

## Psalm 72

(The Catholic Bible has psalm 72 listed as psalm 71).

The superscript says, "A Psalm for Solomon." This was probably written in David's old age as Solomon was about to be king.

Rashi - He prayed this prayer on behalf of his son Solomon, for he foresaw with the holy spirit that he [Solomon] was destined to request of the Holy One, blessed be He, "a heart to understand, to hear judgment."

This is a Messianic Psalm pointing to Christ's reign in the Kingdom of God.

**Psalm 72:1** - "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son."

The Targum renders: "O God, give the decrees of thy judgments to the king Messiah, and thy righteousness to the son of David the king." The Midrash refers this to the Messiah with reference to Isaiah 11:1, 5 (fol. 27, col. 4). (See Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 112. 2.)

- **Matthew 1:1** - "This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David..."

**Psalm 72:3** - "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness."

Rashi - Now what is the peace that the mountains bear? When they produce fruit, people will not be jealous, and "each man will call his neighbor [to come] under [his] vine and under [his] fig tree."

- **Isaiah 52:7** - "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

- **Romans 5:1** - "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

**Psalm 72:4** - "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor."

break in pieces = *daka'* - crush, bruise, break, shatter

The destruction of Egypt, and also as a prophesy of the Deliverer of **Genesis 3:15**

- **Psalm 89:10** - "Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces (*daka'*), as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm."

But also what happened on the cross:

- **Isaiah 53:10** - "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise (*daka*) him..."

**Psalm 72:6** - "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth."

Rashi - May his word descend into the midst of Your people and into their heart as the rain that falls on the cut vegetation, which requires rain after being cut.

- **Joel 2:23** - "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."

- **Hosea 6:3** - "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Christ is God's free gift to all mankind:

- **Matthew 5:45** - "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust."

"Greater is the day of rain, than the resurrection of the dead; for the resurrection of the dead is for the just; but rain is 'both for the just, and for the wicked.'" (Babylonian Talmud, Taanith, fol. 7. 1.)

**Psalm 72:10** - "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts."

i.e. from far-flung places from all over the world -

- **Tarshish** - Tartessos on the Atlantic coast of Spain, a source of metals for the Phoenicians. (The Targum of Jonathan interprets Tarshish as Carthage) During Solomon's reign, "once every three years the ships of Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks." (1 Kings 10:22)
- **Sheba** - the area of present day Yemen, whose queen visited Solomon.
- **Seba** (or Saba) Cush, south of Egypt. Josephus identified it with the Cushite kingdom of Meroë.

The Midrash on Genesis, or Bereshith Rabba, sect. 78, has the following passage:  
 "...All the presents which our father Jacob gave to Esau the nations of the world will once return to the king Messiah, as it is said: 'The kings of Tharsis....' It is not written 'they shall bring,' but 'they shall return.'"

Messiah will be brought gifts according to the Talmud: "Egypt will bring gifts to the Messiah." Seba is associated with Egypt and Ethiopia. The same secret appears in Jacob's blessing connected with the name Shiloh. **Psalm 72:10** and **Psalm 76:11** both

contain a phrase which resembles Shiloh, "shai," or "gifts for him." See **Psalm 76:11** - "Let all around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared."

**Psalm 72:11** - "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

- **Isaiah 49:22-23** - "This is what the Lord GOD says: "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations, and raise My banner to the peoples. They will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders. Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow to you facedown and lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in Me will never be put to shame."

- **Isaiah 60:3** - "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

- **Revelation 21:24** - "By its light the nations will walk, and into it the kings of the earth will bring their glory."

This is placed either in the world to come (Zohar in Gen. fol. 84. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 13. fol. 209. 4. Midrash Megillat Esther, fol. 86. 2. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 44. ) or in the Days of Messiah (T. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 1.).

**Psalm 72:12-14** - "For he shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight."

The king who will deliver the needy and the afflicted is, according to the Midrash, the Messiah, "for it is written: 'A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, and he will judge the needy with righteousness'" (**Isaiah 11:4**). The whole psalm, the Midrash says, is "praise to the Messiah-King."

Christ had special concern for the poor (**Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18**)

Compare with **Job 29:12** - This was the ideal of a just king in ancient times.

- **Isaiah 16:5** - "And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit on it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness."

**Psalm 72:15** - "And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised."

Recall that Jesus had gold presented to him in his infancy (**Matthew 2:11**).

The Messiah "shall live" on, and reign on, in his everlasting kingdom; and men shall bring to him of the gold of Sheba (**1 Kings 10:10; Ezekiel 27:22**), giving him of their

best and rarest, in grateful acknowledgment of his goodness and protection.

"Thy kingdom come" is an example of a prayer to the Father we might make "for" Christ.

**Psalm 72:16** - "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

The "city" is Jerusalem, according to the Targum and the Babylonian Talmud (T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2.). Recall that 3,000 were converted on the day of Pentecost.

"handful" = *piccah* - expansion, abundance, fulness, plenty. It is the feminine of the term "handful" but expresses the bounty from one handful if planted.

Rabbi Obadiah Gaon (10th century) interprets these words, "an handful of corn; that is, the Messiah shall be at first as an handful of corn; but afterwards a multitude of disciples shall grow as the grass" (In Vicens. in loc.)

- **John 12:23-24** - "But Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'"

"And there shall be a firmament on the earth, on the tops of mountains" (a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains). Tanchuma (fol. 79, col. 4) asks: "When will this be?" "In the days of the Messiah" is the answer. The Midrash on **Ecclesiastes 1:9** has the following comment: "As the first Redeemer fed the people with manna (cf. **Exodus 16:4**), so the latter Redeemer shall cause manna to descend, as it is said, "there shall be an handful of corn in the earth."

Rashi - our Rabbis interpret this of the dainties in the days of the Messiah, and the whole psalm concerns the King Messiah.

The Talmudic tract Shabbath (fol. 30, col. 2) has the following reference to **Psalm 72:16**: "Rabban Gamaliel was sitting one day explaining to his disciples that in the future (i.e., in Messianic times) a woman will give birth every day, for it is said: 'She travails and brings forth at once' (**Jeremiah 31:8**). A certain disciple sneeringly said: 'There is no new thing under the sun' (**Ecclesiastes 1:9**). 'Come,' said the Rabbi, 'and I will show thee something similar even in this world; and he showed him a hen which laid eggs every day. Again, Gamaliel sat and expounded that in the future world the trees will bear fruit every day, for it is said: 'And it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit' (**Ezekiel 17:23**). As the boughs grow every day, so will the fruit grow every day. The same disciple sneeringly said: 'There is nothing new under the sun.' 'Come,' said the Rabbi, 'and I will show thee something like it even now, in this age.' And he directed him to a caper-berry, which bears fruit and leaves at all seasons of the year. Again, as Gamaliel was sitting and expounding to his disciples that the land of Israel in the Messianic age would produce cakes and clothes of the finest wool, for it is said: 'There

shall be a handful of corn in the earth, ...' that disciple again sneeringly remarked: 'There is nothing new under the sun."

**Psalm 72:17** - "His name shall endure forever (*olam*): his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

"continued" = *yinnon* - to resprout, i.e. propagate by shoots; figuratively, to be perpetual, be continued.

The Talmud often applies this verse to the Messiah. In Pesachim (fol. 54, col. 1; cf. Nedarim, fol. 39, col. 2) we read: "Seven things were created before the world. These are: the Law, for it is said: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old' (**Proverbs 8:22**); Repentance, for it is said: 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world ...., thou saidst: Return, ye children of men' (**Psalm 90:2, 3**); the Garden of Eden, for it is said: 'And the Lord planted the Garden before' (**Genesis 2:8**); Hell, for it is said: 'For Tophet is ordained of old' (**Isaiah 30:33**); the glorious Throne and the Site of the Sanctuary, for it is said: 'The glorious throne called from the beginning, and the place of our sanctuary' (**Jeremiah 17:12**); the Name of the Messiah, for it is said: 'His name shall endure for ever, before the sun (existed) his name was Yinnon.'

Verse 17 in the Hebrew reads, "before the sun was, his name was *Yinnôn*," which means 'may it sprout' -- one of the eight Old Testament names meaning a 'shoot,' as in **Isaiah 11:4**. The Midrash also understands this name as being assigned to the Messiah "before the creation of the world."

"Yinnon" became one of the names of Messiah in Jewish tradition. 'A shoot (*yinnon*) will come up from the stump of Jesse, and he will judge the needy with righteousness'" (**Isaiah 11:4**)

Rashi refers to Psalm 72 in his exposition of **Micah 5:2**, which says of the ruler of Israel who will be born in Bethlehem, that his "origins are from old, from ancient times." According to Rashi he is "the Messiah, the Son of David, as **Psalm 118** says, he is the 'stone which the builders rejected', and his origins are from ancient times, for 'before the sun was, his name was *Yinnôn*.'" (quoting **Psalm 72:17**)

R. David Qimhi, "without whom there is no correct biblical exegesis", according to the Sages, says unexpectedly:

"It will be said in the Messianic age that his 'origins are from old, from ancient times'; 'from Bethlehem' means that he will be of the house of David, because there is a long period of time between David and the Messiah-King; and he is El (God), which is how he is 'from old, from ancient times.'" (The interpretations of both RaSHI and RaDaQ can be found in the Mikraôth Gedolôth commentary.)

**Psalm 72:18** - "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things."

Rashi - When the fire descended from the heavens through Solomon, his son (at the dedication of the Temple).

**Psalm 72:19** - "And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

- **Daniel 2:35** - "...the stone that had struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

**Psalm 72:20** - "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

Rashi - Our sages expounded...all these are the prayers of David son of Jesse, to include the entire Book on David's name, even what the sons of Korah and the ten elders said. If this is so, this psalm was not written in its place, and there is no chronological order in the Book.

See also - <http://www.ristosantala.com/rsla/OT/OT13.html>

and on the Names of Messiah:

<https://www.cs.utah.edu/~spiegel/kabbalah/jkm011.htm>

<http://scripturestudies.spruz.com/pt/Yinnon---The-Sun/blog.htm>