

Prayer Resources, LSAP Worksheet #2, Response to the Cry of the Poor

Psalms 72 & 104

Psalm 72 -- Of Solomon

A royal Psalm in which the Israelite king, as the representative of God, is the instrument of divine justice (Ps 72:1–4, 12–14) and blessing (Ps 72:5–7, 15–17) for the whole world. The king is human, giving only what he has received from God. Hence intercession must be made for him. The extravagant language is typical of oriental royal courts.

I

O God, give your judgment to the king; your justice to the king's son;
That he may govern your people with justice, your oppressed with right judgment,
That the mountains may yield their bounty for the people, and the hills great abundance,
That he may defend the oppressed among the people, save the children of the poor
and crush the oppressor.

II

May they fear you with the sun, and before the moon, through all generations.
May he be like rain coming down upon the fields, like showers watering the earth,
That abundance may flourish in his days, great bounty, till the moon be no more.

III

May he rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth.
May his foes kneel before him, his enemies lick the dust.
May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
May all kings bow before him, all nations serve him.
For he rescues the poor when they cry out, the oppressed who have no one to help.
He shows pity to the needy and the poor and saves the lives of the poor.
From extortion and violence he redeems them, for precious is their blood in his sight.

IV

Long may he live, receiving gold from Sheba, prayed for without cease, blessed day by day.
May wheat abound in the land, flourish even on the mountain heights.
May his fruit be like that of Lebanon, and flourish in the city like the grasses of the land.
May his name be forever; as long as the sun, may his name endure.
May the tribes of the earth give blessings with his name; may all the nations regard him as favored.

Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does wonderful deeds.
Blessed be his glorious name forever; may he fill all the earth with his glory.

Amen and amen.

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Psalm 104

A hymn praising God who easily and skillfully made rampaging waters and primordial night into a world vibrant with life. The psalmist describes God's splendor in the heavens (Ps 104:1–4), how the chaotic waters were tamed to fertilize and feed the world (Ps 104:5–18), and how primordial night was made into a gentle time of refreshment (Ps 104:19–23). The picture is like Gn 1:1–2: a dark and watery chaos is made dry and lighted so that creatures might live. The psalmist reacts to the beauty of creation with awe (Ps 104:24–34). May sin not deface God's work (Ps 104:35)!

Bless the LORD, my soul!
LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
You are clothed with majesty and splendor,
robed in light as with a cloak.

You spread out the heavens like a tent;
setting the beams of your chambers upon the waters.
You make the clouds your chariot; traveling on the wings of the wind.
You make the winds your messengers; flaming fire, your ministers.

II

You fixed the earth on its foundation, so it can never be shaken.
The deeps covered it like a garment; above the mountains stood the waters.
At your rebuke they took flight; at the sound of your thunder they fled.
They rushed up the mountains, down the valleys to the place you had fixed for them.
You set a limit they cannot pass; never again will they cover the earth.

III

You made springs flow in wadies that wind among the mountains.
They give drink to every beast of the field; here wild asses quench their thirst.
Beside them the birds of heaven nest; among the branches they sing.
You water the mountains from your chambers; from the fruit of your labor the earth abounds.

You make the grass grow for the cattle and plants for people's work to bring forth food from the earth,
wine to gladden their hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread to sustain the human heart.

The trees of the LORD drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon, which you planted.
There the birds build their nests; the stork in the junipers, its home.
The high mountains are for wild goats; the rocky cliffs, a refuge for badgers.

IV

You made the moon to mark the seasons, the sun that knows the hour of its setting.
You bring darkness and night falls, then all the animals of the forest wander about.
Young lions roar for prey; they seek their food from God.
When the sun rises, they steal away and settle down in their dens.
People go out to their work, to their labor till evening falls.

V

How varied are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
There is the sea, great and wide! It teems with countless beings, living things both large and small.
There ships ply their course and Leviathan, whom you formed to play with.

VI

All of these look to you to give them food in due time.
When you give it to them, they gather; when you open your hand, they are well filled.
When you hide your face, they panic.
Take away their breath, they perish and return to the dust.

Send forth your spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the earth.

VII

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD be glad in his works!
Who looks at the earth and it trembles, touches the mountains and they smoke!
I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God while I live.
May my meditation be pleasing to him; I will rejoice in the LORD.
May sinners vanish from the earth, and the wicked be no more.

Bless the LORD, my soul!
Hallelujah!