

Preached at GBC – Ruston; 5/15/22

"Who WILL Go To Heaven?"

Psalms 24

This passage we are looking at today, Psalm 24, presents Christ as the King and Lord over all, but particularly in His proper character as **KING OR RULER** of His people. I might add that Psalm 24, along with Psalm 22 and 23 are a trilogy of Psalms that present Christ in every aspect of His Mediatorial glory as Prophet, Priest, and King. Now the primary application of all three Psalms is to Christ Himself – *“And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.”*(Lk.20:42,43); *“And he said unto them, These [are] the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and [in] the prophets, and [in] the psalms, concerning me.”*(Lk.24:44) **But secondarily, keep this in mind:** They apply to all those who are **ONE** with Christ in the eyes of God's law and justice – *“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”*(I Jn.4:17)

Before we look at our text for this morning, let me quickly show you the Kingly aspect of our Lord as it is set before us by the Psalmist - **Vss.1,2**. The reason for this noble chorus concerning Christ as the "**King of glory**" is founded upon His work as Prophet and Priest for God's chosen people. In Christ's High Priestly prayer in John 17, Christ declared this to be the case- *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”*(Jn.17:1-4) When Paul wrote to those at Philippi, he also confirmed that Christ purchased this right as King through His humiliation, suffering, and subsequent glorification as the Representative and Surety of all those given to Him by the Father in the everlasting covenant of grace- *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and **became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*(Phil.2:5-11) Could there be any grander language or clearer declaration of God's sovereignty as both Creator and Owner of the entire universe? *“The EARTH is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein: for He hath founded it upon the sea, and established it upon the floods.”* Every person should be in awe of this God based on the opening words of the Bible - *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*(Gen.1:1) According to **John 1:3**, *“all things were made by Him* (i.e., Christ, the "word"); *and without Him was not anything made that was made.”* So God spoke and the dry land appeared immediately, resting on the water as the supporting column. These opening verses of Ps.24 teach us that every nation on the earth's surface, all animal and vegetable life, all it's riches, all it's beauty, all of it were spoke into being by His Word. Since He spoke all of it in to existence, and since He sustains **ALL OF IT**, His rightful Lordship is undisputable – *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the*

thing formed say to him that formed [it], *Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*"(Rom.9:20,21) We are His because He made us. For this cause, in lowly reverence we show bow before Him and meekly submit to His supremacy. As justified saints, we should constantly by our efforts seek to glorify and honor Him in "*our bodies and in our spirits, WHICH ARE HIS.*"

Having established the lawful right of the Christ, by virtue of creation and redemption, as Lord of all, the Psalmist now looks up to heaven and by God-given faith looking forward to the Gospel church as represented by this "*hill of the Lord*" asks **the most important question ANY SINNER** can contemplate - "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?*" Another rule of interpretation of Scripture that is applicable to this verse is this: Any time you see a question asked in the Scripture that can be answered either affirmatively or negatively, the answer almost without exception is in the **NEGATIVE**. So the answer to both these questions is **NO ONE**. If it is based on man, no matter how noble, moral, sincere, or religious he might be, **HE CAN NOT ASCEND** or **STAND** before the Lord based on his own merit. The Psalmist understood man's natural depravity, as well as his own inability to do anything to save himself, keep himself saved, or even recommend himself to God? All God's true children **KNOW** and **FEEL** the same to be true – **QUOTE Ps.130:3,4; Jer.17:9**. What person on this earth, **EXCEPT A FOOL**, would think for **ONE MOMENT** they are worthy of communion with the God of all grace, even based on their best religious performance? Actually, when you think about it: The Scriptures have never portrayed man in any situation other than that of a poor, depraved, lost, hopeless sinner - destined for destruction.

Vss.4 - The grand and everlasting truth that stretches from Alpha to Omega is this: "*Without holiness (without righteousness), NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD.*"(Heb.12:14) One thing we can be certain of: Unless a person possesses the very holiness of God, **THEY WILL NOT SEE GOD**. I know that religion hates this truth, and actively seeks to undermine this truth, teaching that God will accept and count man's imperfect faith as true righteousness. **THIS IS NOT SCRIPTURAL** - **Tit.3:5; Gal.2:16**. What I'm saying is nothing more or less than the Scriptures declare - "*For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" **Rom.3:23**

Psalms 24:4 is much like the passage in **Eph.2:4**. After Paul had clearly defined man's awful condition by virtue of their being dead in trespasses and sin, he then interposed God's mercy and grace – "*BUT GOD, who is rich in mercy, for HIS GREAT LOVE wherewith He loved us.*"(Eph.2:4) The Psalmist does basically the same thing in our text. This verse give us the **ONLY ANSWER** to the two imposing questions asked in **Vs.3**. It certainly can't be any natural born son of Adam, either past or present - "*Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*"(Prov.20:9) "*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*"(Eccl.7:20) Yet our text tells us the **ONLY ONES** who will enter into glory are those who have clean hands, pure hearts, who have not lifted up their souls to foolishness, or sworn deceitfully. Since this can't be a reference to natural born sinners, who is the Psalmist talking about here? When it came to God's **GLORY, i.e., how He can be both a "just God and a Savior"**, the Lord **did not leave it up** to chance **NOR** did He leave it up to the fickle free-will and minds of unregenerate sons and daughters of Adam. This verse teaches us what God's infinite holiness and justice **REQUIRES FROM MAN, as well as** what man **CANNOT**

PROVIDE - REMEMBER THE QUESTION IN VS.3. God will not relent in this matter. This is His will - **ONLY THOSE WHO ARE AS PERFECT OR HOLY AS GOD WILL SEE GOD.** But thank God, **Vs.4** also teaches us that God in infinite justice and holiness **PURPOSED THE** way to glorify Himself in every attribute of His character as "*both a just God and a Savior.*" That's why we read **Psalm 89** this morning during our call to worship. Turn back to **Ps.89:19.** Just like God's servant Job, all God's elect **MUST** be taught by the Spirit the heart wrenching truth that Elihu spoke to Job in **Job 33:18-33**, specifically **Vss.23,24** - "*If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.*" Isn't this "*One in a thousand*" the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who Himself went into the "*pit*" for the sake of all the objects of His love? Can you see Christ this morning as your "**RANSOM**"? I hope and pray God causes Christ the "**ransom**" to thunder through our minds this morning. This word "**ransom**" in the Hebrew is that word "*kopher*", which means '**ATONEMENT**, a covering, or **THE PRICE OF A LIFE**'. Remember what God told Noah to do within and without the ark - "*Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt **PITCH** it within and without with **PITCH**.*"(Gen.6:14)

Thankfully **THERE IS A MAN** who has fulfilled every aspect of the requirements to ascend God's hill and stand in His holy place - "*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.*"(Heb.10:12) Paul told the young preacher Timothy: "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the **MAN** Christ Jesus.*" Why is this so important? Remember, sin entered into this world by man, and the **ONLY WAY** sin could be put away was by One who was truly MAN as well. **Let me be perfectly clear on this point:** Christ who was both truly God and truly man, as the Representative of those given to Him in the everlasting covenant of grace fulfilled **EVERYTHING** that was required by God's infinite law and justice. **Think about it:** Wasn't Christ's hands clean? Christ said to the Jews: "*Which of you **CONVINCE** me of sin?*"(Jn.8:46); Pontius Pilate declared to these same **JEW**s TWICE that Christ was without **FAULT**. Wasn't Christ's heart pure? Did Christ **EVER** lift up His soul to foolishness? Did Christ ever swear deceitfully? The answer to all these questions is **NO, NO, A THOUSAND TIMES NO!!** But Christ didn't do any of this as a private person, i.e., He did not do any of it to improve Himself, for He was already **PERFECT**. Everything He did, He did in the name and the nature of those He represented. And when this **MAN** had "*purged our sins*", **HE SAT DOWN.** **LISTEN TO ME CLOSELY:** All those who are vitally united to Christ through election, redemption, reconciliation, regeneration and conversion, possess in Him all these qualities required to enter into glory - **II Cor.5:21.**

Now look at **Vs.5** - This verse is confirmation of the all that we've just discussed. Who but the Lord Jesus Christ can receive the blessing? **What blessing?** The blessing referred to here is the blessing of covenant-redemption, which includes every other blessing. So the Lord Jehovah said it in reference to this redemption by the Mediator - "*My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them*

*up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: **but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.***" (Isa.51:5-8) Didn't the Lord Jesus Christ call GOD THE FATHER the GOD of His salvation? "*O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day [and] night before thee: Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.*"(Ps.88:1-3)

These are indeed precious truths, but only if we read them with an eye to CHRIST. But if we like the self-righteous religionist throw Christ into the background of the subject in these verses or if we seek to join ourselves with Him, as though our personal character and conduct are what were intended, **i.e., if our obedience and faith are what is being described here**, we sadly corrupt this Scripture, and offer a most unbecoming tribute to gratify the pride of our nature. I have said this for **TWO IMPORTANT REASONS: (1)** Because I am more and more convinced every day I live that the one design of the Holy Spirit throughout all the Scriptures is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ – "*He SHALL GLORY ME: for He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you.*"(Jn. 16:14) **(2)** Because the life of all comfort lies in the conviction and enjoyment of this most blessed truth - that it is the perfect righteousness of Christ which justifies, sanctifies, and saves the persons of His people - "*And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.*" (Isa.32:17) It is His righteousness in which all God's elect are seen and accepted before God - **Jer.23:6; 33:16**. This "*righteousness*", the very righteousness of God, is to be preached **UNTO ALL**, and thank God it is **UPON** all them that believe! **And you know what:** Having Christ's righteousness imputed to us, we can "*ascend the hill of the Lord*" and we "*can stand in His holy place*", because "*in Christ*" we have **clean hands, and a pure heart; we haven't lifted up our soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.**

Let's conclude this message by simple reading the resulting joy and exaltation this glorious truth bring in to all those who are "taught of God" - **Vss.6-10. AND GOD'S PEOPLE SAY: AMEN!!!!!!**