

### The Return of the Lord to Earth in Victory

#### Psalm 24

Psalm 24 - *"The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.*

*Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?*

*He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah*

*Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.*

*Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty; the LORD mighty in battle.*

*Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.*

#### Background Notes

In this psalm of praise, the return of the Lord to earth in victory is anticipated. He is the Sovereign Lord over all creation - and He is the King of Glory!

We don't know the occasion of this psalm, but many commentators have suggested that David wrote it when he brought the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom, the Hittite. The Ark had been separated from its rightful place in the Tabernacle for twenty years, ever since the Philistines captured it during King Saul's reign. David wanted to bring the Ark up to Jerusalem, where it would be eventually placed in the Temple. *"Now it was told King David, saying, 'The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.' So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness... So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet." (2 Samuel 6:12-15).*

So David may have written Psalm 24 on the joyous occasion when the gates of Jerusalem were opened for the Ark of the Covenant to enter. Remember, the Ark was the focal place of God's presence in the midst of His people, and thus it is a picture of Christ in the midst of His people.

Psalm 24 anticipates and looks forward to the coming of the Lord to this earth in victory, and His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem where He will reign as the King of glory. This is not the first coming of Christ, when He was rejected as king. This is His second coming, when He will literally reign as King from Jerusalem.

The psalm starts out with an emphatic statement about the Lord's sovereignty over all the earth and its inhabitants: "*The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness; the world and those who dwell therein*" (v1). God is the **Creator** and the **Owner** of this earth and all it contains. He calls the shots as to who owns what on this planet earth!

For example, in the book of Genesis we read that the One who owns the earth gave a certain portion of the Middle East to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - so the Jewish people have a biblical right to that land. From God's perspective, the Jews are not "occupiers" of someone else's land. No, God gave that land to the Jewish people as their homeland. This does not mean that the secular state of Israel is perfect, but the Jewish people do have the divine right to the Land because Psalm 24:1 says, "*The earth is the LORD's, and all it contains*" – and He has the right to distribute it!

Psalm 24:2 looks back to Creation, especially the third day of creation when God formed the earth's continents in the midst of the water that covered the earth: "*He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.*" 2 Peter 3:5 says, "*by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water.*"

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Only the pure are qualified to enter the Lord's holy place in righteousness.

*"Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?"*

*He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah."*

In view of the truth that God is the Creator and Owner of this earth and all it contains, then who is qualified to enter the Lord's house? Answer: "*he who has clean hands and a pure heart.*"

In the context of the Old Testament, this was the person who was seeking to live a righteous life, and who brought the required sacrifices under the Law. In the context of the New Testament, this is the person who has come to Jesus Christ for salvation and is living a godly life. These believers have been declared righteous in God's sight and are blessed by the Lord: "*He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation*"(v5). These folks walk with the Lord and seek to have fellowship with Him: "*This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah*" (v6).

Are you part of this company of believers who have been declared righteous? Praise the Lord - **God does the work of making us clean and pure!** We can't do it ourselves. We must trust in Christ for salvation, and allow the Lord to have the first place in our lives. Only the clean and the pure are qualified to enter the Lord's holy place in righteousness.

## 2. Only the King of Glory is qualified to enter the gates of Jerusalem in victory.

*Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty - the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah" (v7-10).*

Psalms 22, 23 and 24 go together as a trilogy. Together they bring out three aspects that are taught in the New Testament – aspects of our Lord as the Shepherd of the sheep:

- In Psalm 22 we see the **Good Shepherd** who gives His life for His sheep.
- In Psalm 23, we see the **Great Shepherd** who tenderly cares for His sheep.
- In Psalm 24, we see the **Chief Shepherd** who comes as the King of glory to reward His sheep.

The New Testaments teaches that our Lord is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd; and the Chief Shepherd:

- The **Good Shepherd**: *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).*
- The **Great Shepherd**: *"May the God of peace who brought our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever" (Hebrews 13:20-21).*
- The **Chief Shepherd**: *"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:4)*

Psalm 24:7-10 looks prophetically to the return to earth of the ascended Lord of glory. As the King of glory He will establish His earthly kingdom, with His throne in Jerusalem. *"Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty; the LORD mighty in battle... The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah*

In these verses, the gates of Jerusalem are pictured as dejected and sorrowful, with their heads hanging down. But their heads are lifted up with joy as the gates are opened and the Lord enters in triumph and victory!

Remember - when the Lord returns, His first order of business will be to conquer and judge all those who have fought against His people. At this future time, His people are the “godly remnant” of Jews and those who believe during the Tribulation period. After total victory and judgment of the wicked, the Lord will enter Jerusalem in triumph.

So, in this context, it is the future “godly remnant” of Israel who comprise the people with “clean hands and pure hearts” (v4-6), who are qualified to ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place. They will be an essential part of the Lord’s earthly kingdom when He returns. This is why the generation of those who seek the Lord is referred to as “the generation of **Jacob**” (v6). Notice - this verse is **not** speaking of the Church today. It refers to the godly remnant of future restored Israel. *“This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah”*

The repetitions in verses 7-10 serve to emphasize the glory of the King and His qualifications to enter the gates of Jerusalem. He is the Lord, who is strong and mighty and victorious over all the enemies of God. He is the Lord of hosts who has returned in righteous victory. Only the King of glory is qualified to enter the gates of Jerusalem in victory!

## Practical Application

### Have you opened the gates of your heart to the King?

In this psalm we have seen that the Lord Jesus is now ascended as the **Lord of glory**, and He is coming back to this earth as the **King of glory**. He is the **Lord of creation**. He is the sovereign **God of the universe**. He is the **Owner of everything**. The gates of Jerusalem will be opened as the Lord ascends His earthly throne, and every knee will bow to Him as sovereign Lord! *“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:10-11).

In view of these great truths, it is important for each one of us to open the gates of our hearts to the Lord before it’s too late. Have you opened the gates of your heart to the King? This doesn’t happen automatically. It’s a choice- and it’s **your choice!** You must make a conscious choice to open the gates of your life to the Lord.

Have you opened the gates of your heart to the King?