The glory of God

The Lord has entered into His glory! Has His glory entered into you?

Psalm 24

1) The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, l

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 (everlasting) 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 (Psalm 24:1-10 ESV)

Introduction

-- God owns the earth and it's fullness as Psalm 24:1 states: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof". And God also owns all people that ever lived in a sense: "..the world and those who dwell therein" (Genesis 14). After Abraham had rescued Lot from the kings of Sodom, Melchizedek came to him. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of
heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:18-19 ESV). As one theologian once said: "there is not one hairbreadth or centimeter on this earth that does not belong to God.” The devil doesn't own this earth, or it's people, BUT as the Scripture teaches:"the whole world (that is the sinful world) lies in the sway of the evil one" (1 John 5:19) and "everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of God" (1 John 2:15-17).

But in Matthew 28:18 the following is written after Jesus rose from the dead and before He ascended into heaven: "And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18 ESV).

And the prophet Habakkuk declared way back before the incarnation of God, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14 ESV). Although the earth is and will be filled with the glory of God as the waters covers the sea (Habakkuk 2:14) not all people are entering into His saving, glorious presence. God is not far from any of us (Acts 17:24-28). As Paul said at Athens to the heathen philosophers: "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “In him, we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:24-28 ESV).

Even though God owns all people, not all people are His own people. Not all people are part of His elect people. Not all people are His adopted, born again children! It is remarkable that some people claim that God is the Father of all people. In the sense of God being the Creator of all, He is everyone's Father, but in the sense of people being born again of the Holy Spirit, God is definitely not the Father of all people. Only SOME people will be able to stand in His holy place. John 1:12,13 states: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not
of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13 ESV). Only SOME will be able to ascend the hill of the Lord. Is that someone you friend? Are you one of those who will be able to stand in His holy presence? Or will you be cast away? Those people who aren't born again will be cast away in the fire and suffer eternal punishment. Jesus said in Matthew 13:47-49: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:47-50 ESV). Not all people will remain in God's merciful, gracious presence. Or if you will, many will experience God's wrath for all eternity.

This message can be divided into three parts. First we are going to look at God's glory in the past, secondly, God's glory in the present and thirdly, God's glory in the future. Firstly we are going to look at how people entered the glory of God in Old Testament times, secondly, how people enter God's glory now and thirdly how people will enter into the glory of God in the future and then we will conclude.

1) Past glory. Those who entered the hill of God in the past (What God requires?)

- King David most probably wrote this Psalm. As we know, Jerusalem was and is built on a hill. When David speaks about the hill in this Psalm, he is probably referring to where the ark of the covenant was situated in Jerusalem. You will remember that King David was not allowed to build the temple because God prohibited him because he shed too much blood, but that his son Solomon was appointed to build the temple. But the Ark of the Covenant was there in Jerusalem in David's lifetime. And they sacrificed animals in his lifetime. Only priests and Levites could enter the holy place. They were appointed by God to minister in His temple or tabernacle. They were commanded to bring animal sacrifices for sins. The animal sacrifices made atonement for their sins, or more correctly the animal sacrifices were only shadows and types of the Savior's blood that only could make atonement. The
tabernacle in the desert and where the Ark of the Covenant rested in the temple were known for the place where God's glory rested e.g. Moses in the desert. We know how God communed with Moses face to face in the wilderness and that when Moses came down from the mountain of Sinai after God gave him the Ten Commandments, the people couldn't look at his face because of the glory of God. God gave the Israelites the sacrificial ordinances in the desert. The glory of God was clearly seen by the Israelites in the wilderness by the pillar of cloud during the day and the pillar of fire during the night, which led them through the desert for 40 years. We regularly see in the Old Testament after animal sacrifices were offered that the glory of God came down. When Solomon sacrificed animals at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, the glory of God was so dense or thick that the priests couldn't enter the temple (2 Chronicles 6,7).

But David probably referred to something else in this Psalm when He referred to the hill of The Lord. David was anointed as King by the prophet Samuel. And the Holy Spirit regularly came upon him as the book of Samuel tells us. When he played on the harp before King Saul, the evil spirit departed from Saul. The Spirit of God was working through David because he was anointed to be King. The law given through Moses required: "if you keep all the commandments, you shall live." Or "Do and live." If you do what is written in the Law of Moses, then God's blessing would be upon you. God's favor would be upon you IF you obeyed the laws. However, David had intimate relations with God apart from keeping all God's commandments perfectly. David also knew that God required a practical holiness for God to abide in him. We know this from many of the Psalms he wrote like Psalm 15 and Psalm 24.

--David also prophesied numerous times of the coming Messiah (Psalm 16;22;40;41;110), although he probably didn't understand everything he wrote down. David was looking forward to a future with God as well, and He knew Gods standards were high. He knew God required holiness. He knew God required clean hands and a pure heart (verse 4). He knew God required worshipping Him alone (verse 4). He was aware that God required truthfulness (verse 4) and that a man should keep His promises and vows (verse 4). But no Israelite could keep all these laws in their own power; that was certain. No one was without sin. Even
Solomon knew this: in Proverbs he wrote: "Who can say, “I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin”? (Proverbs 20:9 ESV). In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple he said: "If they (referring to Israel) sin against you—(for there is no one who does not sin) -- and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near......and they repent with heart and soul....... then hear from heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you” (2 Chronicles 6:36,39 ESV).

Those who entered God's glory in the Old Testament times entered trusting on the promises, and the prophecies of the Messiah and the offerings of animals prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ. The Israelites knew that God was a holy God and required holiness: In Leviticus God commanded: "Be holy as I am holy." And Psalm 15 reads: "O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved" (Psalm 15:1-5 ESV). God required perfection of his people. And David knew this.

-- The people in the Old Testament only experienced a shadow of the fullness of the glory of God. As Paul said in the letter to the Corinthians; "For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory"(2 Corinthians 3:9 ESV). The Israelites entered the glory and hill of God only through the animal sacrifices prefiguring the atonement of sins through Christ and through believing in the promises and prophecies of God regarding the Messiah, who was to come.

2) Present glory. How people enter God's holy place now

-- After Jesus came everything changed. Animal sacrifices were now obsolete. As the letter of Hebrews states: "And by that (God's) will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, repeatedly
offering the same sacrifices, which can NEVER take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:10-14 ESV). Jesus’ perfect life and death made a new way for us to enter God's holy place. God's Righteousness was revealed 2000 years ago. (Romans 1:16,17). The veil of the temple has been torn in two. There came a new and living way to enter God's presence: as the letter to the Hebrews states: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the HOLY places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (Hebrews 10:19-20 ESV).

-- Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to His throne of glory! In a sense, heaven is the everlasting and ancient doors verses 8-10 are speaking about. And Jesus was mighty in battle. He won the decisive battle on Golgotha. He conquered Satan, sin, death and hell! Paul writes in Colossians: "...Christ... canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 2:14-15 ESV). Christ provided a perfect righteousness for us! He took captivity captive. The King of kings and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ went to sit at the right hand of the Father in glory! Heaven rejoiced! Paul writes further in Ephesians 1:20-22: "that God worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:20-23 ESV). Jesus is NOW seated at the right hand of the Father and crowed with Glory. He is now crowned with many crowns, and He went into His everlasting kingdom. Heavens gates received Jesus Christ into glory!

-- But the gates, the everlasting gates, the ancient gates, referred to in verse 8-10, I believe can refer to every person as well. Ecclesiastes 3:10 says: "God has put eternity in our hearts." Our hearts are also like gates.
As Revelation 3:20 says: "Behold, I (Jesus) stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20 ESV). We are born to live forever. How does the King of Glory enter a person's life? -- How do we ascend the hill of the Lord now? Answer: By not stealing, not lying, not committing adultery and murder and doing all the things that God commands us to do? Yes, we enter in by repentance! We do not come to God's glory by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith in Jesus Christ! We come in by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 3:10-17 reads: "as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” (Romans 3:10-12 ESV). And then in Romans 3:23 it is stated emphatically: "for ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We all are estranged from God from the womb. We are born into sin (Psalm 51:5) and as children of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-2). "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

--We ascend the hill and glory of God by confessing our uncleaness. By confessing our deceit and lies and idolatries and unfaithfulness. See what our sins have done! Our sins nailed Jesus to the cross!! Jesus was crushed because of our iniquities; He was bruised because of our transgression, as Isaiah 53:3,4 tells us. We are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ in the twentieth century. Have you ever come to grasp this fact? Yes, we were not there 2000 years ago when Jesus was crucified, but He was on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins! We crucified Jesus to that cross by our countless sins! Open the gates of your heart and receive Jesus Christ today if you have never received Him before! Come to Him in brokenness and godly repentance and put your faith in the King of Glory! He has entered into glory, and He will forgive you. 1 John 1:7-9 reads: "....If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9 ESV).

-- When you forsake your unrighteousness and your own righteousness you will receive Christ's righteousness. That must be your foundation.
God will bless you if you rely on the righteousness of Christ. And ONLY then. Jesus procured a perfect righteousness by His sinless, perfect life. And He gives it to those who come to Him with empty hands.

-- You remember the song: "on Christ the Solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand";"I trust in nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness." Are Jesus Christ and His blood the only things in which you trust for salvation?

-- The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of glory will inhabit your soul when you take Jesus to be your Savior, Lord, and Treasure of Righteousness. The King of Glory will come into your life when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ penetrate your soul. His glory is irresistible.

3) Future glory. How and where will people enter His holy place in the future?

-- Believers in Christ have a glorious hope. We have the blessing of God in us. The blessed Holy Spirit. He is the one who comforts and helps and encourages us! Unbelievers don't have this hope. They don't have any hope of future glory. Even in the midst of suffering and tribulations, we have this hope. In Romans 5:1,2 Paul states:"Therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2 ESV).

-- There is a new heaven and earth coming. The New Jerusalem is being prepared for those whose names are in the Book of Life. There is still a hill to be climbed for believers in Christ. In Isaiah 35:8 speaking about the new earth, it is written: "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way" (Isaiah 35:8 ESV). And in Hebrews, it is written 12:14: "Without holiness, no one will see God." And in 1 John 3:2 it is written, speaking of believers: "Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will have not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3 ESV).
-- Three famous passages must be quoted here to show who will miss out on the glory of heaven: The First is: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:8-11 ESV). And Revelation 21:7,8 tells us who will miss out on future glory: "The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:7-8 ESV). And lastly: Revelation 22:14,15 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (Revelation 22:14-15 ESV).

--See how this relates to Psalm 24:3,4. Those who make a practice of sinning as 1 John 3 states, will miss out on future glory. There is a difference between falling into sin and making a practice of sinning. 1 John makes it clear that believers do sin, but they don't make a practice of sinning. In other words, their lives are not marked by habitual sin. They don't love their sin; they don't plan to sin, and they don't live a lifestyle of sinning. They have a new identity. Believers are not perfect in themselves, but they are perfect in Christ, and their lives are progressively changed. As Paul said to the Corinthians "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV).

-- Progression and growth in the life of a believer are necessary. We cannot remain as we are. We are called to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. We need to confess our sins still. We still need a pure heart. In Matthew 5:8 it is written: "Blessed are the pure in heart for
they shall see God." The glory of God will be revealed to the pure of heart. We still need to love the truth and love and worship God alone. We are still in a battle. We still need to keep our word and pay our vows of faithfulness and loyalty to God.

-- And we know that we cannot do these things in our own strength. That is why God gave us the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Spirit of glory is what we always need. The Lion of Juda has conquered, and our salvation draws near. 2 Corinthians 7:1 commands us: "let us cleanse ourselves still of all uncleanliness of the flesh and spirit perfection holiness in the fear of God." There is a practical holiness without which no one will see God. The evidence that you are indeed going up the hill is that you keep on repenting. Christian are you cleansing yourself? Is your heart pure? Do you have clean hands?

-- You may ask the question: how should we cleanse ourselves? How do we keep our hearts pure? Here are a few helpful texts:

1 John 1:7 (ESV) "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Psalm 119:9,11 (ESV) "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

Jesus said in John 15:3 (ESV) "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”

Acts 15:8,9 (ESV) reads: "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith."

Ephesians 5:24-26 reads: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”

It is Jesus Christ who purifies our hearts. It is the blood of Christ who purifies our hearts. It is the indwelling Spirit that purifies our hearts and applies the blood of Jesus to our hearts. It is the faith that the Holy Spirit imparts that purifies our hearts. And it is the word of God in which we
have faith in that purifies our hearts. Is your trust in Jesus Christ, His righteousness, and His atoning sacrifice?

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ was received into glory about 2000 years ago. When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven I'm sure something like these words were shouted by the angels in heaven: "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!

We know that the appearance of Jesus Christ is one of exquisite beauty and glory. Revelation 1 tells us of that glory. It was the same glory that made Paul blind on the road of Damascus. On earth, the three apostles saw the glory of God when Christ was transfigured on the mountain, and the face of Jesus shone like the sun. Jesus Christ IS the King of glory!

-- And God calls those who need Christ and have not come to Him with the same words: open your heart and receive the King of glory by repentance and faith in Christ: "Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient (everlasting) 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!" Surrender to Christ. Open the gates of your heart, the everlasting gates, and let Him fight your battles. He has conquered at the cross and will conquer once more.

-- And God calls to the backsliding Christian and the mature Christian with the same words: "Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient and everlasting 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!"

Surrender to Christ continually, believer in Christ, and let Him fight your battles! He is mighty to save! He is the Almighty warrior! He has an invincible army at His side. He has conquered Satan, the power of sins and hell, and the grave and will conquer once more in your life.
As Elisha said to his servant when they were surrounded by enemy troops from all sides: I'm reading from 2 Kings 6. "When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” He said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:15-17 ESV). And Elisha prayed and the Lord struck them with blindness. Believer in Christ know that He who is with us is greater than the enemy and all his armies combined! He will conquer in your life! The God of Israel is a mighty warrior!

God has created.

God is the Possessor of heaven and earth.

God became a human.

Christ fulfilled all righteousness.

Christ died for our sins.

Christ rose from the dead!

The tomb is empty!

The Lord has ascended!

The Lord has entered into His glory!

Christ did all this for you.

The question remains: Has the King of glory entered the gates of your heart?