

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Psalm 72 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the psalm. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

PSALM 72:1-20 ESV

1 Of Solomon. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! 2 May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! 3 Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! 4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! 5 May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! 6 May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! 7 In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! 8 May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! 9 May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! 10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! 11 May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! 12 For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. 13 He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. 14 From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. 15 Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! 16 May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field! 17 May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed! 18 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. 19 Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! 20 The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

STRUCTURE (Adapted from *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, by David Dorsey)

A Prayers for a good king: justice, prosperity, and enduring reign (1-7)

- "may he defend the **afflicted** (Heb. ani); 'may he save the **needy** (Heb. ebyon)"
- "may the **mountains** yield prosperity"
- "as **long** as the **sun endures**"

B CENTER: Prayer for the king's reign over all nations (8-11)

- Theme: May "ends of the **earth**" serve the king

A' Prayers for a good king: justice, prosperity, and an enduring reign (12-17)

- "may he deliver the **needy** (Heb. ebyon)... and the **afflicted** (Heb. ani)... may he pity... the **needy** (Heb. ebyon); and may he save the lives of the **needy** (Heb. ebyon)."
- "may there be abundance of grain... on the **mountains**."
- "may his name **endure** as **long** as the **sun**"

B' POSTSCRIPT (to Psalm 72 and Book 2): Praise for Yahweh's reign over all nations (18-20)

- Theme: "the whole **earth**" will praise "the God of Israel"

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

Psalm 72 is a royal psalm written by King Solomon, closing out Book II of Israel's five-book Psalter (paralleling the five books of Moses's law). Scholars conjecture that Israel sang this song at the coronation of the king and other royal occasions. The prayers of the psalm focus on the king's character (featuring "justice" and "righteousness" that will "defend the cause of the poor... and crush the oppressor"), the prosperity he brings spiritually and economically, and a plea for Yahweh to make his reign extend globally and enduringly.

While Yahweh did provide some good kings, all of them failed, and most failed miserably. Israel's prayer in Psalm 72 laid one eye on her current leader—that he would meet these ideals as closely as possible—while setting the other

eye on the horizon toward a messianic king. We were made to hope in a king. We were made to hope *politically* in a righteous, global, enduring ruler who will one day establish His own utopia—the kingdom of God. God has so embedded this hope in our DNA that if we don't hope in Christ, we will bank our energies on some other political outcome. Hope FOR your desired political outcomes—but hope IN Christ.

Hope in a Messiah was a central feature of Israel's worship. As I describe below, Psalms 1 and 2 provide a “double-door” entry into Israel's Psalter, with the former focusing on submission to God's word and the latter on hope in God's Anointed—the Christ. Holy Worship submits to Scripture and hopes in Christ.

In its original form, Psalm 72 displayed a three-part structure, outlined above (A-B-A'). The center of the structure (B) highlights the global reign of Christ—our hope in worship. The parallel prayers on either side depict the nature of His reign, explaining why He is worth hoping in.

As I explain below, verses 18-20 were almost certainly added later by an editor to round out Book II of the Psalter. At the same time, the editor of the song carefully paralleled the central feature (B) of Psalm 72 by elaborating on the global reign of Christ. The confident tone of the final verses reminds us that the prayers for Christ's reign would indeed be answered. Yahweh's king would reign over all the earth just as Yahweh Himself does.

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

1 Of Solomon. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! 2 May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! 3 Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! 4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!

—“Of Solomon”: the psalm begins with “of Solomon” and concludes with “The prayers of David, the son of Jesse...” Some scholars believe Psalm 72 was penned BY David but FOR Solomon. However, most acknowledge Solomon's authorship and that the final verses were added to conclude Book II, like the other four books of the Psalter, with praise for Yahweh. Because almost all of Book II was composed by David, it makes sense to conclude it with his name.

—“the king... the royal son”: Solomon was no usurper. As a son of David, this “royal son” ascended to the throne by legal means.

—“Give the king your justice... and your righteousness”:

- The prayer is not requesting just and righteous judgments on behalf of the king, nor does it ask here for God's “justifying” grace, as in eternal salvation. Contextually, the Psalmist prays that the king might be a just and righteous person who makes just and righteous decrees. The prayer acknowledges that upright character comes from God.
- Good kings must be good men. Psalm 72 allows no space for the Machiavellian ruler who (according to Machiavelli's *The Prince*) prioritizes (1) pragmatism over morality, (2) deceitful negotiations, (3) ruthless maintenance of power, (4) wicked means for achieving desirable ends—especially, kingdom stability.
- When we pray for our political leaders, we should ask that God grant them “justice” and “righteousness” so they rule like Jesus, not a Machiavellian prince.

—A just and righteous king is especially marked by care for the “poor” (vv. 2, 4, 11) and “needy” (vv. 4, 12-13). Corrupt power manifests itself by terrorizing or neglecting the weak. The “poor” in Scripture includes economic and social dimensions (the widow, the orphan, the immigrant).

—Righteous rulers care about widows. Righteous rulers care about orphans. Righteous rulers care about immigrants. Righteous rulers care about the poor. Scripture routinely emphasizes these.

—“your people... your poor”:

- A righteous king views himself as a steward with derived authority. Like Jesus told Pilate, “You would have no authority if it had not been granted to you...” As stewards, citizens remain “your people”—God's people. The poor are also “your poor”—God's poor. Any ruler who tramples his own citizenry tramples God's people. Any king who harms the poor harms God's poor.
- In its ancient context, “your people” and “your poor” would have applied to Israel—the people of God. In our present age, however, Paul applies these same principles to pagan governments like that of wicked Nero. He refers to Nero as a “servant of God” (Rom. 13:5) and his fellow political leaders as “ministers of God” (13:6). Political leaders serve as stewards under God's kingship—even if they don't know God. This means that God will hold them accountable for how they ruled.

—“mountains... prosperity... hills... righteousness”:

- Mountains and hills speak of Israel's fertile land. The psalmist does not limit his prayer for prosperity in terms of geography. This is a synecdoche, which means “part for the whole” (for example, “boots on the ground” is a synecdoche for soldiers). The psalmist references Israel's fertile regions to say, “May all Israel prosper economically!” It would be similar to saying, “May America's heartland prosper!” The “heartland” typically focuses on our best farmland in the middle of the country, but the essence of the prayer would be for all America to prosper.
- The Hebrew word for “prosperity” is *shalom*, which encompasses more than financial prosperity. It includes peace and well-being of every kind. The NASB and NKJV translate it here as “peace,” the ESV and NIV as “prosperity,” and the CSB as “well-being.”
- In the present context, however, “mountains... [and] hills” refers most specifically to financial prosperity since economic fruitfulness derived from these fertile regions. We might say that the psalmist is praying most pointedly for economic thriving but with every other kind of thriving also in mind (spiritual, physical, emotional, relational, etc.).
- There is a relationship between “prosperity” and “righteousness” in verse 3. Within the context of vv. 1-4, the Psalmist expresses faith that when the nation obeys God (“righteousness”) it receives financial blessing (“prosperity”).
 - This was literally true under the Mosaic covenant. When Israel obeyed God, He blessed the nation in every way, including financially; the opposite was also true. See Deut. 27-28.
 - But is it also true for nations not under the Mosaic covenant? When nations make righteous decrees, does it yield prosperity, and vice versa?
 - God made that covenant with Israel, not the nations. The nations are not in covenant with God through Moses. Therefore, the blessings and curses mandated by Moses do not apply *in the same way* to the nations.
 - At the same time, God based His covenant with Moses on eternal moral principles, which we see outlined in the summary version of the covenant—the Ten Commandments. Throughout the OT, God holds pagan nations accountable for maintaining His moral law. The Amorites were booted from the land because of sin (Gen. 15). Israel's prophets routinely condemned Egypt, Assyria, Edom, Babylon, and others because they broke God's moral code. These nations paid the price for their sin. Therefore, God does hold nations accountable to His moral law, blessing and cursing them accordingly.
 - One place we see this is in Proverbs. These maxims existed within Israel, but they spoke beyond Israel. For instance, when Proverbs 29:14 says, *“If a king faithfully judges the poor, his throne will be established forever”*—the original readers would have thought most immediately of their own Jewish context, but the proverb applied generally to any kingdom. Kingdoms endure insofar as they behave righteously.
 - Of course, every kingdom fails to rule righteously in any enduring sense, which explains why every empire crumbles. The hope presented in this psalm is that, one day, a Jewish King WILL rule righteously and forever.
- The best economic policy is... righteousness!
 - A review of historic economic downturns can find evidence for this. On one hand, there is a cyclical nature that ethics cannot prevent. On the other hand, greed and neglect of the poor exacerbate downturns throughout history.
 - Take, for instance, the 2008 “Great Recession.” The FCIC (Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission) found that it owed to a “systematic breakdown of accountability and ethics.” Predatory lending benefited the wealthy and bankrupted the poor.

—We need not choose between a “meek” political leader and one who is a “fighter.” The king of Psalm 72 is compassionate toward the poor and needy but ruthless against the oppressor.

—Jesus exhibits both meekness and ruthlessness, depending on the situation. Isaiah 11:3-4: *3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.*

5 May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! 6 May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! 7 In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!

—Verses 5 and 7 both mention “the moon”, tying this section together. This section's overall theme is about the king's enduring reign and its effect on the people.

—“May they fear you” in the Masoretic text (which our Bibles derive from) is translated by the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament)—“May he continue.” Which one is correct? We don't know. This represents the tiny percentage of words in our modern Bibles that we aren't certain about. Fortunately, no doctrine hinges on a disputed word.

—Either translation communicates the enduring reign of the king. The Masoretic text additionally emphasizes the “fear” of God associated with the reign of a righteous king. We see this throughout the Old Testament. When the king lived righteously, so did the people. The inverse was also true. The Psalmist thus prays for a long, righteous reign, resulting in righteous citizenry.

—“rain... mown grass... showers... water the earth”: given the context of verses 5 and 7, the imagery of well-watered land in verse 6 metaphorically depicts the spiritual state of people who dwell under the reign of a righteous king. When wicked tyrants breathe fire, the righteous are burned, and wicked bramble prevails. When righteous leaders rule, righteous people flourish.

—In the context of a church gathering, Paul exhorts us to pray *“for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* Paul's prayer reinforces the truth of Psalm 72: the politics of a nation largely determine whether the righteous flourish. The prayer for kings relates to the “peaceful and quiet life” we are able to enjoy—in context—through freedom of worship. This freedom of worship facilitates the spread of the gospel, so that “all people” can be “saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” For this reason, I pray every Sunday for God to give our President wisdom “so that our children and grandchildren can worship You freely in this land.”

8 May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! 9 May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! 10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! 11 May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!

—The king's reign extends through time (vv. 5-7) and space (vv. 8-11). It is enduring and global.

—“from sea to sea”: from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea—that is, the land of Israel.

—“from the River to the ends of the earth”: from the Euphrates (in the North/East) to the entire planet.

—By saying both “from sea to sea” and “from the River to the ends of the earth,” the psalmist speaks of Israel and then the nations. This sequence follows the ancient promise that God would bless Israel and then all nations through Israel.

—Even before Israel, it reminds us of Adam's reign over the entire earth (Gen. 1:26-28), which began by the Euphrates (2:14). God promised Israel “the land,” but from the very beginning, He had the world in view. Paul took it that way, too (Rom. 4:13).

—Psalm 72 reminds us of these ancient intimations of a global reign over the earth. The Psalmist prays for a king to bring these intimations—better, promises—to pass. Just as Adam was a son of God, commissioned to take dominion over the earth (cf. Luke 3:38), Israel was a son of God, commissioned to bless the whole earth (Ex. 4:23; Gen. 12:1-3), and the king was a son of God, who would finally bring this global blessing to pass (2 Sam. 7:12-16). Each of these “Adams” or “sons of God” prophetically foreshadowed the last Adam, the eternal Son of God, begotten but not made, forever reigning, Jesus Christ.

—“Tarshish... coastlands”: it's generally thought that “Tarshish” was in Spain. Regardless of its precise location, it poetically symbolizes the furthest reaches of the known world. “coastlands” likewise represent distant lands. The reign of Israel's Christ will encompass the globe.

—“desert tribes... enemies... kings... all kings”: the high, the low, and those in opposition—all will acknowledge the reign of King Jesus.

—“bow down”: could mean “voluntarily worship” or “involuntarily acknowledge his reign.” On the latter, there will come a day when “every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Even those who resist Him in this life will acknowledge His supremacy in the next. We who worship Christ voluntarily now will enjoy acknowledging His supremacy forever. Those who reject Him now will not enjoy this experience. It will be an admission of defeat.

—“lick the dust”: God’s enemies will be so humbled they will fall flat on their face (“in the dust”). Christ will consummate His judgment on His enemies upon His return.

—“render him tribute... bring gifts”:

- This reminds us of Isaiah 60. Here is an excerpt, with allusions to Psalm 72 emboldened: *1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. 3 And **nations** shall come to your light, and **kings** to the brightness of your rising.... 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the **sea** shall be turned to you, the **wealth of the nations** shall come to you. 6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from **Sheba** shall come. **They shall bring gold** and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD... 9 For the **coastlands** shall hope for me, the ships of **Tarshish** first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and **gold** with them, for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has made you beautiful... 11 Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you **the wealth of the nations**, with their **kings** led in procession... 14 The sons of those who afflicted you shall come **bending low** to you, and all who despised you shall **bow down** at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel... 19 The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. 20 Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.*
- Isaiah 60 prophesies the New Heavens and New Earth. We know this because of allusions in Revelation 21-22 to the perpetually open gates, the City of God, and the removal of celestial bodies, among other things. Below is a quote from my (someday forthcoming, by your prayers) book about Revelation. It focuses on the connections between Isaiah 60 and Revelation 21-22. I am quoting these because they both relate also to Psalm 72. Oh, how connected the Scriptures are!

This is one of my favorite parts of Revelation. Throughout the book, kings and nations have allied themselves with the Antichrist, they’ve persecuted saints, they’ve refused to repent, and they’ve cursed God for the plagues. Understandably, many conclude that only a precious few will enter paradise. But this contradicts the rest of the story. New Jerusalem’s dimensions and perpetually-open gates convey hope.

The open gates allude to Isaiah 60:11: “Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.”

Isaiah sees kings bringing “the wealth of the nations,” and he wasn’t wrong, but John enlarges the image in light of Jesus’ global kingship. The wealth they bring won’t be financial but spiritual. John exchanges Isaiah’s language of “wealth” for “glory and... honor” (Rev. 21:26)—two words only used in Revelation to describe worship (Rev. 1:6; 4:9; 5:12-13; etc.). Poetically, then, John reveals that kings who once slept with the Harlot have since been wooed by covenant love, to worship.

- Connecting the dots back to Psalm 72, King Solomon envisions an enduring global reign for Israel’s king, and the Apostle John identifies that king as Jesus. Jesus will receive not just a begrudged tribute but hearty worship from His former enemies.

—“Sheba and Seba”: Solomon wrote this verse about “Sheba and Seba,” and in 1 Kings 10, the majestic Queen of Sheba visited him, marveling at his wisdom and wealth. Referring to this, Jesus would later say, *“The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here”* (Matt. 12:42). Jesus is our greater Solomon.

—“all kings bow down... all nations serve”: consider how unbelievable this prayer would have been in its 10th century BC context. Solomon ruled over a large empire, but it still never rivaled Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Persia, or Rome. Nevertheless, he prayed that it one day would. We can view this prayer as rooted in the promise of the Messiah’s global dominion.

12 For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. 13 He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. 14 From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.

—The Psalmist returns to the king's treatment of the poor and needy, which he began in vv. 1-4. In the structure above, I outlined how these sections parallel. The function of the parallel is to place vv. 8-10 about the Messiah's global reign at the center—of the poem and of history.

—This parallel clarifies that the "oppressor" (v. 4) is characterized by "violence" (v. 14).

—The poor have a voice with the king: he delivers him "when he calls" (v. 12). Righteous rulers don't just hear their wealthy donors; they hear the poor.

—The king feels "pity" (ESV) or "compassion" (NASB) on the poor. The ideal king does not let power go to his head. He hurts for hurting people. And he translates that into action: he "saves" (v. 13) and "redeems" (v. 14) the weak and needy.

—"precious is their blood in his sight":

- Oppressors shed the blood of the weak because they can.
- This verse touches my heart. The righteous king—Jesus—views the blood of the innocent poor as "precious."
- Jesus' blood is precious to us (1 Pet. 1:19); our blood is precious to Him (Ps. 72:14). (Even if we are not financially poor, we are all "weak" and "needy".)

—These verses are fulfilled partially right now, and they will be fulfilled consummately at Christ's return. Right now, we can go to Christ our King, trusting that He will hear us in our poverty, weakness, and oppression. At Christ's return, He will end all poverty and oppression finally, crushing every oppressor, and glorifying those who believe.

15 Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! 16 May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field!

—"Long may he live":

- Israelites often used this language when speaking to kings (1 Kgs. 1:31; Neh. 2:3; Dan. 2:4; 3:9; 5:10; 6:6, 21). Nehemiah and Daniel even spoke this way to pagan kings!
- It is similar to when British citizens say, "Long live the King" (or "Long live the Queen," as we are used to hearing with the late Queen Elizabeth).
- This prayer is fulfilled in Jesus, who lives and reigns forever "by the power of an indestructible life" (Heb. 7:16).
- The prayer for an enduring reign parallels the first stanza. See structure above.

—In its original context, the prayer would have been for the king to reign, endure, and prosper. Since Jesus has already taken His enduring seat at the Father's right hand, how do we pray this?

- In the current age, Jesus reigns FROM heaven but THROUGH His church's mission and BY the Holy Spirit. Anytime we pray for the church's global mission or the Spirit's empowerment, we are praying in alignment with these verses.
- Furthermore, any time we pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we are praying in alignment with these verses. We are asking for Jesus to manifest His reign and exert His sovereign will over the earth.
- Related to these prayers, any time we pray for the church's welfare ("abundance of grain... fruit... blossom"), we are praying in the spirit of these verses.
- "in the cities" reminds us of God's mission of granting new hearts to His people so that they might, in turn, renew their cities (see Ezek. 36:25-38). Churches are called to city renewal. This again relates to prayers for the mission of the church.
- Overall, Psalm 72 is a prayer for the King's reign to flourish. Citizens of the kingdom of Christ extend His kingdom through prayer.

—Can we also apply these prayers in a way that focuses on current government leaders?

- Absolutely. We should pray for our leaders to have righteous character, defend the weak and needy, to allow freedom of worship, and to prosper the economy. All these principles exist in Psalm 72.
- Nevertheless, we should not pray in such a way that we place our hope in presidents rather than Christ. We pray for the best in our nation, but we place our hope in Christ and His ever-expanding reign: “the government shall be on his shoulders” (Isa. 9:6).

18 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. 19 Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! 20 The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

—These last few verses are like a postscript to a letter. They were probably written after the time of David and Solomon, when the Psalter was assembled. I say this for the following reasons:

- The Psalm says it was by Solomon, yet it concludes with “The prayers of David, the Son of Jesse, are ended.”
- The plural—prayers—suggest multiple psalms, not just Psalm 72. This conclusion was written to close out Book II.
- Most of Book II was written by David, so this ending makes sense as a conclusion for the whole book.
- Books I-V of the Psalms all end with a doxology like this, suggesting it provides the ending for more than just Psalm 72.
- The symmetry of Psalm 72 makes verse 17 an appropriate ending to the song (even though verses 18-20 were made to cohere with the rest of the psalm).
- The Psalter was organized into five books during long after David and Solomon lived, suggesting that this brief doxology was added later.

—Conclusions to other books of the Psalter:

- **BOOK 1:** [Psalm 41:13 ESV] 13 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.
- **BOOK 2:** [Psalm 72:19 ESV] 19 Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!
- **BOOK 3:** [Psalm 89:52 ESV] 52 Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen.
- **BOOK 4:** [Psalm 106:48 ESV] 48 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD!
- **BOOK 5:** The final book of the Psalter ends differently. Instead of a brief beatitude, the whole song is a command to “Praise the Lord!”

—Even though it was probably written later, that does not make it any less a part of God's Word. Scripture has many human authors, but the Holy Spirit inspired them all.

—“God of Israel... whole earth”:

- Psalm 72 focuses on the global and enduring reign of Yahweh's king, but here, the emphasis is on the reign of Yahweh Himself. The two intimately relate to one another because God's king represents Him. Jesus does this perfectly.
- When we discussed Psalms 1 and 2, we talked about them being a “double-door entry” into the Psalter. Psalm 1 centers on obedience to God's Word, while Psalm 2 focuses on hope in God's king. The Psalter fixes our attention on both. Here is what I wrote in my introduction to Psalm 2's Study Guide:
 - *The two psalms were at one time paired together as a single song, and they share many of the same themes and words. Psalm 1 provides two ways, the way of the wicked and the way of the righteous. Psalm 2 provides two ways, the way of submission to the LORD and His Christ, or the way of rebellion. If Psalm 1 emphasizes our alignment with the Word-made-Scripture, Psalm 2 demands alignment with the Word-made-flesh.... If Psalm 1 is to save us from the danger of empty liturgy—lips that sing of God's goodness, but hearts unsubmitted to His Word—then Psalm 2 is to save us from a Christ-less liturgy. We are not just moralists and do-gooders; we are sinners, saved by grace, who sing of our Savior. Paul tells us, in the context of New Testament worship, to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16).*
 - Rightful worship springs from hearts that submit to Scripture and hope in Christ.

- Verses 1-17 pray for Yahweh's king to enduringly reign over all the earth, but verses 18-20 praise Yahweh for His reign over all the earth. The tone is more confident as we generally move from prayer to praise and hope to promise.
- Even though they were added later and close out the whole of Book II, verses 18-20 still relate to the rest of Psalm 72. They parallel the central section about the reign of Yahweh's king by anchoring the surety of those prayers in the perfect reign of Yahweh. "The LORD and... His Anointed" (Ps. 2:2) are so intimately united that hope in One is hope in the Other. Yahweh's global reign ensures the same for Yahweh's king.