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By Solomon.

PSALM 72: 1 God, give the king your justice; your righteousness to the royal son.

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David prays to God for Solomon, Psa 72:1; prescribes Solomon's work, Psa 72:2; the effects of his administration, Psa 72:3-7; the extent of his dominion, Psa 72:8-11; his mercy and kindness to the poor, and the perpetuity of his praise, Psa 72:12-17. God is blessed for his power and goodness; and the psalmist prays that the whole earth may be filled with his glory, Psa 72:18-20.

The title לישלמה lishelomoh, we translate, A Psalm for Solomon. The Chaldee says, "By the hand of Solomon, spoken prophetically." The Syriac, "A Psalm of David, when he had constituted Solomon king." All the other Versions attribute it to Solomon himself. But in the conclusion of the Psalm it appears to be attributed to David. "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." It is most probably a Psalm of David, composed in his last days, when he had set this beloved son on the throne of the kingdom. "Then," says Calmet, "transported with joy and gratitude, he addressed this Psalm to God, in which he prays him to pour out his blessings on the young king, and upon the people. He then, wrapped up in a Divine enthusiasm, ascends to a higher subject; and sings the glory of the Messiah, and the magnificence of his reign. Hence it is that we may see in this Psalm a great number of expressions which cannot relate to Solomon, unless in a hyperbolical and figurative sense; but, applied to Christ, they are literally and rigorously exact."

Verse 1

Give the king thy judgments - Let Solomon receive thy law, as the civil and ecclesiastical code by which he is to govern the kingdom.

And thy righteousness unto the king's son - Righteousness may signify equity. Let him not only rule according to the strict letter of thy law, that being the base on which all his decisions shall be founded; but let him rule also according to equity, that rigorous justice may never become oppressive. Solomon is called here the king, because now set upon the Jewish throne; and he is called the king's son, to signify his right to that throne on which he now sat.

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PSALM 72: 2 He will judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.

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Verse 2

He shall judge thy people with righteousness - With justice and mercy mixed, or according to equity.

And thy poor with judgment - Every one according to the law which thou hast appointed; but with especial tenderness to the poor and afflicted.

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PSALM 72: 3 The mountains shall bring prosperity to the people. The hills bring the fruit of righteousness.

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## Verse 3

The mountains shall bring peace - Perhaps mountains and hills are here taken in their figurative sense, to signify princes and petty governors; and it is a prediction that all governors of provinces and magistrates should administer equal justice in their several departments and jurisdictions; so that universal peace should be preserved, and the people be every where prosperous; for שָׁלוֹם shalom signifies both peace and prosperity, for without the former the latter never existed.

But what is the meaning of "the little hills by righteousness?" Why, it has no meaning: and it has none, because it is a false division of the verse. The word בְּצִדְקָה bitsedakah, in righteousness, at the end of Psa 72:3, should begin Psa 72:4, and then the sense will be plain. Psa 72:3 : "The mountains and the hills shall bring prosperity to the people." Psa 72:4 : "In righteousness he shall judge the poor of the people: he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor."

The effects, mentioned in the fourth verse, show that King Solomon should act according to the law of his God; and that all officers, magistrates, and governors, should minister equal rights through every part of the land. The Septuagint has the true division: Αναλαβειτω τα ορη ειρηνην τω λαω σου, και οι βουνοι· εν δικαιοσυνη κρινει τους πτωχους του λαου, κ. τ. λ. "The mountains shall bring peace to thy people, and the hills: In righteousness shall he judge the poor of thy people," etc.

PSALM 72: 4 He will judge the poor of the people. He will save the children of the needy, and will break the oppressor in pieces.

PSALM 72: 5 They shall fear you while the sun endures; and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

## Verse 5

They shall fear thee - There is no sense in which this can be spoken of Solomon, nor indeed of any other man: it belongs to Jesus Christ, and to him alone. He is the Prince of peace, who shall be feared and revered "through all generations, and as long as the sun and moon endure."

PSALM 72: 6 He will come down like rain on the mown grass, as showers that water the earth.

## Verse 6

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass - The word רֶגֶז rez, which we translate mown grass, more properly means pastured grass or pastured land; for the dew of the night is intended to restore the grass which has been eaten in the course of the day. This very idea the Chaldee has seized, and renders the place thus: "He shall descend gently, like rain upon the grass which has been eaten by the locust." But there seems to be a reference to the thick night dews which in summer fall on the pasturages, and become the means of restoring the grass consumed in the day-time by the cattle. This is finely expressed by the most accomplished of all poets and agriculturists: -

Et quantum longis carpent armenta diebus,

Exigua tantum gelidus ros nocte reponet.

Virg. Geor. ii., ver. 201. "For what the day devours, the nightly dew

Shall to the morn by pearly drops renew."

Dryden.

Or to leave poetry, which always says too much or too little, the plain prose is: - "And as much as the flocks crop in the long days,

So much shall the cold dew restore in one short night."

As showers that water the earth - The influence of the doctrine and Spirit of Christ on the soul of man shall be as grateful, as refreshing, and as fructifying, as the nightly dews on the cropped fields, and the vernal showers on the cultivated lands. Without his influence all tillage is vain; without him there can neither be seed nor fruit.

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PSALM 72: 7 In his days, the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more.

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Verse 7

In his days shall the righteous flourish - There was nothing but peace and prosperity all the days of Solomon: for, "In his days Judah and Israel dwelt safely; every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba;" 1Kgs 4:25.

So long as the moon endureth - עד בלי ירח ad beli yareach, "Till there be no more moon."

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PSALM 72: 8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth.

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Verse 8

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea - The best comment on this, as it refers to Solomon, may be found in 1Kgs 4:21, 1Kgs 4:24 : "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt; for he had dominion over all on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river; and he had peace on all sides round about him."

Solomon, it appears, reigned over all the provinces from the river Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, even to the frontiers of Egypt. The Euphrates was on the east of Solomon's dominions; the Philistines were westward, on the Mediterranean sea; and Egypt was on the south. Solomon had therefore, as tributaries, the kingdoms of Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. Thus he appears to have possessed all the land which God covenanted with Abraham to give to his posterity.

Unto the ends of the earth - Or land, must mean the tract of country along the Mediterranean sea, which was the boundary of the land on that side: but, as the words may refer to Christ, every thing may be taken in its utmost latitude and extent.

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PSALM 72: 9 Those who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him. His enemies shall lick the dust.

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Verse 9

They that dwell in the wilderness - The צִיִּים tsiyim, termed Ethiopians by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic. The Syriac terms them the islands. But it is likely that those who dwell by the sea-coasts, and support themselves by navigation and fishing, are here intended.

His enemies shall lick the dust - Shall be so completely subdued, that they shall be reduced to the most abject state of vassalage, till they shall become proselytes to the Jewish faith.

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PSALM 72: 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the islands will bring tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

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Verse 10

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shalt bring presents - Though Solomon did not reign over Cilicia, of which Tarsus was the capital, yet he might receive gifts, not in the sense of tribute; for מִנְחָה minchah, the word here used, signifies a gratitude or friendly offering.

The kings of Sheba and Seba - Both countries of Arabia. From the former came the queen of Sheba, to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And she brought exceeding great presents or gifts, but not in the way of tribute, for Solomon had no jurisdiction in her country. And certainly many sovereigns, to obtain his friendship, sent him various presents of the choicest produce of their respective countries; and no doubt he did with them as with the queen of Sheba, gave them gifts in return. Hence the word אֶשְׁכָּר eshcar is used, which signifies "a compensative present, made on account of benefits received."

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PSALM 72: 11 Yes, all kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him.

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Verse 11

All kings shall fall down before - They shall reverence him on account of his great wisdom, riches, etc.

All nations shalt serve him - All the surrounding nations. This and the preceding verses are fully explained by 1Kgs 10:23-25 : "King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought unto Solomon to hear his wisdom. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments and armor, and spices, horses and mules a rate year by year." If we take these expressions to mean literally all the habitable globe, then they cannot be applied to Solomon; but if we take them as they are most evidently used by the sacred writer, then they are literally true. When all the earth shall be brought to receive the Gospel of Christ, then they may be applied to him.

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PSALM 72: 12 For he will deliver the needy when he cries; the poor, who has no helper.

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Verse 12

He shall deliver the needy when he crieth - The poor and the rich shall, in the administration of justice, be equally respected; and the strong shall not be permitted to oppress the weak.

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PSALM 72: 13 He will have pity on the poor and needy. He will save the souls of the needy.

PSALM 72: 14 He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence. Their blood will be precious in his sight.

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Verse 14

From deceit and violence - Because they are poor and uneducated, they are liable to be deceived; and because they are helpless, they are liable to oppression; but his equal justice shall duly consider these cases; and no man shall suffer because he is deceived, though the letter of the law may be against him.

And precious shall their blood be - If the blood or life of such a person shall have been spilt by the hand of violence, he shall seek it out, and visit it on the murderer, though he were the chief in the land. He shall not be screened, though he were of the blood royal, if he have willfully taken away the life of a man.

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PSALM 72: 15 They shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba. Men shall pray for him continually. They shall bless him all day long.

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Verse 15

To him shall be given of the gold of Sheba - The Arabians shall pay him tribute.

Prayer also shall be made for him continually - In all conquered countries two things marked the subjection of the people:

1. Their money was stamped with the name of the conqueror.
2. They were obliged to pray for him in their acts of public worship.

Daily shall he be praised - He shall not act by the conquered like conquerors in general: he shall treat them with benignity; and shall give them the same laws and privileges as his natural subjects, and therefore "he shall be daily praised." All shall speak well of him.

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PSALM 72: 16 Abundance of grain shall be throughout the land. Its fruit sways like Lebanon. Let it flourish, thriving like the grass of the field.

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**Verse 16**

There shall be a handful of corn - The earth shall be exceedingly fruitful. Even a handful of corn sown on the top of a mountain shall grow up strong and vigorous; and it shall be, in reference to crops in other times as the cedars of Lebanon are to common trees or shrubs: and as the earth will bring forth in handfuls, so the people shall be multiplied who are to consume this great produce.

And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth - There have been many puzzling criticisms concerning this verse. What I have given I believe to be the sense.

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PSALM 72: 17 His name endures forever. His name continues as long as the sun. Men shall be blessed by him. All nations will call him blessed.

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**Verse 17**

His name shall endure for ever - Hitherto this has been literally fulfilled. Solomon is celebrated in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south; his writings still remain, and are received, both by Jews and by Gentiles, as a revelation from God; and it is not likely that the name of the author shall ever perish out of the records of the world.

All nations shall call him blessed - Because of the extraordinary manner in which he was favored by the Most High. I well know that all these things are thought to belong properly to Jesus Christ; and, in reference to him, they are all true, and ten thousand times more than these. But I believe they are all properly applicable to Solomon: and it is the business of the commentator to find out the literal sense, and historical fact, and not seek for allegories and mysteries where there is no certain evidence of their presence. Where the sacred writers of the New Testament quote passages from the Old, and apply them to our Lord, we not only may but should follow them. And I am ready to grant there may be many other passages equally applicable to him with those they have quoted, which are not thus applied. Indeed, He is the sum and substance of the whole Scripture. His spoke by his Spirit in the prophets; and himself was the subject of their declarations. See our Lord's saying, Luk 24:44.

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PSALM 72: 18 Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvellous deeds.

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**Verse 18**

Blessed be the Lord God - David foresaw all Solomon's grandeur; his justice equity, and the happiness of the subjects under his government; and his soul has, in consequence, sensations of pleasure and gratitude to God, which even his own wondrous pen cannot describe. But it is worthy of remark, that God did not reveal to him the apostasy of this beloved son. He did not foresee that this once holy, happy, wise, and prosperous man would be the means of debasing the Divine worship, and establishing the grossest idolatry in Israel. God hid this from his eyes, that his heart might not be grieved, and that he might die in peace. Besides, there was still much contingency in the business. God would not predict a thing as absolutely certain, which was still poised between a

possibility of being and not being; the scale of which he had left, as he does all contingencies, to the free-will of his creature to turn.

Who only doeth wondrous things - God alone works miracles: wherever there is a miracle there is God. No creature can invert or suspend the course and laws of nature; this is properly the work of God. Jesus Christ, most incontrovertibly, wrought such miracles; therefore, most demonstrably, Jesus Christ is God.

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PSALM 72: 19 Blessed be his glorious name forever! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory!  
Amen and amen.

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Verse 19

Let the whole earth be filled with his glory - Let the Gospel - the light, the Spirit, and power of Christ, fill the world.

Amen - So let it be.

And Amen - So it shall be. Hallelujah!

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PSALM 72: 20 This ends the prayers by David, the son of Jesse.

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Verse 20

The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended - This was most probably the last Psalm he ever wrote. There may be several in the after part of this book which were written by him; but they were probably composed in a former period of his life, for this was the end of the poetic prayers of David the son of Jesse. Those that were found afterwards have got out of their proper connection.