

Who is the King of Glory?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 January 2017

Preacher: Jon Bickley

[0:00] Okay, good evening everyone. If you'd like to turn to Psalm 24. And before I start, I'm just going to pray again.

! Dear Father, we just again once more pray that you would speak to us through your word, that we would be amazed by who you are and the work that you've done, be amazed by the gospel, and we ask for your spirit to be with us and help us now, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Amen. So, I was looking at this psalm, there's two main questions that this psalm asks us. The first one found in verse 3, who may ascend the hill of the Lord, who may stand in his holy place? And another question later on, on who is the king of glory?

So, these are two big questions in the psalm. So, I wanted to look at that this evening. But before we get into those two specific questions, I think it would be good to look at the psalm itself and the context and a little bit about that.

[1:22] So, the psalm is split into three main categories, or sorry, three sections. So, verses 1 to 2 being one section where we see that the creator, God, maker of all, has founded everything and made everything.

And then in verses 3 to 6, the first question is asked on who can ascend the hill of the Lord. And the answer comes that clean hands and a pure heart are required.

And the result of this is blessing from God. And then the last section, 7 to 10, is a picture of a victorious king, the Lord, coming back to a city and shouting up to the gates to lift themselves up and to be opened because he's coming.

So, we have these three main sections. And I thought it would be useful to look at 2 Samuel chapter 6 where it's believed that this psalm is based on.

So, 2 Samuel chapter 6 is the Ark of the Covenant coming to Jerusalem for the first time. So, I'd like to turn there and read a portion of that and then just look at the similarities in the content of this psalm and some of the things happening in that passage.

[2:57] So, that is page 309 in the Church Bible. If you'd like to turn there. So, page 309 to Samuel chapter 6.

And prior to this, Jerusalem has been captured. And David and his men are now off to go and get the Ark and bring it back to Jerusalem.

So, I'll read from verse 1. It says, They set the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which is on the hill.

Uzzah and Io, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the Ark of God on it. And Io was walking in front of it.

David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord with songs, with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals. When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the Ark of God because the oxen stumbled.

[4:33] And the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of the irreverent act. Therefore, God struck him down and he died there beside the Ark. Then David was angry. The Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah.

David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah. And to this day, the place is called Perez Uzzah. David was afraid of the Lord that day.

He said, How can the Ark of the Lord ever come to me? He was not willing to take the Ark of the Lord to be with him in the city of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite.

The Ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite, for three months. And the Lord blessed him and his entire household.

Now, King David was told, The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has because of the Ark of God. So David went down and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David with rejoicing.

[5:37] When those who were carrying the Ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fatted calf. David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the Ark with shouts and the sounds of trumpets.

So here we have this big victory that Israel have had. David's been leading the army and God had given their enemies into David's hands and they had a victory.

They had captured Jerusalem. And as a result of this, they want to retrieve the Ark and bring it into the city to place it in the tabernacle.

So David has this big procession of 30,000 men that he takes with him. And they're coming into Jerusalem with the Ark. And the expectation is that the presence of the Lord is going to come to Jerusalem.

And it's almost got a finality about it that the enemies are defeated. David is reigning. He's king. And the Ark is coming to Jerusalem and God is going to dwell there.

[6:51] And there will be a righteous rule over that part of the world. And the Ark actually gets delayed for three months at Obed-Eden's house because Uzzah had touched the Ark.

And because of the holiness of God and the sacredness of the Ark, he was killed. God's wrath had been kindled against him because of that, because of his irreverent act, which really highlights the holiness of God.

A simple thing like that. It doesn't seem anything in terms of a normal object. But this was the Ark which was special.

And it was holy because it was something which was supposed to be where God was dwelling.

And was placed in the holy place in the tabernacle. So some of the similarities we see between this and Psalm 24.

[8:01] I'm just going to turn back there. So there's an acknowledgement that God is very holy.

And that by ourselves, we can't just approach God. The question is asked, who can ascend the hill of the Lord? And we see that the fact that Uzzah was killed for this act, that only the high priest, after ceremonial cleansing, could approach the Ark on the Day of Atonement in the normal case. So to approach God, a holiness and a cleansing and a cleanliness is required. And also the Ark brings blessing.

So we see as the Ark was at Obed-Edom's house, his house and all that he had was blessed. And Psalm 24 in verse 5 says that those who do ascend the hill of the Lord and can stand in the holy place will receive blessing.

So there's a blessing that comes with the presence of God. And there's a great multitude of people.

[9:36] As we look at verses 7 to 10 in the third section, that we see that the King of Glory is the Lord of Hosts.

And there's this big celebration and procession and cries of opening the gates and lifting up the heads. And we see that David comes with 30,000 men, which isn't a small number.

And they're marching up towards Jerusalem. So there's a big procession of people, a big celebration after a victory. And in verse 8, it says that the Lord is strong and mighty, mighty in battle. Saying that this Lord is a victorious, victorious Lord, victorious over his enemies. So there is some similarities here between the two passages.

It's believed that this psalm was either sung specifically at the time when the ark was brought in or possibly in remembrance of that occasion. Remembering the holiness of God.

[10:40] And also the amazing thing it is that God actually came and dwelled in Jerusalem. And in the context of the first two verses, I think it shows that although God was dwelling in Jerusalem, and that that was where he was going to be with his people, he wasn't contained by that.

That the earth is the Lord's and everything that's created belongs to the Lord. And so he doesn't live in the ark, he doesn't live in the tabernacle or the temple, and he isn't confined by the city walls. He created all those things. And I think that's the context that we see this in. The Lord is coming to dwell in the city, but he's the Lord, the creator that's coming to dwell.

And it's amazing. And how can we approach him, this holiness? So this is the context of the psalm, I believe. And I want to look at the two questions that we mentioned at the beginning.

The first one being, who can ascend the hill of the Lord? So who is qualified to do this? And I think if we're honest with ourselves, we can say that we don't feel qualified.

[12:07] Do we have clean hands and a pure heart that we can say, yes, I will ascend? And for the Israelites to have gone up to the tabernacle to worship on a Saturday morning, then they would have needed to be clean according to the law.

But I think it's a reminder that being in the worship with the other Jews is not enough.

That there's an inward work as well as an outward work that's required. That it's not just if we keep the rules and we'll turn up on a Saturday or for us on a Sunday.

That we won't automatically be blessed by God just because we're there. And that God's blessing doesn't just happen by osmosis. Not that the Jews would have known what osmosis was.

But I can explain later. But just being there wasn't enough. That there's an engaging.

[13:16] And so clean hands suggests an innocence in action. And the outward action and a pure heart is showing that their inward motives are worthy and pure.

So there's a striving for the character of God and the goodness of God and the purity of God, which allows them to go to worship and be blessed by God.

But there is also another side to it where the only person who is truly qualified to do this is Jesus.

He's the only person who was really, really pure, really clean.

He was perfect. And we can't achieve that kind of perfection. But we read this and we read verse 5, which says, He will receive blessing from the Lord, vindication from God, his Savior.

And we know that that's what we want to experience. We know that's what we need. But we aren't perfect. So I wanted to look at just a few verses from the New Testament.

[14:35] So you don't have to turn there. I will read them. But James 4.8 says, Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.

So here James is telling us that we need to wash our hands. We need to have clean hands. We need to purify our hearts. And the accusation of being double-minded suggests that the people he was talking to were affirming of Christian things.

They believed and they saw it was good. But they maybe had things in their life which were drawing them into the world. And there's a double-mindedness.

They're being torn in two directions. And so James is saying that we shouldn't be like that. We should wash our hands. We should purify our hearts and cut off those things which are holding us back.

And then in 1 John 3 verse 3 he says, Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure.

[15:45] And the hope that they're talking about is the hope of being changed into the likeness of Jesus when he comes again. And so if we can say, yes, Jesus is coming again and we will be like him when he comes, then we have the same hope and we should purify ourselves.

And then the last one is 2 Corinthians 7.1. Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

So he's saying that out of a reverence for God and because of the promises they have, that they should be purifying their hearts and removing everything that's contaminating their body and spirit. So I think this idea of cleansing and purifying ourselves is all through the Bible. And it's something that we need to take seriously.

It's a challenge. We need to ask ourselves, what are we doing? What have we done this year so far? If anything, to really look at that. And I think there's the regular things that we would aspire to

do every day, such as reading our Bible and praying, which is purifying to us.

[17:13] And spending time with other believers is purifying to us and edifying. And it's this that we need to pursue as well as looking at the areas where we do need to cut things off and change and seek to cleanse ourselves and to wash our hands and have a purer heart so that we can experience in a greater way the blessing of the Lord and vindication from God our Savior.

Because that really is a blessing, isn't it? We all know that the only true satisfaction we have is with God. So 1 John 1 says, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us.

And forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. And it's that purifying and the continual, humble repentance, which is what I think these verses in 3 and 4 are speaking about, that we ascend the hill of the Lord and we approach God through repentance and cleansing our hands and having a pure heart.

And this is only made available to us because Jesus Christ, who truly had a clean hands and a pure heart, was able to win that salvation for us through his obedience.

And I also thought it's worth remembering that as we examine ourselves and we feel conviction of sin, conviction, which I hope we all do at times, that this conviction is meant to draw us to Christ.

[19:10] If it's conviction from the Spirit, then the Spirit is working in us to draw us back to Christ. And if this conviction is not drawing us to Christ and he's making us feel guilty and turning us away, then we need to consider whether we're actually being tempted and Satan is using that to draw us away.

And so I think it's important that as we look at ourselves and feel the conviction of sin, that we remember that the purpose is to bring us back to Christ in a closer relationship.

And anything else is not of the Spirit. So I want to look at the second question, which is, who is the king of glory?

So this one seems like it might be a little bit easier to answer.

So who is the king of glory? Says he's the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. So here we have an amazing picture.

[20:25] We have this king who is victorious in battle. He's the Lord of hosts and he's coming back to a city. And there are gates and ancient doors.

And these gates and ancient doors seem to be obstructing the way. So a command goes out for the ancient doors. It says, be lifted up, you ancient doors.

And the heads of the gates need to be lifted up as well. So the head of the gate, I presume, is the top of the gate, if it's the head. And the ancient doors, I think, are doors that have been there a long time, if they're described as being ancient.

And somehow these things seem to be obstructing the way. So I think what this is saying to us is that all the things that have come previously have been able to fit through these things without any problem.

But now the existing infrastructure is not sufficient because something is coming which is much greater and much bigger than has come before. And so the ancient doors, which have always been fine up until now, are no longer any good.

[21:35] And they need to be lifted up out of the way because the king of glory is coming. And it's an amazing, amazing picture. So this king of glory is a warrior.

He's mighty. He's victorious. And he's leading a host of soldiers. So I think this picture does fit with what we looked at in Samuel with David victorious from battle.

The victory God had given him with his host of 30,000 men and the ark with them. Jerusalem and the presence of the Lord all going up to Jerusalem.

So you can imagine that when they were singing and playing all those instruments, that these were the kind of things that they were singing about. That something great was coming to Jerusalem and that the gates needed to be flung open.

Everything needed to be moved out of the way because the Lord, the creator, is coming to dwell in Jerusalem. And it's an amazing picture. So whoever's manning the gates cries out, you know, who

is the king of glory?

[22:46] And then all the people and the hosts of the soldiers, they cry out, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. So this great, exciting procession of music and shouting.

And I think it's an amazing scene. And I think it's pointing towards a more amazing scene in their future and in our past.

A more amazing scene in their future when God himself would come to earth as a man.

He would come to Jerusalem and in the person of Jesus. And we see, I think, a very, very small shadow of that when we remember Palm Sunday, when Jesus came to Jerusalem and the palm trees were waved, palm leaves were waved, and blankets put down and everyone shouted, Hosanna.

But really, the real victory that Christ had was victory over death.

[24:01] Sorry, I have lost a page of notes. I've got it.

Excuse me. So, Jesus comes to earth and he has this amazing victory over death. He comes to earth and he does battle with his enemies.

He fulfills the law of living a perfect life. And he allows the Jews to crucify him in obedience to his father. And he does something which is so much more amazing and mysterious than anything that's ever been done before.

And anything that's ever happened before. And then after three days, he rises from the dead. And I wanted to read a passage from 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15, verse 20. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 20. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 20.

[25:13] On page 1155. It says, And then later on in this chapter, we have that verse 53.

It says, So Christ has the first fruits of the victory over death itself.

And after rising from the dead, Jesus spent a short time with his disciples and then he ascends to heaven. And what more appropriate than to hear the call for the gates to be lifted up.

And the gates of the gates to be lifted up. Because the king of glory is coming back. And the amazing victory that Christ had on earth over death is celebrated in heaven.

And then in the fullest sense, I think after the second coming, you know, the ultimate fulfillment of Christ in this psalm.

[27:01] Returning home after the final battle and the ultimate victory. When all of our bodies are raised, if we believe and put our faith in Christ, then our bodies are raised on the last day. And death is finally put to death.

And we ascend victorious with our king, Jesus Christ. And then the question comes back, who is the king of glory? And we will all know because we will all have been raised.

And we'll know that Jesus is strong and mighty. Mighty in battle. And we'll know that not because we've read the psalm, but because we've seen it. We've seen that he's mighty in battle because he's been victorious.

And that he is the Lord Almighty. He's the king of glory. And we can all say that together. And the magnitude and the excitement of that scene should lift our hearts to worship God.

And so I'm going to finish there and we will sing our last hymn.