

Week 10 – Psalm 24

Of David. A psalm.

- A theme that confirms that the world is ethically guaranteed and reliable, due to God's fidelity. Psalm 15, 24 and 112.
- The LXX/Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures used by the early church. It adds: "For the first day of the week" and thus is a celebration of creation. This being the psalm used on Sundays in the daily service in the second temple (**the temple built after the exiles returned to the land**).
- The psalm is a poem which can be classified as an "entrance liturgy" or a "gate liturgy" similar to Ps 15. It is difficult to establish whether the poem was composed to be used during a specific festival procession or whether it merely reflects some elements of such a procession.
- The temple consisted of three sections, the entrance portico, the main hall, and the holy of holies. The Lord resided in the holy of holies, but his presence could be jeopardized by His people's acts. The kingship had to be re-enacted and celebrate annually. The took place during a festival.
- **It appears to be an antiphonal psalm. The people (or a Levitical chorus) opened with verses 1-2; a leader asked the questions in verses 3, 8a, and 10a; and the chorus or the people answered with verses 4-6, 8b, and 10b. The first station was outside the Sanctuary. The second station was at the entrance portico. The third station was in the main hall, where the priests prepared to enter the holy of holies.**
- It may have been linked to David's bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:3) or Yhwh's taking up the position of King in Jerusalem passing through heavily guarded temple gates.
- The psalm is composed of three distinct parts that speak about the Lord's sovereign rule and each is a text for a liturgical act of identification.

Psalm 15 A psalm of David.

- ¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?
- ² The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;

Psalm 24:1-2 – Yhwh's Ownership of the World

- ¹ The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;

² for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.

Verse 1 and 2 anticipate 7-10 where Who is the King of Glory is used 5 x's.

These first two verses explicitly affirm the Lord reigns.

In the Hebrew text the psalm's first word is a prepositional phrase that designates possession: "The Lord's is the earth." This is the most important fact about reality.

First, this declaration concerns everything in the world and everyone who lives in it.

Second, because the inhabitants of the world depend on the Lord for existence, all are included in the ownership of the Lord. The Hebrew word means "what fills it."

The Lord owns the world because it is His work.

The Lord's authority and concern for His creation is displayed in His subduing the chaotic waters that threaten the world and in His establishing the earth securely upon waters held in check only by His power.

To whom do we think practically and operationally the world belongs?

Jubilee and the sabbatical year - giving the agricultural land rest every seven years.

Psalm 24:3-6 – Conditions for Approaching Yhwh

³ Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?

Who may stand in his holy place?

QUESTION

⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who does not trust in an idol

or swear by a false god.

ANSWER

⁵ They will receive blessing from the LORD

and vindication from God their Savior.

PROMISE

⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him,

who seek your face, God of Jacob.

CONFIRMATION

Where is the hill/mountain? Mount Zion, where the temple stands in Jerusalem. Regarded as the center of the world and the most important mountain on earth. The temple was regarded as the Lord's abode and also the point of intersection between heaven and earth. His presence in the temple conveyed the message that He was king and ruled the world.

In these verses the congregation is making a confession.

Those who seek entrance to the temple should reflect humbly on their need for repentance and divine mercy. (imagine a priest or priests calling out these questions to those preparing to enter the temple precincts.)

This is a solemn admission of dependence on the merciful grace of the God whom the worshiper approaches.

Clean hands/pure heart – These are not qualifications that a gatekeeper could test. These are acts that take place in secret – ethical terms. (envelope in Crockett)

Clean hands are those innocent of wrong against others. Pure heart means loyalty is to the Lord. Persons who enter are those whose lives are shaped by complete loyalty to God and love of neighbor.

This liturgy functions to put the ball back into the questioners' court. They have to examine themselves. They cannot pass evaluation on to someone else.

Verse 4 – you shall not lift up the name of the Lord your God to nothingness for the Lord will not hold them clean – the 3rd commandment in Exodus 20:7. Instead, lift yourself to the Lord.

The second part of verse 4 recalls the 9th commandment – you shall not bear false witness.

(Coming to a realization that the Lord is owner of all including self and neighbor.)

Just like Psalm 23, Psalm 24 affirms that the sovereign God provides for God's people. Blessing is the divine gift of provision for and support of life.

They also receive righteousness, or vindication, which is the divine gift of acceptance into and renewal of a relation with God that enables and encourages human righteousness in living.

Proper relatedness among human beings (justice/Amos 5:24) and between humanity and the created order.

Those who seek His face are seeking His blessing and deliverance, the expressions of the Lord's faithfulness.

The ultimate blessing for those who seek the face of the Lord will discover what it means to live in harmony with God, with other people, and with the whole creation.

Psalm 24:7-10 – Admitting Yhwh to the City

⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.

⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory.

The entrance liturgy is composed of a demand for admission, a question about who is admitted, and proclamation of the name of the entrance. It is repeated in order to emphasize and elaborate the identity of the entrant – the King of Glory who is the mighty warrior, the Lord of hosts. Glory is the response of the heavenly host to the proclamation of His Kingship and power.

To “lift up your head,” when applied to people, means to carry your head high with pride. The gates and doors are here personified and asked proudly to open up and welcome the coming of the King of Glory.

The psalm ends where it began, celebrating a God majestic in power, a King in whose hands lie all the forces in the universe of His creating. Yet this awesome, all-powerful God comes to His temple home not in thunder or in a lightning bolt, but in the midst of His worshipping people, who acknowledge the demands He makes upon them and celebrate His presence with them.

The Lord comes to us today. The Lord stands at the door and knocks – Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me (Rev. 3:20). He has come to be present with us and for us. He is the victor who has prevailed against the chaos of unbeing and now the chaos of evil. That is good news. Our existence depends on His creation; our blessing and righteousness depend on His coming.

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