

(How to Understand the KJV Bible) 07 Psalm 24

by Keith Simons

The sermon explores the meaning of Psalm 24, emphasizing God's sovereignty over the earth, the importance of seeking God and having a personal relationship with him, and the description of God coming to his holy place as the King of Glory.

Duration: 21:10

Scripture: Psalm 24:1

Topics: "KJV Bible", "Understanding Scripture", "Seeking God"

Description

Keith Simons explores Psalm 24, emphasizing that while some passages in the Bible may be difficult to understand, the core messages are accessible to all who seek God earnestly. He explains that the earth and everything in it belongs to God, and only those with clean hands and pure hearts can approach His holy place. Simons encourages listeners to reflect on the mysteries within the psalm and to seek a personal relationship with God, who is depicted as the glorious King entering His temple. The sermon highlights the importance of righteousness and the blessings that come from God for those who earnestly seek Him.

Transcript

Welcome, my name is Keith Symons and you're listening to the next in our series of talks on how to understand the King James Version of the Bible. In each of these talks I select a psalm and I go through its words, looking at them in depth and looking at the phrases in depth, so that the psalm takes on a new meaning. The psalm I've chosen today is one with a few difficult passages in it, some things that are mysteries or hard to understand.

And the danger when you come across such a passage is that people get depressed, they start saying, well no one can really understand the Bible or it's all a matter of personal interpretation. Now, thankfully, both those statements are untrue. Yes, there are passages in the Bible that are difficult to understand, but the major passages and the important passages are straightforward to understand.

I've known people who can hardly read or write, but because they care about the Bible and because they've studied it carefully and attended good sermons, they understand it really, really well. And there are no major passages in the Bible that you can't understand at at least a basic level without just a little study. And so don't be put off by the fact that there are mysteries here, there are things that we don't really understand.

Rather, think about them and pray about them and see what God will teach you from this psalm. So our psalm for today is Psalm 24. Psalm 24.

And as usual, I'll be going through it verse by verse. The first verse says, Psalm 24, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. So it says the earth, and that could mean the land, the land of Israel, or it could mean the whole world.

But we're given a clue in the second part of the verse that it's not just talking about Israel, it's talking about the whole world belonging to God. So when it says the earth is the Lord's, it means the whole world belongs to God and the fullness thereof, everything that fullness fills it, everything that fills the earth, all its people, all its precious things, its plants, its animals, they all belong to God, the Lord. And then it repeats the same idea in the second half of the verse, the world and they that dwell therein, in other words, the people that live in it, belong to God.

The people of every nation belong to God. They don't all belong to God to trust in him and serve him, but they belong to God in the sense that he created them, that he is their master and he is their judge and they are responsible to him. And although in the world at the moment we don't see people obeying God and we don't see people serving God, the time will come when this verse is fully brought into force and all the people will serve God because Messiah will be ruling the world.

So when we look at the world, we see the land and we see the seas and we think about the land and we look at how unstable it looks, surrounded on every side by the sea, with its waves and raging so strongly, and yet God has established a firm place for the land. That's the thought in verse two, for he hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods. God has made a place for the land, a place which the seas cannot overcome, a place that the oceans cannot rule over, because God has established his place as a place for they that dwell on the land.

He's established a place for people, a place for people to live, a place for people to be. Yet in that land there is one holy and special place, it is the hill of the Lord. By that David meant Mount Sion, he meant the place where the temple would be built, the place which God had chosen for his house upon earth.

And we have a picture, firstly in this psalm, of the person who goes up to that holy place and then later in the psalm we see that God himself enters that holy place like a conqueror, like a great army captain who's won the battle and in great possessions he is led up to that holy place. But let's first think of the person who has a right to go into God's holy place, the hill of the Lord, the place where the temple stood. Who can ascend, go up to that place? Who has the right to stand in the place which is sacred to God? And David answers his own question in verse four.

He says, well you can't be someone who's doing evil things, you can't be someone who has turned against God, who hates God. If you're going to be in God's holy place, if you're going to be present in the place where God is, you have to, he that hath clean hands. You have to have clean hands.

In other words, if you've killed someone you might say you have bloody hands. If you are not guilty of wrong actions, that's the person who has clean hands. His actions are right and good.

But more than clean hands are needed, because there's also a need for a pure heart. Deep within him he's got to have the right attitudes. What are the right attitudes? Pure attitudes.

Attitudes that don't mix good thoughts and evil thoughts. He's got to have right thoughts and only right thoughts. This person hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.

Vanity means something that has no worth, something that has no value. The Bible often describes false gods as vanity, because they have no value. And the person's soul is his inner life.

This person hasn't given his inner life over to false gods, to wrong ideas, to foolish thoughts, to things that have no value, because his soul, his inner life, belongs to God. Nor has this person sworn deceitfully. Sworn, to swear, means to promise.

Deceitfully means a lie. This person hasn't made promises that are lies. Now that's the person, David says, who receives a blessing from the Lord.

That person whose inner thoughts and whose outer actions are right, is the person who God shows his kindness to. His blessing means the kindness of God, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. How does this person get to this stage, where he has clean hands and a pure heart, right actions and right attitudes? It's not come from himself, but from God.

God has saved him. That's what salvation means. God has rescued him.

God has given him a right relationship with himself. That's what righteousness means. So if this person has received righteousness from the God of his salvation, God has rescued him and given this person a right relationship with him.

Perhaps this person was far from God. Perhaps this person wasn't obeying God and wasn't serving God, but God rescued him and turned his life around. God gave him a right relationship with himself so that he could do what was right, so that he could think what was right, so that he wouldn't turn away to empty and false ideas and wrong gods, so that he wouldn't speak lies, and so that he would carry out his promises.

This is the kind of person who is God's person. This is the kind of person who has the right to go up to God's holy place and to serve him, the true and living God, because God is also a pure and holy God. God does what is right.

God does what is good. There is nothing evil in him and so the person who approaches him must have nothing evil in him as well. That's because that person either never did any evil thing, if there be such a person, or because God has forgiven that person's evil things.

So, verse 6, this, what we've just described, is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face. It's such people who are God's people. A generation means an age, an age of people.

The people who God has reborn, the people who God has saved and given his righteousness to, they are the ones that seek God. And they don't just seek God in the sense of vaguely wanting to know God. No, they want a personal relationship with God.

This is the generation of them that seek thy face. They want the day to come when they will be in front of God, when they will look upon God. Moses could only see the back of God as God went away from him, yet that was a holy and wonderful experience for Moses.

Yet the person who God has forgiven, the person who God has saved and given a right relationship with, he is seeking the face of God. He wants to see God and to speak with God face to face. This is a

generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.

There's our first mystery. O Jacob. Why does it say O Jacob? Well, it's talking to someone called Jacob, and we know that because of the word O, that shows that you're addressing Jacob.

And we've said, this is the generation of them that seek thy face, your face, O Jacob. So we can see that this person is seeking God, but why is God called Jacob? Jacob is the name of God's people. And one answer which some people have tried is to say, well, the generation is called Jacob because like Jacob, they sought God.

Or maybe it's God who's humbled himself and accepted the title of Jacob to show these people his love and his care for them. Or maybe it has some other meaning. As I said, it's a mystery.

We don't know, but that doesn't mean that we can't understand the meaning of the psalm. Then one special word appears in the psalm just by itself, *selah*. It means probably pause, pause and praise God, pause and think how good God is.

It may have shown a musical interlude. It may have just been a word of praise like hallelujah or something like that. But at that point, it's good just to pause for a moment.

And as you read a psalm, just to think about what these words mean and how great and wonderful these words are. And then we move on to the second part of the psalm. The second part of the psalm, we've seen the people who can go up to God's holy place, but now God himself is going up to his holy place.

And we think this is probably a reference to how the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred box that contained the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments on them, how that box was brought by David from Kiriath Jerim up to the place where the temple of God would in the future stand. And we think that this passage describes the opening of the gates of Jerusalem as that sacred box arrived there. But it has a deeper meaning because it's not just a box that's arriving there, however sacred, but God is coming as the king, the glorious king, to take that place for himself, the hill of the Lord, the holy place for God.

And he's coming like a hero, like a champion, like someone who's just won a great battle. And this is like a celebration for that. So it begins verse 7, lift up your heads O ye gates.

And we've just had the mystery of Jacob and immediately we're on to another mystery. Why does it say lift up your heads O ye gates? Well the expression O ye gates tells us clearly that this is speaking to the gates which have to open up so that, the end of the verse, the king of glory, God, shall come in. So why does it say lift up your heads? Well some people have thought that it was the kind of gate which would be lifted up on mopes, so that it would literally lift up so that someone, or in this case God, would go in.

Now you're going to have to be an archaeologist to work out whether such gates existed at the time of the Bible. I think probably not. I think perhaps this is describing the gates as if they're people.

You see the gates of a city were important and honourable and beautiful. They were impressive, they were extremely impressive. And in the same way people, however impressive they are, have to give respect to their ruler.

And when their ruler goes past them in an impressive procession, what do they do, the people? They lift up their heads. And so I think maybe this is describing the gates as if they're people. They lift up their

heads, they look up to see how impressive and how wonderful the procession is.

And so the passage continues. And be ye lift up ye everlasting doors. It's saying to the everlasting doors, to these doors which are strong and powerful forever, because that's why they're called everlasting doors, be lifted up.

And what happens when these gates are lifted up, when they're opened? Then the King of Glory shall come in. Glory means wonder and splendour and majesty and beauty. So we're saying the beautiful, wonderful, powerful, glorious King is coming through those gates into Jerusalem to go up to his holy hill, to go up to his house, his sacred place.

And someone asks the question, verse 8, who is this King of Glory? Who is such a wonderful and glorious and majestic King? And the answer comes back, it's the Lord, the name of God. The Lord who is strong and mighty, the Lord who is mighty in battle, the Lord who's defeated his enemies and now comes to take possession of his temple, his holy place. That's a glorious King.

And then the passage, maybe for dramatic effect, repeats the same thing. Again the announcement is made, lift up your heads O ye gates, even lift them up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. And the question is again asked, who is this King of Glory? Who is this glorious and wonderful King? And the reply is just slightly different here.

The reply is the Lord of Hosts. Hosts means armies, the armies of Israel on earth, the armies of God, the angels in heaven, which form a mighty and glorious and powerful army. The Lord is the King of all these, he therefore is the King of Glory, the glorious King.

And once again the psalmist urges us to pause and to think with the final sellah. In a moment or two I'll read the whole psalm for you, but first let me give you my email address, 333 at gmail, sorry, 333kjb at gmail.com. I'd love you to write to me, the address again, this time correctly, is 333kjb at gmail.com. Do join us again next time when we'll be looking at another psalm, but here is a whole of psalm 24 for you. A psalm of David.

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is a generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts.

He is the King of glory. Salaam.

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