

Meet The King of Glory

Psalm 24

- 1) In 1 Timothy 3:16 there is found a beautiful one verse hymn that wonderfully captures in succinct simplicity the career of Jesus Christ:

“God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.”

- 2) It is that last phrase, “received up in glory,” a reference to our Lord’s ascension back into heaven, that the early church saw depicted in Psalm 24. Its background is perhaps the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem under David in 2 Samuel 6, or a celebration commemorating the event at a later date. Clearly the Psalm fits the context of a festival liturgy of worship as the people of God come together to celebrate Jehovah as their Creator-God (vs. 1-2), their Holy-God (vs. 3-6), their Warrior-God (vs. 7-10). And yet each of these Old Testament themes echoes that which finds its full and clear voice in the New Testament when “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14). The Ark of the Covenant was the presence of Jehovah symbolized. The Word made flesh was the presence of Jehovah realized. John says “we beheld His glory.” Let’s meet this King of Glory and see what we will discover.

I. Acknowledge His Creation. 24:1-2

The first 2 verses are something of a prelude of a hymn that celebrates Yahweh (Jehovah) as the great and victorious Warrior-King. Anyone or anything that attempts to lay claim on any part of Creation invites the Lord to become His enemy. Why?

1. The earth is completely His. 24:1

Lit. “To Yahweh [is] the earth and the fullness of it, the world and those who live in it.” Anything and everything belongs to the Lord. The land and the seas, the nations and the individual, all people and every single thing is His. He stamps all of Creation with the word: “MINE!” The earth and “all its fullness” is the Lord’s.

2. The earth is rightly His. 24:2

- Verse 2 explains why vs. 1 is true, why the earth is completely His. In a word: He created it. He made it. Of His own sovereign will and pleasure He brought something out of nothing, an *ex nihilo* act of creation. Nature is not divine, Jehovah is. Nature is not eternal, the Lord is.
- And just who is this Lord who created all that is? Listen to the Word of God.
 - John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”
 - Colossians 1:15-17 “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that

are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or power. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

- Hebrews 1:1-2 “God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”

Who is this Creator-God and King of Glory? It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the King of Glory.

- Clearly the language of verses 1-2 look back to the primal creation of Genesis 1-2, particularly Genesis 1:9. And yet the words also anticipate that new and eternal Creation of the New Earth of Revelation 21-22, where we are promised by our God, “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts, He...shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.” (21:6-7).

Transition: Acknowledge His Creation, for He has promised His children that we shall enjoy it forever.

II. Hear His Challenge. 24:3-6

- Such an awesome and sovereign God may not be approached lightly or irreverently. He is not our pal, our buddy, a cosmic cheerleader committed to our happiness and self-fulfillment. No, this God, the God of the Bible, is an all-together different God. He is a holy and righteous God who, as Habakkuk 1:13 says, “[IS] of purer eyes that to behold evil...”

- In many ways Psalm 15 is a companion or commentary on vs. 3-6. Listen to the words of David from that wisdom Psalm.

“Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; He who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.”

- Charles Spurgeon said, “There should be some preparation of the heart in coming to the worship of God. Consider who He is in whose name we gather, and surely we cannot rush together without thought. Consider whom we profess to worship, and we shall not hurry into His presence as men run to a fire” (S. Lawson, vol. 1, 132).

Transition: What preparation must we make? What is the challenge we must hear?

1) You must come cleanly. 24:3-4

- Verses 3-4 consist of 2 rhetorical and poetically parallel questions.
 1. Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? This is a reference to Mt. Zion and looks back to Psalm 2:6 and the place where the Lord has installed His Messiah, His Anointed, as King.
 2. Or who may stand in His holy place? The idea is not only who can come into His presence, but who can remain or abide there? This looks back to the righteous man of Psalm 1 and anticipates the answer of vs.4.

- 4 things must be true of the man or woman, boy or girl, who would enter into the presence of the Lord and remain there.
 1. He must have clean hands → right actions. He must be free from guilt, acquitted, no sinful acts.
 2. He must have a pure heart → right attitude. He is blameless, free even from impure motives, thoughts, and emotions.
 3. He must not lift up his soul (worshipped) to an idol → right actions. He does not disgrace God or dishonor the name of the Lord by idolatry.
 4. He must not swear by what is false (*NIV*) → right attitude. There is no deception or false motives in his heart, his soul. He knows nothing of dishonesty or deceit.
- It has been well observed that it usually the priest, and in particular, the High Priest, who could enter the presence of the Lord. Further, who among us could meet perfectly and without flaw the 4-fold requirements of verses 3-4? There is only one who had such clean hands that it is said of Him in Acts 10:38, “[He] went about doing good.” There is only one whose heart is so pure and dedicated to God that He can say in John 8:29, “I always do those things that please Him.” There is only one so devoted to the glory of God alone that He can say in John 17:4, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do.” Yes, there is only one whose words were of such truthfulness and integrity that the Bible says in 1 Peter 2:22, “He

committed no sin, nor was there deceit found in His mouth.” Yes, there in only one man who can ascend the holy hill of Zion and stand forever in the holy place and that one is Jesus! But now by His perfect work of atonement and vicarious sacrifice we can be found in Him, not with a righteousness of our own, but an alien righteousness, His righteousness, imputed to us by faith. Now in Him I can come clean, pure, undivided in loyalty and with integrity. Yes, in Him, I can come cleanly into His holy presence.

Transition: This is what it means to come cleanly. I come in the righteousness of the King of glory! And, the promise, the confidence such as individual can have before the Lord?

2) You can come expectantly. 24:5-6

Marvelous things are promised to the one who can meet the requirements specified in verses 3-4.

First, he shall receive blessing from the Lord. Blessing is *berakah* and means a gift, enrichment; favor physically, spiritually or both. It is grounded in the covenant promises of God to His people and finds eloquent expression in the High Priest blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. “The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace,” This blessing is ours through our High Priest the Lord Jesus, for as Hebrews 10:21-23 notes, “having a High Priest over the house of God [temple imagery?], let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [purified!] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed

with pure water [clean hands!]. “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

Second, he receives the righteousness from the God of his salvation. The word righteousness (*sedaqah*) here could be affirming the doctrine of imputed righteousness developed more fully by Paul in Romans and Galatians. It may also be that the idea of vindication, even praise, is in view. The God who saves pronounces me, declares me to be right in character and conduct. I am acceptable in His sight and He declares me fit to stand in His presence. This I have only in Christ.

Third, He declares that those who receive the Lord’s blessing and righteousness are liken unto Jacob and his generation, those who seek Him, who seek your face. In Genesis 32:24ff the Bible says, Jacob wrestled with God. He wrestled or, if you like, sought the Lord all night until the Lord blessed him (vs. 29). Jacob named the place *Peniel*, “Face of God,” for “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (v.30). If we seek the Lord with all our heart we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). If we seek the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart, we will see Him. Selah! Think about that.

III. See His Coming. 24:7-10

- There is some question as to what coming is in view in these final verses. The voices of worshipers is clearly present, but what is the context of their praise and adoration? Some suggest it is the Ark of the Covenant’s return from battle. Others believe it is specifically the Ark’s return to Jerusalem under the leadership of David (2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13). Still others view this as a liturgical hymn celebrating the Lord’s kingship over His people and His

presence with them as they gather for worship on the hill of the Lord, Jerusalem (v.3), and in His holy place, the temple (v.4).

- And yet the early church saw something greater and more transcendent to which these earthly enactments pointed. This entry of the King of glory is not an entry taking place on earth but one transpiring in heaven. This holy hill and holy city is not made by human hands nor inhabited by human persons only, but as Hebrews 12:22 instructs us, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels.” This entry is into heaven as the ascended Lord Jesus is met by the host of heaven welcoming home the victorious warrior Christ, the mighty King of glory.

Transition: What did they see? What may we see with the eyes of faith?

1) Look for the King who is mighty. 24:7-8

- Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! The gates leading to the sanctuary are addressed by the literary device of personification. They are told to raise their tops and to throw open their doors as wide as possible. Why? Because the King of glory is here and it would be insulting to have Him stoop and bow to enter into His sanctuary.
- This great King is described with a powerful and striking accolade in response to the question, “Who is this King of glory?” (v.8). He is Jehovah strong and mighty. Jehovah mighty in battle. This King is Jehovah, God! This King is a warrior, a warrior who is strong not weak, mighty and not timid. Start the battle and when the dust settles, He will be standing victorious over death, hell and the grave.

2) Look for the King of glory. 24:9-10

- 5 times in vs. 7-10 the Lord Jesus is called the “King of glory”, the glorious King. He is strong and mighty, mighty in battle (v.8), because He is also the *Lord Sabbaoth*, the Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies (v. 10). For a second time the gates are commanded to raise their tops and the everlasting doors are told to open wide. For a second time they are told to prepare for the King of glory and for a second time the question is raised, “Who is this King of glory?”
- The answer is made plain by the revelation in scripture of the holy war fought on Calvary’s hill. There our warrior-King, the Lord’s Anointed Son engaged the forces of evil and destroyed death by death. Having finished the enemy off on the field of battle, he took a brief repose in a throne room of a tomb before bursting forth in glorious resurrection. Remaining for 40 days to prepare His troops for further battles, He then ascended the hill known as the Mount of Olivet, and there He again ascended from earth into heaven leading captivity captive and giving gifts to men... ascending far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things (Ephesians 4:8-10). Thus ascending into the very presence of the holy sanctuary in heaven, He has entered in as our High Priest, “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, having become higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). Here is our ascended King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- This is the King of glory you should look for. This is the King of glory you must meet.

Conclusion:

PSALM 24

THE EARTH AND ALL THAT DWELL THEREIN

The earth and all that dwell there-in, With all its wealth untold,
Belongs to God, who founded it Upon the seas of old.

O who shall stand before the Lord On Zion's holy hill?

The clean of hand, the pure of heart, The one who does God's will.

O everlasting doors, give way, Lift up your heads, O gates!

O look behold, to enter in, The King of glory waits.

Who is this glorious King that comes To sit upon His throne?

The Lord of Hosts the Warrior King, All glory, to Him alone.

Scottish Psalter, 1635

So we will proclaim His glory, And celebrate His fame.

The Lord mighty in battle reigns, Jesus the Christ His name.

(5th verse by Danny Akin)