

Psalm 24

A Psalm of David.

The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas And established it upon the rivers. Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the LORD And righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face—even Jacob. Selah. Lift up your heads, O gates, And be lifted up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift them up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah.

Who is the King of glory? He is our God, the Creator and Owner of creation, victorious in battle, Who holds all of creation in His hands. He is in control, and He is on our side.

The people of David's day, however, did not always think this way. To them, even to many Israelites, the gods of the nations were real and a force to be reckoned with. Yam, in Hebrew, Yom, literally meaning the sea, or Yam-Nahar, the sea and the rivers, according to the surrounding nations, was the god of the sea and the rivers or waters, sometimes referred to as the depths, which was also his home. He was closely related to, and even represented by a snake, the one who churns the seas. According to this myth Yam is the son of the main god of the pantheon and very powerful, and with his brother, Mot, or death, were thought to be in control of all forms of chaotic events.

David, however, starts this Psalm, stating quite the opposite, “*the earth is the Lord's*” – it belongs to Yahweh – together with “*all it contains*,” and not to the gods of the nations. It is not controlled by their tantrums and emotions. All of this, “*the world, (as well as) those who dwell in it*” belong to God. He has the final say, and not the gods of the nations. This God is worthy of all our worship, which is exactly the point of this Psalm – it worships God .

Why does “*the earth... (and) all it contains*” belong to God? The answer is clear (**verse 2**). “*He has founded it upon the seas (Yom), And established it upon the rivers (Nahar).*” When the ancient Israelites heard that God “founded” the earth “*upon the seas and established it upon the rivers,*” it told them that God battled and conquered Yom, and brought order to the chaos (symbolism often found in Biblical creation stories).

Chaos is not greater than God, and should neither be feared above God, for God rules over and above it. God was not phased by these so-called strong powers, but He overpowered and subdued it. He took control of chaos, brought order and dominated its power. He is the King of Glory, the Creator of the earth, the Victor over the powers, the One to whom all must bow and to whom it all belongs .

When the Psalmist calls the “*ancient gates*” to “*lift their heads*” (**verses 7-9**), so “*that the King of glory may come in,*” he is referring to no other than our God, the Creator, referred to earlier.

Who is this King of glory? He is (**verse 8**) “*The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.*” He (**verse 10**) is also “*the Lord of hosts,*” the Lord of the heavenly armies of angels. He is mighty in battle, firstly, because David often experienced God physically intervening on his behalf in battle. More important, though, He is mighty in battle, because in the ancient mind creation is a battle won against the powers of chaos. The term, the Lord of hosts, has much the same meaning as the Lord, mighty in battle. He is the warrior God, victorious in battle, although it also refers to Him as the ruler over all the earth (**Zechariah 14:9; Isaiah 37:16**), with the implication that all the earth will have to bow down to- and worship Him.

Let's think for a moment of this god of the nations mentioned earlier, Yom. He brings chaos, is represented by a snake, lives in the deep, and his brother is death. It kind of reminds me of Satan, doesn't it! Satan, although he still has a big bark, he has been conquered and his bite has been removed.

Although to some extent this battle between God and Satan has been raging all along, with Jesus' birth it went to a new level (**Revelations 12**). Jesus also took this battle to its culmination on the cross, where He gave Satan his final blow, as has been proven by His resurrection. Paul says (**Colossians 2:15**), "*He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him (Jesus).*" Disarming the rulers and making a public display of them is exactly what a victorious king did to the defeated enemy after a battle at that time, and it is what Jesus did to Satan. This He did by (**verse 14**) cancelling "*out the certificate of debt,*" by nailing it to the cross. Even though this battle will only be finalised at the final judgement when Satan and his followers will be thrown in the pit of fire (**Revelations 20:1-15**), this victory is real and it belongs to God. Our God is indeed "*strong and mighty... in battle.*" In Jesus He conquered our biggest enemy, Satan. He is indeed the King of glory.

One more remark is necessary at this point. "*The generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face*" (**verse 6**) are the benefactors of this battle. That is the church. They are the ones who "*shall receive a blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.*" The Coronavirus is not our biggest problem, even in this time, but our sin, and that is why we need this "*righteousness from God of his salvation.*" Jesus removing our sin, giving us righteousness before God is what brings us in the right relationship with Him, and when we are in the right relationship with God, He is on our side and He fights our battles for us. This does not mean that nothing bad will happen to us, but right there within that bad happening to us, God is with us. What is more, He is in control of the situation, has never lost control, and neither will ever lose control. He keeps our hand, gives us strength, and leads us right through the situation. Yes, even if the situation might be death (**Psalm 23:4**), He takes us safely through it. When everything seems to go wrong and we feel so out of control, we can rest assured our God remains in control. Even though at times it may feel as if Satan has taken over, He is the conquered enemy and is on a short leash, and even he can only do what our victorious God allows him.

Who is the King of glory? He is our God, the Creator and Owner of creation, victorious in battle, Who holds all of creation in His hands. He is in control, and He is on our side.

Extra Notes:

It recognises God for who He really is and proclaims that.

Here the author continues to say who may worship God in His temple. Being the God of order, only those whose lives are in order (**verses 3-4**) may come into His presence. Of course every knee will bow and every tongue will confess, but that will not be genuine, from the heart of worship, and therefore also not truly acceptable to God, but my focus today is not on the worshippers mentioned in this Psalm, but on the God being worshipped and its implication for the worshippers.

In this immediate context the ancient gates refer to the gates of the temple, shall we call it His worldly "home," which is also the place where He is worshipped. These gates need to lift their heads, they need to open, so that God, the King of glory, can come in and take His rightful place.

Of course the true worshippers never thought of God as being contained to the temple. Not even the highest heaven, Solomon admits (**1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; 6:18**), can contain Him. When the Psalmist refers to ancient gates, he actually uses the words "eternal gates," and we realise that heaven is where God actually resides, and there the heavenly hosts eternally and continuously worship Him (**Revelations 4-5**).

Of course God does not need the physical gates of the temple to be opened to be able to come in, but He is a gentleman and we would want Him to feel welcome in the temple. The temple, for the believer (**1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19**), of course, is more than the physical building. It is our bodies or ourselves, and we need to let Him feel welcome in our lives, which we also do through the way we live and worship.

Although, to our understanding, Satan has long ago, immediately after his rebellion, been thrown out of heaven, and in that sense has been conquered by God, the battle for man's salvation continued, and it was that battle that was finalised by Jesus' death on the cross, and will be given the final blow when he will be thrown into hell together with all his followers.