

Kingship

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Preacher: Rev. Ben Roberts

[0 : 00] Well, it's good to be here this morning. My name is Ben Roberts. In case I haven't met you, I'm the guy that oversees the Artizo Internship Training Program.

So we help train people to preach and do other forms of ministry. And it's good to be here for James. Do we know where James is?

Ontario. James is in Ontario. So we'll miss him, but he'll be home in a couple weeks. And let's take some time to look at Psalm 72. So you probably know we're in the midst of this series.

And the summer series is seeing God's big story of the Bible through the lens of the Psalms. So, you know, as Christians, one of the things that we believe is that the Bible tells one story.

It tells the story of what God is doing in the world, how he created all things, and how he's going to bring new creation at the end of all things. And that there's a connection and an arc that can be followed through that story.

[1 : 04] And one of the interesting takes as we preach the Psalms this summer is to try to fit those pieces of the story together from different Psalms. And so, so far in the summer we've gone, we've heard about creation.

We've seen Psalms that speak about the Exodus and speak about the giving of the law and the gift of the law. And so basically we're about Genesis through Deuteronomy so far. And today we're going to continue that story and we skip over the conquest a little bit.

We're not really talking about taking the land of Canaan, but we are talking about what happens right after that, which is the period of kings where God's people get their kings and they're ruled by kings.

And Psalm 72 is a really good choice to talk about this idea, highlighting this idea of kingship in the Bible. And it also actually helps us quite a bit in thinking about the significance for us today.

We would call this Psalm a royal Psalm. And that means that it would have been used to pray for the king. Perhaps it would have been used in anointing the king when a new king would come along.

[2 : 14] But it's more than simply just a prayer for the king. And maybe you noticed when we read it, it actually has an agenda. And so this Psalm is going to set kingship within a theological framework.

And it's telling us that God has a perspective on what a king ought to be like and what a king ought to do. Now, if you've read the books of Kings and Chronicles, you'll know that most of Israel's kings don't resemble Psalm 72 at all.

In fact, they fall far, far, far short of this kind of beautiful prayer and this beautiful vision of what kingship could be. And that shows us something as well.

And what it shows us is that there's actually messianic hope in this psalm. And in fact, all the rabbinic notes on this psalm will say, oh yeah, this is definitely messianic.

They're looking at the history of Israel and they're like, no way. It's not about one of our kings. This is definitely about the Messiah, that God's king, God's true king that is coming. And so one of the things that we'll keep remembering as we go through this psalm is that this psalm has promises in it that go beyond any Old Testament kings or actually any earthly ruler at all.

[3 : 33] And they point us to Jesus who's ruling all things now. And so this is one of the things to know about kingship. Kingship or the idea of kings in the Bible, they always are pointing us towards this bigger promise, this bigger idea, the hope for God's Messiah, the hope for the true king, the forever king that we're waiting for.

And that's the hope that is fulfilled in King Jesus. Well, let's look more closely at this psalm and we'll see if we can see this ourselves. So three points to help us as we examine the psalms, or this

psalm this morning.

We're going to look at the idea of regent, the idea of realm, and the idea of rule. That's pretty good. Even three R's alliteration. This isn't even a Baptist church and we've got three R's.

Okay, so first regent. And not just because it's my alma mater, but because this word gets at the idea of the king's rule being subsidiary.

So it's underneath God's rule. It's dependent on his rule. And we see that right in the start. So if you look at verses 1 and 2, give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son.

[4 : 48] May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. So even right there we see that these things belong to God and not the king. The king is ruling in independence, well hopefully, independence and obedience to God.

And administering God's justice and God's righteousness to God's people. And so he's granted this rule by God and he's accountable to God. And he's supposed to care for God's people and lead them as God would.

And one of the things that we see throughout this psalm is a longing for an establishment of this kind of pattern, this ordering, for the right order of things to happen under God's law and under God's king.

So, I mean, you can see the ordering here. God is the creator. He's the king of all things. And then the king kind of comes underneath that. And this is his regent.

This is his ruler. He's ruling with God's justice in God's way. And then underneath the king, as we go on, we see the people of God. And we see that the king is establishing a way for them to live in justice and prosperity and peace underneath his rule.

[5 : 56] And then underneath the people, we see creation. And in this kind of right ordering of things, creation actually flourishes. And it's this picture of supernatural abundance within this kingdom.

So, if you look at verse 16, you'll see that this picture of even grain growing on top of mountains. And if you've been to Israel, that seems unlikely for the whole country for grain to be on the top of those mountains.

So, this is a picture of God's just supernatural blessing as things fall into the right order. But by contrast, we could remember the story of Israel, which is a story of disorder, right?

The kings are constantly abandoning God and his law, and they're sending up altars to other gods. And the result of that is just chaos. It's just this continual injustice and conflict and wickedness among the people.

And then there's always a connection to the land in the Bible as well. And so, finally, they're removed from the land. The land's just disconnected from the people entirely, because this whole thing has gotten out of order.

[7 : 00] And so, in contrast, this psalm stands in contrast to the reality of Israel's monarchy, right? And it prays for, and expects, God's true king. The one that can set things like, in this right order, underneath God as his king, with his people, and all of creation ordered underneath him, ruling in God's way.

And in that rule is flourishing and justice. And we know that that's Jesus. He's the one that's going to bring that ultimately. And he's the one that can reorder our hearts and minds, and help us to come under the law of God, to see that it's beautiful and good, and the way that we want to live. And he's the one that's going to reorder all things, one day, so that they will be, they will fit this vision. Okay, so that's regent. Let's look a little bit more about this king's realm, which is quite impressive.

And so, the first thing that you can notice is that this realm is endless. And so, if you look at verse five, may they fear you while the sun endures, as long as the moon, throughout all generations. And then verse seven, actually, until the moon is no more. And then verse 17, may his name endure forever. His fame continue as long as the sun.

[8 : 18] So, there's kind of this cosmological picture of this king just reigning, outliving all of the, outliving the sun and the moon, and kind of this reign that goes on without end forever.

And, we know that, from time to time, people are, want to use this type of flowery language when they're around monarchs. And you remember, when we preached through Daniel, that he would always say, oh king, may you live forever.

And in some places in Daniel, it seemed a bit sarcastic, perhaps. But, in this psalm, this is more than flattery. It's not just flattery for a monarch. And, and that's because, this psalm is actually attributed to Solomon.

Some scholars say, well, it was actually written by David for Solomon. It was one of the two of them. And, one of the things that we should know when we think about the big story of the Bible, is that God makes this promise to David and his descendants.

And, it's a promise that sounds really similar and really familiar to this type of language about endless rule. And so, I'll just read this for you. This is from 2 Samuel. This is what God says to David.

[9 : 32] And so, this is a, again, a messianic promise, right?

This is a promise for God's true king, God's Messiah to come. And the promise is that one of David's descendants, one of his offspring, is going to outshine his father. That this king that comes from David's line is actually going to rule forever.

And, there's a lot of other promises around that. Let's call it, we call it the Davidic covenant, the promise to David. And, and it's a kingdom that goes beyond anything that ever happens in Israel. And so, this psalm is kind of reflecting that similar idea of, of a, of a kingdom that goes without end. Well, the second thing to notice about the king's realm is that it is boundless.

So, it's endless and it's boundless. And so, if you look at verse eight, there's this prayer for his dominion to be from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth.

[10 : 47] Some of you may recognize that verse. As a recent citizen of Canada, I learned that this verse is the source of Canada's motto, which is from sea to sea. And it's, and they actually, in the citizenship guide, they say, oh, Psalm 72, eight, which we were kind of surprised to see.

And, you know, many of us also remember Dominion day, perhaps, not me, but maybe some of you. Um, I was, uh, I was still in America when Dominion day was happening here.

Um, but we're not talking about the dominion of Canada. Uh, we're not talking about the Pacific to the Atlantic here. This, uh, language about, uh, stretching from sea to sea is actually talking about the whole world.

And so, this, uh, you'll notice there that he references Tarshish. Um, do you remember that place? That's the place that Jonah wants to go away to.

So, if you're, uh, if you're in the, if you're living in Israel and you say, like, it's like the furthest place that anyone can imagine, you say Tarshish, right? That's like just the furthest place away. And so, uh, this is saying, this king is going to rule over everything, everything.

[12 : 00] And the rule isn't just geographical. It's also political. And so you see all of these different peoples and nations that are coming to, uh, pay tributes. Uh, the desert tribes are bowing down before him.

Sheba and Seba are paying tribute to this king. Verse 11, may all kings fall down before him and all nations serve him. Again, that's quite ambitious, quite an ambitious prayer for Israel, this tiny little nation, uh, in the crossroads of the Middle East.

And even around the time this was written, which was really like the height of Israel's, like kind of, you know, the closest they got to being an empire, a really powerful nation, still worldwide conquest. That's not a thing that's, uh, that's going to happen for them.

And it pushes our eyes forward again. Who is this king that can match this prayer? Who is the king that can rule completely? That can, that can rule so supremely, who can establish righteousness and justice?

And, again, it's not an Old Testament king, it's Jesus. Uh, Jesus risen and reigning now. The king to which every knee shall bow, every tongue confess.

[13 : 05] Okay, so let's look at the final theme, uh, for our psalm this morning, which is rule. And what I mean is the character of his rule. So, what does the governance of God's king look like?

And we've talked about this a little bit. We've talked about him ruling in justice and righteousness, meaning that he orders things according to God's will and God's way. Uh, but one of the things that really, uh, jumps out in this psalm is the work of justice is especially connected to his defense and care for the poor.

his, uh, this, this king has a real attention for people that are oppressed and people that are vulnerable. And so we see that starting in verse four, may he defend the cause of the poor of the people and give deliverance to the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.

Now, if you follow, uh, our, our neighboring nation to the South, uh, you'll be aware of this really controversial ongoing practice of separating migrant children from their parents at the border and holding them in, uh, seemingly fairly terrible conditions.

And, uh, there's this recent, um, clip going around of this attorney arguing that actually the U S wasn't legally required to provide, you know, soap or toothpaste or blankets to these children.

[14 : 23] And it's just kind of this, you know, a lot of people are watching this with kind of horror.

Um, and, uh, the promise here of God's King in Psalm 72 is giving us a really different hope for a different kind of ruler, isn't it?

I mean, this thing that's happening at the borders is, uh, is terrible. Um, but unfortunately it's actually pretty unremarkable in the history of the world and the way that leaders often rule and those in power, uh, look to people that don't have power.

And, and so this is quite striking when we're talking about a supreme ruler over an endless, uh, boundless realm that, that his attention and his care is for the people at the very bottom of the stack.

That instead of being the one on top doing the oppressing and kind of just making decisions, uh, this King actually is removing the oppressor, throwing them out of way and looking to the people that can't help themselves, the people that are vulnerable and, and saving and rescuing them.

And so verses 12 to 14, they're just beautiful for this. And, and I think encouraging to us as well, uh, for he delivers the needy when he calls the poor and him who has no helper.

[15 : 38] He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy from oppression and violence. He redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight. Now we could highlight this King's power and the King's rule and the King's glory.

And those things are true of Jesus, especially now as he's ascended, um, the right hand of the father. But this Psalm is really wanting to point us towards how God's King uses his power to defend and protect the poor and the needy and the vulnerable.

And it's going to crush the people that are seeking to harm those people. And it, and doesn't it just remind you of Jesus's ministry? Jesus who came to seek and save the lost, uh, those that couldn't help themselves.

And we remember Jesus has this kind of magnetic attraction to the least of these, to people that are unlovely, uh, to people that are unclean. And he's just so gentle, uh, with people like that.

And he's so gentle with us who, who, who are actually poor and needy as well, um, when we come to him. And he's just has this ferocious judgment against hypocrites and legalists and people that, uh, would oppress others.

[16 : 51] So when the poor are defended and the oppressors thrown down, that's when the people blossom in these cities. That's, that's where this picture of abundance is coming from. And we know that no nation in the world has been able to establish a system of justice or, or, um, or righteousness like this, but this is what Jesus, Jesus will do is bring this, uh, this reality of abundance and justice and, and prosperity and joy.

Okay. Where does this leave us? So it's about, about nine o'clock on Sunday morning, or no, eight 30 on Sunday morning. Where does this leave us?

Uh, well, uh, there's a lot of potential applications. We could talk about, uh, we could talk about our duty to the least of these. Um, uh, we could talk about, uh, you know, the way that we want to reflect God's rule politically, maybe, uh, an example of that.

But as I was looking at this, uh, Psalm, I was just, I was just, uh, rejoicing in it. To be honest, I, I just, I think, I think the main application here is just to celebrate this King, to celebrate that, uh, that this King is our King.

The King that is described in this Psalm is our King, King Jesus, and, and he's the King that is coming. And that just filled me with tremendous hope and joy this week as I thought about it.

[18 : 20] Um, we know who the King is. We know that the King is Jesus. And that's so wonderful because we know what Jesus is like. And we know that he is good and he is gentle and he is patient, um, along with being powerful and just.

And we know that he is coming. Um, and isn't that wonderful news to know that our King is good and our King comes and he comes to do these things, these promises that we long for.

And that his endless and boundless realm is going to be fully realized. And his justice and righteousness is going to be fully established. And his people are going to be redeemed and the

poor will be helped.

And there's the sense of the people blossoming and all nations being blessed through him and what he has done. Jesus, his kingdom will come and his will will be done on earth as, as it is in heaven. That's what Psalm 72 is reminding us of. And that right there is the biblical vision of kingship. And so for us, take heart. The true King is victorious and the true King comes.

[19 : 25] Amen.