

A Psalm of Future Blessings

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[0 : 0 0] For a short time this evening, we're staying in this psalm, Psalm 72. We've covered parts of this psalm before, and actually, our look this evening is part of some forward planning.

We'll come back to this psalm, God willing, next year in part of a series, but we'll get to that in the Lord's time. But just in the planning of that series, I want to give an overview of this psalm for us this evening, just through one angle, with one lens.

When we come to Psalm 72, we're all so familiar with it. It's one, of course, we sing at least twice a year, the last few verses at our times of communion, but it's one we sing often.

And for context, of course, Psalm 72, it's clear it's a psalm of coronation, it's a psalm to be sung concerning a king. Now, in a strict sense, it is not a messianic psalm, in that it's not clearly defined psalm to be messianic.

But in a more practical sense, of course, we know, theologically speaking, it tells us something about Jesus, all scripture does. There are some who say Psalm 72 is only speaking about an earthly king.

[1 : 2 3] It's only speaking of King David, it's only speaking of Solomon, it's only speaking of another king. And there's no doubt, Psalm 72, certainly, we know, almost certainly, certainly, was used for royal coronations.

They would sing it at the king's coronations over Israel. There's no doubt about that, really. But just because they used it for royal occasions, it doesn't mean that this psalm only speaks of a strictly human king.

Now, of course, we know it doesn't, but even the psalm itself, as you read it, you realise there is no human king who is going to fulfil even part of this psalm in any sort of decent way.

The very, very first verse, Give the king your justice, O God. There's no human king, there's no human ruler who gets even close to the divine level of justice that's required that we'd associate with God.

There's no human king in the whole of history who can, that can be said about them, that they reign justly, they reign well. All that being said, it's something that's clear to us.

[2 : 3 8] Our angle this evening, our view this evening, is that this psalm is talking about a future reign. Really, it's a song of the future.

It's a psalm of the future. Really, this psalm is singing about the perfect king in his perfect reign. There's plenty of imagery being used.

And we'll see that hopefully just briefly later on. In other words, this is a psalm. When we sing it, when we read about it, we're reading and singing about the new heavens and the new earth.

We're singing about the coming kingdom. We're singing about the future that every one of us here who know and who love the Lord, that we are heading towards. One day, this is a psalm that we will see fully fleshed out and fulfilled in our king.

Just three elements in the psalm that shows us and it tells us, it gives us a glimpse into the future. But this is a psalm that sees the future.

[3 : 43] We see the power of the future king. We see the place of the new heavens and the new earth. And we see the people who are there.

Again, very briefly this evening, just an overview for us. We'll dig into it with the Lord's help in time to come. But first of all, the power of the king in the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, each one of these sermon points could easily be a sermon series from this psalm alone. So I'm trying to be concise because there's too much to say and we could go into great depths.

And indeed, we will with the Lord's help one day. But just for now, first of all, we see the power of the king, as we said in the very first verse. Give the king.

And as you read this psalm, we imagine and you imagine it's the people singing it. It's a crowd assembled as they sing this towards their glorious king.

[4 : 43] And the people sing out, the people praise and they say to God, Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son. Straight away, we're seeing that the king of this psalm, he is divine.

He is divine. There is no human king who can be given, who can be, as it were, trusted with the full justice of God to carry out God's just plans.

Of course, every earthly king, every earthly ruler, from council leader up to king, is given the authority to rule and to reign and to make decisions.

But we all know that every single leader, every single ruler, even the best of them, they're just human. They will sin, they will falter, they will fail. Only the great king, only Jesus himself, will fully accomplish the perfect justice of God.

Give the king your justice. In other words, what's being said there is, the king will carry out your royal plans, your royal justice will be carried out by this king.

[5 : 53] The king can be trusted to act justly, in other words. Our king can be trusted to act justly. And the Lord does not allow anyone, apart from his own beloved son, to carry out his work and to trust him with it fully.

The king carries out justice. It's a divine justice. It's a clear justice. It's a fair justice. And who is the king?

It's the royal son. Now, those who say this is speaking just of a human king, they say, well, this is talking about a king's son, who's following on after him, which makes sense.

I'm not here tonight to argue against that. That's not tonight's point. But from our angle, and how we are seeing the psalm this evening, it's clear, isn't it? The royal son is our glorious king himself.

He is a son, and he has full royalty bestowed upon him. He has full divinity. He has full glory. He has full honor. And he is there placed as the perfect, just king of this new heavens, and this new earth, which Sam is talking about.

[7 : 09] With this king, there's not just justice. With this king, there's a glorious presence that comes with him. A glorious presence that comes with following him, and being taken in by him.

Verses 5 down to verse 6, we see just a glimmer of that. May they fear you while the sun endures, as long as the moon throughout all generations.

Again, you see the wee one there, it takes you down. The other rendering is, we have it in the Greek, the Greek version of the Old Testament. He shall endure while the sun endures.

In other words, we have in this future king, we see an eternal reign. Our glorious king will reign, of course, forever.

He will reign as long as sun and moon endure. Now, of course, surely that defeats your point, surely that goes against what you're saying, because one day, the sun and moon will stop to shine, and one day, all that will stop, one day, all creation is going to be scrapped.

[8 : 14] Well, if that's your view, then you're the most literal reader of scripture. Allow the psalmist to be a psalmist, allow him to be poet, allow him to write his words poetically.

It's clear what's being said here. He's using the imagery, sun and moon, day by day, it goes in, it goes out, it's the same process, it seems to be an ending. He's being poetical. He's clearly saying, what is being said is that, forever, for all generations, day after day, and night after night, as sure as day follows night, night follows day, we will have a saviour, who will reign and rule over us.

It's only those who pick apart, the beauty of poetry, that fail to see, what's being said here. The Lord is using the beauty of his word to show us that he will reign forever, and his reign will be a glorious reign.

Look at the presence of the king. Look what this reign of the king feels like. Verse 6 and verse 7. May he be like rain that falls on morn grass, like showers that water the earth.

We know ourselves in a limited way. Those here who have lived through many more politicians and prime ministers and first ministers than I have, you know that, in times, our own country and nation, nations have felt less than steady.

[9 : 39] Our brother prayed about the reality of this world. There are many rulers of this world who wish to destroy, and to kill, and to maim, and to have full power, and full control.

There's many leaders, and many kings, or so-called kings in this world, whose reign is heavy, whose reign is evil, whose reign is there to fulfil their own pleasure, and to suppress the people under them.

Well, quite the opposite is the reign we see of our future reigning king in the new heavens, in the new earth. What kind of reign will we have over us? With the reign that falls on morn grass.

What a beautiful scene. You can just picture yourself there, can't you, that image. Freshly cut grass, a field, a vast field, of freshly prepared grass, mown grass, and the gentle rain falls down on it.

That image of vitality, of growth, a gentle, peaceful, serene, the smell in the air, you get when that rain falls on spring, on fresh grass, and that's the image.

[10 : 51] There's nothing heavy here. This is the lightest of rains. And the beauty is, it's the lightest of kingly rains by the king with the most power of all the human kings combined.

But our saviour, our king, uses his power so lightly, his rain feels like rain on freshly mown grass.

Like showers that water the earth. Now, we can understand the image, and as we hear just now, against the windows, of course, we know rain very well.

But imagine that the poor souls in this time, in this day, who are reading this, in a desert land. We appreciate rain after a few dry weeks in the summer. Well, after a few dry months, after a dry year, some years, you can imagine how much they're longing for a bit of rain.

And the image here of rain that showers and just covers the earth, it's what we're praying for. It's what we pray for, isn't it? Again, it's what our brother prayed for. It's what we all pray for.

[11 : 56] We long for the day when we see that the turmoil and the dryness and the deadness of our world just be swept away and replaced with growth.

Be replaced with this this watering of the Lord's power which comes when he comes back again to rain in his full power. And we see his presence mentioned, of course, that famous verse we all know so well at the end in verse 19.

Just skip down because we keep going verse by verse. But verse 19, we see the full extent of the rain of the king. Blessed be his glorious name forever.

May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Now, just to go back to the first thing we said, this proves this is not about a human king. So if it was really, well, this verse is heresy if we ever wrote it.

Where virgin to was. If it's about a human king, imagine saying let his glory be filled with the earth. You're not going to write that. That's not right. That's not correct. That can only ever be said about one whose glory can fill the earth and one whose glory should fill the earth.

[13 : 09] And this is the image of the ultimate reign of our saviour. His kingdom will be one of such that the whole earth will be filled with his glory.

Peace. Peace. Why is there peace? Well, there's peace because he is now reigning in a sinless world.

We see that in the second point. What is this place like? What is this future kingdom? What does it look like? What is its dimensions? What is its topographical points?

What's the landscape like, we could say, spiritually speaking? What we see, first of all, this is a prosperous kingdom. And really, that's our only point about this kingdom because every time we see it described, it's just adding to the prosperity in its description.

Verse 3, first of all, we see that let the mountains bear prosperity to the people and the hills in righteousness. We're back to the same imagery here.

[14 : 13] Verdant green hills overflowing with provision. Again, at this time, you think of hills, we think of hills perhaps as places of heaven and rough places, rocky places perhaps.

For them, places of hills where water, Jew would gather on top and the water would run down and hills in this mindset and this culture, this time, it's a place, at times anyway, of growth.

You'd have your vineyards in the hills and the valleys going down the hills. It's the wettest place. You'd grow your crops there. If you recall, we saw that in Judges, didn't we? That every time the Israelites are attacked, it's always the hill areas that are being attacked because that's where all their crops were being grown, which is why that was a big problem for them because the hills capture or gather most of the water in this place at this time.

So the image here is hills full of growth. There's food enough to go round. There's no lack in any way and any means at all. In the new heavens and the new earth, all the needs are met.

All our needs are met. All our bodily needs. There's some reasons unknown. They'll argue we won't eat or drink in the new heavens and the new earth. We won't need to.

[15 : 34] We won't need to, fair enough. But it seems, scripturally, we're going to be doing it. There's a feast I'm very much looking forward to in the Mars Supper of the Lamb and it might be imagery but I'm pretty sure there's going to be food there if not, then I think we've misinterpreted something somewhere severely.

There is food. There is joy. There is that we're feasting. Why? Because it's the new heavens and the new earth. I'm not saying this flippantly at all. I'm really not. But I was thinking as I was walking the box of mince pies there, you know, the joy of a pastry and a fruit filling can give to those who enjoy it.

That's the joy we have in a fallen world where the best of our feasts, the best of our time together as family and friends, eating and sharing and fellowship, is tainted by our own sin.

It's tainted by the sin of this world. It's tainted completely. In the new heavens and the new earth, all needs are met and there's no taint of sin.

There's no damage of sin. It's just perfect beauty, perfect glory. All our bodily needs are met. All our mental and physical and spiritual needs are met.

[16 : 47] And we will exist in perfection. But we will exist bodily. We'll have our resurrection bodies. We will exist physically for all time in the new heavens and on the new earth.

And that's the series we'll look at God willing next year. We will have a life that goes on forever. It's a prosperous kingdom.

It's a glorious kingdom. That's emphasized again in verses 15, verse 16. The same image here. And we see that the imagery used here is that of Sheba.

And see that the gold producing regions that all the gold that the earth can offer, humanly speaking, is given to Him. The overflow imagery is still there.

And again and again brings us to verse 16. As the abundance gathers up and gathers up, it takes us to the verse we all love and know so well. I'll just read it for us from the Psalter.

[17 : 47] It sounds better in the Psalter too, and it's quite accurate. Even what we lose perhaps in the English in our Bibles in every translation is that it's a poetry, of course, and the Psalter captures that.

The Hebrew is written and it matches the Psalter perhaps a bit better than it does in our Bibles because it's written to rhyme in the Hebrew and it rhymes, of course, in the Psalter. The city shall be flourishing her citizens abound.

Verse 16. Of corn and handful in the earth on tops of mountain high with prosperous fruit shall shake like trees on Lebanon that be. This is a place of great abundance.

And the image here is the fruit of Lebanon, the trees of Lebanon. With a whole this new kingdom, the whole this new world, it's equivalent to one big Lebanon.

This place of fertility where there's these huge trees and the grain grows as tall as the trees and the fruit produces to the same level as these trees produce their fruit. Just in short, it is unbridled, sin nowhere near tainted, perfection.

[18 : 57] Full, God-given prosperity for all time to all his people. Because we have a king who cares for his people. I've recovered way back, it feels many months ago now, in our cities in the garden.

So if God created the first garden, good, didn't he? He created it beautiful. He took pleasure in making it beautiful. Well, the second garden, the second earth, the final new earth, will it not be beautiful and glorious and perfect?

Think how much beauty we see. I don't know if you saw this morning, even the clouds this morning. Glorious, beautiful. Pretty terrifying at one point, I was driving to back this morning for the school assembly.

Just the power of these clouds this morning over the sea, there was just heavy and orange and this iridescent glow above them and it was beautiful.

That's beauty in a sin-sick, sin-tainted world. How much more beauty are we looking forward to in the future to our new heavens, our new earth where there's no sin tainting any of it? We can't understand it, but it's what we're heading towards.

[20 : 14] It's a prosperous kingdom with no fallen people. No fallen people. Our final point and I'll close this with this beautiful point for us all.

There's too many verses to go through here. Verses 4, verses 12 down to verse 14, verses 17, verses 19 to name but a few. I'll go through them briefly but in short, his kingdom contains no fallen people.

There's only perfect people in the perfect kingdom and brothers and sisters, that's good news for us. There are only those who have been made perfect through the finished work of our Saviour and we know that our place is there.

How do we know? Because he's gone to prepare a place for us, hasn't he? That verse which encourages us to have full assurance no matter how long-winded and how grim and how sinful and how dark our journey might feel just now through this world, he has gone to prepare a place for us elsewhere.

And that gives us full assurance that one day he will come and take us to be with himself. And we have a king here who is described again as a perfect king.

[21 : 29] Verse 4, he defends the poor, he delivers the needy, he crushes the oppressor. Our kings do the opposite, do they not? So often, so often, our kings attack the poor.

So often, our kings, our leaders, they certainly don't deliver the needy, they create needy people. They often are the oppressor. With King Jesus in the new heavens and the new earth, there is no more pain, there is no more sadness.

So we read in Revelation, not to give us a wee pep talk halfway through a week, no, we read that because this is the genuine future which awaits every single one of us.

a wee of a thought. It's not my thought. I don't know where I read it. It may have been, I was reading Bavinck last week and I say it's him because I haven't got much other thoughts.

If it's Bavinck, I'll find the quote for next week or next time we talk about this. But in Bavinck, he talks about new heavens and new earth if it is Bavinck. So Bavinck of Calvin, two good men out of every way.

[22 : 37] And we're saying the glorious thing is we all enter the new earth and the new heavens together. Because we won't enter that until we receive all of us our resurrection bodies.

Of course, those who have gone before us just now, they've gone to the Lord and their souls with the Lord. We know the catechism on that. We know the scriptural teaching on that. They're with the Lord in peace and in glory.

They're with him. But they're waiting. They're waiting for what? They're waiting for resurrection. They're waiting to be reunited with their bodies, their perfected resurrection bodies.

Then together, those of us who are still here perhaps, and those of us who have gone into glory, together we will enter the new heavens and the new earth as one glorious people.

Just now there's some in heaven, some in the Lord, some in glory and some on earth. We are united together as brothers and sisters put on different sides as we're off the veil. But as one family, we go together to glory, to the new heavens and the new earth.

[23 : 45] As one united people, as one saved people, as one glorified people. Verse 17, second half. As one blessed people of all the different nations, cultures and colours and every other combination you can think of, the Lord will have his people there.

And he has his people right now. And he is saving his people. He is bringing his people into the kingdom. In parts of this world, we have no understanding about, no care about, no knowledge of.

There's plenty of places we pray for and we try and remember. The truth is, the Lord is saving his people in places and in cultures and in contexts and situations right now that we just will never know about until we meet them in glory.

And it gives us hope, not just for some far-flung place, it gives us hope for Tolstair. It gives us hope for ourselves. Again, as our brothers alluded to and it's not pertinent to discuss in great length, but there's been, even today, myself, several conversations flowing from interactions even from last night that should encourage us, we won't say any more because we'll wait and see what happens, but the Lord is building his church even here.

There are people in our village and there are people who are moving to our village who it turns out, as we've all known for many years now, turns out they just don't know.

[25 : 18] They just don't know who the Lord is. They just don't know what the gospel is. They just don't know that they are very welcome to come and to join with us week after week.

And who knows how the Lord will build his church in Tulsa. But as we said last week, the week before, he is building his church. And together in Tulsa, together across the world, we will one day join together and enter in together to this new kingdom, to this new glorious kingdom.

And that's how we end. Again, we can go on and on verse by verse, but just to end with a high note to first, reflecting back on the verse we read, that final verse of the psalm itself, Psalm 19.

Blessed be his glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen. And amen. As I said, every time we see the word may in the psalm, that's not a tentative may.

It's not, let's hope it works out. Let's hope this happens. No, that's a, it's an affirmative. It's a, it's a, it's an assuring term.

[26 : 31] We're not saying, oh, let's hope is there for his glory. That's what we see the psalter here actually really gives it to us well. There's a certainty to it.

The people who are singing this to the king aren't saying, well, let's hope this works out well. No, we're saying, may the whole earth be filled with his glory. That's clear when we sing it, but we know that's being said here.

There is no doubt here. There is no worry here. But every single day we serve the Lord, every single hour we live our lives. Every interaction that goes well or doesn't go well, every day we strive to be faithful servants.

Every success on that journey, every, perhaps failure on that journey, we're walking ourselves and moving closer to verse 19.

And our ultimate hope, our final hope, as we said last night in the carols, we said last Lord's Day, so last night I just did a simplified version of what I shared last Lord's Day morning, looking at John 3, 16.

[27 : 37] Our hope is, and our sure hope is, the hope of verse 19, that we will inhabit and we will know and we will see and taste and experience and smell and be fully alive forever in a world, a new heavens, a new earth, a new creation that is filled with his glory.

No more sin, no more darkness, no more tears. The former things have passed away as we read in Revelation. It's just perfection. The King of Kings leading us forward as his people as we live and grow year after year forward.

I can't even say year after year in eternity, but as far as my brain can comprehend it, as we grow decade after decade, century after century, as we grow forever, in our love and understanding of our Lord, in our love for one another as brothers and sisters, with no sin to muddy the waters, with no disunity, with no argumentation of nonsense anymore, no wee quibbles making us fall out, just peace, just glory, all focused on our Lord.

That is our hope, that is our joy. But until we get there, until we see Psalm 72 fulfilled in our experience, we keep striving on, we keep working away, knowing that this is our sure and definite future as the Lord's people.

To bear our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you once more for the glorious gift of your word. We ask the Lord you'd give us the peace this evening as we perhaps reflect again privately on the glory and beauty of this psalm.

[29 : 32] We come to a psalm where we are reminded in such beautiful ways that you are prepared for your people, a future kingdom, a future reality that is so beyond our even smallest of understandings.

Lord, help us this evening to find our hope in that promise that we have been promised a place of our Saviour, if we know him, if we love him, that he has guaranteed through his finished work that he will lose not a single one of his people, that he will not forget a single one of us, but he who knows us, who has died for us, who has bled for us, who has been raised again from the dead for us, that he will one day come and take us home to himself and one day together as brothers and sisters we will enter into that new land, we will enter into the new heavens and the new earth and we will inhabit it for all eternity growing and growing, growing our love for you, growing an understanding of who you are.

We give you praise that understanding will never reach its limit, we will keep growing for eternity, growing closer to you and growing closer to one another as the aeons of glory and peace and joy spread out before us.

Until these days of glory are found in our experience, help us to serve you well, we ask. We thank you once more for the various opportunities you've given us. We pray especially this week, mindful of the family service this coming Lord's Day morning.

Lord, your word will go out, we ask. We ask, Lord, for clarity of thought and for clarity of word. We ask, Lord, for a receptive ear for those who may be coming perhaps even for the first time.

[31 : 20] I pray that some would consider and some would ponder even of coming out. We know it's a big step for them, humanly speaking. It's an impossible step, humanly speaking, for many people.

We know there's many in this building who, and many in our own congregation, who once had the same worry but now, Lord, they know you and now they love you. You can bring life to those who are dead and you can bring hope to those who are hopeless and you can bring light to those who are previously in darkness.

We pray that would be the case for our dear friends in this village who as of yet have no clear understanding as to who you are. We also give you praise, Lord, for the event of last night and the word went out.

We pray, Lord, that those who took the tracts and the booklets and the books that they would be blessed by them. Those who heard and who truly listened to your word would be blessed by it. Page now also for the children of our village who are represented, Lord, in back school.

We pray for them as they begin their time off. Our leaders' award goes out to that school month after month. Lord, we ask you to bless your word there. Bless us, Lord, and give us encouragement we ask as your people.

[32 : 30] Help us to be faithful in our service to the Lord, the understanding it is your work and we have a great privilege of being able to work in this vineyard of North Tulsa. We ask we would see fruit, Lord, for all the labour that takes place, but not for our glory, not for the glory of this ministry, not for the glory of our denomination or our congregation, but for your glory and your glory alone.

Your name will be magnified in this village and in this place. Help us as we leave this place this evening to go home in peace and to spend time, even privately, thinking forward as to the glory that lies ahead of your people.

Until these days come, help us to serve you well in this time and in this place, asking for forgiveness of sin and relying only on the risen Saviour and the finished work. Amen.

We can conclude with the final verses, of course, of that psalm. The second half of verse 16, the usual verses we conclude with.

The second half of verse 16 down to the end. The city shall be flourishing, her citizens abound, and numbers shall like to the grass that grows upon the ground. His name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall, and shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall.

[33 : 52] Hymn call to God's praise. The city shall be flourishing, our citizens abound, won't affect ■ here shall above 50 people die■ preserve about 50 people but loads over 50 people■ and the shore is Peter Salmonish, lost like the sun it shall then shall be blessed in heaven blessed all nations shall encode now blessed be the Lord the God the God of Israel for he alone the wondrous world sing glory out excel and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth pledge his glory amen so let it be in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with you now and forevermore amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen