

Psalm 24.

The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.

² For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.

³ Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.

⁵ He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁶ This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face. *Selah*

⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!

And the King of glory shall 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 you gates!

Lift up, you everlasting doors!

And the King of glory shall come in.

¹⁰ Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts,

He *is* the King of glory. *Selah*

Introduction

Most Bible commentators connect this Psalm with the time that David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. The story is recorded in 2 Samuel Chapter 6 and in 1 Chronicles 15: v. 1-16: v.3.

Just in case we are not familiar with the Old Testament and the Ark of the Covenant, some explanation is needed.

The Ark of the Covenant was a small wooden box, overlaid with pure gold.

Inside the box were the 10 commandments. These were God's rules to His chosen people. They were written on stone tablets. Also inside the box was a sample of the "manna bread". This was the food that God provided in a miracle way to feed his people for 40 years in the desert, after He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt, before they entered the promised land.

The box had a gold lid with a statue of two Angels with outstretched wings.

It was called the "Atonement Cover".

This was the only piece of furniture allowed in the Holy of Holies area inside the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

This box came to represent the very presence of God Himself.

2 Samuel 6: v. 1-15.

Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. ² And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. ³ So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. ⁴ And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. ⁵ Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrams, and on cymbals.

⁶ And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. ⁷ Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his error*; and he died there by the ark of God. ⁸ And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day.

⁹ David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" ¹⁰ So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. ¹¹ The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

¹² Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. ¹³ And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. ¹⁴ Then David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁵ So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

You will notice in the N.K.J. version that the word "**Lord of Hosts**" is used in Psalm 24 and in the 2 Samuel passage as **another name for God**.

It is very likely that the occasion of bringing the "**Ark of the Covenant**" back into Jerusalem after it had been stolen by enemies of David, **was the song that was sung here**.

It has been described as an "**Antiphonal Psalm**" which means that it is a Psalm that is to be sung by at least two sets of people.

The leader asks the questions and the people reply.

It was a Psalm that was sung in Herod's Temple each Sunday and many people connect it with the entrance into Jerusalem on Psalm Sunday.

For many Anglicans around the world this Psalm is read on Ascension Day which is the 40th day after Easter. This year it will be Thursday May 30th.

This Psalm represents three privileges that God has given His people.

1. The Privilege of living in God's creation. – v. 1-2.

The first thing that the Psalmist says is that the God of the Bible is the "**CreatorOwner**" of everything in this world.

This includes every living animal, insect, bird and all human beings.

The Psalmists words are echoed in **Isaiah Chapter 45: v.18. N.K.J.**

¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
"I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.

Most intelligent people in the world will acknowledge that there is a great beauty and amazing design in nature.

Most doctors will admit that the design of the human body is even more amazing.

The two longest training periods for a person's career today are to study to be a doctor or a vet, or a specialist in plant life.

The reason for this is the amazing complexity of the design of a human body and that of creation. You can study creation all of your life and you will never uncover everything there is to know about what God has created on this earth.

There are 12,000 species of ants in the world today. An ant can lift 20 times its own body weight.

Comparing this with a human being, a child of 9 would be able to pick up an average size car.

Some Queen Ants can live for many years and have **millions of babies**.

If you spent your whole life just studying the ants in this world, you would not have time to discover more than 10% of the total species.

It is no wonder God says that if we want to be wise we need to consider the ways of the ant.

Proverbs 6: v.6-8

⁶ Go to the ant, you sluggard!

Consider her ways and be wise,

⁷ Which, having no captain,

Overseer or ruler,

⁸ Provides her supplies in the summer,

And gathers her food in the harvest.

The problem we have today is that even though people may be very positive about creation and the human body, they refuse to acknowledge that the God of the Bible is its creator.

I find it hard to understand that intelligent people believe that it happened by chance.

The opposition is especially strong when it comes to acknowledging God as our **creator owner**. In the main, human beings are rebellious towards their creator.

However, God tells us that **His creation is a manifestation of Himself.**

Romans 1: v. 20. (N.K.J.)

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

If you are a **Christian today**, it is not difficult to **Praise God for His wonderful world.**

So the first verse of this Psalm is teaching us that the **God of the Bible is the creator owner of all of this earth and everything in it.**

The question we need to ask ourselves is this.

Is God my creator owner, and will I acknowledge that in my life?

The second question is, will I desire to worship Him through living an obedient life, according to His word?

These are things that we need to answer individually, and a positive response needs to be reflected in our daily lives.

May I recommend a book written by a man called Stuart Burgess.

Stuart has taught engineering design at Cambridge University in England and is now at Bristol University.

The book is called "**Hallmarks of Design**".

In his book Stuart examines the evidence of purposeful design and beauty in nature.

The author writes in plain easy to understand terms about the complexity and the beauty of living creatures all around us.

I have ordered two of these books which will be on sale from the O.I.C. book cart very soon. I am personally covering the shipping so the book will be available at a cost price of only 1,000 yen.

If you are a Christian, you will be very encouraged. However, if you are not yet a believer, and read the book with an open mind, you will never argue for evolution again.

2. The Privilege of experiencing God's Grace in Redemption. – v.3-6.

Psalm 15 is a parallel text to these verses.

(Psalm 15 in N.K.J.)

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?

Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

² He who walks uprightly,

And works righteousness,

And speaks the truth in his heart;

³ He *who* does not backbite with his tongue,

Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;
⁴In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honors those who fear the LORD;
He *who* swears to his own hurt and does not change;
⁵He *who* does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
He who does these *things* shall never be moved.

Both of these texts teach that in order to worship God we need to reach a higher level. This level can't be reached on our own.

Psalm 2: v. 6 tells us that God's Son sits on the throne in the Heavenly Zion.

(Zion is another name for Jerusalem)

The Ark of the covenant was God's throne on the earthly Zion. (Jerusalem)

The Levites who carried the "Ark" had to be ceremonially clean.

Clean hands in v. 4 speak of **"Righteous Conduct"**.

Isaiah 1: v. 15-16 & 18. (N.K.J.)

¹⁵When you spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
Even though you make many prayers,
I will not hear.

Your hands are full of blood.

¹⁶"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.
Cease to do evil,

¹⁸"Come now, and let us reason together,"

Says the LORD,

"Though your sins are like scarlet,

They shall be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They shall be as wool.

A pure heart speaks of **godly character and pure motives.**

(Matt. 5: v. 8 N.K.J.)

⁸Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.

The Psalm says in v. 4 that anybody who has sworn deceitfully may not enter into God's presence. Deception is a very strong thing, and will get stronger as we move nearer to the second coming of Jesus.

God is the only person who really knows the motives of our heart.

God examines those motives.

You can give a gift to somebody in Japan and it can be mean absolutely nothing.

It might even be a bribe to try and receive favour from that person.

However, you can give a gift to someone in Japan **from pure motives and it can mean absolutely everything.**

God examines the motives of the heart.

Swearing deceitfully refers to giving a **false witness in court.**

Lifting up your soul to an idol in the days that the Psalm was written was a real challenge.

If you didn't worship the God of the Bible in those days, **you most certainly worshipped an idol.**

Today we may not worship idols, but we need to be careful about the **idols of our heart**. These are the things that take **central place in our lives and push God to background**. These could be our **work, our family, our pride, our position, our hopes and dreams for the future**. If the God of the Bible does not have first place in our life, **then the thing that does, is our idol**. We need to think about that because it can **hinder our Christian growth to have idols of the heart**. So let's go back to the original question of the Psalmist.

"Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His Holy place?"

If we are all honest, nobody meets God's standard of 100% Holiness.

Romans 3: v. 23 says that everybody has sinned and come short of God's Glory.

Good works or religious character cannot save us.

The only way that we can enter into God's presence is by **putting our faith and trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ**.

We must **repent of our sin** and put our **faith and trust in Jesus**.

Only Jesus Christ qualifies to enter into God's presence.

When we put our faith and trust in Jesus and what He did on the cross, by dying for our sins, then **God gives us a gift**.

It is a gift and not a reward.

Romans 3: v.21 – 4: v. 17. In N.L.T.

²¹ But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²² We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

²⁷ Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸ So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

²⁹ After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. ³⁰ There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. ³¹ Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.

⁴ Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? ² If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. ³ For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."

⁴ When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. ⁵ But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. ⁶ David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it:

⁷ "Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sins are put out of sight.

⁸ Yes, what joy for those
whose record the LORD has cleared of sin."

⁹ Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. ¹⁰ But how did this happen?

Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

¹¹ Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. ¹² And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. ¹⁴ If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. ¹⁵ For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

¹⁶ So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. ¹⁷ That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

The question I need to ask you today is, **have you received God's gift of eternal life?**

If not, then you can receive that gift today.

You must be prepared to lose your old life, but you will receive a "New Life".

Luke 9: v. 23-27 in N.K.J.

²³ Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels. ²⁷ But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God."

3. The privilege of celebrating God's Glory in victory. – v. 7-10.

Five times in these last few verses God is called the **king of Glory**.

Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd, He is the head of the Church, and that makes Him the head of O.I.C. The Bible teaches us that one day Jesus will return in Glory, and He will give each faithful servant a crown of Glory.

1 Peter 5: v. 1-4. (N.K.J.)

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

It is very interesting to note that the **Psalmist repeats himself in v. 7-10.**

What the Psalmist says, and why he repeats himself, is important.

First of all, I would like to quote these verses in the N.L.T. so we are clear about what David is saying.

(Ps24:v. 7-10 in N.L.T.)

⁷ Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.

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

⁹ Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.
¹⁰ Who is the King of glory?
The LORD of Heaven's Armies—
he is the King of glory.

In the context of the situation, the gates of Jerusalem which opened outwards, needed to be opened wide for the Levites to carry the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

The gates of the city were where all the business of the city was transacted.

This was the important place in the city.

David was saying that the whole city needed to welcome the presence of God back.

The Psalm then says "Who is the King of Glory?"

The reply was "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord invincible in battle." (v.8)

The question we need to ask is **why were the gates of Jerusalem addressed twice?**

The King of Glory is Jesus Christ.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, a week before Easter, the whole city didn't receive Him and praise Him.

On Palm Sunday, this Psalm had been sung that morning in the Temple.

However, the Psalm was not applied to Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Instead of honouring Jesus, the leaders rejected Jesus and crucified Him on a cross.

However, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, the battle against Satan and sin was won.

Jesus defeated Satan through His death and resurrection.

Jesus returned to the heavenly Zion where He was received as the victorious Lord of hosts and the King of Glory.

The words are repeated because there will be a second coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus will return to this earth and fight a battle against the armies of this world and **He will be victorious.**

Jesus will deliver Jerusalem from her enemies and establish His kingdom on the earth.

Then His people will receive Him in Jerusalem, the Lord of hosts, the King of glory.

We need to anchor my words in the Bible. They are important.

Revelation 19: v. 11-16 in N.K.J.

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Zechariah 14: v. 1-9. In N.K.J.

Behold, the day of the LORD is coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.

² For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;

The city shall be taken,

The houses rifled,

And the women ravished.

Half of the city shall go into captivity,

But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

³ Then the LORD will go forth

And fight against those nations,

As He fights in the day of battle.

⁴ And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
 Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
 And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
 From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
 Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
 And half of it toward the south.
⁵ Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley,
 For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
 Yes, you shall flee
 As you fled from the earthquake
 In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
 Thus the LORD my God will come,
And all the saints with You.
⁶ It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
 The lights will diminish.
⁷ It shall be one day
 Which is known to the LORD—
 Neither day nor night.
 But at evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.
⁸ And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
 Half of them toward the eastern sea
 And half of them toward the western sea;
 In both summer and winter it shall occur.
⁹ And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.
 In that day it shall be—
 “The LORD *is* one,”
 And His name one.

Application

We haven't come to the second coming yet. However, we can be overcomers, and more than conquer through faith in Jesus Christ now!

2 Corinthians 2: v. 14.

¹⁴ Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

Romans 8: v. 31-39.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For Your sake we are killed all day long;
 We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As children of God, we belong to three worlds.

1. **The world of creation.** The wonderful world that God has created.
2. **The world of the New Creation.** When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you enter a New World.

(2 Corinthians 5: v. 17 in N.K.J.)

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

It is a spiritual world where you can communicate with your creator and experience the blessing of being his child.

3. **The world to come.**

(Revelation 21: v. 1-8 in N.K.J.)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

⁶And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."