

God’s anointed king is righteous and just to all people, especially to his downtrodden children. He is “blessed to be a blessing”—to them and all nations so that God will be glorified in all the earth. Worship this king, rejoice in his wise government, and flourish in the fullness of the “shalom” he brings.

Introduction – How would you describe the kingdom of God? Theologian Graeme Goldsworthy offers this concise summary: God’s *people*, living in God’s *place*, under God’s *rule*. Jesus also called this kingdom the “kingdom of heaven” because it is like heaven come to earth. Beautiful!

Background – Moving from Book 2 of the Psalter, through Book 3, and into the beginning of Book 4 provides a fascinating and instructive look at God’s kingdom. Book 2 is about Israel communicating with the nations about the nature of God and his kingdom. It ends on a high mountain peak of glory in Psalm 72. But Book 3 is about Israel’s devastation and the lessons we learn about exile, ending at the Psalter’s nadir in Psalm 89. Thankfully Book 4 raises us from the dust of death that we might gain godly humility and kingdom perspective regarding God’s mysterious and sometimes painful dealings with his people.

I. A Real Historical Kingdom

A. Ruled by King Solomon of Israel, the royal son of David (vv. 1, 8)

This is not some fairy tale kingdom. David really was a shepherd boy who slew a giant, soothed a troubled ruler, slinked away to save his life, and succeeded Saul to become king. God blessed his son Solomon to rule over the most glorious kingdom the world had ever seen. We tend to forget that Israel, the kingdom Solomon ruled as the son of David, was surpassing in its beauty, wealth, prosperity, righteousness, wisdom, holiness, and divine privilege compared to all other nations, kingdoms, and empires. In terms of its geopolitical boundaries, at its apex Israel stretched from “sea to sea” (Mediterranean to Red Seas) and from “the River to the ends of the earth” (Euphrates in the north to the southern frontier at the horn of Africa). For a good period of time, no one would have faulted you for mistaking David’s son Solomon as the Messiah, the promised Son of David to come (Exodus 23:31; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; 1 Kings 4:21, 24-25, 29-34).

B. Founded on God’s covenant promises (vv. 17, 20)

Everyone recognized Israel at that time as the kingdom of God. The LORD’s glory inhabited his temple in Jerusalem, fulfilling the promise that God would dwell in the midst of Israel. God’s promise to the patriarch Abraham, that he would be blessed to be a blessing to the nations, and that his descendants would be kings, was coming true before everyone with eyes to see (v. 17; cf. Genesis 12:3; 17:3-8). God’s covenant with David, and David’s psalms of prayer that God would fulfill his promises “are ended” in the reign of Solomon, whose name derives from *shalom*, meaning full-orbed peace (v. 20). In a very earthy sense, God’s covenant promises were fulfilled.

II. A Model Ideal Kingdom

A. God-given righteousness-justice (vv. 1-2, 4, 9, 12-14)

Here we learn two key aspects of God’s kingdom, and they are both gifts of God, not accomplishments that flow from human intelligence, philosophy, or ideology. The first aspect concerns righteousness and justice, which are both closely related. God’s righteousness-justice is a gift (v. 1), and it is actually the only genuine form of justice in the world (v. 2). In verse 2, the same righteousness and justice with which the king judges the people, including the poor, is “your justice, O God, and your righteousness” in verse 1. God is the source of the king’s righteousness and justice. Done by the king, and others who do justice in his name, it defends the cause of the poor, it delivers

needy children, and crushes their oppressors (v. 4). It causes the unruly and enemies to bow face down before the righteous and just king (v. 9). It delivers the needy, the poor, and the helpless when they cry out (v. 12). It has pity, empathy, and tender compassion on them by saving their lives (v. 13). The one who rules in God-given righteousness and justice treats the blood of these vulnerable people of his as precious, acting to redeem their lives from oppression and violence (v. 14). God tells us what his justice, which is the only real justice, should look like and aspire to in the real world.

B. God-given prosperity (vv. 3, 6, 7, 10, 16)

What kind of kingdom will it produce? Under God's blessing as his anointed king reigns, we have a poetic glimpse of God-given prosperity. Like the strong cedars of Lebanon, Israel's crops burst forth in the hills even up to the mountaintops where fruit trees and amber waves of grain sway back and forth in praise of their Creator (vv. 3, 16). Israel's anointed king will be a blessing to all people in every way. By his righteous judgments he will be like refreshing showers on the land, so the freshly mown grass will glisten like diamonds and grow fresh evergreen blades from rich soil (v. 6). In his days that extend until moons wax and wane no more, peace will be everywhere and the righteous, like green grass in the field, will flourish in the cities (vv. 7, 16). In sum, God's justice produces *shalom* for all his people. They all rejoice! That's the model ideal kingdom.

III. A Coming Forever Kingdom

A. Long live the king—the coming Anointed One (vv. 5, 11, 15)

When we as God's people, living in God's place, under God's rule pray, "May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!" (v. 5), no other king but King Jesus is feared as long as the sun rises and sets. When we pray, "May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!" (v. 11), no other king but Jesus Christ receives this kind of homage from *all* nations. When we pray, "May gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day!" (v. 15), no one but Jesus Christ, the reigning and ruling son of David, receives more precious gifts, is prayed for continuously, and is the name through which so many are blessed. And when the Christian prays, "Long may he live!" (v. 15), only in Jesus are those prayers answered in a king who lives forever in resurrection glory, for only Jesus is risen from the grave, has ascended to his heavenly throne, and sits at the right hand of God the Father until he comes again to earth.

B. The whole earth will be filled with God's glory (vv. 18-19)

What is the only right response to the arrival of Jesus and his establishing God's kingdom? Bless the LORD God of Israel. Bless his glorious name forever. And pray with all your might the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen! We who are in Christ, who is the NT Israel of God, are right now living in God's established kingdom. Already in essence, but not yet in its completion. In God's wise plan for the ages, we are currently living in the age of kingdom advancement. We who live on this side of Christ's first coming still await a coming anointed king—his second coming. Jesus is the returning king from heaven who we look for. And as much as God's heavenly glory keeps on advancing throughout the whole earth before he returns, oh what a day that will be!

Conclusion – But not yet. Remember, we live in a day when Christ's kingdom is truly established, but Jesus has not yet installed his righteousness, his justice, and his *shalom* in every home, every heart, and every square inch of creation. Until then, your calling as a Christian is to spread the good news of the kingdom, strive for God-given righteousness and justice, enjoy the blessings of God-given *shalom* in your work and rest, and worship as if heaven is a real place. Because it is, in Christ. That is how we see the kingdom established: God's people *in Christ*, living in God's place *in Christ*, and under God's rule *in Christ*. Let us pray along with the early church who longed for the anointed king who they knew and loved: "Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus!" Amen and Amen!