

PSALM 24

YAHWEH, KING OF GLORY

Text

- 1 By David. A Psalm.
To Yahweh belongs the earth and what fills it,
The world and what dwells in it.
- 2 For He founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the rivers.
- 3 Who may ascend the hill of Yahweh?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
- 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who does not lift up my soul to falsehood,
And has not sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He will carry away blessing from Yahweh,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation
- 6 This is the generation of those seeking Him,
Who seek Your face—even Jacob.

Selah

Text

- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates,
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
That the king of glory may enter.
- 8 Who is this king of glory?
Yahweh, powerful and mighty,
Yahweh, mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up your heads, O gates,
And lift up, O ancient doors,
That the king of glory may enter.
- 10 Who is He, this king of glory?
Yahweh of armies
He is the king of glory!

Selah

Introduction

- ▶ Psalm 24 closes a trilogy of psalms (Pss. 22-24)

Psalm	Psalm 22	Psalm 23	Psalm 24
Person	Servant	Shepherd	Sovereign
Ministry	Suffering	Providing	Reigning
Time	Past	Present	Future
Symbol	Cross	Crook	Crown

Introduction

- ▶ “There are three beautiful Psalms here linked together. The first shows us Christ dying for His sheep (22). The second shows us Christ supplying all the wants of His sheep (23). The third shows us Christ leading His sheep into the glory (24). So then Christ fills up the whole of the mighty distance between the cross and the crown, reminding us of His own wonderful words, “I am the way” (John 14:6)...
- ▶ ...The three Psalms taken together present Him in His infinite sufficiency for the need of believers, from the work accomplished for them at the first advent, through all their varied experience, unto their entrance with Him at the second advent into the fold where none can stray.” (Brookes, 365-6)
- ▶ “In His death on the cross, Christ fulfilled the anticipation of Psalm 22 that He would die as the Good Shepherd for His sheep. In His present ministry, however, Christ fulfilled what is anticipated in Psalm 23 as the Great Shepherd who cares for His sheep.” (Walvoord, 296).

Introduction

- ▶ It is well-known through various quotations and song arrangements
- ▶ However, the psalm as a whole is less familiar to us
- ▶ Historically, Psalm 24 was used in the post-exilic Jewish community as the psalm sung on Sunday, the first day of the week
- ▶ If Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a Sunday (recently disputed by many scholars) then He would have entered on the day that the priests were reciting Psalm 24: “Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in”
- ▶ While the crowds were asking, “Who is this?” (Matt 21:10), the priests were chanting, “Who is this king of glory? Yahweh of armies, He is the king of glory”

Introduction

- ▶ Psalm 24 appears to be a psalm of praise
- ▶ However, there is also appears to be a distinct liturgical element to its arrangement...a back and forth recitation of the verses
- ▶ The setting for the psalm has garnered attention and resulted in many speculative explanations
- ▶ On the surface, the psalm's three main sections appear seemingly unrelated...
- ▶ "The psalm comprises three self-contained brief sections that are unusually unrelated to each other. The psalm is 'baffling' in this respect" (Goldingay, 356).

Introduction

- ▶ This has led some scholars to conclude that each section existed on its own until they were joined together into one psalm
 - ▶ Section 1: a hymn of praise to God as creator
 - ▶ Section 2: an entrance liturgy for pilgrims entering the temple to worship
 - ▶ Section 3: a processional liturgy for the ark
- ▶ The psalm could have originated as three distinct elements
- ▶ But it could have also have been composed as a unity

Introduction

- ▶ Proposed settings for Psalm 24:

- ▶ Entrance of ark into Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6
- ▶ Entrance liturgy for those pilgrimaging to Jerusalem to worship
- ▶ Processional bringing ark into sanctuary as part of festival celebrating Yahweh's reign

"The occasion for the performance of this entrance liturgy in Israel's religious life may have been a procession that brought the ark into the temple precincts as part of a festival celebrating the reign of the LORD" (Mays, 123)

- ▶ Celebration of victory over Canaanite army

"The internal evidence suggests that the Israelites had just returned from a victorious battle with the Canaanites. They were proceeding to the sanctuary to give praise to the LORD for the great and mighty victory in battle, carrying with them the glorious ark of the covenant, the symbol of the LORD's presence with them" (Ross, 575-6)

Structure

- ▶ Psalm 24 is divided into three sections:
 1. God as Creator (vv. 1-2)
 2. God as Holy (vv. 2-6)
 3. God as King (vv. 7-10)

- ▶ Within these sections, stanzas are also marked by changes in speaker

Verse 1

Yahweh's name appears at the beginning of the psalm—this emphasizes its importance

Pss 3, 6-8, 11, 15, 21-24 all begin with "Yahweh" or another title for deity

By David. A psalm.

There is no verb in this verse...the "to" in front of Yahweh designates possession

To Yahweh

(belongs)

the earth

Two parallel terms representing **TERRITORY**

What follows describes what belongs to Yahweh

and what fills it

Two parallel phrases representing **INHABITANTS**

There is **incomplete parallelism** which draws more focus to Yahweh

the world

and what dwells in it

Taken together, there is a comprehensive scope to the assertion—Yahweh owns **EVERYTHING**

Think & Apply

- ▶ What are the theological implications of this assertion?
 - ▶ Exodus 9:27-29—Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time ⁱI have sinned; the ^kLORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ ^lPlead with the LORD, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” ²⁹ Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, ^mI will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that ⁿ**the earth is the LORD’s.**”
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 10:23-26—“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. ²⁴ ⁿLet no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. ²⁵ ^oEat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶ For ^p**“the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”**

Verse 2

Verse 1 = truth claim
Verse 2 = theological support/explanation

For

Verse 1 began with "Yahweh" standing alone
Verse 2 begins with "He" standing alone

He

"He" carries double emphasis:

1. It is placed forward in verse
2. It is grammatically unnecessary

upon the seas

founded it

and upon the rivers

established it

Two parallel prepositional phrases referencing **location**

Two parallel verbs referencing **divine action**

2nd **incomplete parallelism**

Verse 2

Terms picture Yahweh as architect and city-founder

He

founded it

established it

upon the seas

and upon the rivers

Poetic description Gen 1:9 where God caused dry ground to appear out of the waters

There is also a veiled polemic against pagan mythology

“seas” (*yamim*) and “rivers” (*nahar*) were also the names for Canaanite deities

“These deities were powerful forces in the underworld to the pagans, but to the Israelites they were simply forces of nature that God had created and controlled when he established the land. Since they were venerated as spirit forces by the Canaanites, Israel could single them out in the praise of the LORD’s sovereign to stress that in defeating the Canaanites the LORD demonstrated his sovereignty over their gods as well” (Ross, 578)

Think & Apply

- ▶ How does verse 2 help support the assertion of verse 1?
 - ▶ Jeremiah 18:6—O house of Israel, ^ucan I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. ^vBehold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.
 - ▶ Isaiah 45:9—"Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! ^eDoes the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?"
 - ▶ Romans 9:19-21—You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For ^zwho can resist his will?" ²⁰ But who are you, O man, ^ato answer back to God? ^bWill what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ ^cHas the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump ^done vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?
- ▶ God—as Creator—is sovereign. His ownership is based on his creatorship

Think & Apply

- ▶ What implications does this have for you and I?
- ▶ How does impact us as God's "new creations" (2 Cor 5:17) and his "workmanship" (Eph 2:10)?
- ▶ The practical implications of vv. 1-2 become apparent in vv. 3-6

Verse 3

The theological assertions of vv. 1-2 lead to moral implications...

"It is to make a deliberate question (Mk 9:2), to mount to a vantage point (Gen 13:14ff; 19:27f), to converge on it with other seekers (Isa 2:2f), and finally to stand before the throne (Rev 7:9)" (Kidner, 131-2)

Who

may ascend

"Ascend" and "stand" are both worship terms, and the one leads to the other

KEY CONCEPT: Yahweh's place is holy and not just anyone may enter and stand in his presence...

Who

may stand

"His place" is "holy" because it is where Yahweh is

the progressive parallelism of this verse...

in the place of his holiness

The universality to vv. 1-2 (all creation) apply to these interrogative pronouns

These questions apply to all people, not just the Israelites

"Verses 1-2 have asserted that Yahweh established the earth and is therefore sovereign over it. The question about the possibility of going into the presence of this God is a solemn one" (Goldingay, 358).

Verse 4

Here we see the qualifications to enter God's presence...

This list is not comprehensive. For a fuller description see Psalm 15

He who is clean of hands
and pure of heart

1st half = summary

He who does not lift up
his tongue to falsehood
nor swear
my soul
and has not sworn
deceitfully

The Masoretic punctuation is instructive

2nd half = examples

Verse 4

Describes something clean and unstained

Speaks of innocence, free from guilt (cf. Ps 19:12; Isa 1:15)

Hands = instruments for doing things

He who is

clean of hands

heart = location of thoughts and intentions

and

pure

He who does not lie

"The false (i.e. empty) object of trust may be an inadequate helper (e.g. an idol, or 'the help of man', 60:11) or an unworthy stratagem such as the lies of 12:2 (Heb 3) for which this word is also used" (Kidner, 132)

Together, the 1st half presents a comprehensive requirement of perfection

"my soul" in Hebrew

his soul

in this case, it is "falsehood" or "emptiness/vanity"

The term is also used to refer to idols in passages like Jer 18:15; Pss 31:6; 119:37; Jon 2:8

and has not sworn

Some see this as a reference to false swearing in legal proceedings

deceitfully

cf. NIV = "who does not lift up his soul to an idol"

Think & Apply

- ▶ What do vv. 3-4 imply about the qualifications to enter God's presence?
 - ▶ "On the face of it this standard would have eliminated everyone from entering God's presence without some divine provision. Its purpose was to remind people of just how holy the LORD is and how they were not qualified to enter his presence without the purification ritual first" (Ross, 580).
 - ▶ Matthew 5:8 – "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"
- ▶ Entering God's presence requires a conscious evaluation of one's spiritual and moral condition
- ▶ Verse 5 explains what spiritual benefits are given to the one who recognizes his moral inadequacy and relies on the resources God gives to enter into the divine presence...

Verse 5

Here we see the promise made to those who qualify...

He will carry away

blessing

= gift or enrichment/bounty from the Lord

"carry away" is the same term as "lift up" (vv. 4, 7)

The wordplay contrasts the act of idolatry with the spiritual preparation for the Lord's return

"Whatever is functioning as it should be is 'righteous': in court, the man in the right; in character, the honest man; in the run of affairs, success. Probably all three are present in this context. This man has the smile of God upon him: he is accepted, he is helped to live an upright life, his affairs under God's *blessing* will run as they should" (Kidner, 132).

from the God of his salvation

The inclusion of this phrase reinforces that justification seems to be in view

"...the physical or spiritual and indicates that **all** between the worshiper and

ation"

However, the context suggests it refers to moral righteousness, i.e., justification

Verse 6

Verse 6 represents the congregation's reply to the qualifications to enter the holy place

This is the generation

Refers to the worshipers who all have the same spiritual interest and need

of those seeking Him

who seek Your face

Jacob

The text is difficult here because of the concise language of the poetry

It's best to see this as a reference back to "this generation"

Selah

Many versions have "God of Jacob" but the text only has "Jacob"

Verse 6

This is the generation

A

"to seek" = significant worship term referring to diligent pursuit

Focus is on the center of the chiasm

of those seeking Him

B

Note the chiastic arrangement

who seek Your face

B'

Cf. with Num 6:24-26 – "May Yahweh make his face to shine upon you..."

A'

Jacob

Selah

Functions of "selah" in the Psalms:

- structural
- musical
- rhetorical

"It invites a response from the people gathered for worship, whether a vocal response or some other kind of outward bodily action we are not sure." (Davidson, 21-22)

Think & Apply

- ▶ Is the congregation claiming something more about themselves than they should?
 - ▶ “The declaration is not one of absolute moral integrity, for no person could make such a claim; it is a declaration, as those what the potential worshipers are aware of the implications of their desire to worship—they must be innocent. They are described, in the declaration, as those that ‘consult’ God and ‘seek’ his ‘face’; they are prepared in the sense that the desire to worship God has become an integral part of their lives, providing direction and focus. Though they lacked absolute righteousness, they desired it; in part, they would receive it as a consequence of worship” (Craigie, 213).
- ▶ What makes it possible for us to worship God?
 - ▶ Rom 12:1-2
 - ▶ John 4

Verse 7

Another shift in perspective occurs in vv. 7-10

Lift up

be lifted up

O gates

O doors of old

your heads

that

What do these refer to?

- personification of gates?
- metonymy for people at the gates?
- metaphor for hopeful rejoicing?

may enter

the king of glory

Same term as used in v. 4 (does not “lift up” his soul to emptiness” and in v. 5 (he will “carry away” blessing”)

This repetition ties the progression of the psalm together, moving from spiritual qualification to divine grace to jubilant rejoicing

Logical progression:

- **Vv. 1-2:** God's kingship rooted in creation
- **Vv. 3-6:** God's kingship effects worshipers
- **Vv. 7-10:** God's kingship exemplified in victorious warrior king

These can't be the temple gates, since the temple wasn't built until after David's death.

The reference to “doors of old” (i.e., “ancient doors” reinforces this

Verse 7

Another shift in perspective occurs in vv. 7-10

Lift up O gates your heads

be lifted up O doors of old

that

may enter

A unique designation for Yahweh found nowhere else in the OT (see Ps 29:3, "God of glory")

the king of glory

"Glory" (*cabod*) carries the idea of weight or significance, but came to also include the presence of God.

The occasion for this jubilation is the advent of Yahweh, depicted as a king returning to his palace

The focus on Yahweh's return seems to suggest both meanings may be intended

Verse 8

Verse 8 is perhaps part of the liturgy

Who (is)

this

king of glory?

Priestly gatekeepers

Masoretic punctuation
reinforces this view

Yahweh

powerful

and mighty

Joyful congregation

**NOTE the extended use
of repetition in Psalm 24**

Yahweh

mighty in battle

Verse 4-5, 7-10

4 He who does not lift up my soul to falsehood,
And has not sworn deceitfully.

5 He will carry away blessing from Yahweh,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation

7 Lift up your heads, O gates,
and be lifted up, O ancient doors,
That the king of glory may enter

8 Who is this king of glory?
Yahweh, powerful and mighty
Yahweh, mighty in battle

9 Lift up your heads, O gates,
and lift up, O ancient doors,
That the king of glory may enter

10 Who is he, this king of glory?
Yahweh of armies,
He is the king of glory

Verse 8

Repetition of the divine name emphatically specifies the identity of “this king of glory”

cf. Exod 34:6 for an example of repeating the divine name

this king of glory?

Yahweh

meaning “strong, powerful, mighty; cf. Isa 43:17

powerful

Military language & terminology

and mighty

In military contexts = “hero,” “warrior,” “skilled/seasoned combat veteran”

Yahweh

Cf. David's “mighty men”, i.e, “elite troops” (2 Sam 20:7)

mighty in battle

This phrase appears in Exod 15:3

The effect is to **link** Psalm 24 with Israel's redemptive history

Verse 9

Repetition nearly identical to v. 7

Lift up

O gates

your heads

Lift up

O doors of old

What might the **significance** be repeating v. 7 nearly verbatim?

that

Active verb here

Cf. "be lifted up"
(passive) in v. 7

What might the **significance** of the subtle changes between vv. 7 and 9?

may enter

the king of glory

Change from passive to active voice ensures avoidance of pure repetition...introduces variety in poetry

Verse 8

Verse 10 is very similar to v. 8, with specific and important differences

Who (is) **He** this king of glory?

Pronoun appears here but not in v. 8:

- Dramatizes the question beyond that of v. 8
- Breaks up repetition from v. 8

Yahweh of armies

Traditionally “the LORD of hosts”

“Hosts” can refer to:

- Israelite armies
- Angelic hosts

He (is) king of glory

Another emphatic pronoun which balances out the line

The title refers to the hosts who surround the LORD’s heavenly throne and who praise and consult him and carry out his decisions as sovereign of the world (e.g., 29:1-2; 82:1; 89:6-7)” (James Luther Mays, Psalms, Interpretation, 123)

Selah

Marks closing of section and call to reflection upon the Lord’s advent

cf. vv. 1-2, which sets a universal, cosmic backdrop for the psalm

Think & Apply

- ▶ What is being referenced in this anticipation of the Lord's advent?
 - ▶ David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem?
 - ▶ The ark returning after a major military victory?
 - ▶ Jesus' triumphal entry on Psalm Sunday [Monday?]?
 - ▶ Jesus' ascension into heaven?
 - ▶ Jesus' second ascension when he returns to take the church?
 - ▶ Jesus' second return when he establishes his earthly kingdom?
 - ▶ Every believer's heart?
- ▶ Consider Zechariah 9:9-10 – both advents of Christ are in view (cf. Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38)
- ▶ Also consider Ezekiel 10:19 and 11:1 where God's glory is seen in the vicinity of the temple gates, not to return until...when?