

## ECF 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Psalm 24 Welcome the King of Glory

**Video: God in A Box!** I wonder if we ever try to keep God in a box? Do we try and confine God to parts of our lives? Do we try to keep him out of sight when we want to be in control, when we want to do our own thing, and just bring him out when we think that we need him to sort out a problem or help us when we're in trouble?

Is that possible? Will God allow us to do this? And if he did, would that be enough for us? Do we just need a little bit of God now and again in our lives?

Well Psalm 24 disagrees. It tells us that if we want God to be in our lives, if we want to experience the blessing that only he can give, then we need to welcome him as the King of glory, the King over everything. Psalm 24:

*"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;*

*<sup>2</sup>for he founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the waters.*

*<sup>3</sup>Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?*

*Who may stand in his holy place?*

*<sup>4</sup>He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to an idol  
or swear by what is false.*

*<sup>5</sup>He will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God his Saviour.*

*<sup>6</sup>Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.*

*Selah*

*<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.*

*<sup>8</sup>Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
the Lord mighty in battle.*

*<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.*

*<sup>10</sup>Who is he, this King of glory?*

*The Lord Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.*

*Selah."*

### 1. Welcome the King

Tradition indicates that this psalm was written for the occasion of David bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. The Ark was an ornate, gold-covered wooden box that was placed by Moses inside the tabernacle, in the innermost room, the Holy of Holies. It symbolised the presence of God among his people.

2 Samuel 6 describes how David brought the Ark into Jerusalem, the capital city of the people of God and into the tent that he had prepared for it. It was an amazing procession with sacrifices, singing and dancing. And so some people suggest that this is why David wrote:

*"Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in." Psalm 24:7*

And so, although we can't be sure, this psalm is perhaps a poetic call to the gates and doors of Jerusalem to open wide for the triumphant entry of the symbol of God's presence. It is a call to the people to welcome God into the very heart of their lives.

#### a) He Came

However, like many of the psalms, there is a greater fulfilment of this in Jesus. About 1000 years after the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Jerusalem, Jesus rode a donkey into the very same city. Matthew recorded that this fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy: *"Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"* Matthew 21:4–5

And to some extent the disciples and others there that day recognised what was happening. Many of them didn't

understand Jesus' true identity, but they believed that Jesus was the promised King and so they threw their cloaks on the ground for Jesus to ride over and carried palm branches in celebration. And they shouted: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Matthew 21:9

### b) He is Coming Again

But many of the people in Jerusalem that day did not recognise or accept Jesus as the coming King of glory. They rejected him, accused him, arrested him and nailed him to a cross. They did not welcome him as this psalm says.

But one day, Jesus is going to come back again, and this time everyone will see him. Jesus said about all the nations of the earth, that: "They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30

And so when Jesus comes back again, every knee will ultimately have to bow and every tongue ultimately will have to confess that Jesus Christ is the King of glory, that he is the Lord.

### c) He wants to Come to Us

But I don't think this psalm just looks back at the events of history or forward to that amazing event sometimes in the future. I think that it also calls to us today to:

"Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in." Psalm 24:7

This psalm challenges us to welcome the King of glory today. It confronts us with the question: Are we going to open wide the gates of our lives, our families, our church and allow Jesus to come in?

And if we are going to say yes to this, then we need to know who we're allowing into our lives and what he comes in to do. And so this psalm twice asks the question:

"Who is this King of glory?...  
Who is he, this King of glory?" Psalm 24:8, 10

Who is the one who wants to come into our lives? What is he like? What can he do? What does he demand of us? What role does he come to take in our lives? Well, that's what David in this psalm answers for us.

## 2. He Owns Everything

First of all he says: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Psalm 24:1 This King of glory owns everything. He is the rightful owner of this whole earth. Every nation belongs to him. Every resource is rightfully his – every field, every animal, every property, every business, every investment, every possession, every person.

That means that he is Sovereign over it all. If he owns everything in this world, then he deserves to be in charge of it all, including us!

### a) Including Us

Of course this is unacceptable to most people today. Our world today teaches us to say, "It's my life and I'll do what I want with it!" I'll be what I want to be, do what I feel like doing, believe what I think is right – and nobody has the right to tell me that I'm wrong.

But Jesus claims that right. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

That means if we are going to welcome him into our lives, then we need to welcome him as nothing less than the Lord of all. Jesus won't come into our lives as a hobby, an advisor, a part-time assistant, or as an emergency service just for times of crisis. He won't be honoured by just one day a week, or 10% of our income, or a couple of minutes of quiet time a day or any other kind of half-hearted religious observance. He will only come as our King.

## 3. He Made Everything

But why is that? What gives Jesus this right to claim ownership of our whole lives?

Recently, there have been a number of cases in the courts over claims of ownership. For example, earlier this year Ed Sheeran was sued for \$100 million dollars over his 2014 hit song, "Thinking Out Loud" by the copyright owners for Marvin Gaye.

They claimed that Sheeran copied “the melody, rhythms, harmonies, drums, bass line, backing chorus, tempo, syncopation and looping” of one of Gaye’s songs from 1973. And their claim is that because he plagiarised it, he had no right to use it because the one who creates the music is the one who has the right of ownership.

David said that the Lord has the right of ownership over this world, “For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” Psalm 24:2 The King of glory owns everything, because the King of glory made everything.

#### a) For His Glory

I think this is why so many people are desperate to accept the theory of evolution and the Big Bang to explain our existence. If they can claim that this world is simply the result of mindless natural processes over billions of years, then it allows them to reject the reality of a Creator, which means that there is nobody to answer to, nobody to live for, nobody to obey.

But Paul about Jesus, that: “By him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” Colossians 1:16

This world was created by Jesus and for Jesus, to bring pleasure to him and to reveal and magnify his glory. So he is the rightful owner of this universe – and so he has the right to claim lordship over our lives, and call us to worship him, as he deserves.

#### 4. He is Holy

But this doesn’t mean that we can worship him any old way. In Psalm 24:3, David asked: “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?”

If this psalm was written when the Ark was brought into Jerusalem, then this would be a natural question. Who can climb up mount Zion to the sanctuary to approach the Lord? Who can stand in that holy place and worship the Lord?

And this is still a crucial question for us today, because many people talk about God’s presence as if it is no big deal. They expect that God would never prevent someone from coming to him, that he would not impose any restrictions on them. Sure, God is a God of love, and so he will accept everyone into his presence, wouldn’t he?

#### a) Restricted Access

But David disagreed. He said that access to God’s presence is restricted. It is limited to a select group of people.

##### i) Clean

First of all, it is limited to “He who has clean hands and a pure heart.” Psalm 24:4 If we want to come into the presence of the Lord, then we need to be outwardly and inwardly clean. Our actions and our attitudes must be uncontaminated by anything corrupt, by any sin.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Matthew 5:8

##### ii) Committed

Secondly, God’s presence is only accessible to the person “Who does not lift up his soul to an idol.” Psalm 24:4

If we want to approach the Lord, we need to be totally committed to him. We must not have placed anything in his place in our lives – no statue of gold or stone, no person, possession, ambition or right.

Jesus said that the first and greatest command is that we <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37

##### iii) Correct

And thirdly, God’s presence is only accessible to the person “who does not... swear by what is false.” Psalm 24:4 If we want to approach the Lord, we need to be totally correct, totally committed to truth. Jesus said that “God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24

So we can’t just come to God any old way. We can’t just wander up to him, no matter what our lives are like. Only those who are clean, committed and correct, can stand in his presence.

#### b) Because of Who God Is

This is not because God has imposed arbitrary conditions to coming into his presence. Rather this is because of who he is. Peter wrote: [“Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.””](#) 1 Peter 1:15–16

The Lord is a holy God, separate from anything impure, and so those who come to him, who connect with him and are in relationship with him, must also be holy. If we are going to be accepted into the presence of the Holy One, then we need to be clean, committed and correct right at the heart of our being.

### 5. He is Gracious

But that’s a problem, because on our own, none of us are like that. None of us are holy and set apart from sin. As Romans 3:10 says that [“There is no-one righteous, not even one.”](#)

On our own, none of us have a totally pure heart. Our actions are always from mixed motives. Our loyalties are divided. At times we’ve been devoted to God’s truth, but too often we’ve followed this world and our own desires. Our lives are contaminated with sin. If it was up to us, then none of us would have the right to come into God’s presence.

But the King of Glory is not just holy, he is also gracious. [“He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Saviour.”](#) Psalm 24:5

#### a) In Saving Sinners

This is the good news of the gospel. Jesus came into this world to be our Saviour. On the cross, [“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”](#) 2 Corinthians 5:21

And so those who come to Jesus with the humility to repent of their sin and put their faith in him, will be blessed. They will be vindicated. They will be declared righteous before a holy God. And so the King of glory will be able to welcome us into his presence, if we first of all welcome him into our lives as our Saviour!

### 6. He is Victorious

And if we do, then we can rejoice in all the blessings of his victory. David concluded this psalm with the final answer as to who the King of glory is:

[“The Lord strong and mighty,](#)

[the Lord mighty in battle...](#)

[The Lord Almighty—](#)

[he is the King of glory.”](#) Psalm 24:8, 10

David had experienced this reality in many battles. The King of glory had fought for him and given him the victory over his enemies. He could rejoice that his God was victorious over all the forces of evil.

#### a) On the Cross

But today we celebrate a different kind of victory. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, he didn’t look strong and mighty. When he was arrested, tried, flogged and nailed to a cross he didn’t look mighty in battle. Hanging there on the cross in weakness, agony and shame, he did not appear to be the Lord of angel armies.

And yet, this was not a defeat, but the most glorious of victories. Paul wrote in Colossians 2:13-15: [“He forgave us all our sins,<sup>14</sup> having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.<sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”](#)

Through the weakness and shame of the cross, Jesus once and for all defeated the forces of darkness, broke the power of sin and death and set free forever everyone who trusts in him!

This victory was revealed when he rose from the grave and one day it will be declared to this world, when he returns. But today, we can enter into that victory. If we welcome Jesus into our lives as our Saviour and Lord, then he will bring us into his victory over sin and death.

And so even although we will go through times of suffering and struggle, we can rejoice that [“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”](#) Romans 8:37, and we can rest in the security and certainty that nothing and no-one can ever separate us from his love!

## Conclusion

So this is who the Lord is and who he wants to be in our lives. He is our King, our Creator, the One who is Holy and separate from sin, who loved us so much that he died on the cross to be our Saviour to rescue us from sin and death and hell and bring us to himself.

So let's not try and put God in a box and confine him to a tiny part of our lives. Instead, let us welcome him into our lives to be everything that he is and wants to be for us. Let us open up the gates of our hearts, that the King of glory may come in.

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