

# WHO CAN ENJOY GOD FOREVER?

## Psalm 24

**TEXT: Psalm 24.**

- 1 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,  
the world and those who dwell therein,
- 2 for he has founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.
- 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?
- 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to what is false  
and does not swear deceitfully.
- 5 He will receive blessing from the Lord  
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. *Selah*
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And be lifted up, O 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, O gates!  
And lift them up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.
- 10 Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory! *Selah*

**DOCTRINE:** The Lord God owns everything and everyone by creation, and He has created mankind to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. But who can enjoy God forever?

## **I. THE LORD OWNS EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE**

**Psalm 24:1** “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,”

The LORD God Himself says to the man Job in The LORD God Himself said to Job, “Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine” (**Job 41:11**). And the LORD sarcastically says in the Psalms, “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine” (**Psalm 50:12**). Commenting on Psalm 24:1, Matthew Henry wrote, “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.”

The Lord owns the dirt. He owns the grass, fields, crops, trees, deserts, creeks, rivers, seas, oceans, plains, valleys, hills, and mountains. You have never seen, touched, or heard anything the Lord God does not look at and say, “That is mine.” The Lord owns your house. The Lord owns your transportation, tractors, tools, toys, and treasures. The Lord owns your books. The Lord owns your clothes, your wallet, purse, cash, and cards. The Lord owns that chair you are sitting on right now. The Lord owns every piece of food and drop of drink you have ever or will ever consume. You have never owned anything, properly speaking. God Himself owns everyone and everything. The things we call “ours” or “mine” are entrusted to us as stewards by our merciful God. The Lord owns your wife, husband, and He owns your husband, wife. The Lord owns your parents, your brothers, and your sisters. The Lord owns your children. You have never met a person the Lord God does not own. The Lord owns you. He owns your body. The Lord owns your brain. The Lord owns your heart, lungs, tongue, and eyes. The Lord owns that air you are breathing in this very moment. Every atom is an asset of the Lord God, each one existing to shine forth His infinite glory!

I) Use this truth for testing yourself.

Do you treat the earth and the fullness thereof, even your own possessions and your own body and your own soul, like they belong to the Lord God? Do you humbly give thanks to him, the owner, who has entrusted to you His goods? thanklessness is a great sin! The English Puritan William Cooper said in a sermon on thankfulness, “To be unthankful to a bountiful God, is for a froward child to beat his mother’s breasts that gave him suck, and to kick his father’s loins.” God says through Paul in, **Romans 1:21**, “Although [sinners] knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” God owns everyone and everything. Do you act like it?

II) Use this truth also for comforting yourselves, if you belong to Christ.

Everything that exists belongs to your generous Father! Matthew Henry again notes, “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.” God says in **1 Corinthians 3:21-23**, “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.” All is yours if you are in Christ because all is His and He is yours. Rejoice, believer.

## **II. THE LORD OWNS EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE BY RIGHT OF CREATION**

**Psalm 24:2** “for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.” I think it would be good if you meditated on **Job 38:1-11** in light of what David sings in Psalm 24:2. “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid

its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?"

### III. THE CHIEF END OF MAN IS TO ENJOY GOD FOREVER

This truth is precisely why David asks these questions: **Psalm 24:3** "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?" Now look at **Psalm 24:5-6**: "He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah" The chief end of man is to not just glorify, but also to *enjoy* God forever.

Moses knows this, so he says. "Please show me your glory" (**Exodus 33:18**). David knows this wonderful truth, therefore he sings, "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (**Psalm 16:11**). Asaph knew the chief end of man was to enjoy God forever, so he sings, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (**Psalm 73:25-26**). Paul experientially knew the enjoyment of Christ is the chief end of man, so he writes, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (**Philippians 3:7-8**). Christ knows this, therefore he prayed, the night before he bled and died to ransom his people, "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world" (**John 17:24**). John the apostle knows the chief end of man is to enjoy God forever, because he saw and heard with his own eyes and ears, "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for

the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (**Revelation 22:3-5**).

Any pleasure you have sought in sin pales in comparison to the pleasure that is found in enjoying God! Sin gives “fleeting pleasures” (Heb. 11:), but “at God’s right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11). This is the wonder and glory of the Garden of Eden, where God deposited our first father Adam. Adam and Eve could enjoy God face to face, in His very presence where happiness ever flows! However we lost that when we all sinned in Adam. Therefore David asks these questions in Psalm 24:3: Who can ascend the hill of the LORD? Who can enjoy God by standing in His holy place, in His very presence? Now God gives us four qualifications through David in this Psalm:

**I) Only those who have clean hands can ascend, stand, and enjoy God forever.** “He who has clean hands...” (**Psalm 24:4a**). Why must we have clean hands? Because to have clean hands means to be without sin when it comes to your actions. Hands are symbols of the actions we perform; the things we do outwardly. We defile ourselves by sins of omission and commission; by doing what is against God’s Law, and by not doing what God’s Law requires. “[The LORD] said, ‘you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live’” (**Exodus 33:20**). Why? “You...are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong” (**Habakkuk 1:13**). In God’s presence is fulness of joy, but not a spot of evil! “Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (**Revelation 21:17**). What fellowship has light with darkness? What communion has holiness with defilement? What preferment has the red-handed malefactor with the white-robed Majesty?

Sin is trespassing. What will happen to you with Oklahomans if you trespass someone’s land and try to steal their property? What will happen to you with God if you trespass His Law and try to steal His glory? The wages of sin is death, not life. The penalty for sin is misery not merriment. The result of sin is sadness not happiness. Jonathan Edwards wrote, “Since God is of infinite honor, infinite majesty, and infinite holiness, the slightest sin is of infinite consequence. The slightest sin is nothing less than cosmic treason when we realize against whom we have sinned.” Have you obeyed, with your external actions, the moral Law of God summarized in the Ten Commandments? Do you have clean hands?

**II) Only those who have a pure heart can ascend, stand, and enjoy God forever.** “and a pure heart...” (**Psalm 24:4b**). John Calvin notes, “True purity, no doubt, has its seat in the heart, but it manifests its fruits in the works of the hands.” Have you obeyed, with your internal thoughts and affections, the Law of God? Do you have a pure heart?

**III) Only those who worship the Lord and not idols can ascend, stand, and enjoy God forever.** “who does not lift up his soul to what is false...” (**Psalm 24:4c**). Have you worshipped the Lord your God and served Him only? Have you loved the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Or would **Jeremiah 2:13** be true of you: “My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

**IV) Only those who have clean lips can ascend, stand, and enjoy God forever.** “and does not swear deceitfully” (**Psalm 24:4d**). Has your tongue always told the truth, perfectly obeying the ninth commandment? Remember what verses 5-6 promise to the one who can ascend the hill of the LORD and stand in His holy place: “He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah” (**Psalm 24:5-6**). I ask you to examine yourself, compared to what God says here and I ask you: Can you ascend the hill? Can you stand in the holy place?

#### **IV. WHO CAN ASCEND, STAND, AND ENJOY GOD FOREVER? GOD HIMSELF**

**Psalm 24:7-10:** “Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this 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” Only Christ can gain access. This is the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He came down the hill, so that he could live without sin, die to pay his people’s sin-debts, and arise to then carry us on his back up it to the eternally happy presence of God! Christ, who is God, left the holy place and came to the earth, becoming a man to redeem sinners like you and me so that we

could get back into the holy place before the holy face of God. So who can ascend the hill of the Lord? Christ alone! And yet you and I can ascend the hill if we ride on his back.

Confess with the prodigal son, “I have sinned against God and against other people.” Confess with Jeremiah, “My heart is desperately sick and deceitful above all things.” Confess also with Jeremiah, “I have committed two evils: I have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for myself, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” Confess with Isaiah, “I am a man of unclean lips and I live amongst a people of unclean lips.” Then look to Christ in faith and live! And you who believe, listen to John Preston: “Look on your own secret sins, your relapses, and then on Christ’s coming with His mercies and favors—and you cannot help but love Him.” If you belong to Jesus Christ by faith, as you ride his back up the hill, trust him and labor by the power of the Holy Spirit to wash your hands, cleanse your heart, repent of lifting up your soul to what is false, and use your tongue to the glory of the King of glory. This is how we have sweet fellowship with God even here and now.

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