

PSALM 24

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 24

A Psalm of David

This psalm is thought by some of the Jewish writers ^{f373} to have been wrote when the ark was brought from the house of Obedom to the city of David, and put into the place prepared for it by him, (⁴⁰⁶⁷2 Samuel 6:17); to which reference is supposed to be had in (⁴⁹⁴⁰Psalm 24:7-10); or after that David had built an altar in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and had knowledge of the hill Moriah, as the place where the sanctuary was to be built; called the hill of the Lord, and his holy place, (⁴⁹⁴⁸Psalm 24:3); however, it was certainly written by David, under the inspiration of the spirit of God; and is a prophecy of Christ, and of the Gospel church, and describes the members of it.

Ver. 1. *The earth [is] the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, etc.] The whole universe, all the terraqueous globe, both land and water, and the circumambient air, and all that is therein; the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, all plants and vegetables that spring out of the earth, and metals and minerals in the bowels of it; all which are the riches of the Lord the earth is full of, (⁴⁹⁴²Psalm 104:24); (see ⁴⁹¹⁰Psalm 50:10-12);

the world, and they that dwell therein; the habitable world, and the dwellers on it, rational and irrational. These words may be interpreted of Christ, who is Lord of all; he made the world, and has a right and claim to all things in it; for the same person is here spoken of as in the preceding psalm, under the character of a shepherd; and this shows him to be very fit and proper for such an office, seeing he cannot fail of feeding and protecting his sheep; nor can they want any good thing, since the fulness both of nature and of grace is with him; and hence it is that all things are theirs, whether the world, or things present, or things to come; and though they seem to have nothing, yet possess all things, they possessing him whose all things are. The apostle makes use of this passage of Scripture, to prove, explain, and direct in the use of Christian liberty, with respect to the

free use of creatures, they all being the Lord's; and therefore good, and to be received with thanksgiving: and yet, inasmuch as there is a variety of them, such should be abstained from, when to use them serves to embolden evil men in their wicked ways, or offend and grieve weak Christians, (~~4005~~1 Corinthians 10:25,26,28).

Ver. 2. *For he hath founded it upon the seas*, etc.] Or “with” them, as some interpret ^{f374} the particle | [; he hath founded the earth and seas together, and both upon nothing; and yet are stable and firm; or “by the seas” ^{f375}, near unto them, at the side of them; which, though higher than the earth, are wonderfully bounded by the power of God, so as not to return and cover the earth; (see ~~8808~~Job 38:8-11 ~~19416~~Psalm 104:5-9); so the particle is used in (~~5008~~Psalm 1:3 23:2). Some have thought that the first earth, which Peter says was standing in the water, and out of the water, (~~6085~~2 Peter 3:5), was made in the form of an egg, and that the waters were under the earth, and the earth was as a crust or shell over them, until the deluge came; and this crust then broke in, and formed the sea; and so it was literally true, that the earth was founded upon, or over the waters;

and established it upon the floods; the floods of the seas, or rivers of water running to and fro in it: this shows the ground and foundation of Christ's right and claim to the earth, and all that is in it; which is not by reason of his father's gift to him as Mediator, but by virtue of his concern in creation, the world, and all things in it, being made and established by him; in him do all things consist, (~~5016~~Colossians 1:16,17).

Ver. 3. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?* etc.] Though the Lord has a claim in general to the whole world, and all its fulness; yet there is a particular part of it, or spot in it, which is his special and peculiar property, and that is his church and people; for though some reference may be had, in this passage, to Mount Moriah, and the hill of Zion, on which the temple was afterwards built, and is called the hill of the Lord, where he desired to dwell, (~~8885~~Psalm 68:15,16); yet the church is mystically intended, and is so called on account of its visibility, through a profession of faith in Christ, and for its immovableness, being built on him;

and who shall stand in his holy place? the same with the hill of the Lord; the temple being to be built upon it, where the Lord took up his residence, and was worshipped, and holiness becomes the house of God for evermore: the import of these questions is, who is a proper person to be an

inhabitant of Zion, or a member of a Gospel church? and the answer to them is in (^{<1246>}Psalm 24:4), in which is a description much like that which is given of one hundred forty and four thousand seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion, (^{<6401>}Revelation 14:1,4,5); compare with this verse.

Ver. 4. *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart*, etc.] Though “clean hands” are mentioned first, as being more obvious to view, and better known, and more subject to the cognizance and observation of others; yet a “pure heart” is first in being and in order; from whence cleanness of hands, when right and truth springs: no man has a pure heart naturally and of himself: the heart is desperately wicked; the imagination of the thoughts of it is evil continually; the mind and conscience are defiled with sin; nor can any man make his heart clean, or say he is pure from sin; but it is God that creates a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within men, and purifies the heart by faith, which is led to the blood of sprinkling, which purges the conscience, and cleanseth it from all sin; and from this purity of heart flows purity of life and conversation, signified by “clean hands”; the hand being the instrument of action, holy actions, or good works, performed from a principle of grace, are meant; the phrase is expressive of a holy, harmless, and innocent conversation, washing the hands being used to denote innocence, (^{<1724>}Matthew 27:24 ^{<1216>}Psalm 26:6 73:13); not a conversation entirely free from sin, nor by which a man is justified before God; for though he wash his hands ever so clean, they will not be pure in his sight, and will need washing in the blood of the Lamb; but it denotes a conversation upright in general, and declares a man righteous in the sight of men, and distinguishes him from one of a dissolute life, whose hands are full of blood, and defiled with sin;

who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity; or “set his heart upon”^{f376}, and desired vain things, as the phrase is sometimes used, (^{<1345>}Deuteronomy 24:15 ^{<1027>}Jeremiah 22:27); that is, the vain things of this world; as the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it; or has not served other gods, the idols of the Gentiles, which are lying vanities, but has lifted up his soul to God, and served him only: or “who hath not received his soul in vain”^{f377}; from the hands of God, but loves him with all his soul, believes with the heart in Christ for righteousness, being sanctified by the Spirit of God; and so the desire of his soul is to his name, and the remembrance of him. The “Keri”, or marginal reading, according to the points, is, “who hath not lifted up my soul to vanity”^{f378}; that is, has not taken the name of God in vain, or swore falsely by his name; his soul being put for his name or

himself; and by which he is said sometimes to swear, (²⁵¹⁴Jeremiah 51:14 ³¹⁰⁸Amos 6:8); and this sense the Jewish interpreters ^{f379} generally give into. The Targum seems to take in both the writing of the text and the marginal reading, as it often does, and renders the words, “who hath not sworn in vain, to the condemnation of his soul”; though sometimes to his own disadvantage, yet not to the hurt of others; (see ¹⁹⁵⁴Psalm 15:4); it follows, *nor sworn deceitfully*; by bearing false witness against any man; or by cheating him out of his substance through a false oath.

Ver. 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord*, etc.] Or “who receives” ^{f380}; the future for the present; and so is a continuation of the description of a person proper to enter and abide in the church of God, as (¹⁹²⁶Psalm 24:6) seems to require; even one who has received every spiritual blessing in Christ in general, special grace out of his fulness; particularly the blessing of pardon, as also adoption, and a right to eternal life; though it may be that the following clause is explanative of this;

and righteousness from the God of his salvation; from Christ, who is God his Saviour, the author of salvation; and who has brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is in him, and is a gift of his grace, and is received from him by faith, and is a great blessing indeed; it secures from condemnation and death, and entitles to eternal life.

Ver. 6. *This [is] the generation of them that seek him*, etc.] The persons above described are such, who in every age are the generation of the children of God, and are accounted by him for a generation; they are such that seek him, in the first place, with their whole hearts, and in Christ, where they find him;

that seek thy face, O Jacob. By the “face” of God is meant the favour of God, the discoveries of his love, the light of his countenance, than which nothing is more desirable to gracious souls, or more sought after by them; and by Jacob is meant the God of Jacob; and so Apollinarius has it in his metaphor; (see ¹⁹⁰⁰Psalm 10:1); unless Christ should be intended, one of whose names is Israel, (²⁴⁰⁸Isaiah 49:3); or the words may be supplied, as they are by some Jewish writers ^{f381}, “this is Jacob”; or the persons before described are the seed of Jacob, and who are called by his name: and it may be observed, that the church of God often bears the same name, (²³⁰⁸Isaiah 43:1 44:1,5); and then the sense is, the persons whose characters are given

above are fit to ascend, and stand in the holy hill of God, are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile.

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on “^{<488D>}Psalm 3:2”).

Ver. 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates*, etc.] By which the gates of hell are not meant; nor are the words to be understood of the descent of Christ thither, to fetch the souls of Old Testament saints from thence; who the Papists dream were detained in an apartment there, as in a prison, called by them “limbus patrum”; seeing these, immediately upon their separation from the body, were in a state of happiness and glory, as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows; and since Christ, at his death, went, in his human soul, immediately into heaven, or paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him: nor do the words design the gates of heaven, and Christ’s ascension thither, shut by the sins of men, and opened by the blood of Christ, by which he entered himself, and has made way for all his people; though this sense is much preferable to the former. The Jewish interpreters understand the phrase of the gates of the temple, which David prophetically speaks of as to be opened, when it should be built and dedicated by Solomon, and when the ark, the symbol of Jehovah’s presence, was brought into it, and the glory of the Lord filled the house; so the Targum interprets this first clause of “the gates of the house of the sanctuary”; though the next of “the gates of the garden of Eden”; but the words are better interpreted, in a mystical and spiritual sense, of the church of God, the temple of the living God, which is said to have gates, (^{<2801>}Isaiah 60:11); and is itself called a door, (^{<280>}Song of Solomon 8:9); where the open door of the Gospel is set, or an opportunity of preaching the Gospel given, and a door of utterance to the ministers of the word, and the doors of men’s hearts are opened to attend to it; and indeed the hearts of particular believers, individual members of the church, may be intended, or at least included in the sense of the passage; (see ^{<68D>}Revelation 3:20); and it may be observed, that the new Jerusalem is said to have gates of pearl, through which Christ, when he makes his glorious appearance, will enter in his own glory, and in his father’s, and in the glory of the holy angels;

and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; or “the doors of the world”^{f382}; which some understand of the kingdoms and nations of the world, and of the kings and princes thereof, as called upon to open and make way for, and receive the Gospel of Christ into them, and to support and retain it; but

it is best to interpret it of the church and its members, whose continuance, perpetuity, and duration, are here intimated, by being called “everlasting doors”; which may be said to be “lifted up”, as it may respect churches, when those things are removed which hinder communion with Christ; as their sins, which separate between them and their God, and the wall of unbelief, behind which Christ stands; and sleepiness, drowsiness, coldness, lukewarmness, and indifference; (see ^{<400>}Isaiah 59:2 ^{<200>}Song of Solomon 2:9 5:2); and when public worship is closely and strictly attended on, as the ministration of the word and ordinances, prayer to God, which is the lifting up the heart with the hands to God, and singing his praise: and as it may respect particular believers; these doors and gates may be said to be lifted up, when their hearts are enlarged with the love of God; the desires and affections of their souls are drawn out towards the Lord, and the graces of the Spirit are in a lively exercise on him; and when they lift up their heads with joy in a view of Christ coming to them. This must not be understood as if they could do all this of themselves, any more than gates and doors can be thought to open and lift up themselves;

and the King of glory shall come in; the Lord Jesus Christ, called the Lord of glory, (^{<400>}1 Corinthians 2:8 ^{<200>}James 2:1); who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his divine nature, as the Son of God; being the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person; and in his office as Mediator, being full of grace and truth, and having a glory given him before the world was; and which became manifest upon his resurrection, ascension to heaven, and session at God’s right hand; and particularly he is glorious as a King, being made higher than the kings of the earth, and crowned with glory and honour; and so the Targum renders it **aryqy** **Æl m**, “the glorious King”; and he is moreover the author and giver, the sum and substance, of the glory and happiness of the saints: and now, as the inhabitants of Zion, and members of the church, are described in the preceding verses, an account is given of the King of Zion in this and the following; who may be said to “come into” his churches, when he grants his gracious presence, shows himself through the lattices, and in the galleries of ordinances, in his beauty and glory; takes his walks there, and his goings are seen, even in the sanctuary; and where he dwells as King in his palace, and as a Son in his own house; and he may be said to come into the hearts of particular believers, when he manifests himself, his love and grace, unto them, and grants them such communion as is expressed by supping with them, and by dwelling in their hearts by faith,

Ver. 8. *Who [is] this King of glory?* etc.] Which question is put by the church, or particular believers; not through ignorance, as the daughters of Jerusalem, (^{<2169>}Song of Solomon 5:9); or the Pharisees, when Christ made his public entrance into Jerusalem, (^{<4210>}Matthew 21:10); much less in pride and haughtiness, in scorn and derision, as Pharaoh, (^{<4181>}Exodus 5:1); and the Capernaïtes, (^{<4162>}John 6:42); but as wondering at the glories and excellencies of his person, and as desirous of knowing more of him. The answer to the question is,

the Lord strong and mighty: he whose name alone is Jehovah; the most high in all the earth; the everlasting I AM; Jehovah our righteousness; the mighty God, even the Almighty; the Son of Man, whom God has made strong for himself: his strength and might have been seen in the creation of all things out of nothing, in upholding all things by his power, in the redemption of his people, in the resurrection of himself, in dispossessing the strong man armed out of the hearts of his chosen ones, in the government of his church, and the care of all his saints, and in keeping them from a final and total falling away. From the first of these words, which is only here used, Mars, because of his strength, has the name of Azizus; which name of his Julian ^{f383} makes mention of; and very probably Hesus, also a deity of the ancient Gauls, spoken of by the poet ^{f384}, and by Lactantius ^{f385}; but to none does it belong as to our Jehovah;

the Lord mighty in battle; as he was when he was up on the cross; when he made an end of sin, spoiled principalities and powers; abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of it; and as he will be at the last day, when the kings of the earth shall make war with him, and he shall overcome them; when the beast and false prophet shall be taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire; and the remnant shall be slain with the sword of his mouth; (see ^{<4674>}Revelation 17:14 19:11-21); and who is now the Captain of salvation to his people, their Leader and Commander; who furnishes them with weapons of warfare, which are mighty through God; who teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight the good fight of faith; and makes them more than conquerors, through himself, that has loved them.

Ver. 9. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates even lift [them] up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.* (See Gill on "^{<4207>}Psalm 24:7"). This is repeated on account of the backwardness and negligence of churches, and particular believers, to open and let Christ in; as may be seen

in the case of the church in (~~218D~~ Song of Solomon 5:2,3); as well as the more to set forth the greatness and glory of Christ, about to make his entrance, and to command a proper awe and reverence of him: some think respect is had to the twofold coming of Christ; first into the second temple, and next at the last judgment; though rather the certainty of his coming, in a spiritual manner, to his church and people, is here designed.

Ver. 10. *Who is this King of glory?* etc.] This is repeated, because of the preceding words, and in order to have a further account of his glorious Person, as follows:

the Lord of hosts, he [is] the King of glory; he who is the Lord of sabaoth, the Lord of the armies, both of the heavens and the earth; at whose dispose and control all things are in both worlds, above and below: this is the great and glorious Person that condescends to dwell in his churches, and in the hearts of his people; and this honour have his saints.

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on “~~218D~~ Psalm 3:2”).