

Psalm 24 – Who Shall Stand in God's Presence! (part 2 of 2)

III. THE QUALIFIED REVEALED – vv 5-6 – Verse 5 describes more than just going to heaven. It highlights the privilege of the person who can stand in the presence of the LORD and who is accepted by Him. He has a covenantal relationship with the LORD. That is why “the LORD” (Jehovah) is used here instead of “God”. The covenantal relationship exists only when the sinner accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. This was possible in Old Testament times when the OT saints obeyed the LORD by observing the holy days and keeping the sacrificial system of the Levitical priesthood. These were types of Christ and presented a picture of a coming Messiah who would die for them and take away their sins. By acts of faith done in spirit and according to God's truth, the children of God entered into a relationship with God. They received the blessing from the LORD. They did not have as clear a message of salvation as what we have today because of progressive revelation but they had enough of God's Truth revealed to them by God Himself to save whosoever would believe.

It is specifically called “the blessing” and not “a blessing” because “it” refers to the salvation relationship which is the start of all other blessings. With Israel, material blessings did not come without spiritual blessings. Israel was first and foremost a spiritual nation. Israel was not like other nations of the world whereby a leader is considered good if he can bring material prosperity and political stability. But Israel was measured by a different yardstick. Material and economic prosperity could be attained by clever political and marriage alliances with neighbouring countries but Israel was never to do that. She was to trust in the LORD alone to see her through. This is the blessing that the LORD speaks of for the one who can stand before Him. This understanding is seen in the second line which is a synthetic parallelism to the first.

He shall also receive righteousness from the God of his salvation. The blessing is one of righteousness. This is the imputed righteousness that God gives to all who believe in Christ. This righteousness means that he is viewed by God as never having sinned before. He would not be given this righteousness otherwise. What if he sins now? If he sins now, the LORD will also not see his sin. His sins are all forgiven by God through Christ for this is his positional relationship with God. He has a father-child relationship with God that is sealed by the blood of Christ that will never and can never be broken. When the believer sins on earth and does not repent of His sin, his fellowship with God is affected but not his relationship. This relationship is based upon the righteousness that the believer possesses and will not be lost or taken away. The practical does not affect the positional. The positional affects the practical because the believer who has a relationship with Christ will want to maintain a close fellowship with God. He will want to repent of all his sins so that his practical will match his positional for as long as possible and as often as possible. This is holiness.

This righteousness is given when he is born again in Christ; the LORD who gave him this righteousness is now described as “the God of his salvation”! The LORD is also

the believer's God as he is now a child of God. God is the architect of his salvation as well as the Administrator and Sustainer of his salvation. His salvation from beginning to eternity depends on God. This is the man who has clean hands and a pure heart. This is the work of God through Christ Jesus. There is no other way. The person who is saved has been given clean hands and a pure heart whereby access to God is now his privilege. When he sins and does not deal with his sins, his access to God is jeopardized. **Psalms 66:18** (KJV), "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."

Verse 6 (synthetic parallelism) – When will sinners turn to God through Christ and be given the righteousness of God? David says this is the generation that will seek God. This generation refers to the generation that is alive on this earth and not the past generation, for they had their time on earth and they have died. It is not the future generation because they are not born yet. Now is the time for the generation on this earth to consider this very important truth. Do they want to stand before God and be accepted by Him? Then they must seek Him, i.e. go to Him. The first "seek" has the idea of "seeking with care and diligence", whereas the second "seek" has the idea of "begging." The former emphasizes determination - he will not stop seeking until he has found it. The latter emphasizes the attitude of searching whereby he does it with humility. Combine the two words and we see that he who seeks after God is the one who humbles himself and acknowledges that God is greater than he is and that without God he cannot save himself from his sins. The search for the LORD is with such great determination that he will not stop until he finds God.

It is the face of God that he wants to see! This is of course a figure of speech to describe someone who stands in front of God and is not cast away. This appeal was to Jacob, the usurper. Israel had the Word of God and only through the Word of God can the face of God be found. Without the Word of God man may go all over the world and would not find Him. That is why the appeal was to Jacob. The ones who seek after God have to be the people in the church. They have the Word of God. We must not presume that just because we have the Word of God in our hands that therefore we are already standing before God accepted. Being a member of a local church does not mean we are already standing before God accepted. Attending church and serving and even sharing the gospel does not mean that we are already standing before God accepted. These "outward" activities mean something only if we truly have a relationship with God. These activities do not equal a relationship with God. Let us not deceive ourselves.

Verse 5 makes it very clear that the person receives the righteousness of God. It is a gift from God. He cannot earn it, for that would mean salvation by works. The sinner must not confuse the fruit of salvation with the root of salvation. The root of salvation is always the blood of Christ. Then the fruit of salvation follows, i.e. the evidence of the born again is seen by his new life in Christ.

IV. THE CALL OFFERED – vv 7-10 – The next four verses are very similar. Using four imperatives in these verses, David calls for a response from the readers. As Israel was the prime target of David's plea, these terminologies would have to refer to the entire nation of Israel living in all their cities in the Land of Promise. This is a continuation of David's appeal in the earlier verses of this psalm.

Verse 7 (synthetic parallelism) – "Lift up yours heads" means to stop whatever one is doing and listen and obey and do not allow any obstruction to stand in the way of these entrances. Since it is a reference to "gates" and "doors" and the Temple of Solomon was not built yet, it has to refer to the gates of the cities and the doors of all the homes in Israel. The cry was to these cities to open their doors and homes, i.e. their lives to the LORD. Israel was a nation of God and the people who lived in the nation had a duty to manifest the glory of God to the rest of the world. They were not to allow anyone else to come in other than the LORD. When the LORD comes in, there must be no idolatry or immorality but only holiness.

The King of glory shall come in! This means that all idols must be cast away for the King to come into all the cities and homes in Israel. The LORD wants to come in. The LORD wants His people to enter into His presence with clean hands and pure hearts. The LORD wants Israel to receive the righteousness and the blessing of the God of Israel. But they must let the LORD come in. The LORD must not be an outsider or a guest in their homes and cities. He must be their King. Not just their King but their King of glory whereby the glory of the LORD must be seen and experienced by the people of God as they live and testify of His grace and mercies in their lives.

This is what the LORD wants to see in His churches today. Churches that compromise and bear a godless and carnal witness are condemned by God. They must turn from their carnal ways and return to the LORD. The LORD wants to come in but it must always be on His terms. The terms are clean hands and a pure heart. This standard of holiness will not change.

Verse 8 (synthetic parallelism) – Who is this King of glory? He is none other than the LORD who is strong and mighty. The word "strong" means to have the strength of an army. The word "mighty" means to have "power". Combine the two words and we learn that the LORD is like a powerful army which no one is able to fight against. This is asserted by David when he wrote, "the LORD mighty in battle".

The battlefield is before all believers who live on this earth. The LORD knows that His people are constantly fighting a spiritual battle. That is why He describes Himself using "battle terminology". Satan is like a roaring lion seeking and waiting to devour the people of God. He does so by getting them to sin and stumble and fall. They fall when they love the world and manifest a bad testimony. Believers stumble and fall when they succumb to the deceptions that are in this world. They are lulled into complacency when they believe that the world is like a nice playground. Soldiers in the playground are not on guard and not ready to fight off the enemies. They think the enemies are not around. They are easily overwhelmed and defeated. But the LORD comes in and helps every believer to have the victory. Victory comes when believers

lean on Christ and live holy lives according to His perfect Word. Believers will be alert and always on guard. They will pray without ceasing. They will study and meditate on God's Word to equip them with the mind of God so that they can think like God when they face difficult adversities and seductive temptations.

The LORD does not want to see His people defeated by the evil one. He wants to see strong and mighty men and women of God fighting the good fight of faith.

Verses 9-10 – Both these verses are similar to verses 7 and 8. They are repeated for emphasis. One difference is that the LORD calls Himself the LORD of hosts as well as the King of glory in verse 10. “The LORD of hosts” is a reference to the covenantal relationship that He has with His people. This covenant is sealed by the blood of Christ and is the basis for the LORD entering into the lives of His people. This is not something new but something that had been Israel's experience since the day the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt in the days of Moses. Based upon this covenantal relationship Israel had no choice but to do what the LORD wants. Israel was not to back out of this covenantal relationship but fulfil it. Israel had to let the LORD come in and be her King and fight the battles for her. Israel must be holy again.

CONCLUSION – The time to enter into the presence of the LORD is NOW while there is life in our bodies. The call is to this generation that is alive on the earth. The LORD wants all of us to have clean hands and pure hearts so that all can stand in His presence and be accepted. Only the cleansing power of the blood of Christ is able to wash away all our sins. The blessing and righteousness from the God of our salvation would be given to all. Do not procrastinate any further. The King of glory wants to come into your heart and transform your life. Do not delay any longer. Humble yourself and seek His face, and do not stop seeking until you find! Amen.