

Lec 7

Psalm 24

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In the last lecture, we studied Psalm number 23, which is not only famous but the most famous Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." But when we sing Psalms in Punjabi, you who are watching live, online, or here physically in the class, those watching online can answer by commenting, and those here in the class can raise their hands. When we sing Psalms in Punjabi, which Psalm do you think is the most famous? Raise your hand. Even if the answer is wrong, it is okay. Yes, brother said 136. What is 136? That is "Give thanks to the Lord." Okay, one brother said Psalm 136, "Give thanks to the Lord, give thanks to the Lord." Yes, the sister at the back raised her hand and said, "The Lord God is King, He is the King of glory." What is the number of this Psalm? Psalm number 24. How many of you who raised hands agree with the sister that Psalm number 24 is "The Lord God is King, He is the King of glory"? I also agree with you. I think the brother is right too. Psalm 136 is also very famous, but I think Psalm number 24, "The Lord God is King, He is the King of glory," is the most popular among Punjabi Psalms. That is why today we will study this Psalm from the Urdu Bible in detail.

Open with me the Old Testament, the Book of Psalms, Psalm number 24, from verse 1 to verse 10. This Psalm has ten verses. Wherever you are, those watching online or sitting here in class, we will read this Psalm together. When I say three, we will start reading:

One, two, three —

"The earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world and those who live in it.

For He has founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in idols or swear by false gods.

He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior.

Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, Jacob.

Lift up your heads, you gates! Be lifted up, you 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, you gates! Lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory."

Amen.

Psalm 24 is a Psalm of David. The commentators believe, and this idea is very strong, that David wrote this Psalm when he brought the Ark of the Covenant to the city of Jerusalem. To learn about this historic event, let's read 2 Samuel chapter 6, verses 1 to 5:

"And David again gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. Then David and all his men went to Baalah of Judah to bring up the Ark of God from there, which is called by the Name, the Lord of hosts who sits upon the cherubim. So they brought up the Ark of God and set it on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. Ahio was going in front of the Ark. And David and all Israel were playing all kinds of instruments of cedar wood, with harps, lyres, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals, making a joyful noise before the Lord."

Then see verse 12:

"And the king David was told, 'The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him because of the Ark of God.' So David went and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with joy. And it happened as the Ark of God was brought up, that David and all Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all their might, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets."

So this event is when David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, which was also called the city of David. At that moment, David wrote this Psalm: "The Lord God is King, He is the King of glory."

This Psalm has ten verses and is divided into three parts:

- The first part is verses 1 and 2, where the Lord Yahweh is shown as Creator and powerful ruler.
- The second part is verses 3 to 6, which ask and answer the question: Who can climb the Lord's mountain and stand in His holy place to worship Him?
- The third part is verses 7 to 10, which present Yahweh as the King of glory, strong, mighty in battle, and the Lord of armies.

Now let us look at these three parts one by one.

After David wrote this Psalm when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem (which we saw in 2 Samuel chapter 6), this Psalm was regularly sung in Israel's worship. It was sung especially in the temple during worship when the Israelites announced the victory, reign, and kingship of Yahweh God.

Then David and his followers would enter the temple shouting and singing this Psalm when announcing God's kingship.

If you remember, or many of you who belong to churches that celebrate Palm Sunday, why do we celebrate Palm Sunday? It is because on that day, the Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as a king and a crowd welcomed Him by shouting.

So today, when churches celebrate Palm Sunday and carry palm branches in processions, many churches sing this Psalm: "The Lord God is King, He is the King of glory."

This tradition comes from the Jewish people that when they announce God's kingship and celebrate it with shouts and songs, they sing Psalm 24 in His praise. Jewish people sang this Psalm to celebrate and proclaim the reign of Yahweh God, and after David's time, they entered the temple with processions singing this Psalm.

Remember, in David's time, the temple was not yet built; he brought the Ark to Jerusalem, but the temple was built later by his son Solomon. So this Psalm is connected to the temple because in Jewish theology and philosophy, the temple was the most holy place where God's presence lived and where the Ark was kept.

Jewish people believed that God's throne was there in the temple, just like kings in the world live in palaces. So they called the temple Yahweh God's palace. Now let's go back to the meaning of the text. Are you with me? Are you understanding? Show me by raising your hand.

Good. Now it says, "The earth and all its fullness is the Lord's, the world and those who dwell in it." David, the Psalm writer, wants to say that Yahweh God is the Creator and Sustainer of the earth. Creator means the One who made it, and Sustainer means the One who keeps it working.

Our God Yahweh made this earth and still keeps it alive and strong. An interesting thing is that in Hebrew, the first line says the earth and its fullness belong to Yahweh alone. It means the creation, the existence, and the continued life of the earth all depend on Yahweh God.

If He did not decide or command, this material earth and world would neither exist nor last.

Another interesting point is that in Hebrew and Jewish history, the first verse of Psalm 24 — "The earth and all its fullness is the Lord's" — is very important. This is not just a statement but also a slogan, like in the New Testament when we say, "Jesus is Lord." When we say this, we are not just giving a statement; saying "Jesus is Lord" — what do you think, Pastor Munawar? — it is a challenge, it is a declaration, it is a slogan that Jesus Christ is Lord, which means Jesus is the master and owner. Death is not the master and owner, humans are not the master and owner, cruel human rulers are not the master and owner, governments, kingdoms, and powerful organizations are not the master and owner. Jesus is the master and owner.

Just like the Psalm writer says in the first verse that the earth and everything on it belongs to the Lord, the world and all who live in it. So, the Psalm writer, my sisters and brothers, is telling us that Yahweh God is the creator, owner, and provider of this earth. He made it and keeps it going. The gods of the idol-worshipping nations around Israel are not the creator, owner, or keeper of this earth. Yahweh God is the God who is the creator, owner, and provider, and He is

the one who created our lives today, and no matter how hard our situations are, He will keep us going. Hallelujah!

In the second verse, it says that He founded the earth on the seas and established it over the floods. The Hebrew word for seas is "yamim," and for floods here, other translations say more strongly "rivers." "He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers." This means God made the earth's foundation on the seas and kept it firm on the rivers.

Some people who criticize the Bible make a mistake here. They think that in verse two, the Psalm writer is giving a scientific statement about how the earth was made. Remember, the Bible writers are less focused on how the earth and sky were made, and more focused on who made them. Many people make a mistake trying to prove science from the Bible. But remember, the Holy Bible is not a science book. The Bible is not a book of science but a book that teaches us about the living God, Yahweh, who gives knowledge. Scientists study and discover the universe God made.

So when it says God founded the earth on the seas and rivers, the historical context is that in the Ancient Near East, the nations around Israel believed in two gods. One god was the sea god, called "Prince Sea" — in Hebrew "Yam." The other was the river god, called the "Judge River" — that the river is judge, fair and just, and the sea is the prince, the ruler.

For the rivers, the word is "nahar," and the Canaanite stories say that Baal, the storm god, won over the sea and the river. In this historical environment, the Psalm writer tells us that the God of Israel, Yahweh, is the one who has power and control over the seas and rivers, and He is the only creator of the earth where we live. Hallelujah!

So the first two verses talk about Yahweh God's creation, authority, and power, and as I said, He is the personal creator of every life — yours and mine — and whatever situation you are in, He created you and will keep you. Trust Him, rely on Him.

Now we come to the second part of the Psalm, verses three to six. Verses three to six come between verses one and two, and verses seven to ten — so the topic changes for a little while. It is like verses one and two, and verses seven to ten are two pieces of bread, and verses three to six are the filling in the middle. They are sandwiched between verses one and two and verses seven to ten.

In these verses, the Psalm writer focuses on the character of Yahweh God, and the character of His worshippers — those who serve Yahweh. Just like the victorious creator king Yahweh is pure and holy in His character and being, so also are His worshippers.

So in these verses, the focus is that the God who made the system of the earth, who created, formed, and arranged everything, wants our personal lives to be

arranged and formed like His character. Not only should the world run by God's order — the earth — but also humans, especially those who worship Him. In this connection, a rhetorical question is asked in verse three. It is a question for thinking. Verse four gives the answer or conditions, and verse five gives a promise for those who worship Yahweh.

Verse three asks: "Who can go up to the mountain of the Lord? Who can stand in His holy place?" This is the question. The answer, or the conditions to go up the mountain and stand in the holy place, are found in verse four.

There are two positive things a person must have, and two things they must not have. The positive are: "He who has clean hands and a pure heart." To go up the Lord's mountain, to the place where the ark of the covenant was kept in David's time, the condition is that your hands are clean and your heart is pure.

If we look at 2 Samuel chapter 6, Uzzah touched the ark and died because God's justice was shown there.

Now, "clean hands" does not mean someone who just washed their hands with soap or sanitizer. Clean hands mean a person who has not done wrong, a person who has integrity and honesty in life.

It says "pure heart," meaning a heart that is sincere to God. So these two positive things must be true.

Yes, then two things must not be true: "He who has not lifted up his soul to vanity" (vanity means pride and lies), meaning he has not trusted in pride and lies, and "has not sworn deceitfully."

Swearing falsely means to lie by making a promise or taking an oath. So, these four things together mean: having clean hands, having a pure heart, not liking falsehood or pride, and not swearing falsely — these four things combined mean living honestly before God — "A life of integrity."

This does **not** mean a perfect life. Only God is perfect. It means that a person comes to God with a true and pure heart.

Some people misunderstand this verse and think we can only come before God if we are completely pure, without any mistakes or sins. If you set that rule, then no one can come to God. Then on Sunday, people go to church, and on the other days, synagogues are empty.

Here, the Psalm writer is **not** asking you to be perfect before God. He is asking you to be sincere, faithful, and honest when you come before God. Are you with me? Do you understand what I am saying? Why? Because in the next verse, he explains who will be blessed by God, who will live the life described in **verse 4**.

It says that God will bless those people, yes, those who have righteousness from their Savior God.

The Hebrew word for "righteousness" is "tsedakah," which means being "just" or "right" — righteousness.

So, those who come to God with clean hands and pure hearts, that is, with honesty and sincerity, will receive righteousness — justice — from the Lord, the saving God.

This means they are not made right before God because of their worship or good works, but the saving, sincere God, by His grace, because of their faith and humility, will make them righteous.

The Lord will give them righteousness. The Lord will make them right. The Lord will declare them just.

My dear brothers and sisters, I want to tell you this message: according to this Psalm, to come before God, we do **not** need to be perfect. We only need to come with a true heart, faith, and honesty.

When we come with sincerity, truth, and humility, God, by His grace and through the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ, cleanses us from all sin and makes us righteous, pure, and accepted before God.

Many people say, "When I stop sinning, then I will start coming to church." Or, "I am still working on myself." But the truth is, even if you work on yourself all your life, you cannot make yourself righteous.

My dear son, my daughter, my beloved brother, if you believe in Lord Jesus Christ and come humbly and sincerely before God, then by His grace, at that very moment, He will freely give you righteousness and justice.

In the New Testament, we see that the salvation and righteousness that King David talks about in this Psalm come to us freely from our great King, the living God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and faith in Him.

Only the Lord gives righteousness.

Are you still with me? If not, then only God's Holy Spirit can teach and guide you now.

Then verse 6 says:

"These are the ones who seek You, who long to see Your face, O Jacob."

Here, "Jacob" and "Israel" mean God's chosen people. David speaks to God:

"O God! These are Your seekers, those who look for You, those who desire to see You."

If the condition to come before God was to be already perfect and pure, it would not say here, "These are Your seekers." God invites us to seek Him, to search for Him, to come and bow before Him. Then He Himself makes us pure, perfect, without fault, and righteous.

There is a well-known saying about the church:

"The church is not a club for saints, but a hospital for spiritual patients."

Sick people come to a hospital and leave healed. Similarly, when we come to God's presence and His church with our spiritual and moral weaknesses, God restores and heals us.

Then verse 7 says:

"Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the King of glory may come in."

Here, "those who long for Your face" means those who want to meet God and have a relationship with Him. To meet someone fully, we want to see their face.

In the same way, real connection with God happens when we want to see Him.

Verses 7 to 9 describe God entering like a King.

In old times, cities had big gates. Like the famous "Twelve Gates" of Lahore today. When David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant (a sign of God's presence) into Jerusalem, he said:

"O gates! Lift up your heads, so that the King of glory may enter."

This is a symbolic way to show God's presence is coming.

Verse 8 asks:

"Who is this King of glory?"

And the answer is:

The Lord, strong and mighty,

The Lord, mighty in battle.

This means God is the hero of war, the God who gives victory. He won battles for Israel, and He gives victory in our personal, family, spiritual, and service battles too.

Verse 9 repeats verse 7:

"O gates! Lift up your heads, O ancient doors! That the King of glory may come in."

Then verse 10 asks again:

"Who is this King of glory?"

The answer is:

"The Lord Almighty — He is the King of glory!"

Here "Lord Almighty" means two things:

The owner of all armies and war powers on earth,

The leader of the angel armies in heaven.

And the truth is, our God is the owner of both.

So when you compare verses 8 and 10, verse 8 says, "The Lord who is strong and mighty," and verse 10 says, "The Lord Almighty," the leader of all chariots and armies, the conqueror, warrior, and King.

And in verse 8, the last line says, "The Lord mighty in battle," meaning the Lord who wins the war.

Verse 10 ends saying He is the King of glory, the "King of Glory."

Remember these five qualities in verses 7 to 10:

1. Strong
2. Mighty
3. Mighty in battle
4. Lord of armies

5. King of glory

Actually, verses 7 to 10 describe these five qualities of Yahweh God.

Now, if you think carefully, I will soon finish this lecture.

In the ancient Near East, in the eastern religions, the nearby ancient religions, in the lands where Israelites lived, the surrounding nations had their own gods.

Each person had their own personal god, a local god.

Besides that, each area had a guardian god, a protector god.

And also, there were gods of nature.

That there is a god of rain, a god of fertility, a god of the sea, a god of the river, a god of storms; Psalm 24 is telling us, my brothers and sisters, that the God of

Israel, the God of the Bible, the one true God, is the only God of all these things.

He is the God of rain, He is the God of storms, He is the God of the sea, He is the God of the river, He is the God of fertility, He is the God of humans, He is the God of angels, He is the only God of all creatures, and He alone deserves the worship of all creation. Let us clap loudly for Him. And this King of Glory came to this world through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, becoming flesh. Open with me John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 14, and read: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth; and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father."

So this King of Glory came in the form of Jesus Christ. The second person of the Holy Trinity, the Word made flesh, the Son of God Jesus Christ showed us the glory of God the Father Yahweh. And today through Jesus Christ we know God, we know the King of Glory. His glory comes to us through Christ. What kind of glory is this? In verses 16 to 18 it is written: "From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known."

God's glory has been shown to us in Jesus Christ, through God's grace and truth.

So if today you want your hands to be clean before the Lord, your heart to be pure in His presence, and you want to know the King of Glory, Yahweh God, who is strong, who is able, who is mighty in battle, the God of armies, the God of angels, and come near to Him, then the only way according to the Holy Bible is to worship God the Father Yahweh in the name of Jesus Christ. Worship Him like David did, because as Psalm 24 says, "This is the generation of those who seek Him." In John's Gospel chapter 4 it is written that the Father seeks those worshippers who worship Him in spirit and truth.

So come and be those who worship Yahweh God the King through the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus. He will make our hands clean, our hearts pure, and give us victory in the battles of life. Thank you, God bless you.