

The Scripture:

Psalm 24

Of David. A psalm.

1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything
in it,

the world, and all who live in it;

2 for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.

3 Who may ascend the mountain of the
Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

4 The one who has clean hands and a
pure heart,

who does not trust in an idol

or swear by a false god.^[a]

5 They will receive blessing from the Lord
and vindication from God their Savior.

6 Such is the generation of those who
seek him,

who seek your face, God of Jacob.^{[b][c]}

7 Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

8 Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,

that the King of glory may come in.

10 Who is he, this King of glory?

The Lord Almighty—

he is the King of glory.

[LC

*Matthew Henry published his
Commentary on Scripture in 1710,
over 300 years ago. It is dense text,
archaic to the modern mind.
However, I find gold in it.*

*Below is his Commentary on Psalm
24. What I have added is white
space (new lines and indentations.)
You'll see bullet points, which were
inline in his text; I make them
clearer with white space as they
would be typeset today.*

*I add several definitions of words
common and obscure. I also provide
the text of some Scripture he only
provides the reference to.*

*It all makes for easier reading and a
fuller understanding of God's word
in Psalm 24.]*

**Matthew Henry's Commentary on
Psalm 24**

Psalms 24:1-2

Here is, I. God's absolute propriety* in this part
of the creation where our lot is cast, [Psa 24:1](#).

*[* propriety: the state or
quality of conforming to
conventionally accepted*

standards of behavior or morals.

synonyms: decorum, decency, correctness, appropriateness, good manners, courtesy, politeness, rectitude, discretion, gentility, etiquette]

use property and enjoy the fruits of it]

The mines that are lodged in the bowels of it, even the richest, the fruits it produces, all the beasts of the forest and the cattle upon a thousand hills, our lands and houses, and all the improvements that are made of this earth by the skill and industry of man, are all his.

We are not to think that

- the heavens, even the heavens only, are the Lord's, and the numerous and bright inhabitants of the upper world,

and that this earth, being so small and inconsiderable a part of the creation, and at such a distance from the royal palace above, is neglected,

- and that he claims no interest in it.

No, even the earth is his, and this lower world; and, though he has prepared the throne of his glory in the heavens, yet his kingdom rules over all, and even the worms of this earth are not below his cognizance, [*ie; knowledge, awareness, or notice.*] nor from under his dominion.

1. When God gave the earth to the children of men he still reserved to himself the property, and only let it out to them as tenants, or usufructuaries*: *The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.*

*[* usufructuary: one who has been granted by the owner of property the right, usually for a lifetime, to*

These indeed, in the kingdom of grace, are justly looked upon as emptiness; for they are vanity of vanities, nothing to a soul; but, in the kingdom of providence, they are fullness.

The earth is full of God's riches, so is the great and wide sea also. All the parts and regions of the earth are the Lord's, all under his eye, all in his hand: so that, wherever a child of God goes, he may comfort himself with this, that he does not go off his Father's ground.

...wherever a child of God goes,
he may comfort himself with this,
that he does not go off his Father's ground.

That which falls to our share of the earth and its productions is but lent to us; it is the Lord's; what is our own against all the world is not so against his claims.

That which is most remote from us, as that which passes through the paths of the sea, or is hidden in the bottom of it, is the Lord's and he knows where to find it.

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

2. The habitable part of this earth (**Pro 8:31**) is his in a special manner - *the world and those that dwell therein*.

[Proverbs 8

27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, ...

30 Then I was constantly at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence,

31 rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind.]

We ourselves are not our own, our bodies, our souls, are not. *All souls are mine*, says God; for he is the former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits.

He is the former of our bodies
and the Father of our spirits

Our tongues are not our own; they are to be at his service. Even those of the children of men that know him not, nor own *[acknowledge]* their relation to him, are his.

Now this comes in here to show that, though God is graciously pleased to accept the devotions and services of his peculiar chosen people (**Psa 24:3-5**), it is not because he needs them, or can be benefited by them, for the earth is his and all in it, **Exo 19:5; Psa 50:12**.

It is likewise to be applied to the dominion Christ has, as Mediator, over the utmost parts

of the earth, which are given him for his possession: the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand, power over all flesh.

The apostle quotes this scripture twice together in his discourse about things offered to idols, **1Co 10:26, 1Co 10:28**.

1 Cor 10:25-26 “If it be sold in the shambles, *[a butcher's slaughterhouse]* eat it, and ask no questions; *for the earth is the Lord's*;

it is God's good creature, and you have a right to it.

But, if one tell you it was offered to an idol, forbear, *for the earth is the Lord's*, and there is enough besides.” (*1 Cor 10:28a*)

This is a good reason why we should be content with our allotment in this world, and not envy others theirs; *the earth is the Lord's*, and may he not do what he will with his own, and give to some more of it, to others less, as it pleases him?

II. The ground of this propriety.

[propriety: the correct thing to do]

The earth is his by an indisputable title, *for he hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods*, **Psa 24:2**.

It is his; for,

1. He made it, formed it, founded it, and fitted it for the use of man.

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

The matter is his,

- for he made it out of nothing; the form is his, for he made it according to the eternal counsels and ideas of his own mind.

- He made it himself, he made it for himself; so that he is sole, entire, and absolute owner, and none can let* us a title to any part,

*[* let: allow someone to have the use of (a room or property) in return for regular payments; rent]*

but by, from, and under him; see [Psa 89:11](#), [Psa 89:12](#).

2. He made it so as no one else could.

It is the creature of omnipotence, for it is founded upon the seas, upon the floods, a weak and unstable foundation (one would think) to build the earth upon,

[I wonder if MH thought this was literal, modern thought being that the lands are not floating islands, but rather, the seas but ponds upon the earth. Either way, it is His creation and His.]

and yet, if almighty power please, it shall serve to bear the weight of this earth. The waters which at first covered the earth, and rendered it unfit to be a habitation for man, were ordered under it, that the dry land might appear, and so they are as a foundation to it; see [Psa 104:8](#), [Psa 104:9](#).

3. He continues it, he has *established* it, fixed it, so that, though one generation passes and another comes, the earth abides, [Ecc 1:4](#).

[3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?

4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.]

though

one generation passes

and another comes,

the earth abides

[On this green bank, by this soft stream,

We set to-day a votive stone;

That memory may their deed redeem,

When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare,

*To die, and leave their children
free,*

Bid Time and Nature gently spare

*The shaft we raise to them and
thee.*

*(Note: This version is from The
Complete Works of Ralph Waldo
Emerson (1904)*

Concord Hymn - Emerson]

And his providence is a continued creation, **Psa 119:90**. The founding of the earth upon the floods should remind us how slippery and uncertain all earthly things are; their foundation is not only sand, but water; it is therefore our folly to build upon them.

Psalms 24:3-6

3 Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart ...

From this world, and the fulness thereof, the psalmist's meditations rise, of a sudden to the great things of another world, the foundation of which is not on the seas, nor on the floods. The things of this world God has given to the children of men and we are much indebted to his providence for them; but they will not make a portion for us. And therefore,

I. Here is an enquiry after better things, **Psa 24:3**. This earth is God's footstool; but, if we had ever so much of it, we must be here but a while, must shortly go hence, and *Who then shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?* Who shall go to heaven hereafter, and, as an earnest *[deposit, down payment]* of that, shall have communion with God in holy ordinances now?

A soul that knows and considers

its own nature, origin, and immortality, when it has viewed the earth and the fulness thereof,

will sit down unsatisfied;

there is not found among all the creatures a help meet for man,

and therefore

it will think of ascending towards God, towards heaven, will ask,

“What shall I do to rise to that high place, that hill, where the Lord dwells and manifests himself, that I may be acquainted with him, and to abide in that happy holy place where he meets his people and makes them holy and happy?

... to abide

in that happy holy place

where He meets His people

and makes them holy and happy?

What shall I do

that I may be of those whom God owns for his peculiar people

and who are his in another manner than the earth is his and its fullness?"

... in another manner ...

This question is much the same with that, [Psa 15:1](#).

[Ps 15:1 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?]

The hill of Zion on which the temple was built typified the church, both visible and invisible.

When the people attended the ark to its holy place David puts them in mind that these were but patterns of heavenly things, and therefore that by them they should be led to consider the heavenly things themselves.

[↑

That paragraph is worth thinking about.]

II. An answer to this enquiry, in which we have,

1. The properties of God's peculiar people, who shall have communion with him in grace and glory.

(1.) They are such as keep themselves from all the gross acts of sin.

They have *clean hands*; not spotted with the pollutions of the world and the flesh.

None that were ceremonially unclean might enter into the mountain of the temple, which signified that cleanness of conversation which is required in all those that have fellowship with God. The hands lifted up in prayer must be pure hands, no blot of unjust gain cleaving to them, nor anything else that defiles the man and is offensive to the holy God.

[LC Psalm 139:23,24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.]

(2.) They are such as make conscience of being really (that is, of being inwardly) as good as they seem to be outwardly. They have *pure hearts*.

We make nothing of our religion if we do not make heart-work of it.

We make nothing of our religion if we do not make heart-work of it.

It is not enough that our hands be clean before men, but we must also wash our hearts from wickedness, and not allow ourselves in any secret heart-impurities, which are open before the eye of God.

Yet in vain do those pretend to have pure and good hearts whose hands are defiled with the acts of sin.

That is a pure heart

- which is sincere and without guile* in covenanting with God,

[guile : sly or cunning intelligence.

Syn: tricky]

- which is carefully guarded, that the wicked one, the unclean spirit, touch it not,
- which is purified by faith, and conformed to the image and will of God; see [Mat 5:8](#).

(3.) They are such as

- do not set their affections upon the things of this world,
- do not *lift up their souls unto vanity*,
- whose hearts are not carried out inordinately towards
the wealth of this world,

the praise of men,

or the delights of sense,

- who do not choose these things for their portion, nor reach forth after them, because they believe them to be vanity, *[the quality of being worthless or futile]* uncertain and unsatisfying.

(4.) They are such as deal honestly both with God and man.

In their covenant with God, and their contracts with men,

- they have not sworn deceitfully,
- nor broken their promises, violated their engagements,
- nor taken any false oath.

Those that have no regard to the obligations of truth or the honour of God's name are unfit for a place in God's holy hill.

(5.) They are a praying people ([Psa 24:6](#)): *This is the generation of those that seek him.*

In every age there is a remnant of such as these, men of this character, who are *accounted to the Lord for a generation*, [Psa 22:30](#). And they are such as seek God, *that seek they face, O Jacob!*

[1.] They join themselves to God, to seek him, not only in earnest prayer, but in serious endeavours to obtain his favour and keep themselves in his love.

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

Having made it

the summit of their happiness,

they make it

the summit of their ambition

to be accepted of Him, and therefore take care
and pains to approve themselves to Him.

It is to the hill of the Lord that we must ascend,
and, the way being up-hill, we have need to put
forth ourselves to the utmost, as those that
seek diligently.

It is to the hill of the Lord

that we must ascend,

and,

the way being up-hill,

we have need

to put forth ourselves to the utmost,

as those that seek diligently.

[2.] They join themselves to the people of God,
to seek God with them.

[↓ 110 word sentence]

Being brought

into communion with God,

they come

into communion of saints;

- conforming to the patterns of the saints that
have gone before (so some understand this),

they seek God's face,

as Jacob (so some),

who was *therefore* surnamed
Israel,

because he

wrestled with God and prevailed,

sought Him and found Him;

and, associating with the saints of their own
day, they

- shall court the favour of God's church
([Rev 3:9](#)),

- shall be glad of an acquaintance with
God's people ([Zec 8:23](#)),

- shall incorporate themselves with
them,

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary

[*underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC*]

- and, when they *subscribe with their hands to the Lord*, shall *call themselves by the name of Jacob*, [Isa 44:5](#).

[↑ end, 110 word sentence]

As soon as ever Paul was converted he *joined himself to the disciples*, [Act 9:26](#).

[26 When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.]

They shall seek God's face *in Jacob* (so some), that is, in the assemblies of his people. *Thy face, O God of Jacob!* so our margin supplies it, and makes it easy.

As all believers are the spiritual seed of Abraham, so all that strive in prayer are the spiritual seed of Jacob, to whom God never said, *Seek you me in vain*.

2. The privileges of God's peculiar people, [Psa 24:5](#). They shall be made truly and forever happy.

(1.) They shall be blessed:

they shall receive the blessing from the Lord, all the fruits and gifts of God's favour,

according to his promise;

and those whom God blesses are blessed indeed, for it is his prerogative* to command the blessing.

[* prerogative: a right or privilege exclusive to a particular individual or class

(2.) They shall be justified and sanctified.

[justified: declared or made righteous in the sight of God.

Sanctify: set apart as or declare holy; consecrate

Righteousness: (word occurs above and below) the quality of being morally right or justifiable.

Being OK with God.

Syn: goodness, virtue, integrity, worthiness, rectitude, honesty, honor, innocence, blamelessness, guiltlessness, sinlessness, saintliness, purity, nobility, noble-mindedness]

These are the spiritual blessings in heavenly things which they shall receive, even righteousness, the very thing they hunger and thirst after, [Mat 5:6](#).

Righteousness is blessedness,*

[* blessedness: the state of being blessed with divine favor]

and it is from God only that we must expect it, for we have no righteousness of our own.

They shall receive the reward of their righteousness (so some), the *crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give*, [2Ti 4:8](#).

[8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.]

(3.) They shall be saved; for God himself will be the God of their salvation.

Note,

Where God gives righteousness he certainly designs salvation.

Those that are made meet for heaven shall be brought safely to heaven, and then they will find what they have been seeking, to their endless satisfaction.

[Wow! Now, that is good news!]

Psalms 24:7-10

What is spoken once is spoken a second time in these verses; such repetitions are usual in songs, and have much beauty in them. Here is,
1. Entrance once and again demanded *[cool!]* for the King of glory; the doors and gates are to be thrown open, thrown wide open, to give him admission, for behold he stands at the door and knocks, ready to come in.

2. Enquiry* once and again made concerning this mighty prince,

*[* enquiry: an act of asking for information]*

in whose name entrance is demanded: *Who is this King of glory?*

As, when any knock at our door, it is common to ask, *Who is there?*

3. Satisfaction once and again given concerning the royal person that makes the demand: *It is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts*, [Psa 24:8](#), [Psa 24:10](#). Now,

1. This splendid entry here described, it is probable, refers to the solemn bringing in of the ark into the tent David pitched for it or the temple Solomon built for it; for, when David prepared materials for the building of it, it was proper for him to prepare a psalm for the dedication of it. The porters are called upon to open the doors, and they are called *everlasting doors*, because much more durable than the door of the tabernacle, which was but a curtain.

[Remember, the Tabernacle in the desert was a type, a symbol, a foreshadowing of the Reality. This speaks not of the type but of the heart-matter, the living relation between a created living soul and the Creator God, Whose inheritance we are.]

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

They *[the porters, ie, the priests carrying the Ark]* are taught to ask, *Who is this King of glory?*

And those that bore the ark are taught to answer in the language before us, and very fitly, because the ark was a symbol or token of God's presence, [Jos 3:11](#).

the ark
was a symbol or token
of God's presence

Or it *[ie, "This splendid entry here described" which is vs. 7-10]* may be taken as a poetical figure designed to represent the subject more affectingly.

God, in his word and ordinances, is thus to be welcomed by us,

1. With great readiness: the doors and gates must be thrown open to him.

Let the word of the Lord come into the innermost and uppermost place in our souls; and, if we had 600 necks, we should bow them all to the authority of it.

2. With all reverence,

remembering how great a God
he is with whom we have to do,

in all our approaches to him.

II. Doubtless it *[ie, "This splendid entry here described" which is vs. 7-10]* points at Christ, of whom the ark, with the mercy-seat, was a type.

[The ark:

(this is Moses' ark,

*which is the ark of the
Testimony,*

not Noah's ark,

a big barge)

Exodus 25

10 "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; (3' 9" long by 2' 3" wide & tall)"

11 And you shall overlay it with pure gold ...

16 And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

12-15 Rings and poles: Four rings of cast gold were affixed to the corners, 1 (of 2) pole went through the rings - typically envisioned as parallel to the long sides (front and back).

It says, "15 The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it."

This implies (to me, anyway)

- the ark is to be carried not by one person, but by more than one (four? There may be a ref for this) This God-stuff is corporate, not Lone Ranger.

- the poles CAN be removed, (slid out) but they "shall not be". Hmmm. Seems like a reminder

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

- that the Ark comes with carrying instructions - best to heed them

- why would you take the poles out? Because you thought you could display it better? (Take those awkward poles out and stand them up in the corner) - No, leave them in, ready to go at moments notice.

The Mercy Seat was the top of the Ark. It was wood, covered with gold. At each end there was an Angel, facing the other. Their wings swept around forward and up so the wingtips almost met above the center of the top.

The area under their wings was The Mercy Seat, "22 And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony ..."

Christ,
of whom the ark, with the mercy-seat,
was a type

1. We may apply it *[again, vs.7-10]* to the ascension of Christ into heaven and the welcome given to him there. When he had finished his work on earth he ascended *in the clouds of heaven, Dan 7:13, Dan 7:14.*

The gates of heaven must then be opened to him, those doors that may be truly called *everlasting*, which had been shut against us, to keep the way of the tree of life, [Gen 3:24](#).

Our Redeemer found them shut,
but,

having by his blood

made atonement for sin

and gained a title to *enter into the holy place (Heb 9:12),*

as one having authority,

he demanded entrance,

not for himself only, but for us;

for,

as the forerunner,

he has for us

entered

and

opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

The keys not only of hell and death, but of heaven and life, must be put into his hand.

His approach being very magnificent, the angels are brought in asking, *Who is this King of glory?* For angels keep the gates of the New Jerusalem, [Rev 21:12](#).

[12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates ...*

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

* “she” above refers to “the great city, the holy Jerusalem,” stated in verse 10]

*Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,
And I have stained all My robes.]*

When the first-begotten [*Jesus*] was brought into the upper world the angels were to worship him ([Heb 1:6](#));

for he appears in that world as a Lamb that had been slain.”

It is answered*

[6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says:

*[* in v. 8bc: Who is this King of glory?*

“Let all the angels of God worship Him.”]

The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.]

and accordingly, they here ask with wonder, “Who is he? - this that cometh with dyed garments from Bozrah? ([Isa 63:1-3](#)),

that he is *strong and mighty, mighty in battle*, to save his people and subdue his and their enemies.

*[63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This One who is glorious in His apparel,
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—
“I who speak in righteousness,
mighty to save.”*

2. We may apply it [*again, vs. 7-10*] to Christ's entrance into the souls of men by his word and Spirit, that they [*ie, you!*] may be his temples. Christ's presence in them [*ie, you!*] is like that of the ark in the temple; it sanctifies them. *Behold, he stands at the door and knocks, [Rev 3:20](#).*

It is required

that the gates and doors of the heart be opened to him,

2 Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

not only as admission is given to a guest,

*3 “I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one was with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;*

but as possession is delivered to the rightful owner,

after the title has been contested.

Read the Scripture before and as you read this commentary *[underlining is by LC, and ital in [] is always by LC]*

This is the gospel call and demand, that we let Jesus Christ, the King of glory, come into our souls, and welcome him with hosannas, *Blessed is he that cometh.*

That we may do this aright *[correctly]* we are concerned to ask, *Who is this King of glory?* - to acquaint ourselves with him, whom we are to believe in, and to love above all.

[The Philippian jailer asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16)

This "belief" we are supposed to have is not formless, it is not vague mental ascent; it has detail. We are to know the details, we are to believe in a Person Who has distinct likes and dislikes. We are to know Him. We are to know some important things right away in order to believe, and we learn more of Him as we walk with Him through life.]

And the answer is ready: He is *Jehovah*, and will be *Jehovah* our righteousness*, an all-sufficient Saviour to us, if we give him entrance and entertainment.

*[* Jehovah: (the) self Existent or eternal; Jehovah, Jewish national name of God: - Jehovah, the Lord.*

This is the name of God. More modern versions translate it as Yahweh. It occurs 6521 times in the bible and is often seen like this: LORD.]

He is *strong and mighty*, and the *Lord of hosts*; and therefore it is at our peril if we deny him entrance; for he is able to avenge the affront; he can force his way, and can break those in pieces with his iron rod that will not submit to his golden sceptre.

In singing this let our hearts cheerfully* answer to this call,

*[* cheerfully is an important attitude, synonyms are thankfully, happily, gladly]*

as it is in the first words of the next psalm, *Unto thee, O Lord! do I lift up my soul.*