

Advent Devotional December 17, 2022

Scripture

Psalm 72

- 1 Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.*
- 2 May he judge your people with righteousness
and your poor with justice.*
- 3 May the mountains yield 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 needy,
and crush the oppressor.*
- 5 May he live 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 righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.*
- 8 May he have dominion from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.*
- 9 May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.*
- 10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute;
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts.*
- 11 May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.*
- 12 For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have 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 day long.*
- 16 May there be abundance of grain in the land;
may it wave on the tops of the mountains;
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 all nations be blessed in him;
may they pronounce him happy.*

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

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Jane Holtzclaw, DMin student

During recent travels, I fell “victim” to airline drama: a canceled flight likely to cause me to miss the event that was the purpose of my journey. The agent, in a position of power, easily could have thwarted my ability to make my destination. He chose, however, to address my predicament in a meaningful manner.

Psalms 72, felt to be a prayer or hymn sung at the coronation of a king, speaks to the powerful relationship of a king to his people and of the king to God. Many scholars also find it to be messianic. It is interesting to note that the focus is not on the king’s power in terms of authority, wealth, or military strength. Rather, the king is charged with being the hands and feet of God—caring for his people, God’s people, by providing for the poor and the oppressed according to the will of God: “May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor” (v. 4).

We all live in community with one another and in that community we each have a place of power in relationships—a type of kingship. This psalm serves as a call to action. In our relationship with others it is our duty to act in accordance with that which God desires. And God provides what we need to do just that: “rain that falls on the mown grass . . . showers that water the earth” (v. 6). We are not in this alone, and for that we can rejoice and be grateful.

Prayer

Gracious God, as we travel on our journey through Advent, open our eyes to see what you want us to see, open our ears to hear what you want us to hear, so that we may more fully live into that which you created us to be—bringing righteousness to the poor and justice to the oppressed. Amen.