

November 4, 2018

Who is This King of Glory?

Psalm 24

God is the sovereign king who created us, sustains us, prepares us for worship, and defeats all our enemies.

LTS: Psalm 95

This is a special morning for us as Christians. It's the time when we are reminded of the roots and foundation of the gospel as we participate in sharing the Lord's Table. This morning we are going to be reminded through vivid, Spirit-wrought demonstration what it cost the Lord of glory to Cleanse, Justify, Redeem and Adopt sinners who were justly condemned for their treason against the King.

It will be a time of appropriate introspection and a time of joyful communion with Christ and those who call Him Lord. And I hope you are looking forward to that part of the service and preparing your heart for it even now.

The message from God's word this morning, however, will focus on the final part of the gospel message: that "when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, [He] sat down at the right hand of God waiting until his enemies should be made a footstool for His feet" (Heb. 10:12).

The message this morning is not about a babe in a manger, a man who worked miracles, a Savior offered as a sacrifice, or even a dead man who arose from his tomb. No, the message this morning is about that same man who now sits upon the eternal throne of God as the sovereign reigning King.

There's something fundamental that you and I must always remember as we approach a text like the one: We were made for worship. We exist to ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. This morning we are going to be especially helped in fulfilling this purpose by opening Israel's ancient hymnbook and turning to Psalm 24.

For centuries the Psalms have held a central place in the church of Jesus Christ. They are intended to be sung by a congregation as songs of praise, worship, adoration, and thanksgiving to God. They are given to man to turn our hearts away from the ubiquitous and relentless noise of the world and the constant drumbeat of earthly problems, to draw us back to the joy of ultimate reality; namely, God himself.

The book of Psalms has been called the Mount Everest of the Bible. From it we can see the glory of God with a clarity and wonder that we seldom see elsewhere. And in His sweet providence we find ourselves this morning standing on one of its majestic peaks, for Psalm 24 is a powerful example of a Psalm specifically designed to reorient our lives to true north where we can see the wondrous glory of God.

Let's stand together, then, and read Psalm 24

Read Psalm 24

- A short preface to the text seems in order as we begin. Psalm 24 is what is known as a Royal Psalm; a hymn of praise that extols the virtues of God our King. In this psalm God's people are mentioned, but the focus of attention is squarely upon the King of Glory.
- Historically, this psalm has been viewed as part of a trilogy of Psalms that stand in a perfect row beginning with Psalm 22. The church has sometimes referred to these three as the Psalm of the Cross (22), the Psalm of the Crook (23), And the Psalm of the crown (24). Our text for this morning is the Psalm of the Crown (Psa. 24)
- In all honesty, we don't know if there was a historical setting for this Psalm. Some are convinced it was written to commemorate the time when David transported the Ark of the Covenant up Mount Zion to the city of Jerusalem and into the tabernacle of God. Nevertheless, the text gives no indication of such a setting. Rather, it is more likely that the Psalmist (David, in this case) was simply writing the kind of song that would extol the glory of God who is King over all.
- At the end of this Psalm we were confronted with the central question: Who Is This King of Glory? And the Psalm as a whole was written to answer that question. Introducing us, as it were, to this divine King, David offers three themes:
 - I. The Dominion of the King: (1-2)
 - II. The Holiness of the King: (3-6)
 - III. The Majesty of the King: (7-10)

In verses 1-2 then the congregation lifts their collective voice to sing of...

I. The Dominion of the King

Here, David declares God's sovereign dominion over the earth and all that is in it

Read v. 1-2

1. It's helpful to observe in the original Hebrew language that the very first words of this Psalm are not "the earth." Rather, to highlight the main point of the Psalm David's first two words are The Lord's. This is emphatic. This is like taking a highlighter and marking the main point of the Psalm. This Psalm is NOT about us. It's not even about planet earth. This Psalm is about God, the "King of Glory," who exercises sovereign dominion over all things.

2. I find it helpful to remember that the pagans of the ancient Near East viewed the gods as those who ruled over certain geographic territories. If, by way of illustration, we were living back in that day some would believe that there is a god who rules over Dallas, and another who rules over F/W. There would be a god over Texas, and a different God over, say, New Jersey.

3. In fact, I came across an instance of this while reading the Bible in my own morning devotions this week. In 2 Kings 17, I read about how after taking Israel captive, the king of Assyria repopulated the land with people from other nations. The Lord responded, then, by sending lions to judge them, and a number of people were killed.

4. In 17:26 we read “So the king of Assyria was told, ‘The nations that you have carried away and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of that land. Therefore, he has sent lions among them, and behold, they are killing them, because they do not know the law of the god of the land.’” What’s the solution?” The next verse reads, “Then the king of Assyria commanded, ‘Send there one of the priests whom you carried away from there and let him go and dwell there and teach them the law of the god of the land.’”

5. The common understanding of the day was that there were many gods who acted as tribal deities. They each ruled over a certain land and a certain people. But David knew better. Yahweh is NOT merely the God of the Jews. He exercises sovereign dominion over all the earth. Notice (1) “The earth is Yahweh’s and the fulness thereof, the world and all who live in it.”

6. In other words, the whole world belongs to God. He owns it all. He owns Fort Worth. He owns Dallas. And yes, He even owns Texas! As much as we love our state, it doesn’t belong to us. As much as we love our nation, it doesn’t belong to us. We are not free to do with them as we please. They all belong to God. They exist under His dominion.

7. And notice how he says, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” The word “fullness” points to the wealth and fertility of the earth: All the gold in Alaska. All the oil in the Middle East. All the wheat in Kansas.

All the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the animals on land, and all the money in your bank account. None of it belongs to us! The Lord owns it all. It exists for His satisfaction and glory and it is all under His sovereign domain as King.

- A. It is God who gives wealth and takes wealth away.
- B. It is God who sends rain and controls the drought.
- C. This King of Glory rules over all.

8. But it’s not only the resources of the earth that King Yahweh lays claim to. It’s all the people of the earth as well. Notice he says, “The world and those who dwell therein.”

9. What does that mean? In a word, “You are not your own.” Do you live in this world? Then you belong to God.

- A. You may love your wife, but she doesn’t belong to you.
- B. You may love your children, but they don’t belong to you.

10. Someone will say, “But I don’t believe in God.” Well, you may not believe in gravity either, but that doesn’t change the reality of what will happen if you jump off the roof!

- A. And since you exist in God’s domain, you owe your allegiance to God as your true and rightful king.
- B. He is the only one with the wisdom and authority to tell you how to govern your life. And those who are wise willingly rank themselves under His rule.
- C. Then again, the opposite is also true. Listen to me. Hidden under every sin is a desire and demand for self-rule.
- D. Every time I face temptation, I find myself in a battle for control. And every time I sin, I declare my independence from the Rule of the Lord of Glory. In my heart I establish my own kingdom where I exercise autonomous rule over my own life. And that insistence of ruling over my own kingdom is in direct opposition to the King under whose dominion I live and breathe. This, beloved, is the war beneath all others.¹

11. Furthermore, it is a war I can never win. Why? Because God’s dominion over my life is no more in question than the law of gravity. Every time I fight it, I lose. The earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell in it.”

- A. His rule over average people like you and me is equally absolute to his rule over the kings of the earth.
- B. Daniel 4:34 we read “At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar [who was the president of world’s only super-power], lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation.”

12. By what authority does Yahweh exercise dominion over the world? By the authority of Creation. God rules the world because He created the world.

Read v. 2

13. This is creation language. God founded it (or laid it’s foundations) – that’s past tense. And then, a better translation of the next phrase would be “He establishes it (present tense) upon the waters. He laid it (that’s creation) and he establishes it (that’s active maintainance). This too, is part of Yahweh’s dominion over the world. He not only created the world but he sustains the world.

14. If we would fast-forward from Psalm 24 to the N.T. book of Colossians chapter 1, we would hear Paul say of Jesus that “by him all things were created in heaven and on earth,” and that “in Him all things hold together.” Again, the author of Hebrews chapter 3 tells us that Jesus Christ “upholds the universe by his powerful word.”

¹ Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, (Phillipsburg, P&R, 2002), p. 80

15. This, beloved, explains why there is order in the world. This is why the scientific method works. It's why mathematics can be used to understand the complexities of the created order. The fact that God created and sustains all things is the basis of logic, and why we can make predictions about the future.

- A. For example, because of Albert Einstein's observations of the stable complexities of light, he was able to predict that it should be possible to create a beam of light that can be controlled and useful to man.
- B. Decades later, other scientists took his observations and created the first working laser.

16. I find that amazing... but not surprising! You see, chaos doesn't' beget order. Order and complexity only arise out of order and complexity. The cosmos is orderly and predictable because the God who created and sustains it is a God of order who holds it all together.

17. I realize this flies in the face of evolutionary theory, but the equation "Nothing + no one = everything" has never made sense to me. Such theorizing is not based on observable science, but on blind faith. What we do observe in science is that order and complexity always find their source in something more complex and orderly than itself.

18. How do we explain the deep complexities of the cosmos? Simple. Here is the equation: Nothing + God = everything. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all who live in it."

19. This, beloved, is the dominion of the King. And it brings us to the second part of the Psalm. We've seen the Dominion of the King (1-2)

II. The Holiness of the King (3-6)

Here we discover that the King of Glory is approachable, but that he requires holiness in those who enter his presence.

Read 3-6

1. Believe it or not, David wants us to sing about the moral qualifications necessary for an audience with the King. Now this is delightfully surprising when you think about it. We have just learned that the King of Glory is the Creator of earth and everything in it. And now we discover that this highly exalted king is actually approachable.

2. Apparently, God desires to live in relationship with the people He has created. How else should we understand the question, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?"

- A. Clearly, this is a reference to the hill upon which Jerusalem was built, and specifically that part of the hill where the Tabernacle (and later, the Temple) was established.
- B. This was the designated place of Jewish worship of Yahweh, the King of Glory.

3. Then, to the question "Who is qualified to stand in the presence of the King," the answer comes in the form of a basic list of qualifications. Let's consider them briefly.

- A. (4) “clean hands” has to do with pure behavior; a life that pursues active goodness and righteousness and resists temptation to sin (outer man).
 - B. (4) “Pure heart” speaks to the man’s, attitudes, motives, and intentions of the heart. (Inner man)
 - C. (4) “does NOT lift up his soul to what is false.” This is a prohibition against idolatry.
 - D. (4) “does not swear deceitfully.” In other words, he is not dishonest or deceitful; “his Yes is yes, and his No is no.” People can trust him.
4. It needs to be said here that the Lord is not talking about moral perfection. He is describing people who are counted righteous in God’s sight by virtue of their faith in God commands and promises expressed in holy living.
5. Righteousness has always been graciously imputed to sinners on the basis of faith. Hence, when Paul takes pains to explain the gospel, he declares on the basis of O.T. teaching that “The just shall live by faith.” That is, they are considered righteous in God’s sight because of their faith, and that faith produces practical righteousness in the way they live.
6. Listen to how David says it (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 His face of the God of Jacob.”
- A. Think about it. On the one hand, a way has been established for you to actually enjoy “facetime” with the King of Glory!
 - B. On the other hand, no one should think they can just casually saunter into his presence with no concern about the moral quality of their life.
 - C. True Christians understand that they will never attain perfect holiness or moral perfection, but they want it. They strive for it NOT to earn salvation, but simply to please the one who loves them so much he was willing to suffer death in their place.
7. Such imperfect people are loved by God and welcome in his presence. He counts them righteous on the basis of their faith in Him. And the proof of their faith is their consecrated lives.
8. David has had us sing about the Dominion of the King, the Holiness of the King, and finally.
9. So much more should be said, but this is a taste of the Holiness of the King.

III. The Majesty of the King

Here we learn that the Gink of Glory is a conquering King and that He is none other than Jesus Christ.

Read 7-10

1. The scene David is painting for us is that of a warrior King returning to Jerusalem in victory over his enemies. As he approaches the gates of the city the choir leading the procession calls out to the gates, personified as men. They cry out in song declaring:

- Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!

From behind the great walls of the city comes a voice

- Who is this King of Glory?

The spokesman of the King cries out!

- Yahweh, strong and Mighty!

Yahweh, mighty in Battle!

Again, the choir sings,

- Lift up your heads O gates! And be lifted up O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

And again, a voice from within cries,

- Who is this king of Glory?

And the spokesman of the King declares emphatically:

- Yahweh of Hosts [Captain of an army of angels], He is the King of Glory!

2. Beloved, it is NO theological stretch to conclude that this Yahweh of hosts is none other than the second Person of the Trinity. But in this scene, He is not “gentle Jesus meek and mild,” but the great warrior King who has created a People for Himself and is every day building His kingdom.

3. By the way, it more than a little interesting to learn that during their exile in Babylon the Jews developed a tradition of reading a prescribed Psalm for each day of the week. Psalm 24 was designated for the First day of the week (Sunday). And so, every Sunday morning a priest would come to the outer gate of the temple and read this Psalm loud enough for a crowd to hear.

And if this is true, we can conclude that these were the very words being recited by the temple priests on the very morning that Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem mounted on a donkey amidst the praises of the people who declared, “Hosana! Hail to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.²

4. Who is this King of Glory? He is the Sovereign King whose dominion envelopes all creation. He is the Thrice Holy King who invites into fellowship all who share in His holiness. And He is the Warrior King who defeats every foe until He makes His enemies a footstool for His feet.

² James M. Boice, *Psalms: Vol 1.*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1994), 214

5. Beloved, Behold your King. He is the King of Glory. Psalm 24 is the Psalm of the Crown. The Psalm of the reigning King.

6. And if we would turn back half a page, we would read about our Shepherd King who leads his people to green pastures, quiet waters, and through the valley of the shadow of death without fear for those who trust him. This is the Psalm of the Crook.

7. And if we turn back half a page again, we would read the Psalm of the Cross. In preparation for the Lord's table, let me take a moment to read a few short excerpts.

- 1-2
- 6-8
- 14-18

8. Who is this King of Glory? He is the King who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. HE IS THE KING OF GLORY!