

Psalm 24

A Psalm of David.

Psalm 24: This psalm may have been written on the occasion of David's retrieval of the Ark and its placement at Jerusalem (2 Sam. chapter 6). The psalm is clearly divided into two parts: a processional song emphasizing God's sovereignty and man's need for righteousness before God (verses 1-6), and an antiphonal song stressing the glory of the Lord (verses 7-10).

Verses 1-10: The form of Psalm 24 has been disputed. For example, it has been labeled by some as an entrance ceremony (compare Psalm 15), by others, a hymn of praise, and yet by others, a mixture of both elements. Its occasion has also been contended; however, the view that it might have been used at the time of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-19; 1 Chron. Chapter 13), still has credible appeal. The early church designated it messianically as an ascension psalm (compare verse 3). The movement of the psalm seems to follow the movement of the people. It traces the community's worship procession, both spatially and spiritually, through 3 progressive states.

- I. Stage One: Worship of the Creator through Contemplation (24:1-2).
- II. State Two: Worship of the Savior through Consecration (24:3-6).
 - A. The Probing Questions Inviting Consecration (24:3);
 - B. The Proper Qualities Indicating Consecration (24:4-6).
- III. State Three: Worship of the King through Commemoration (24:7-10).

Verses 1-2: God is over all because He created all. The "seas" describes the watery chaos of which God brought forth the earth in the Genesis account of creations (Gen. 1:2, 9).

Psalm 24:1 "The earth [is] the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

The whole universe, all the formed globe, both land and water, and the surrounding air, and all that is therein. The fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, all plants and vegetables that spring out of the earth, and metals and minerals in the bowels of it. All which are the riches of the Lord the earth is full of (Psalm 104:24; see 50:10). "The Lords": On His universal ownership, (compare Exodus 19:5; Deut. 10:14; Psalms 50:12; 89:11); in the New Testament compare (1 Cor. 3:21, 23).

"The world, and they that dwell therein": "The world" seems to be here synonymous with "the earth". Not only do its material products belong to God, but its inhabitants also.

God created the world, and everything and everyone in it. We are His creation. We all belong to God in the sense that He created us. The world belongs to God. He can do with the world and all things in it, as He wishes. It is His possession. We would have to read nothing but the first few verses of Genesis to know that not only the earth, but everything in the universe was part of

God's creation, and therefore belongs to Him. To further this explanation, we could also read the first chapter of John and know even further that all things were made by Him. People who are prejudiced against another race of people, should read this in Psalms. All mankind belongs to God. It matters not whether you are Caucasian, Negroid or Asiatic, you were created by God, for God.

Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

1 Corinthians 10:26 "For the earth [is] the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

Psalm 24:2 "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."

This is a poetic, not a scientific, picture of creation (compare Gen. 1:9-10; 7:11; 49:25; Exodus 20:4; Deut. 33:13; Job 26:10; Psalms 74:13; 136:6; 2 Peter 3:5).

"For he hath founded it upon the seas": Or "with" them, as some interpret the particle he hath founded the earth and seas together, and both upon nothing, and yet are stable and firm. Or "by the seas", near unto them, at the side of them. Which, though higher than the earth, are wonderfully bounded by the power of God, so as not to return and cover the earth (see Job 38:8). So, the particle is used in (Psalm 1:3).

"And established it upon the floods": The floods of the seas, or rivers of water running to and fro in it. This shows the ground and foundation of Christ's right and claim to the earth, and all that is in it. Which is not by reason of his father's gift to him as Mediator, but by virtue of his concern in creation. The world, and all things in it, being made and established by him; in him do all things consist (Col. 1:16).

Genesis 1:6 "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

Genesis 1:7 "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so."

It really does not matter how He did it. It is enough to know that He did. We know that even the waves obeyed Jesus' voice when He spoke to the waves and said, peace be still (Mark 4:39). The water, the land and the sky are all subject to God.

Psalm 24:3 "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?"

For the elaboration of this answer (see Psalm 15 and Isaiah 33:15; 33:18). "The answer is remarkable, as expressing in language so clear that a child may understand it. The great doctrine that the only service, the only character which can be thought worthy of such a habitation, is that which conforms itself to the laws of truth, honesty, humility, justice, and love. Three thousand years have passed, Jerusalem has fallen, the Jewish monarchy and priesthood and ritual and

religion have perished. But the words of David still remain. With hardly an exception, the rule by which all wise and good men would measure the worth and value of men, the greatness and strength of nation.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?" Mount Zion; called the hill of the Lord, because it was the place designated for His worship, or the place of His abode (see notes at Psalm 15:1). The idea here is, "Who shall ascend there with a view of abiding there? Who is worthy to dwell there?" The question is equivalent to asking, what constitutes true religion? What is required for the acceptable worship of God? What will prepare a person for heaven?

"Or who shall stand in his holy place?" In the tabernacle, or in the place where he is worshipped (compare the notes at (Psalm 1:5). Who is worthy to stand before God? Who has the qualifications requisite to constitute the evidence of his friendship?

Before Jesus opened the way to the Father by tearing down the veil of partition to the Most Holy Place when He gave His body on the cross, it meant death to come to the Father. Only the High Priest could go into the Most Holy Place where God dwelt and he could go only at certain times, and he must be accompanied by blood. We know that Moses ascended the hill of the Lord. Others were warned not to even touch the mountain, lest they die. The only way any of us can stand in the hill of God or stand in the Holy Place, is when we are covered by the blood of Jesus. We take on the righteousness of Christ, when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. Jesus is the door we must enter by. Heaven and the Most Holy Place, is open to all believers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 24:4 "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

These sample qualities do not signify sinless perfection but rather basic integrity of inward motive and outward manner.

In God's eyes, the only acceptable worship is offered by people who have "clean hands, and a pure heart". That is, those who are holy in thought and motive as well as deed (26:6; 51:10; Matt. 5:8). Ultimately, any human holiness comes from Jesus' redeeming sacrifice on the cross, not through individual good works (Eph. 1:4-6; Heb. 12:10).

This is a beautiful answer to verse 3. Whatever is in our heart, is what we are. Salvation occurs in the heart. Before anything else occurs, we must believe in our heart. The hands of the priests were dedicated to God in the sanctuary, by applying blood to the thumb of the right hand. You see, first our heart must be pure and clean, then the work that we do for God must be clean and pure as well. Are the things you are doing with your hands pleasing to God? Notice in this very same statement that a pure heart and clean hands must be accompanied by separation from the lust for worldly things. The vanity of this world is not to be desired of believers. Jesus said, not to swear at all. This says, don't swear a lie. We see in this next verse how serious lying is.

Revelation 21:8 "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Psalm 24:5 "He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

Or "who receives"; the future for the present; and so is a continuation of the description of a person proper to enter and abide in the church of God (as Psalm 24:6), seems to require. Even one who has received every spiritual blessing in Christ in general, special grace out of his fullness. Particularly the blessing of pardon, as also adoption, and a right to eternal life. Though it may be that the following clause is explanative of this.

"And righteousness from the God of his salvation. To the man who comes to God with an honest and true heart, God will give additional graces, such as justification, assurance, perseverance, unwavering hope, perfect charity.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh [himself] with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth [herself] with her jewels."

You might ask, how do we receive our righteousness? One answer is found in this next Scripture.

Revelation 7:14 "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Psalm 24:6 "This [is] the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah."

The true progeny, which God regards, that make it their care and study to know him, and his mind and will, and to please and serve him. Whereby he reflects upon them who boasted of, and trusted in, their carnal descent from Abraham and the other patriarchs.

"That seek thy face, O Jacob": That is, O God of Jacob, that seek thy grace and favor, often called God's face. Such ought the people to be who seek the presence of God, and approach to worship him in the sanctuary. And such ought they to be who celebrate the ascension of the Redeemer, and hope, one day, to follow him into those happy mansions which he is gone before to prepare for them.

"Selah; on this word and explanation (see Psalm 3:2).

We are told in the Scriptures that if we seek Him, we will find Him. This does not mean that all the people in a particular age will seek God, but rather that the ones who seek Him are a generation to themselves.

Romans 9:6-8 "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel:" "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, [are they] all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called." "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

To sum this up, we would say then, the children who seek the face of God are the true believers in Christ. Christians are the generation spoken of above.

Verses 7-9: These are bold personifications indicating that the city gates need to stretch themselves to make way for the awesome entrance of the Great King. By doing so, they too participate in worshipping Him.

Psalm 24:7 "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

Lifting up the "gates" refers to making the gates higher and larger so that such a glorious God could enter (Matt. 21:1-10; Rev. Chapter 19).

The questions, who shall ascend God's hill, namely, to worship? And, who shall stand in his holy place, to minister before and serve him? Being answered, the psalmist proceeds to speak next of the introduction of the presence of him into that place whom they were to worship, namely, the great and glorious Jehovah. For what would it signify that they were prepared to worship, if HE whom they were to worship were not present to accept and bless his worshippers? David speaks here of the gates and doors, either first of his royal city Zion, through which the Ark was now to pass to the tabernacle which he had built for it. And he calls these doors everlasting, either on account of the durableness of the matter of which they were made; or from his desires and hopes that God would make them everlasting, or of long continuance, because he loved the gates of Zion (Psalm 87:2).

And the King of glory shall come in. God was regarded as dwelling between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, where the Shekinah from time to time made its appearance. The entrance of the Ark into the tabernacle was thus the "coming in of the King of glory."

We see in this, a glorious entering into the throne room in heaven of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is now King of kings and Lord of lords. He sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father. These doors opened when the veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom at the crucifixion of Jesus.

Matthew 27:51 "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"

Jesus had always been allowed to go into the Most Holy Place, but His followers could not until Jesus opened the door for us. He is the door. He is the way. No man cometh to the Father, but by Jesus. Christians, the door to heaven is opened for you. Wash yourself in the blood of the Lamb and enter in.

Psalm 24:8 "Who [is] this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle."

The other half of the choir, acting as keepers of the doors, inquires, as if ignorant of the motive and character of the procession, "Who is this King of glory?" Who is it to whom ye give this high-sounding designation, and to whom ye require us to open? And the reply follows from the previous speakers.

"The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle": It is Jehovah, the Strong and Mighty One. Strong in himself, mighty in his acts, mighty especially in battle. Whom ye may therefore be glad to receive among you as your Defense. It is this King for whom we demand admission.

The King of glory is the Word who took on the form and of flesh and suffered on the cross. He won the victory for us on the cross. We called Him Jesus, because He is our Savior. He is mighty in battle, because He defeated Satan, and destroyed sin on the cross. He is now Lord of lords and King of kings. We know this One was the Light in the tabernacle, He was the Manna, He was the Show Bread, His fiery finger had written the 10 commandments on the stone. He was the fulfillment of that very law. In fact, He was the Ark and the mercy seat symbolically. Whatever you call Him, He is all believer's Savior and Lord.

Psalm 24:9 "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift [them] up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

This is repeated on account of the backwardness and negligence of churches, and particular believers, to open and let Christ in. As may be seen in the case of the church (in Song of Solomon 5:2). As well as the importance to set forth the greatness and glory of Christ, about to make his entrance, and to command a proper awe and reverence of him. Some think respect is had to the twofold coming of Christ. First into the second temple, and next at the last judgment. Though rather the certainty of his coming, in a spiritual manner, to his church and people, is here designed.

Don't you know there was rejoicing in Heaven, when Jesus came home?

Psalm 24:10 "Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he [is] the King of glory. Selah."

The second part of the choir reiterates its question, as though not yet quite understanding. "Who is he, this King of glory?" and the first, slightly varying its answer, replies, The Lord of hosts, he

is the King of glory. The epithet, "Lord of hosts" well known at the time (1 Sam. 1:11; 2 Sam. 5:10; 6:2; 7:18, 26, 27), made all clear. And the gates being thrown open, the Ark was brought in, and set in its place in the midst of the tabernacle (2 Sam. 6:17). It has been generally recognized that the reception of the Ark into the tabernacle on Mount Zion typified the entrance of our Lord into heaven after his ascension. Whence our Church appoints this psalm as one of those to be recited on Ascension Day.

“The Lord of hosts”: The Divine Warrior possibly comes back into consideration; He, the Commander-in-Chief, is “the King of glory” (compare 1 Sam. 17:45).

He is Jehovah, Lord God Almighty, The Everlasting One, The King of Peace. He is our all in all.

Psalm 24 Questions

1. The earth is the _____.
2. What, besides the earth, belongs to God?
3. Where do we read about God creating the world?
4. Thou art worthy to receive _____ and _____ and _____.
5. He hath founded it upon the _____.
6. What did Jesus do, that made us know that He had rule over the waters?
7. Who opened the way to the Father, and how?
8. Who was the only one allowed to go into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle?
9. When he went into the Holy of Holies, what did he have to have with him?
10. Who was the only one allowed to go up the mountain, when God was on the mountain?
11. What must the Christian be covered in to stand before the Father?
12. How does the Christian receive the righteousness of Christ?
13. Heaven is open to all believers through what?
14. What are we really?
15. Where does salvation first occur?
16. How were the hands of the priest dedicated in the sanctuary?

17. The Christian must not lust for what?
18. Who does Revelation 21:8 say will taste the second death?
19. What does Isaiah 61:10 say believers are clothed in?
20. What makes the robe of the Christian white?
21. Who are the generation who seek God?
22. What is verse 7 in this lesson describing?
23. When was the door to heaven opened?
24. What was special about the veil being torn in the temple?
25. Who is the King of glory?
26. Why did we call Him Jesus?
27. Name several things in the tabernacle that represented Jesus.
28. What answer did the author give to verse 10, Who is the King of glory?