

Shoes Off

Psalm 24:1-6

Cross Reference Psalm 15***

I. Whose House vs. 1-2

- a. Earth
 - i. All it Contains
 - ii. The World
 - 1. Those who dwell in it.
 - 2. Thus is asserted the universal ownership of Yahweh, in accordance with the post-exilic conception that Yahweh is the universal God and the only God for the whole earth. His ownership is based upon the fact that He had created them
 - 3. affirmation of the Lord's dominion over the created world and its inhabitants; that dominion is based upon the fact that God himself "fixed" and "established" the world),
- b. Founded
 - i. Upon the Seas - depicts forcefully the Lord's creation of an ordered world, "upon" seas and rivers, symbolizing the subdued forces of chaos.
- c. Established
 - i. Upon the Rivers

II. Who's There vs. 3-4

- a. Who
 - i. Ascend Psalm 15:1
 - 1. Hill of the Lord- Mountain of God -Jerusalem – Psalm 2:6
 - 2. In the original liturgical significance of this passage, a ritual was enacted which was the necessary precursor to participation in worship. The worshipers, or pilgrims, were approaching "the mountain of the Lord"; that mountain, with its temple, was the earthly symbol of the kingship established by God in his creative acts.
 - ii. Stand
 - 1. Holy Place Psalm 65:4
 - 2. With this stanza compare Psalm 15, and the comments there. To *ascend* and *stand* presents a fine picture of worship, balancing the other main expression, to 'bow down'. It is to make a deliberate quest (cf. Mark 9:2), to mount to a vantage-point (cf. Gen. 13:14ff.;

19:27f.), to converge on it with other seekers (Isa. 2:2f.), and finally to stand before the throne (Rev. 7:9).

b. He

i. Clean Hands Psalm 26:6

1. Exodus 3 Burning Bush

ii. Pure Heart Psalm 51:10 Matthew 5:8

1. An innocent man, as 10:8; 15:5. This one is still further defined as *pure of mind*. He is characterized by internal innocence, cleanness, and purity. This has been weakened in the ancient texts by the insertion of “hands” after “clean,” which makes it refer to action,
2. The qualifications for worship are elaborated in moral terms, rather than ritual terms. The worshiper must have “innocent hands and a pure heart”; that is, he must have maintained moral integrity with respect to both actions and thoughts. The idiom “raised the mind” (v 4b) implies an attitude of adoration and worship; the potential worshiper must not have been so bound to falsity, or vanity, as to have been a worshiper of such emptiness. And he must not have “sworn deceitfully”—viz. undertaken a solemn oath with no intention of fulfilling it. The qualifications given here are only a partial list; a much fuller list of moral prerequisites is provided in Ps 15.

iii. Not Lifted Falsehood

1. Sworn Deceitfully

- a. in desire, cf. 25:1; 86:4; 143:8.—*to a lie*], falsehood, in accordance with 12:3; 41:7; 144:8, 11. This is an internal desire, harmonious with the previous purity of mind

III. What Goes Out vs. 5-6

a. Blessing from the Lord

b. Righteousness

- i. *Vindication* is lit. ‘righteousness’, and is here akin to justification, the judge’s pronouncement in favour of one’s claim or plea. Whatever is functioning as it should is ‘righteous’: in court, the man in the right
- ii. God of his Salvation

c. Generations- But the context makes it evident that these are not strangers seeking Jacob, but Israel resorting to his God

i. Seek

ii. Seek Your Face

1. Even Jacob
2. The choir without claims the right of entrance in a couplet responding to the demand as to character, by stating the privilege belonging by inheritance to the seed of Jacob. They are not

strangers who seek access to Yahweh, but His own people.—*This is a generation*], a class of men whose characteristic it is, that they *resort to Him seek His face*]. The express continual resort to the sacred place for worship

Word Studies

Founded – Established

Established – to set up

Ascend

Hill of the Lord – Mountain of God

Holy Place

Clean Hands

Pure Heart with reference to moral integrity¹

Falsehood

Sworn Deceitfully

Blessing

Seek

¹ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed., vol. 19, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004), 210.

Commentary Studies

The most notable such theme is the worship of God as King. The opening verses (vv 1–2), referring to creation, establish the foundation of God’s kingship in creation and the subjugation of the waters of chaos. The second part of the psalm specifies the conditions to be met by those who would worship the God of creation. The third part celebrates the kingship of God in military language, having associations with the Ark of the Covenant, which in turn symbolized God’s victorious presence in battle in early Israel

Comment

The God of Creation (24:1–2). The hymn begins with an affirmation of the Lord’s dominion over the created world and its inhabitants; that dominion is based upon the fact that God himself “fixed” and “established” the world. At first sight, it appears as if the language of v 2 reflects primitive cosmology: the world, like a floating saucer, is anchored “upon the seas.” Yet the language is more profound and contains within it a transformation of Canaanite (Ugaritic) cosmogony. *Yam* (literally, “Sea”), who is also called *Nahar* (literally, “River”), represented a threat to order in Canaanite mythology; the conquest of Yam by Baal represented the subjugation of chaotic forces and the establishment of Baal’s kingship. The Hebrew poet, using the terms *yam* and *nahar* in a demythologized and depersonified sense (ימים, נהרות, v 2), depicts forcefully the Lord’s creation of an ordered world, “upon” seas and rivers, symbolizing the subdued forces of chaos. (On other passages employing similar transformation of Ugaritic-Canaanite mythological language, see Craigie, *Tynd²B* 22 [1971] 3–31 and *Semitics* 4 [1974] 10–21.) The symbolism of the language is significant: just as in the underlying Ugaritic myth, the conquest of *Yam* culminated in kingship, so too the Lord’s creative work, as described here, is linked with kingship in vv 7–10.

The Worship of the Lord (24:3–6). In the original liturgical significance of this passage, a ritual was enacted which was the necessary precursor to participation in worship. The worshipers, or pilgrims, were approaching “the mountain of the Lord”; that mountain, with its temple, was the earthly symbol of the kingship established by God in his creative acts. They ask a question, prior to climbing Mount Zion: “Who shall ascend ...?” The question is significant in terms of the creation theme of the opening verses. In those verses, the poetic motifs are those of *order* and *chaos*; the Lord established *order* (the created world) by virtue of the subjugation of *chaos* (“seas,” “rivers”). But now, in the context of worship, the motifs of order and chaos are transformed into moral concepts, *good* and *evil*. The place symbolizing God’s creation and order

²*TyndB Tyndale Bulletin*

is a “holy place” (v 3b); order is good. Hence the question—who may ascend to such a place? The answer given to the pilgrims, pronounced by a priest, specified that only the *good* could ascend to the *holy place*. The qualifications for worship are elaborated in moral terms, rather than ritual terms. The worshiper must have “innocent hands and a pure heart”; that is, he must have maintained moral integrity with respect to both actions and thoughts. The idiom “raised the mind” (v 4b) implies an attitude of adoration and worship; the potential worshiper must not have been so bound to falsity, or vanity, as to have been a worshiper of such emptiness. And he must not have “sworn deceitfully”—viz. undertaken a solemn oath with no intention of fulfilling it. The qualifications given here are only a partial list; a much fuller list of moral prerequisites is provided in Ps 15. Persons of such moral integrity would receive “blessing” and “righteousness” from God (v 5); in context, the terms refer to both the practice and consequence of participating in the worship of God in his place.

After the priest had declared the qualification for ascending to the temple for worship, the pilgrims—or their representative—declare their worthiness so to worship (v 6). The declaration is not one of absolute moral integrity, for no person could make such a claim; it is a declaration rather that the potential worshipers are aware of the implications of their desire to worship—they must be innocent. They are described, in the declaration, as those that “consult” God and “seek” his “face”; they are prepared in the sense that the desire to worship God has become an integral part of their lives, providing direction and focus. Though they lacked absolute righteousness, they desired it; in part, they would receive it as a consequence of worship.³

To Yahweh belongs]. He is the possessor and owner, cf⁴. 89:12.—*the earth and its fulness*], all that fills it, its contents, its creatures.—*the world*], with the special signification that it is habitable and accordingly associated with it are *those that dwell therein*], its inhabitants. Thus is asserted the universal ownership of Yahweh, in accordance with the post-exilic conception that Yahweh is the universal God and the only God for the whole earth. His ownership is based upon the fact that He had created them⁵

³ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed., vol. 19, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004), 212–213.

⁴cf. confer, compare.

⁵ Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1906–1907), 214–215.

is the response of the choir within, in two syn⁶. couplets, the first giving the characteristics of the one who might be admitted to Yahweh's presence. These are two in number.—**4.** *One clean*]. An innocent man, as 10:8; 15:5. This one is still further defined as *pure of mind*. He is characterized by internal innocence, cleanness, and purity. This has been weakened in the ancient texts by the insertion of "hands" after "clean," which makes it refer to action, giving two characteristics and making the line into a tetrameter.—*Who hath not lifted up his soul*], in desire, cf⁷. 25:1; 86:4; 143:8.—*to a lie*], falsehood, in accordance with 12:3; 41:7; 144:8, 11. This is an internal desire, harmonious with the previous purity of mind. This explanation is favoured not only by the parallel. of the previous line, but also by the subsequent line, ⁸, and Vrss⁹.—*and hath not sworn to deceit*]. This was doubtless an explanatory gloss; but it changes the tetrastich into a pentastich, and so destroys the symmetry of the Ps.—**5.** The second couplet sets forth the benefits to be derived from Yahweh in His house.—*He shall bear away*], take with him, when he departs from the temple.—*a blessing*], suited to the pure in mind, |¹⁰| *righteousness*, suited to the sincere desire. This latter is not in the sense of alms, as ¹¹, a meaning not known to OT¹².; or in the sense of that which is ethically right, which could hardly be bestowed upon him; but in the meaning urged by the phr¹³. *God of his salvation*, saving righteousness, righteousness of vindication, as usual, Pss. 5:9; 22:32; 36:11 ¹⁴+ and Is. ²; 45:8; 46:12; 5:13 ¹⁵+.—**6.** The choir without claims the right of entrance in a couplet responding to the demand as to character, by stating the privilege belonging by inheritance to the seed of Jacob. They are not strangers who seek access to Yahweh, but His own people.—*This is a generation*], a class of men whose characteristic it is, that they *resort to Him* |¹⁶| *seek His face*]. The ptcs¹⁷. express continual resort to the sacred place for worship. ¹⁸ has "Thy face," which gives an abrupt change of person and makes it difficult to explain the context. "O Jacob," PBV¹⁹. is an adaptation to ²⁰ of some texts of ²¹ which have "face of Jacob." But the context makes it evident that these are not strangers

⁶syn. synonymous.

⁷cf. confer, compare.

⁸☞ Hebrew consonantal text.

⁹Vrss. Versions, usually ancient.

¹⁰|| parallel, of words or clauses chiefly synonymous.

¹¹☞ Greek Septuagint Version.

¹²OT. The Old Testament.

¹³phr. phrase.

¹⁴+ plus denotes that other passages might be cited.

¹⁵+ plus denotes that other passages might be cited.

¹⁶|| parallel, of words or clauses chiefly synonymous.

¹⁷ptcs. participle.

¹⁸☞ Hebrew consonantal text.

¹⁹PBV. Version of the Book of Common Prayer.

²⁰☞ Hebrew consonantal text.

²¹☞ Latin Version of Jerome.

seeking Jacob, but Israel resorting to his God. “Thy face, O God of Jacob,” RV²²., adapts ²³ to ²⁴, which gives “the face of the God of Jacob,” but the insertion of “God” looks like an interpretation and it leaves the subj²⁵. out of the parall²⁶. The subj²⁷., syn²⁸. with generation, is exceedingly forcible in the climax if it is defined as Jacob, with all the historic rights to the covenanted promises contained in the name. Inasmuch as the suffix “they” is not in ²⁹, ³⁰, ³¹, it is an interpreter’s addition. It is easy to correct the text after the parall³². and read “His face,” and to regard the couplet as inclusive, “generation” beginning and “Jacob” closing it.³³

24:3–6. The All-Holy

With this stanza compare Psalm 15, and the comments there. To *ascend* and *stand* presents a fine picture of worship, balancing the other main expression, to ‘bow down’. It is to make a deliberate quest (cf. Mark 9:2), to mount to a vantage-point (cf. Gen. 13:14ff.; 19:27f.), to converge on it with other seekers (Isa. 2:2f.), and finally to stand before the throne (Rev. 7:9).

4. On *clean hands* see Isaiah 1:15; 33:15; 1 Timothy 2:8. On *a pure heart* see on 17:15. The meaning of *lift up his soul* is illuminated by 25:1, where it is a parallel to ‘trust’. This false (i.e. empty) object of trust may be an inadequate helper (e.g. an idol, or ‘the help of man’, 60:11) or an unworthy stratagem such as the lies of 12:2 (Heb. 3), for which this word is also used. On *swear deceitfully*, see on 15:4c.

5. *Vindication* is lit. ‘righteousness’, and is here akin to justification, the judge’s pronouncement in favour of one’s claim or plea. Whatever is functioning as it should is ‘righteous’: in court, the man in the right; in character, the honest man; in the run of affairs, success. Probably all three are present in this context. This man has the smile of God upon him: he is accepted, he is helped to live an upright life, his affairs under God’s *blessing* will run as they should. See also on 23:3b; 65:5.

²²RV. The Revised Version.

²³𐤇 Hebrew consonantal text.

²⁴Ⲙ Greek Septuagint Version.

²⁵subj. subject.

²⁶parall. parallel with.

²⁷subj. subject.

²⁸syn. synonymous.

²⁹Ⲙ Greek Septuagint Version.

³⁰Ⲫ The Syriac Peshitto Version.

³¹Ⲕ The Vulgate Version.

³²parall. parallel with.

³³Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1906–1907), 215–216.

6. For the meaning of *generation* see on 12:7; and on seeking God's face see on 11:7 and 17:15. *Jacob*, in the Hebrew text, stands alone (cf. A³⁴v), and makes little sense without the LXX³⁵'s prefix, *God of*. Either this Hebrew word has dropped out in the copying, or possibly we should read 'seek thy face like Jacob' (assuming haplography of the consonant *k*), alluding to the blessing and the face-to-face encounter at Peniel (Gen. 32:29f.).³⁶

³⁴AV English Authorized Version (King James), 1611.

³⁵LXX The Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament).

³⁶Derek Kidner, [*Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 131–132.