

## Get Ready, the King Is Coming Psalm 24:1-10

Almost one year ago on May 6, 2023, the world watched the coronation of King Charles as the procession headed from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey where the ceremony took place. As you can imagine, there was a lot of pomp and circumstance around the coronation, some televised, others done in private. There was the crowning and the anointing with holy oil indicating both the secular and spiritual responsibilities that the new king is to undertake on behalf of the nation. Holy oil that was made in Jerusalem and blessed by the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem was used. Members of the Church of England and the British royal family pledged their allegiance to the new monarch and people throughout the realm were invited to do the same. It's been estimated that over 20 million Brits watched the event on television.

Twelve new musical pieces were commissioned for the event and other older pieces used in previous coronations were added for the ceremony. Some were played by an orchestra while others were sung. Psalm 71 was also chanted in Greek by a Byzantine choir in honor of King Charles's late father, Prince Philip, who was born a prince of Greece.

At the end of it all, Britain now has a new sovereign.

**Psalm 24** is described as a processional liturgy celebrating the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. This particular psalm was composed either for the occasion when David brought the Ark of the covenant into Jerusalem for the first time or for a festival commemorating that event. Many churches have used this Psalm to celebrate the ascension of Jesus into His heavenly throne. It's been used in conjunction with **Psalm 47**, which celebrates the universal reign of God in testimony to all the surrounding nations.

Before we turn to **Psalm 24**, let's set the stage. We read in **I Chronicles 13** that David met with his officials to make plans on bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. David wanted to bring it to the capital because the passage says that under Saul they didn't

inquire of it for national or spiritual direction. Another reason was because Jerusalem was now the capital city of Israel and it seemed fitting to have the Ark there. Efforts were halted, however, when Uzzah reached out and touched the Ark and was slain by God for not adhering to the prescribed way to move the Ark.

Skip ahead to **chapter 15**. Several months have gone by. David realized that the first effort to bring the Ark was not done in the right way and so he met with the Levites and directed them to transport the Ark in the proper way outlined by Moses. We can only imagine the great fanfare that must have accompanied the Ark on the way to Jerusalem on that day. There were animal sacrifices and lots of singing and celebration. After its arrival in Jerusalem, Levites were appointed to serve before the Ark through burnt and fellowship offerings. Others were appointed to pray and give thanks and to praise the Lord with all kinds of singing and musical instruments. David gave Asaph, the chief musician, a psalm of thanks found in **I Chron. 16:8-36**. Jewish historian, Josephus says it was sung by 7 choirs of singers and musicians as they approached the city.

So whether **Psalm 24** was written specifically for this event in I Chronicles or if it was written later to commemorate the occasion is unclear. What is clear is that its intent is to recognize God as the creator and sovereign ruler over everything as well as urge worshippers to prepare their hearts and lives for coming into the King's presence.

Consider from **verses 1-2**, that God's claim is clear.

### I. GOD'S CLAIM IS CLEAR – vv. 1-2

**Verses 1 and 2** speak with clarity about the fact that God is in control, that He is sovereign over everything. There are a lot of people in the world who deny that reality, either believing that God isn't as powerful as He claims to be or that He doesn't care at all given the mess the world is in. Others don't believe that there even is a God, that the world is up for grabs by whoever has the most power.

Science says there is no evidence for the Biblical narrative of creation. Yet, scientifically speaking, there is no scientific evidence for its claim for

evolution. Just considering human anatomy alone, it's hard for me to fathom how this body evolved through millions of years of what essentially boils down to trial and error. There may have been times in school when I wished trial and error could have been used in taking tests. You know, you get to take a test over and over again until you get an A. But no, chance is not the sovereign ruler of all that we see, God is and that's what David declares in these opening verses.

Notice first that God's possession is clear.

### A. God's Possession Is Clear – v. 1

I have never owned a patent, but I have known people who do. A patent is a legal right granted to an individual for an invention allowing the person, as owner, the right to exclude others from replicating, using, or selling it. It is granted by a sovereign authority to that inventor.

David is saying that God is the patent holder of creation. It is His possession. It belongs to Him and to no other.

**“The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”**

**Genesis 1** is very clear that God is the creator and inventor. He designed it by laying out the blueprint of everything in the universe. There was a logical and sequential way in how He brought it into existence. From His perspective, it was a simple process. We read that on each day of the creation week **“God said”**. He didn't need to take any existing material or existing ideas and come up with a new and improved universe. There was nothing, He spoke, and it came into existence.

**John 1:3 “Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.”**

**Message: “Everything was created through Him; nothing – not one thing – came into being without Him.”**

On day 1, God said and there was light.

On day 2, God said and there was the sky separated from the waters.

On day 3, God said and there was land along with the seas, plants, and trees.

On day 4, God said and there was the sun, moon, and planets.

On day 5, God said and there were birds and fish.

On day 6, God said and there were animals and man.

**Hebrews 11:3 “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”**

**Psalm 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.”**

**Revelation 4:11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created.”**

**Colossians 1:16 “For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”**

From these verses we can see with clarity that God created everything and that everything was created for Him and that He is the one who sustains it and keeps it going. The laws that keep things in order were His design and from what we see, what He created, they in turn are to give Him praise as we saw from **Psalm 19:1** that they declare His glory.

So with David we can declare that **“the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”** It's not just the inanimate objects that are His, even we who live on the third planet from the sun, are His as well so that we can say that all around is His possession because He made it. He is the patent holder, the creator from which He deserves our praise as we sing songs like:

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing  
Power and majesty, praise to the King  
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar  
At the sound of Your name

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands  
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand  
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You

Think of this as a processional song being sung in response to His possession of everything He made. Because He made it, it belongs to Him. God's claim is clear because His possession is clear. God's claim is clear because His power is clear.

## B. God's Power Is Clear – v. 2

The word 'founded' is a metaphor for the founding of a city. It's the idea of something that originated or was established. We talk about the founding fathers of our nation or the founding of a college by so-and-so on such-a-such date.

We already looked at some verses stressing the absolute and omnipotent power God has in creating everything from nothing.

A week ago I was doing a little plumbing repair. The instructions told me to take a ball of plumber's putty about the size of a quarter and roll it into a line about 9" long. The putty was already made, all I had to do was fashion it into what was needed to install the drain.

God had nothing to start with and by the power of His word alone, He spoke, and everything was created from nothing.

But His power goes beyond creating the universe. Throughout Scripture His power is displayed in ways that defy the laws of nature, what we call miracles.

Parting the Red Sea

Parting the Jordan River

Causing an axe head to float

Making a donkey talk

Making a woman pregnant well past the years of childbearing

The virgin birth

Healing the lame, the deaf, the blind, and the leper

Raising the dead

As David made preparations for the building of the Temple, dedicating Solomon as his heir apparent, and charging him with its construction, he offered this prayer as a testimony to God's possession of the world and to His power as its creator:

**I Chronicles 29:11-12 "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the**

**majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; You are the ruler of all things. In Your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."**

Let's remember that what we have and what we see all belongs to God and it is His right and through His power that He gives to us.

God's claim is clear.

So is God's call. That's clear in this psalm as well.

## II. GOD'S CALL IS CLEAR – vv. 3-6

**When we consider God in light of verses 1-2, what kind of response should it elicit from us, keeping in mind that this is a processional heading into the capital city? And then what reward is given for those who do what is right?**

These verses tell us what is clear from God's call. First, our righteousness is clear.

### A. Our Righteousness Is Clear – v. 3-4

Picture yourself among this group of worshippers. The city of Jerusalem was situated on a bluff. To get to the city you had ascend up the road and the location of the Temple was on the highest point within the city so that it stood out as you walked toward the city. The term 'holy hill' was often used to describe the Temple and the place where Holy God resided. **Verse 3** asks the questions.

**"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place?"**

**In other words, who can approach God?**

**Who can come into His presence?**

These verses lay out the requirements for being in God's presence and we see in the answer that it's more than just ritual observances like offering sacrifices or merely observing the regulations of the law.

David understood that after his sin of adultery with Bathsheba followed by the murder of Uriah when he wrote in his psalm of confession:

**Psalm 51:16 "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt**

**offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”**

In other words, what David is saying in **Psalm 24** and **51**, is that if we want to come into God’s presence, you can’t just follow rituals and think everything is okay. He says you are to take sin seriously. Don’t just brush it aside and think that it doesn’t matter if you keep the law. In our passage, David says we need to have clean hands.

Having lived through COVID, we know what that’s like. The CDC encouraged and businesses required that you use hand sanitizer. That stuff was flying off the shelves. It was at times hard to find. I have a bottle of germ-x that sits on my desk. The bottle says it kills 99.9% of germs. From a medical perspective it’s quite effective in killing germs. But even at that, there’s a chance some are still lingering on surfaces that I may touch or may pass on.

These verses are giving us a prescription for coming into God’s presence.

First, that person must have *clean hands*.

When Herod rebuilt the Temple, he also included ritual baths along the path so that worshippers could cleanse themselves as they approached the Temple.

In the Old Testament, the law required that the priests assisting with the sacrifices must go through a ritual bath before performing his duties. The High priest was also required to go through an elaborate cleansing process before entering the Tabernacle and into the Holy of holies.

One of the additional laws that the Pharisees added was hand washing before eating. One day Jesus was asked by the Pharisees why His disciples didn’t wash their hands before eating according to tradition (**Matt. 15:2**). In other words, it wasn’t a law, it was something they made into a law. It was a rule made up by men as a means of earning favor with God.

Having clean hands refers to right actions.

**Isaiah 1:15-20**

David is invoking worshippers approaching God to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that

their actions, their character is right before God, that they were free of guilt from sin. We could look at this as a time of self-examination and confession.

What the religious leaders lost sight of from the Old Testament requirement of washing their hands and feet in the bronze basins before entering the presence of God, was that it symbolized spiritual cleansing. **James 4:8 “Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash (cleanse) your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts you double-minded.”**

Both David and James are stressing the need to address any worldliness, any sin in our lives and conduct and confess them. Both are saying that we can’t come into God’s presence without first repenting. So repentance is essential in order to have “clean hands” in approaching God. When we do that, James says that God will draw near to us.

One author aptly wrote “*We get our hands dirty when we play in the world’s sandbox. We cleanse our hands by removing them from sinful pursuits and moral compromises and then seeking God’s forgiveness.*” Who by the way is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. (**I John 1:9**)

If we want to draw near to God’s holy hill, into God’s presence, we need to take a look at our conduct and cleanse our hands from the stain of the world.

The second response to the question of who can stand in His holy place is that we need to *purify ourselves*. Where cleansing hands refers to external actions, purifying ourselves refers to internal motives or attitudes. Remember that Jesus said that what we do comes from what we think, what’s in our heart, Actions are really a heart issue.

Paul issued a stern warning in **Romans 12:2** not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Conformity to the world has to do with adapting its practices, living like the world so that there’s virtually no difference. Renewing the mind has to do with what starts in the heart, allowing the Word of God to change what you think and how you act. David will speak to that in his psalm of confession saying the same thing as

Paul about renewing the mind when he writes:

**“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)**

Clean hands are a result of a pure heart. David says such a person does not lift up his soul to idols or swear by what is false. James refers to such a person as double-minded. After the nation of Israel conquered the Promised Land, Joshua had a challenge for them. Choose this day whom you will serve. In other words, you can't serve both God and the idols of the people you just put out of the land.

If we want to come into God's presence as genuine worshippers, we need to be honest with God and ourselves humbly confessing sin. God's expectations for our righteousness in coming into His presence are clear. We would do well to use David's prayer to ensure that we come with clean hands and a pure heart: **Psalm 51:10, 17 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”**

Our righteousness is clear and then so is our reward.

## **B. Our Reward Is Clear – vv. 5-6**

The person whose hands are clean and whose heart is pure; the person whose actions and heart are right, that person will be rewarded. He will receive a blessing from God and be vindicated by the Lord. David says these people are the ones who seek God.

Seeking the face refers to seeking God's presence. I much prefer having a face-to-face conversation with someone than just speaking over the phone where I can't see them. Seeking the face is wanting a face-to-face meeting with the Lord. There is a sense in which we are always in God's presence because of His always being present with us. But there is a sense in which God is not always present with us. Now before you brand me as a heretic, tar and feather me and throw me out, let me explain.

We see repeated in the Bible that we are to seek God. For example, **Psalm 105:4 “Seek the Lord...seek His presence continually.”**

While God is always with us, we are not always with God. John Piper explains it this way: **“God's manifest, conscious, trusted presence is not our constant experience. There are reasons we become neglectful of God and give Him no thought and do not put trust in Him and we find Him ‘unmanifested’ – that is, unperceived as great and beautiful and valuable by the eyes of our hearts...His face – the brightness of His personal character – is hidden behind the curtain of our carnal desires.”**

Seeking His face is a call by God for us to enjoy His presence and we can't enjoy His presence and neither do we seek His face when our hands are not cleansed nor our hearts pure.

To seek God's face means to set our heart and mind on Him. It is a conscious and conscientious focusing of our mind's attention and heart's affection on God. **I Chronicles 22:19 “Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the Lord your God.”**

**Colossians 3:1-2 “Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”**  
**What obstacles are in our lives that dull our heart and mind, keeping us from seeking God? What things of the world pull us away from God?**

Our seeking should be constant, and we are told that when we seek Him, we will find Him if we seek Him with all our heart (**Deuteronomy 4:29**).

Seeking God requires total commitment.

We seek Him through prayer.

We seek Him through worship, both private and corporate.

We seek Him through the study of His Word.

We seek Him through the presence of His Spirit.

One author noted **“The Christian walk is a life devoted to seeking God's presence and favor. The Lord wants us to humbly and trustingly seek His face in our prayers and in our times in His Word.”**

This is something we are to constantly do and when we diligently seek God, we are told in **Hebrews 11:6** that there is a reward. We are told in **Matthew 7:7-8** that when we seek, we will find.

In his book, The Practice of the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence offers this thought: “**We should feed and nourish our souls with high notions of God; which would yield us great joy in being devoted to Him.**”

**What’s keeping you from seeking Him?** The reward is clear when we seek God: we will find Him and enjoy Him.

In closing let’s consider that God’s coming is clear.

### **III. GOD’S COMING IS CLEAR – vv. 7-10**

Once again, picture the procession drawing near the city gates. **Verses 7-8** are nearly identical to **verses 9-10**. Its repetition is for emphasis.

**The procession is clear.**

**The proclamation is clear.**

As the worshippers get closer, they call to the guard on the tower at the gate. Open up so the King of glory can come in.

The guard asks, “**Who is this King of glory?**” In effect ‘halt, who goes there? What business do you have here?’

The procession responds, “**The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.**”

In the Hebrew it’s the term El Shaddai, or God, the all-powerful one. He is the same one referred to in **vs. 1-2** who created, sustains and rules over the earth. He is the one in whom nothing is impossible, the one through whom there is victory.

David is announcing to the whole city that they should welcome the king, open the gates to the all-powerful king and ruler, open up to the one who deserves all glory, honor and praise. As the King of glory, God is awesome, and powerful.

The glory of God is in connection with the Shekinah glory that was visible in the Ark of the Covenant where God’s presence resided. The Shekinah glory was a term coined by Jewish rabbis and literally means “He caused to dwell” which referred to God’s presence on earth seen in the pillars of cloud and fire. It’s the glory Moses saw in the cloud when he received the 10 commandments and the glory Peter,

James and John were privileged to witness on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

This King of glory is the one who deserves our praise and worship, our willful surrender, our complete obedience and devotion and our willingness to open our hearts for Him to rule.

One day Jesus will return in that same glory to the city of Jerusalem from which He will reign for a thousand years. Until then, let us open the doors of our heart to allow the King of glory to reign. Like the 5 virgins in the parable Jesus told, we must prepare for His coming. **Are you ready for when He returns?** We begin that preparation by first repenting of sin and then trusting Him for salvation. And then we continue by seeking Him with clean hands and a pure heart.

**Are you ready to receive the King Almighty?** His coronation will be with a lot more splendor than anything we could ever put together.