

Last week we began to consider these last words of David—that is—his last inspired prophetic words—I suggested we can divide them into three general parts—[1] a preface (vv1-3a), [2] the prophecy proper (vv3b-4), and [3] a response (vv5-7), wherein David applies his prophecy both to himself (v5), and the unconverted (vv6-7)...

Now—before I go any further—let me suggest three reasons why—I am largely going to apply v3b-4 as a prophecy of the Messiah—[1] the grammar—if you notice—the words "must be" are in italics—because the English translators have added them, as they are not in the original Hebrew text—literally the text says—"when one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God"—it's a statement of fact about the results of such a rule, v4—"he dawns on them like the light of the morning when the sun rises..."

In other words—the prophecy isn't telling us what a ruler should be—but what a coming Ruler will be—who's rule and reign brings nothing but blessings along with it—A.W. Pink—"Verses 3 and 4 can be rightly regarded as a Messianic prophecy, for the Hebrew may be rendered 'There shall be a Ruler over men which is just, ruling in the fear of God'..."

[2] The previous verses—that is—he's just told us in vv2-3a—that he received this word from the Holy Spirit as a prophet of God—thus, my point is—why would he tell us he's a prophet—if all he's intended to do was—provide the character traits of an ideal ruler—Dale Ralph Davis—"I think David's 'ruler' refers to the Messiah...But I do not think David in verses 3b-4 is merely holding up an ideal for Davidic kings. I think he speaks prophetically of the Final Representative of his dynasty, the Messiah, because the emphatic stress on divine inspiration in verses 1-3a is hardly compatible with a rather bland statement about what a king ought to be like..."

[3] The following verses—that is v5—where David contrasts the rule of the Messiah with His own, and clearly puts his hope for salvation solely in the care of this coming righteous King, whose kingdom is compared with the morning sunrise and spring rains—furthermore, he contrast his salvation with the damnation of the wicked (vv6-7)...

I. An Explanation of the Text

II. An Application of the Text

I. An Explanation of the Text

A. He is a ruler of men

1. The Hebrew word rendered "rule over" literally means—"to rule, govern, reign, or have dominion"—over someone...
2. The OT often describes the Messiah as a ruler, Mic.5:2—"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting..."
3. The text speaks about a ruler, who rules or has dominion over "men"—literally—"humanity" or "mankind..."
4. In other words—the rule here described is broader than any one single people—but includes "man" in general...
5. Now—most of you know—that historically theologians have distinguished between Christ's rule of power and grace...
6. [1] The kingdom of power—by this is meant—Christ' authority given to Him by His Father over heaven and earth...
7. This includes His present and future rule over all men, wicked and righteous, angels, bad and good, and creation...

8. Matt.28:18—"Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth..."
9. [2] The kingdom of grace—by this is meant—Christ' rule and reign within the hearts of His beloved people...
10. This is the rule or reign that is here meant—because, as we learn from v4—it brings joy and happiness with it...
11. That is—His rule or reign, v4—"is like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds..."
12. Thus—the first public words our Savior recorded are a call to repent and enter the kingdom of God's grace...
13. Mk.1:15—"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand [kingdom of grace], Repent, and believe in the gospel..."
14. That is—this kingdom only concerns those who repent and believe the gospel—it is a limited rule or reign...
15. This was typified under the OC—in that David was king over Jerusalem, the City of God, or Mount Zion...
16. So too—Christ is King over His New Israel, the New Jerusalem, the City of God, Mount Zion, or church of God...
17. Lk.1:32—"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end..."
18. Ps.2:7—"I have set My King, on My holy hill of Zion"—that is—Christ was enthroned over the church at His resurrection...
19. This is the kingdom of our text—Christ ruling over the hearts of His NC Zion within the kingdom of grace...
20. Now—this necessarily implies—that He first changes the hearts of every subject to comply with His just rule...
21. That is—He does not merely rule them externally, but internally—that is—He puts His law within their hearts...

B. He is a righteous ruler

1. This word "just" refers to His righteous rule or reign—which results form His just and righteous character...
2. [1] He is just in His person—that is—He Himself is a righteous person—He is perfectly sinless, holy, and just...
3. [2] He is just in His precepts—that is—the law He rules by is holy, just, and good—He is a just king with a just law...
4. Ps.45:6-7—"Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions [Zach.9:9; Jer.23:5; Isa.32:1-2]..."
5. [a] He is just in His precepts, v6—"your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom..."
6. A scepter was the rod or staff that a king held—which symbolized the authority he possessed over his kingdom...
7. The character of His government shall be that of righteousness—He shall rule His kingdom with righteousness...
8. Or—put another way—He shall rule them with a righteous government—which is comprised of a righteous law...
9. Ps.119:137—"Righteous are you, O LORD, and your laws are right" Rom.7:12—"the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good..."
10. [b] He is just in His person, v7—"you love righteousness and hate wickedness"—that is—He is a just ruler...

11. He loves righteousness because He is a righteous person—He only loves righteousness and hates wickedness...
12. Samuel Pierce—"These spices were made use of to anoint Aaron, the high-priest, and the tabernacle with; they being wrought up according to the Lord's command into an oil, or ointment, it was poured on Aaron's head, and it doubtless perfumed all his garments. It was symbolical of the Holy Ghost, with whom Christ was anointed, and from whom he received his name, *the Anointed*, Christ and Anointed are one and the same. Our Immanuel is all perfume. His name is as ointment poured forth; his person perfumes the church on earth, and the church in heaven; his garments yield a rich perfume..."

C. He is a God-fearing ruler

1. V3a—"He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God"—that is—ruling within the sphere of fearing God...
2. The Scriptures use "the fear of God" as a synonym for godliness or piety—the very essence of true religion...
3. To fear God is to know God—to know who God is in and of Himself—to be ever conscious of His presence...
4. To put it simply—to fear God is dread His frown and desire His smile—above and beyond all other things...
5. Thus—a God-fearing ruler isn't so much concerned with what the people think—but with what God thinks...
6. A God-fearing ruler rules conscious of God's presence—he rules deeply knowledgeable of God's holy character...
7. Isa.11:1-5—"There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. 3 His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist..."
8. [a] Stem of Jesse—though David's dynasty was now only a stump, a Rod or Branch would grow out from it...
9. This of course—underscores the Messiah's humble pedigree—He like David would have a humble lineage...
10. [b] Anointed one, v2—"The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him"—that is—especially at His baptism...
11. We then have three couplets of two graces—wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear...
12. In other words—the Spirit of God will fill His human nature with these graces—to the fullest degree or measure...
13. [c] Righteous ruler, v3—"His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth v5—"Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist"
14. [d] God-fearer, v2—"the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD..."
15. Notice how knowledge and the fear of God are coupled together—the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...
16. This fear, along with every other grace, is given to the Messiah by the Spirit, in the fullest possible degree...
17. Let me put it this way—if fearing God is intimately related to knowing God—how much did He know God...
18. Well—obviously, I trust it's safe to suggest that the Messiah knew God very well—being that He Himself is God...

19. Nobody every feared the LORD like the Messiah, Jn.10:15—"as the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father..."
20. E.J. Young—"The fear of the Lord is the heart and core of Biblical religion. It involves a recognition of the absolute holiness of God; it is a fear based upon the recognition of that holiness and coupled with full reverence before Him...The Spirit produces the fear of the Lord in those to whom He gives this gift. Even the Messiah will be imbued with the fear of the Lord in order to accomplish His mighty work..."

II. An Application of the Text

A. Byway of imitation

1. Here—I want to apply this text to human rulers—as they too are obliged to be just rulers who govern in the fear of the Lord...
2. This of course was illustrated in David—who like His greater Son—ruled over Jerusalem with righteousness...
3. 2Sam.8:15—"So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people..."
4. This was further illustrated in Solomon's reign—who ruled over his kingdom with wisdom and righteousness...
5. Tragically, after Solomon, there were precious few kings—who ruled over men with justice and in the fear of God...
6. Now—brethren, regardless of your views on the role of the civil magistrate—surely we all must agree—that it's the responsibility of every ruler to rule righteously and in the fear of God...
7. Or, let me put it another way—it's the responsibility of every man—be he a ruler or not—to be a God-fearing righteous man...
8. Oh dear friends—let me put this as plan as I can—every ruler of men—will be held accountable how he rules...
9. Prov.29:2—"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan..."

B. Byway of invitation

1. Here—I want to exhort poor sinners—to bow the need to King Jesus—to become loyal subjects of His kingdom...
2. All men by nature, regardless what country they live in, are born under the authority of the god of this age...
3. Acts 26:18—"I send you] to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God..."
4. [1] His threatenings, Ps.2:12—"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish *in* the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little..."
5. [2] His invitations, Mk.1:15—"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, Repent, and believe in the gospel..."
6. Remember—these are the first recorded public words that our Savior uttered—an invitation to take Him as King...
7. Now—I totally agree that these words are more than an invitation—they are in fact a royal and divine command...
8. But dear friends—they are also an invitation—that is—they reveal something of His desire and intent toward you...
9. We learn from these words—what our Savior desires for you and that is—that you repent, and believe in the gospel...
10. Now—this word REPENT is a familiar word to most of you—it simply means to agree with God about yourself...
11. That is—agree with God that you are a guilty rebel—without any native merit to commend yourself to God...

12. Repentance entails—the changing of mind concerning yourself—and the turning from your own supposed merit...
13. The other phrase is also familiar to you—"repent, and believe in the gospel"—what is the gospel but good news...
14. The good news of a Savior who came to provide both a perfect righteousness and blood to atone for our unrighteousness...
15. [3] His promises—that is—His many promises that if you come to Him—He will in NO WAY refuse you...
16. Jn.6:35-37—"And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst...All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out..."

C. Byway of consolation

1. Here—I simply want to remind Christians of their many privileges—of being ruled by such a righteous Ruler...
2. The kingdom of God is a theocracy—which means—that God and God alone—rules over the people of God...
3. While it is true—they remain citizens of this earthly kingdom—ultimately and finally—they have but one King...
4. Thus—having become by His grace, citizens of Zion, every subject possesses two great and grand privileges...
5. [1] His provision—it is the responsibility of rulers to make provision for their subjects or citizens—to provide for them...
6. The first thing King Jesus provides for His people is a righteousness that answers the just demands of the law...
7. He then provides them with a practical righteousness that fulfills the law—in loving God and their neighbor...
8. Acts 26:18—"I send you] to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me..."
9. [a] Positional righteousness—"that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance"—this refers to justification...
10. [b] Practical righteousness—that is—He gives them a NEW HEART—in which He writes His righteous law...
11. He then puts His holy and righteous Spirit within them—enabling them to love and obey His righteous commands...
12. Rom.14:17—"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit..."
13. Thus the positional and practical righteousness that He provides—both agree with His holy and righteous law...
14. [2] His protection—it is the responsibility of rulers not only to provide for their subjects but also to protect them...
15. Christians are warriors in the midst of a fierce battle—their enemies are many and possess great hatred for them...
16. But King Jesus sits enthroned upon Zion—He sits upon His throne in Jerusalem—He protects the city of God...
17. Thus—while their enemies lay siege against the city—day after day—and though they grow weary with battle...
18. He will never allow the enemy to breach the gates and conquer the city—He is committed to protect His people...
19. Ps.48:1-3—"Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, in His holy mountain. 2 Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King. 3 God *is* in her palaces; He is known as her refuge..."