

THE PSALM OF THE KING

Psalm 24

Intro: Psalms 22, 23, and 24 form a trilogy of Psalms, and they all refer to our Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 22 we have Christ, the Savior, in Psalm 23 we have Christ, the Shepherd, and in Psalm 24 we have Christ, the Sovereign.

It is generally thought that Psalm 24 may have been composed at the time when David brought the ark of the covenant up from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. The account is given in 2 Samuel 6, especially verses 12 through 16. It obviously was a time of great joy for David and the people of Israel, but Michal, Saul's daughter and David's wife, did not share in his joy. Instead, "she despised him in her heart because she felt that David had disgraced himself by behaving in a very "unkingly" manner. But God judged her, and so she "had no child unto the day of her death."

Verses 3 through 5 is very similar to Psalm 15, emphasizing those who are prepared to enjoy personal fellowship with the Lord.

However, having said all of this, it is clear from Psalm 24 that what is written there goes far beyond David's time, and the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem. It anticipates a time yet future when David's greatest Son will return to the earth to reign. And so in answer to the question, "Who is this King of glory?" in verse 8, the answer is not David, but "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." When the question is repeated in verse 10, the answer is, "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." The LORD is found six times in this Psalm (1,3, 5, 8 (2x), 10). Each time it is Jehovah, or Yahweh, that is used. And this Psalm is proof that that title belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ as much as it does to God, the Father.

The Psalm is clearly divided into three sections:

- 1) The earth is the Lord's (vv. 1-2).
- 2) Who can stand in His holy place? (vv. 3-6).
- 3) The entrance of the King of glory (vv. 7-10).

It is amazing to me that some expositors place this scene in heaven when the setting in verse 1 is clearly upon the earth.

Notice also that the statements in verse 1 are very positive, very certain.

The Lord has made the earth, and He is the One Who maintains it. But in the second and third sections, we have questions that require an answer. The answer is the middle section has to do with those who meet the qualifications; the answer to the question in the last section is singular. Only One can qualify at "the King of glory" – and we know that He is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us examine the Psalm.

I. "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S" (Psa. 24:1-2).

Those who do not believe in creation, and that our Lord God is the Creator, are off on the wrong step to begin with, and therefore none of their conclusions can possibly be right.

"The fulness thereof" has to do with all that the Lord put on the earth before He created man. It includes the grass, the shrubs and trees, the creatures who live in the waters, the animals that walk on the earth, and the birds which belong on the earth, but are able to fly in the skies. All of these belong to the Lord.

"The world, and they that dwell therein" has to do with the people who live on the earth. Wherever people are, whatever the color of their skin, whatever their nationality and the language they speak, they all belong to the Lord. They are His creatures, and they belong to Him. This latter point is brought out in verse 2.

Concerning the founding and establishing of the earth on the seas and the floods, we know from Genesis 1 that originally the earth was covered with water, and that on the third day, the Lord gathered the water together and made the dry land to appear. That in itself was a marvelous demonstration of both the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

There would have been no earth, no world, and no seas if it had not been for the creative power and wisdom of God. And it all belongs to Him. He may allow Satan to exercise his power in the earth as "the god of this world," but all that He does is under the personal supervision and sovereign control of the Lord of creation. The Lord is not glorified on the earth now, but the point of this Psalm is that as "the King of glory" the day is coming when He will assume His rightful place when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 11:15)..

I repeat: No one can come to a right understanding of this world, nor can they understand what its destiny is, if they do not know that the Lord is the Creator, and the Sustainer of it. The Lord is totally ignored by the nations of the earth, even the leaders of our own nation, and that is one main reason for the corruption and foolish mistakes that people today are making all over the earth.

But the Word of God is true. The Lord made the earth, He keeps it going, and it always has, and always will, belong to Him! Let men say and think what they want to, God has spoken! This point about creation cannot be emphasized too strongly.

But now we come to the second part of the Psalm.

II. "WHO SHALL ASCEND . . . OR WHO SHALL STAND" (Psa. 24:3-6).

Notice that we are talking about "the hill of the Lord," and "His holy place." Since the world belongs to the Lord, He has the absolute right of determining where He will manifest His presence on the earth. "Who can stand" there?

Fausset in the JFB commentary says, "As ascend implies the first entrance, so stand implies permanent continuance in the presence God." When we consider Who God is, and then reflect upon what we are, we can see the reason for these questions. We would have to say that no one is fit to enter into the presence of the Lord, and then remain there. But what does our Psalm say?

These are the qualifications:

- 1) "He that hath clean hands" – outwardly pure.
- 2) "He that hath . . . a pure heart – inwardly pure.
- 3) "Who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity" – is not idolatrous.
- 4) "Nor sworn deceitfully" – is not a liar.

Verse 5 tells how we qualify. People can only qualify for the enjoyment of the presence of the Lord and the fellowship that that means, by the gracious salvation that we have "from the Lord" and "from the God of his [our] salvation."

The Psalm anticipates the time when the Lord will come as "the King of glory," but it nevertheless explains for us the only way anyone can possi-

bly enjoy the fellowship of the Lord.

By "this generation" the Psalmist was indicating by the Spirit of God that there will be those when the Lord comes to reign who will have been redeemed, and so are numbered among those who seek the Lord. It is generally thought that the expression, "O Jacob," means "O God of Jacob."

Such was the need for the people in bringing the ark of the covenant into the city of Jerusalem in David's day, such is the need in every generation of those who seek the Lord, and this will also be true when the Lord comes again. He will have a people who are waiting for Him, and who are prepared to meet Him because they have experienced the cleansing power of salvation, and are covered with the righteousness of God.

The statements of verse 4 seem to indicate, when we think of them in the light of salvation, that the effect of salvation is to meet the needs of people to such a degree that their sins of the past will not be remembered against them any more.

Finally we come to

III. THE ENTRANCE OF THE KING OF GLORY (Psa. 24:7-10).

This part of the Psalm pictures the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in all of His glory. We don't know exactly by whom the promises and questions are stated, but it seems that the God of heaven may be the One Who says the words found in verse 7. Then the people ask, "Who is this King of glory?" Then the Lord answers, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." And then the Lord continues in verse 9 with the same command and promise that we had in verse 7. Again the people ask, "Who is this King of glory?" And God answers, "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."

The "heads" of the gates which are referred to were added protection for the gates which were lowered down upon them when an enemy approached to keep the enemy from crashing through the gates of the city. But with the King of glory we have the King coming to sit upon his own throne.

Concl: Twice in the Psalm we have the word, "Selah." And this divides the Psalm into two parts: vv. 1-6, and vv. 7-10. It is generally considered to be a musical marking which indicates a pause in the music

to give time for reflection upon what has been said. And it is good for us in reading any Psalm, not necessarily to repeat the Word, but to stop and think about what has been said, to seek to understand it, and then to let it be a time when our hearts are lifted to the Lord in praise for the truth we are asked to consider.

This Psalm anticipates the coming of the Lord which is described in Rev. 19:11-21. (Read.) Also see Matt. 24:29-31; 25:31-46.

But Psalm 24 also has its application to our lives today. I have already emphasized how important it is for us to believe in the Godhead as the Creators of the heaven and the earth. It is not by chance that our Bibles open with the account of creation, and then all through Scripture we see that the Members of the Godhead are recognized for their work in creation. Even the Gospel of John begins by emphasizing this truth. So there is no question but that it is foundational to our understanding of God and of His Word.

But this is also a key passage of Scripture for all generations to know how it is possible for sinners to "ascend into the hill of the Lord, and to stand in His holy place." It is only salvation which qualifies us for such fellowship, and it is by maintaining a life of holiness that we can continue to enjoy such a relationship with God.

So let us make sure that our hands are clean, that our hearts are pure, that we do not worship anyone or anything but God Himself. And, as one writer has said about swearing deceitfully, let us be sure that we always are truthful, and that we do not perjure ourselves by swearing deceitfully. God's standards of right and wrong never change, and we need to ask Him continually to teach us His ways, and then to give us the grace to live lives that are pleasing to Him.