

WHO SHALL STAND IN HIS HOLY PLACE?

April 13, 2014

Psalm 24

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?”

Psalm 24:3

Psalm 24 was written by King David, but he wrote about another king. A simple outline of the psalm is: I. King of Creation (1-2), II. King of Righteousness (3-6) and III. King of Glory (7-10). Viewed in the light of the rest of Scripture, it is evident that the King in David's focus is the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

The psalm is built upon three questions, the third being repeated twice, by which suspense and anticipation of the answer are created. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?” (3), “Who shall stand in his holy place?” (3), “Who is this King of Glory?” (8), “Who is this King of Glory?” (10). One answer satisfies each question. Jesus Christ alone shall ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place. Christ alone is the King of Glory (Isa. 6:1-5; John 12:40, 41; Rev. 4:8).

The psalm focuses upon one geographical location: “the hill of the Lord” (3). It inquires who is worthy to ascend that hill and to stand within the holy place upon that hill. It makes reference to the city upon that hill, its gates and “everlasting doors” (7, 9).

This “hill of the Lord” is Mt. Zion, also known as Mt. Moriah. Jerusalem was there, sometimes called Zion. God directed David to purchase it from Ornan and offer a sacrifice there to end a plague that was killing many (II Chron. 21). It is the location to which God sent Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-14), and was referred to as “the mount of the Lord” (Gen. 22:14). God instructed Solomon to build the temple there (II Chron. 3:1), by which it would become the place of sacrifice and atonement. Outside its gates, Jesus Christ would be crucified.

When the temple was constructed by Solomon, and God filled the temple with His presence on the day of its dedication (II Chron. 7), this was identified unmistakably as “the hill of the Lord,” and within the temple was God's holy place. None could enter the holy place except the high priest of Israel, and only on the Day of Atonement and with blood from the sacrifice offered on that day (Lev. 16).

Within this context the questions are asked, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?” The answer: “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully” (4). Such answer excludes everyone. No sin-cursed person (and all are sin-cursed) meets this qualification. The only human who qualifies is Jesus Christ.

Thus, as He approaches the hill of the Lord, the command goes forth, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in” (7, 9). Who is the king of glory? It is the Lord of Hosts, the one who command's the hosts of heaven's armies. He is the righteous one who satisfies the four questions, and is therefore the King of Glory.