everything here is dependent on Him. Let Israel look back with nostalgia to the days of David and Solomon. Much more is still to come. Those two previous kings will be as nothing compared to David's great Son. When He comes even all nature will outdo itself. The conditions can scarcely be put into words — and the greatest poet is speaking here!

Universal admiration

The name of anyone whose reign will be such a blessing or the people over whom He rules and over the land itself will always be remembered. How could the name of such a ruler ever be lost from memory? No, His name shall endure forever and shall be continued as long as the sun. The Hebrew poet makes it clear that he considers this name everlasting. And, it is not just for His people. No, we now see fulfilled the promise made to Abraham that in his seed all the nations should be blest. The people of God must often have asked themselves: How will this promise ever be fulfilled? It often seemed as though the people of God were considered a curse by the other nations among whom they were scattered. Time and again these surrounding nations sought to expel and sought to blot out the people of God. Now they can sing of the fulfillment of this promise in Psalm 72. Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him happy. This Ruler receives the admiration and praise of all the nations.

Praise to God

This Psalm ends with a doxology. This sounds somewhat strange because we are not accustomed to hear a doxology at the end of the Psalms. However, it is most appropriate at the end of this

Psalm. There are those who do not believe that these words really belong to this Psalm. However, I disagree. The Psalmist has been on the very heights. He has seen "*the promised land*" of the time of the reign of King Messiah. Words have almost failed him before in describing the rule of Messiah. Coming to the end of the Psalm, words fail him completely and he can only come with the words of a doxology — a word of praise to God! It is Jehovah God Who has done the marvelous works which he has described. To Him be the praise and the glory. He is the only One who does wondrous things. May His glorious name be blessed forever and ever. Let the whole earth be filled with the glory of that God! He is great and He is greatly to be praised! No One can send a Messiah except Jehovah God! He has remembered His promise! And His promise is even so much greater than we had imagined. The doxology is in its rightful place here.

The Psalter of Israel was divided into several books from early days. For example, we find the same kind of ending to Psalm 41 as we find at the end of Psalm 72. We are now told that the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. The second book of the Psalter has now come to a close. There are differences of opinion regarding the specific meaning of these words. We do know that the Psalms of David have not ended here. Later there are other Psalms which are attributed to David.

In the New Testament, our Lord refers to the Psalms, and speaks of them as written by David. This last sentence of this Psalm need not hold our attention very long. Suffice it to say that here was a division of the Psalter which was clearly understood at that time. But, let not this last sentence detract from the sublime beauty of this Psalm. Our Savior is King. In His Kingship many promises are fulfilled. His Kingship is so great. It is everlasting.

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Questions for discussion:

1. When the reign of Messiah is called a beneficent reign is this fact contradicted by verse 4?
2. Is the rule over the poor and needy something which endears Him to the rulers of this earth? If their blood is precious in His sight, will He call them to defend their homeland?
3. The fact that men will pray for Him and bless Him all the day long is an evidence of the esteem in which the people hold Him. Was anything like this to be found in the reigns of David and Solomon? In the realms of present-day rulers?
4. The whole country, including nature, will benefit from the just and beneficent rule of Messiah. Why is this true? Does real prosperity always accompany just and righteous rule?
5. How are all nations blest by Him? How are all nations blest by the people of God?
6. The final glory is ascribed to Jehovah God. Why? Will the reign of a righteous ruler serve to draw people to the living God? Why or why not?