

PSALMS

Chapter 24

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, 2 for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah 7 Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O 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, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. 10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! Selah

Ps 24† A processional liturgy (see Ps 47; 68; 118; 132) celebrating the Lord's entrance into Zion—composed either for the occasion when David brought the ark (representing God) to Jerusalem (see 2Sa 6) or for a festival commemorating the event. It was probably placed next to Ps 23 because it prescribes who may enter the sanctuary (see 23:6). The church has long used this psalm in celebration of Christ's ascension into the heavenly Jerusalem—the sanctuary on high. (CSB)

This psalm, which may have been written for the return of the Ark of the Covenant to the tabernacle (2Sm 6:12–15) calls God's people to worship, noting His creation and glory. (TLSB) Format: Vv 1–2, the earth is the Lord's; vv 3–6, those who seek the Lord; vv 7–10, the King of glory enters. (TLSB)

24:1–2 The prelude (perhaps spoken by a Levite), proclaiming the Lord as the Creator, Sustainer and Possessor of the whole world, and therefore worthy of worship and reverent loyalty as “the King of glory” (vv. 7–10; see Ps 29; 33:6–11; 89:5–18; 93; 95:3–5; 104). (CSB)

The whole world belongs to Jesus, since he shares the work of creation and preservation with the Father. When this world strayed away from God in sin, Jesus returned God's flock to the fold through his work as Redeemer. (PBC)

24:1 *The earth ... everything in it.* For Paul's use of this declaration see 1Co 10:25–26. (CSB)

All creation belongs to God the Creator. (TLSB)

In a celebration of victory over the enemies of Israel, the Israelites would remind themselves that their God was sovereign over everything in creation. (A Commentary on the Psalm – Ross)

It appears to be much more to the point to regard what is said as a protest against the idea that God is or can be limited to a certain area like Jerusalem or like the sanctuary in which he is thought by some to be confined. (Leupold)

24:2 An echo of Ge 1:1–10. founded ... established. A metaphor taken from the founding of a city (see Jos 6:26; 1Ki 16:24; Isa 14:32) or of a temple (see 1Ki 5:17; 6:37; Ezr 3:6–12; Isa 44:28;

Hag 2:18; Zec 4:9; 8:9). Like a temple, the earth was depicted as having foundations (see 18:15; 82:5; 1Sa 2:8; Pr 8:29; Isa 24:18) and pillars (see 75:3; Job 9:6). In the ancient Near East, temples were thought of as microcosms of the created world, so language applicable to a temple could readily be applied to the earth. (CSB)

Verse 2 provides the explanation of the Lord's sovereign possession of everything: he created all. (A Commentary on the Psalm – Ross)

He made it in an incomparable manner which still challenges attention. (Leupold)

On the third day of creation, God separated the dry land from the sea (Gn 1:9–10; 2Pt 3:5). The order He gave the earth continues to this day. (TLSB)

24:3–6 Instruction concerning those who may enter the sanctuary (probably spoken by a priest. (CSB)

Mount Zion, with its focal point, the tabernacle. These verses may have been responsively spoken by worshipers going to the temple. (TLSB)

It is, indeed, a privilege to appear before the Lord God Almighty. (Leupold)

24:4 *clean hands.* Guiltless actions. (CSB)

By joining an external part (hands) with an internal part (heart), David asserts that both ritual and moral purity are important. The OT ceremonial law was fulfilled by Christ and no longer binds us. Our only purity is given to us by Christ. (TLSB)

pure heart. Right attitudes and motives. Jesus said that the “pure in heart … will see God” (Mt 5:8). (CSB)

An expression meaning to trust, dedicate your life, or worship something. The true worshiper lifts his soul to God alone (25:1). (TLSB)

The 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. (A Commentary on the Psalm – Ross)

24:5 *will receive blessing* – God’s children are not righteous by their own works; God declares them righteous for the sake of Christ (Gal 3:6). (TLSB)

righteousness – That is, the fruits of vindication, such as righteous treatment from a faithful God; hence, here a synonym of “blessing” (CSB)

As a shepherd leads his sheep (see 77:20; 78:72) in paths that offer safety and well-being, so David’s Shepherd-King guides him in ways that cause him to be secure and prosperous.

24:6 *seek him* – Translates two terms: Hbr baqash, “look for”; Hbr darash, “care about, examine, inquire.” The Lord is sought in three ways: (1) through calling on His name in prayer, (2) by consulting Him through Urim and Thummim administered by the high priest, and (3) through the study of His Word. A visit to the tabernacle or temple is frequently implied. Unbelievers do not seek God. Believers seek Him in an attitude of repentance, not selfishness. (TLSB p. 843)

Urim and Thurmim are objects placed in the breast piece of the high priest. Their exact nature is unknown. They were used, however, to determine the will of the Lord (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21). (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

seek the face – Seeking God’s face is to seek the favor of the Lord. Here again we see an allusion to the priestly blessing: “May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. (A Commentary on the Psalm – Ross)

Jacob – Jacob ... Israel. Synonyms (see Ge 32:28). (CSB)

Selah – Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

Selah may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the thought appears. (Leupold)

24:7–10 Heraldng the approach of the King of glory (perhaps spoken by the king at the head of the assembled Israelites, with responses by the keepers of the gates). The Lord’s arrival at his sanctuary in Zion completes his march from Egypt. “The Lord Almighty” (v. 10), “the Lord mighty in battle” (v. 8; see Ex 15:1–18), has triumphed over all his enemies and comes now in victory to his own city (see Ps 46; 48; 76; 87), his “resting place” (132:8, 14; see 68:7–8; Jdg 5:4–5; Hab 3:3–7). Henceforth Jerusalem is the royal city of the kingdom of God. (CSB)

Likely sung responsively by worshipers, intensifying as they repeat their cry for the gates to open. The response identifies the Lord three times (vv 8, 10), implying the triune nature of God. Cf Nu 6:24–26. (TLSB)

God’s heavenly throne has its counterpart on earth in his temple at Jerusalem, from which center he rules the world. When Jesus entered the gates of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he received a royal welcome, but it was superficial and short-lived – yet he will not be deprived of the honor due him. (PBC)

24:7 *Lift up your heads ... be lifted up.* In jubilant reception of the victorious King of glory (see 3:3; 27:6; 110:7). (CSB)

Luther: “Open wide the portals.” (Leupold)

gates. Reference could be to the gates of either the city or the sanctuary. (CSB)

Worshipers ascending to the tabernacle reach Jerusalem’s gates and call for them to open before God. David personifies the gates, showing that it is an honor to be in God’s presence. If the gates are to lift up their heads in honor, how much more should God’s people rejoice in His gracious presence. (TLSB)

doors. A synonym for “gates,” not in this case the doors of the gates (as in Jdg 16:3; 1Sa 21:13). The gates are personified for dramatic effect, as in Isa 14:31. (CSB)

24:8 mighty in battle – Why should Israel not cheerfully acknowledge particularly his strength and victorious character when the Philistines had been compelled to make free admission concerning his great power (1 Sam. 5:6ff.) (Leupold)

24:10 king of glory – St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “The First-begotten from the dead, He who opened to believers the kingdom of Heaven, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah, who opens and no more shuts, at whose entrance with complete authority [this song] was sung by the heavenly powers” (SLSB, p 170). (TLSB)

Lord of hosts – This is the first time in the Bible that God is designated by this title. The Hebrew for “host(s)” can refer to (1) human armies (Ex 7:4; Ps 44:9); (2) the celestial bodies such as the sun, moon and stars (Ge 2:1; Dt 4:19; Isa 40:26); or (3) the heavenly creatures such as angels (Jos 5:14; 1Ki 22:19; Ps 148:2). The title, “the Lord of hosts,” is perhaps best understood as a general reference to the sovereignty of God over all powers in the universe. In the account of the establishment of kingship in Israel it became particularly appropriate as a reference to God as the God of armies—both of the heavenly army (Dt 33:2; Jos 5:14; Ps 68:17; Hab 3:8) and of the army of Israel.). Here it stands in climactic position. (CSB)

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Ps 24 Those who worship the Lord need “clean hands and a pure heart” (v 4). Sinful human beings are neither prepared nor worthy to be in God’s presence or worship Him. Yet God forgives us, covers us with Christ’s righteousness, and enables us to worship Him. This is why worship begins with Confession of sins and Absolution. By God’s grace, we worship with clean hands and a pure heart. • Merciful Lord, I confess all my sins to You, trusting in Your promises. Forgive me, for Jesus’ sake. Amen. (TLSB)