

Thoughts From Other Minds:

23. There are great events and great sights before all the saints, vv. 7, 9. There is no danger that after this life the just will lack a divine entertainment. The removal of the ark to mount Zion was a dull affair compared with Christ's ascension to heaven; and his ascension to heaven as seen from earth was as nothing, compared with his second coming, although this shall be in like manner. Nor shall the final judgment present the last grand spectacle that shall be witnessed by the redeemed. It will be but the beginning of unceasing wonders.
24. Christ Jesus is in the midst of worshipping assemblies. The king of glory comes in, vv. 7, 9. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee, Ex. 20:24. Compare Matt. 18:20. From age to age Christ is gracious to the penitent, who tremble at his word, and call on his name.
25. Christ must be received, v. 7. This is indispensable. Not to welcome him is to reject him. Not to open the heart to him is to bar it against him. Dickson: "The way to make men true converts, true believers, true saints and inheritors of heaven, is to receive Christ heartily, and honourably to cast up doors in hearty consent of faith and love ... for welcoming so glorious a conqueror to be their guest." We must with full consent receive Christ, Rev. 3:20.
26. Hitherto men have known Christ chiefly in a lowly condition, but he is the King of glory, vv. 7-10. He was so even in his humiliation. At times his glory shined forth illustriously as in his miracles, John 2:1-11; in his transfiguration, Matt. 17:1-7; in his resurrection, Acts 2:24; and in his ascension to glory, Acts 1:9-11. He offered no more blessed petition for his chosen than that they should be with him and behold his glory, Jn 17:24. That vision 'will be heaven, Rev. 16:1.
27. So glorious a person is fit to be a King, yea, King of kings and Lord of lords. He is Lord of all, God over all, blessed forever, vv. 7-10. Let us own him. Let us rejoice and be glad in him. ... He is Jehovah of hosts, v. 10. Because he is God, it is no marvel that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," Col. 1:6, 17.
28. Great comfort and joy have all the saints in the glorious scheme of redemption! Barker: "The strength of our salvation consists in this, that our Redeemer and Intercessor is the Lord of Hosts. Every other work shall be destroyed, but the work of redemption is for ever." "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished," Isa. 51:6.

W S Plumer, Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on Psalm 24, *Psalms*, p. 328.

Camperdown Noorat Terang Presbyterian Charge

14 February 2016

Sermon: "Worship him who is the King of Glory" (text: Psalm 24:1-10)

Scripture: Psalm 24:1-10; 1 Peter 3:8-22

Sermon Notes

Introduction: Rather than start a new series this morning, we are having another study in the psalms—this time psalm 24. It continues 'worship' theme for it speaks to us of the character of those whose worship is acceptable to God (v. 3).

It can help in understanding a psalm if we can see why it was written. The last four verses of this psalm used to be sung to *St Georges, Edinburgh*—but it is rarely heard now. These verses are likely to be the key to why this psalm was written, for taking up of the ark into Jerusalem, the 'ancient doors' being the city gates, to be opened wide in glad welcome to the Lord, represented by the ark.

Then given that people would come up to Jerusalem to worship at the visible sign of the presence of the Lord, it would have been desirable to state the necessary conditions to be met by anyone who would want to come to worship him—and to correct any idea that he was only 'local' the psalm opens with his omnipresence.

Most Christian interpreters of this psalm believe it is a prophecy of the ascension of our Lord into heaven. The entry of the ark into Jerusalem in triumph was symbolic of the entry of Jesus into heaven after his victory over sin and death, and so this psalm is often called 'the Song of the Ascension'; but some associate it with Advent, and see it as calling on us to prepare our Lord a worthy reception.

1. Declaring His greatness

The Lord is infinitely greater than all others because he owns everything (v. 1a). He chose Abraham and his, and covenanted with them to be their God; he chose David, and made him king; he chose Jerusalem, to dwell there as God among his people—but there is no limit to his interest in the world; it is all his!

It is his because he made it (v. 1b); by 'the earth' David means the dry land, the world of people and animals; of course he made the oceans and rivers—but David is thinking of the peoples of the world ('all who live in it'), especially as belonging to the Lord, and as 'ought to be' worshippers of him, as they will (Isa 2:1-3).

2. Describing His worshippers

The nations belong to God who made them, and they should therefore worship and serve him—but who is fit for such high and holy work? (v. 3) Good question! People who don't know the greatness of god or their own sinfulness may suppose it a small thing to worship him—but he is holy, and so only those who are holy themselves can climb his hill and stand in his presence.

The first marks of the person who can ascend his holy hill are 'clean hands and a pure heart' (v. 4a). 'Clean hands' stand for outward everyday practical godliness—our doing what is right; 'pure heart' stands for inward purity—and both are necessary if we are to come into his presence to worship him.

Inwardly we must be free of filthy thoughts and desires and defiling vices such as envy or hatred—and we must also love God and all that is good and pure and holy. Outwardly, we must be free from dishonesty and violence and oppression, and doing honest work to provide for our needs, the Lord's word, and for others.

The second mark of the person who can ascend his holy hill is integrity of speech: (vs. 4b) - most English versions: "he who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity and has not sworn deceitfully." (NET) 'who does not lie, or make promises with no intention of keeping them.'

These honour God in heart and in their words; they highly regard truth; their word is their bond, and if, when necessary, they affirm the truthfulness of their words with an oath, they do not swear deceitfully. It is a blessing that God forgives lies, for if he did not we would all have a part in the lake of fire (Rev 21:8) - but we must guard against lies, lest we prove ourselves to be the devil's children (Jn 8:44).

Those who have these marks will receive blessing and righteousness from God their saviour (v. 5). Not that they have made themselves clean and pure; those who have these marks fear God, trust him, and delight in what pleases him because they could imagine nothing worse than not being welcomed by him.

God is not our debtor, but our Saviour; the righteousness by which he justifies us is his gift to us, received by faith; it is the imputed righteousness of Christ. But we must not on that account despise personal righteousness as unnecessary. The faith which alone justifies is never alone in those who have it, for it produces good works.

Only these who have clean hands etc. really ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in his holy place (v. 6). Others may climb the hill, but only those with this character seek him. Others may come to church, and sing the songs and enjoy the service, but they too do not seek the face of God, for they do not have the fruit of saving faith.

3. Delighting in Him

We know he is the King of Glory—but why 'the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle'? Because it was by his power that Jerusalem was taken from the Jebusites; when the gates of heaven welcomed our Lord Jesus, they celebrated a far greater victory (Col 2:13-15).

By his death he destroyed the power of the devil and his angels; this victory is celebrated every time a sinner repents and trust in Christ Jesus, for there is joy in heaven then (Lk 15:7, 10). This King of Glory commands us to receive him, and promises the spoils of his victory, forgiveness of sin, deliverance from sins power, and the privilege of welcoming him when he comes in glory to claim his own.

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My Notes:

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does the fact that the Lord is the creator function in vs. 1 and 2 of psalm 24? What would be the consequences if it were not true that the Lord is the creator—and how do we see these consequences working out in our culture?
2. What biblical response (from this psalm and elsewhere) could you give to someone who said something like, 'See, it's clear from this psalm that all God asks of us is that we live decent upright lives, and there is no need for 'salvation' by 'blood'?
3. How is the absolute necessity of personal righteousness, both outward and inward, as described in verses 3 and 4 of this psalm, consistent with the teaching that sinners are justified (forgiven and declared righteous) by grace through faith on the basis of Christ's righteousness?
4. How might verses 7-10 be understood as applying to:
 - a) the Old Covenant and the circumstances prevailing in the time when it was first written; and
 - b) the New Covenant, with the fulfilment of the Old Covenant in Jesus Christ?