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PSALMS OF THE CROSS, THE CROOK, AND THE CROWN

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01 -- INTRODUCING THE TRILOGY PSALMS

Psalms 22, 23 and 24, form a trilogy. A trilogy is a series of three dramas, each complete in itself, yet so interrelated as to form one theme.

The arrangement of the one hundred fifty Psalms doubtless was the work of the Holy Spirit through Ezra, a holy scribe. The Scriptures are written and arranged in such a manner as to give pictures, and forecasts of events beyond the historical facts. This is especially true of Psalms 22, 23, and 24. There is perfect unity, harmony and order in the Trinity, and in the Bible.

The Psalms are rich in their teachings. In them David has written his experiences. The experiences of God's people are very much alike; therefore, the Psalms fit our experiences. At the same time they are prophetic, referring to Christ in His two advents. The fulfillment of the many prophecies cluster around Him.

The contents of the Psalms, summed up in a nutshell, can be comprehended in the following arrangement:

P-SALMS

P-raise

P-rayer

P-romise

P-rophecy

The Psalms are Messianic, and present Christ as:

(P)-rophet, Priest

(S)-on of God, Son of Man

(A)-lmighty

(L)-ord

(M)-essiah

(S)-avior

The Trilogy Psalms (22, 23 and 24) are exceedingly rich in their prophetic and practical teachings. They are rich because they are full of Christ and the Gospel. These three Psalms may be studied from many standpoints, giving us different views of Christ and of Christian experience.

Standpoint of Prophecy

Psalms twenty-two, is a prophecy of the Crucifixion. It begins with the wail of Calvary, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Crucifixion, as a method of execution was unknown at this time; yet in a vision, David sees the Redeemer nailed to the cross, His hand and feet pierced, dying a vicarious death.

Psalms twenty-three, is a prophecy of the Resurrection of Christ. In order, it follows Psalm 22; and the prophecy follows that of the previous Psalm, even as the resurrection follows the crucifixion. Taken as a whole, we see Christ resurrected, living, satisfied, upheld by the Father and forever dwelling in His house.

Psalms twenty-four, is a prophecy of the Ascension. The ascension logically follows the resurrection. This Psalm speaks of ascending into the hill of the Lord. The question, Who can ascend into heaven? is answered, and no one fits the description as well as the Lord Jesus. He is first in resurrection, first in ascension, and first in glorification. He is the first Man to ascend into the presence of the Father. He challenges the door keepers of heaven to open, and, as the King of Glory, Who had been mighty and victorious in fine battle of grace, and as the mighty Champion Who triumphed over everything, enters as the God-Man into the presence of the Father.

A Threefold View of Christ

In Psalm 22, Christ is pictured as the Savior of all men. As such He suffers the penalty for sin, taking all sins upon Himself taking the place of all sinners. As Saviour, He cannot save both Himself and others. As the Savior, He must take our place to make it possible for man to take His place; He must become poor, that we through His poverty might become rich; He must become a curse to redeem us from the curse; He must become the despised, hated and rejected One, that we may become the beloved and accepted ones.

In Psalm 23, Christ is presented as the Shepherd. As the Shepherd of His sheep, He provides for their needs. He tenderly provides rest, guidance and food for His sheep. He selects their pasture. His presence is ever with them. He leads them through valleys and trials. He leads them into heaven, where they will forever dwell with Him.

In Psalm 24, Christ is presented as King. He is Creator and Redeemer. He is Possessor of the earth and its fullness. He is the legal Heir to this earth. The earth belongs to Him by creation and also by redemption. No one is better qualified, as to right and might, to be King, than He.

The Work of the Shepherd

Psalm 22. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. All who have been born again, as sons of God are His sheep. No one is better qualified to be the Shepherd than Christ. No one loves, cares and shelters from storms, wolves and thieves, better than He. In this Psalm, we see Jesus, the Good Shepherd, laying down His life for the sheep.

Psalm 23. In this Psalm we see Christ as the Great Shepherd tenderly caring for, and leading His sheep into the promised land.

Psalm 24. This is the Psalm of the Chief Shepherd coming in glory to claim and reward His sheep. This will be at His advent when the saints of all ages will be gathered from the east, the west, the north and the south.

Geographical Standpoint

Psalm 22. This is the Psalm of Calvary. The hill of execution was outside the walls of Jerusalem and was called in the Greek, Calvary. This name has become an inspiration today in song and in sermon. This name is associated only with the death of Christ.

Psalm 23. This is the Psalm of Canaan. In this Psalm we read of rivers, waters, tender grass, valleys, shady places and comforts. Canaan was the good land of hills and valleys, of springs and fountains, wheat and barley, figs and dates.

Psalm 24. This is the Psalm of Olivet. On this mount, Christ stood when He blessed and comforted His believers -- then He ascended. This also will be the spot where His feet shall stand at His second advent. This same Jesus shall come in like manner as He went; and shall come to the same spot from whence He ascended.

God's View of Christ

Psalm 22. The Shepherd in the Night. God beholds His beloved Son in the dark world of sin, misery and woe. He sees Him wandering in the dark, with bleeding hands and feet, and a broken heart seeking the lost.

Psalm 23. The Shepherd in the Fold. God beholds His Son, risen, changed and beyond the state where unbelieving eyes behold or plot against Him, where no sinner or demon can touch or tempt Him. He is alive for evermore.

Psalm 24. The Shepherd in Glory. He is the Creator and Redeemer of the Earth. In this Psalm, the Son is in the presence, yea, seated at the Father's right hand. He is there awaiting the fullness of time, when the Father will make His enemies His footstool.

Standpoint of Christian Experience

Psalm 22. This Psalm teaches Regeneration. The death of Christ makes possible the regeneration of sinners. In order, this work precedes all others.

Psalm 23. This is the Psalm of Sanctification. Thins work of grace follows regeneration. Jesus is Savior of the regenerated, and Lord of the Sanctified. No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

Psalm 24. This is the Psalm of Glorification. Glorification will be experienced at the second advent of the Lord. As regeneration prepares the believer for sanctification, so sanctification qualifies the believer for glorification.

Standpoint of Practical Living

The twenty-second Psalm is that of the Cross. The cress is not a spiritual luxury. The cross is a crude looking instrument on which to die. Christ died upon a cross. Believers are commanded to take up their cross and follow Christ. The cross of a believer is not the cross on which Christ died; but as Paul speaks, "a dying daily". The believer must daily live a life of separation from sin. The way of the cross is antagonistic to the ways of the world.

The twenty-third, is the Psalm of the Crook. A crook is a rod with a hook on one end. The shepherd used this rod during the daytime to rescue sheep; to draw them back from a precipice, or as need demanded. The crook is for believers after they are saved, and is only for this life.

The twenty-fourth, is the Psalm of the Crown. The divine order is: the cross, the crook, the crown. Man cannot reverse this order. No cross -- no crown. Many want to wear a crown, yet they do not want to bear the cross. The cross is for this life, the crown is for the next life. The cross is made to bear, the crown is made to wear. If faithful, some day, we shall lay down the crass and the Lord will place on us the crown. The cross is only for time, but the crown is for eternity. When the Lord returns in glory, the believers will be crowned. Then we shall never get through wearing the crown, nor will it ever wear out. God's Yesterday, Today And Forever

Psalm 22. This is the Psalm of God's yesterday. God fills all time even as He fills all space. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." God never changes. He is what He always has been and what He always will be. This Psalm beautifully illustrates the love of God and the redemption that has been accomplished for man, or what God has been, and has done for His people.

Psalm 23. This is the Psalm of God's today. Here we learn what the Lord, the Good Shepherd, is to His sheep. Even now, the Lord's sheep can enjoy perfect satisfaction, rest, food, quietness, guidance, restoration, fellowship and joy. This Psalm peculiarly fits the present life.

Psalm 24. This is the Psalm of God's forever. Here we learn what is awaiting the sheep who have followed the Lord, those who have clean hands and pure hearts. These will enter inside the pearly gates with the Lord of hosts to abide forever in His presence.

While it is true that Psalms 22, 23 and 24, in a remarkable manner reveal what the Lord has done in the past, what He is doing in the present, and what He will do in the future for His people; they also reveal the Yesterday, the Today and the Forever of Jesus Christ, Who never changes, but ever is the same. At the same time, each of these Psalms, has a future -- a point beyond the present. There is no end or limit to the blessed results of the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, or the Ascension of Christ; neither will there be an end to the blessed results of His second coming in power and great glory.

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02 -- THE PSALM OF THE CROSS -- PSALM 22

1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28 For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

* * *

The Sufferings of Christ and the Glory That Follows

This Psalm is addressed: "To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David."

This is a Psalm of David. David, as God's anointed and God's appointed king (though not yet enthroned), was rejected, hunted and hounded. He was compelled to dwell in the hills and hollows in seclusion His life was sought by Saul.

This Psalm is addressed to the chief musician. David was a great musician and a sweet singer. He appointed three chief singers or chorus leaders over the people, namely, Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman. All Psalms addressed "to the chief musician" were presented to Asaph, Jeduthun or Heman, who set music to these inspiring Psalms and taught them to the people. It is claimed that all Psalms addressed to the chief musician are Messianic and point to Christ in some way. Christ is the Chief Musician, the sweetest Singer in the Universe and the Leader of the redeemed, who will sing redemption's story.

"Aijeleth Shahar," as the marginal note reads, means "the hind of the morning." The hind is the female deer, which is constantly hunted and hounded. It is stated that there exists a deadly enmity between the deer and the serpent. The deer with its warm breath draws serpents out of their holes in order to destroy them. We know that Christ was the hunted and hounded One. From the cradle to the grave, His life was sought. We also know that there existed a deadly enmity between Christ and the Devil, that Old Serpent who sought to destroy Christ. Christ came into the world to destroy Satan and his works. Christ died to destroy him who had power over death. I. The Sufferings of Christ -- vs. 1-21a.

It is necessary to see in this division, the sufferings of Christ in order to get a clear vision, of its scope, to see what the prophet David saw, and the message that the Spirit revealed in

prophecy. The speaker of this Psalm is not David, but Christ. In verses 1 to 22, Christ is the Speaker; in verses 23 and 24, the Holy Spirit is the Speaker; in verse 25, Christ is the Speaker; and in verses 26 to 31, the Spirit. Christ speaks in the first person, and the Spirit in the third person. The Person spoken to in both instances is God the Father.

1. Suffering From the Hand of God -- vs. 1-5.

In these verses we get a faint glimpse of the suffering of Christ as the innocent, spotless, holy and sinless Lamb of God, forsaken by God. Such a case was never known before, nor has it since been repeated, that a sinless and righteous man was forsaken by God. This never needs to be repeated. The sinless Man, Christ Jesus, was made sin for us. He became the Saviour and Substitute for all men. The Bible student must differentiate between the external sufferings and the internal sufferings of Christ. The Gospels portray the external sufferings of the innocent One. Psalms 22, and 69, and Isaiah 53, depict the internal sufferings of Christ. The external sufferings are what man did unto Him. He was betrayed, taken, captive, falsely accused, slapped, mocked, spit upon, blindfolded, scourged, stripped and made naked; a crown of thorns was placed upon His head; and His hands and feet were pierced by nailing Him to the cross. A sinful and fallen creature can suffer only so much; for there will come a time when the physical can no longer sustain under the strain, and death will ensue. What wicked men did unto Him cannot be compared with that which God did unto Him. Neither sin nor death could have any claim upon Him, because He was sinless, holy and unfallen. Because He was Deity, we cannot fathom His sufferings. The internal suffering of Christ is what the Sword of Divine wrath and justice did unto Him. In this judgment, God dealt infinitely with sin, and in so dealing with it in the Person of His beloved Son, showed His wrath against sin, and His love for the sinner. It is only through the death of Christ that God can forgive sins and save the sinner. The Gospels record the facts of the crucifixion, which was what man did unto Him, or His outward sufferings, but this Psalm reveals the feelings of the crucified One, or His inward sufferings.

Verse 1. The sufferings from the divine side are given first, then those from the human side. In other words we see what God did unto Him, before we see what man did unto Him. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is the wail of Calvary. While Christ was nailed to the cross, God the Father gathered up all sins from that time even to the first sin man committed and laid them all on Christ, then God reached forward and gathered up all sins, even to the last sin that ever will be committed and laid them with the penalty upon His Son. Then the Father turned His back on the Son and literally forsook Him. This is the only time that Christ personally addressed His Father as God. That near and dear name "Father" was not on His lips. God is the natural name for Deity. The natural man speaks of Deity as God. The sinner has no claim upon God as "Father." On the cross, Christ was in the sinner's place. There He asked God, "Why." If Deity (Christ as the God-Man) was forsaken by Deity (the Father), and God (Christ) cried unto God (Father), "Why," then why should man attempt to explain or endeavor to think that he can fully understand this mystery? Never through the eternal past, while the Son eternally dwelt in the bosom of the Father, did He hear a harsh or unkind word; never did He behold a frown or look of displeasure on His Father's face. Now, that all sins were laid on Him and being forsaken by God, was an element of bitterness which no human being can explain. The physical sufferings, intense as they must have been, were to Him of little comparison to the vicarious sufferings and the unspeakable agony of being forsaken by God. There was no help for Him.

"The words of My roaring," were expressive of profound mental anguish poured forth in vehement strains.

Verse 2. For our prayer to be unheard is not a new trial to the Christian. Christ keenly felt this while He was hanging on the cross; yet He held fast His belief in God and cried, "My God." As long as He was made a Sin-offering, He was not heard, because He was forsaken by God. The "daytime" in which He cried, was from nine o'clock in the morning, (the hour at which He was crucified, which also was the hour of the daily morning sacrifice) until twelve o'clock at noon when God hung the crape of sorrow and death in the sky and the sun turned black and there was darkness over the whole land. The "night season," was the period of darkness from twelve o'clock until three o'clock, the hour of the evening sacrifice, at which time He died.

Verse 3, is a most beautiful confession of trust and submission Though He was overwhelmed with darkness and sorrow, and not heard, yet He vindicated God as being holy and worthy of praise. He justified God in the midst of all His agony, though He was not heard.

The Hebrew fathers trusted in God (vs. 4 and 5) and not in vaunt; they trusted and God delivered them; they cried and were delivered; they trusted and were not disappointed. There could be no help for Him in this hour, for He must drink the bitter cup, and He drank it willingly to please the Father. He cried and was not heard; He trusted and was not delivered; He was made a reproach that we might be delivered -- that we might not be confounded; but know of a certainty that God has saved us from sin, wrath, judgment, darkness and hell, and for holiness and heaven.

2. Sufferings From the Hands of Israel -- vs. 6-8.

Following the sufferings from the hands of God, the Messiah in prophecy recites the sufferings received from His own people, Israel. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He came to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The rejection by His own made His sufferings more bitter because it came from those who were near to Him. His own were those who had received the law and prophets, the promises and the Levitical system with all of its foreshadowings. The sufferings were so intense and the load of sin so heavy that it crushed Him until His visage was marred. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" instead of us. Verses 6-8 are a confession of Christ unto God of the ill treatment He received from Israel, the priests, scribes and elders.

The offenses of the cross brought Him low, and made Him not worthy of regard. He cries, "I am a worm and no man." The priests treated Him as such. He was loathsome to them and hated by them; every one trampled upon Him, and trod Him under foot, as men do worms. He was made a worm particularly while hanging upon the cross, writhing in pain, for He was bruised and His visage marred. Because He was made a curse, He was without form, void and in darkness. An old saint has written, "a fisherman, when he casts his angle into the river, doth not throw the hook in bare, naked and uncovered, for then he knows the fish will never bite, and therefore he hides the hook with a worm, or some other bait, and so, the fish, biting at the worm, is caught by the hook. Thus Christ, speaking of Himself, saith, 'I am a worm.' He, coming to perform the great work of our redemption, did cover and hide the Godhead within the worm of

His human nature. The grand water-serpent, Leviathan, the Devil, thinking to swallow the worm of His humanity, was caught upon the hook of His divinity. This hook stuck in his jaws, and tore him very sore. By thinking to destroy Christ, he destroyed his own kingdom, and lost his power forever."

Verses 7 and 8 are exactly what the people cast at Him while He was hanging on the cross. To the people, death itself was not enough to inflict upon Him, therefore, they added mockery and scorn. It is true, Christ trusted in the Father; it is true, the Father delighted in the Son and the Son delighted Himself in the Father, There is truth in the sayings of the priests, the scribes and elders, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." That is, if He would save us, He cannot save Himself, and if He saves Himself, He cannot save us. They said it reproachfully, and to mean, If He cannot save Himself neither can He save anyone else. "They shake the head" at Him in mockings, ridiculings and derisions. Men "wagged their heads" at Him Whom angels adore and before Whom they veil their faces.

3. Christ's Humanity Dependent on God's Deity -- vs. 9-11.

The reproach Christ suffered which came from the lips of the Jews, cast reflection on Christ, that He was not the Son of God. It also cast reflection on God, that He was not the Father of Christ. This element of suffering, as it were, cut Him to the quick. Christ again vindicates God in this slander and justifies the Father by confessing His faithfulness unto Him all through His earthly life, from the incarnation and birth even to that hour. Christ confesses that God has been faithful and true unto Him, and as it were, relieves God of any injustice by assuming the reproach and taking it all upon Himself. These verses teach the miraculous conception, the incarnation, and the dependence of Christ as a Man upon God. From His birth, all through His life, He depended upon His Father, and His Father never failed Him once. But now, there was trouble. The disciples fled and deserted Him, and God turned away from Him. Trouble had come and no one could help Him. He must go through alone.

4. Sufferings From Satan and Demons -- vs. 12, 13. The suffering from Satanic hatred, demon rage and cruelty is described in verses 12 and 13. In this dark hour, there was not only the cruelty and hatred of men, but all the wrath of hell was against Him. Jesus said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lu. 22:53). Satan and his demons were doing their worst. A part of Genesis 3:15, was being fulfilled, "Thou (the serpent -- Satan) shalt bruise His heel." The heel is the lowest part of our being. Christ had two natures (His Deity -- the higher, and His humanity-the lower). Satan bruised His heel, the lower nature of Christ. The "many bulls," the "strong bulls of Bashan," the "ravening and roaring lion," were the demons and Satan. In this dark, trying hour, these compassed Him, and as is written in prophecy, "They gaped upon Me with their mouths." The saints of God often, go through the valley of the shadow of death, spending nights and days in conflict, battling with fears and doubt under the oppression of some demon. But on this occasion, all hell seemed to be turned loose on Him. They seemed like many wild bulls, goring Him, and as roaring lions devouring Him. They added spiritual darkness to literal darkness. They fired many darts at Him, trying to defile Him with their doubts, and wiles, and with confusion; to cause Him to think some thought, or say some word, or have a feeling of impatience, or distrust. Hard did they press Him to complain of His sufferings, to doubt the

Father, and to resent His sufferings. But, thank God, not for one moment did He yield. Not one word of complaint escaped His lips.

5. Physical Sufferings -- vs. 14, 15. Turning from His enemies, our Lord describes His own personal condition which is exceedingly touching, and yet can only be grasped in a faint way. Verses fourteen and fifteen are to be understood as literal. His flesh, bones, heart, bowels, strength, tongue and jaws, are all to be understood as His literal and human members, and the suffering as physical. This cannot be spiritualized or be made a figure, for the risen Lord said, "Behold My hands and feet that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." (Lu. 24. 39). "I am poured out like water." Language fails to express His physical suffering. As water poured out falls from the vessel to the earth, all particles separate farther and farther from each other and have no power to return to their place, expresses utter weakness, so the Lord was helpless while hanging on the cross. He poured out His strength. "All My bones are out of joint." The large rude nails driven through His hands and feet in fastening Him to the cross and the jar occasioned by fixing the cross in its socket, the fire of wrath and the penalty for sin in His body, caused every muscle to melt and every bone to be out of joint. The fire of Almighty wrath that would have consumed our soul forever in hell, was no light thing for Him to bear as our Substitute. We know that the greatest and most intolerable pain the body can bear is that arising from a bone out of joint. All His bones (over two hundred) in His sacred body were out of joint. While He was suspended on the cross, all joints began to give so that all the bones were parted the one from the other so visibly that in truth they "may tell (count) all My bones," (v. 17). The loss of blood from the nail wounds, the melting of muscles and the melting of His heart, caused extreme thirst so that His tongue clave to His jaws. On the cross He cried, "I thirst." Wicked men gave Him vinegar and gall to drink. He poured out His life that we might drink of the water of life and never thirst. The melting of His muscles, heart and bowels, and all bones which were out of joint, were the result of the "bruising of the Lord." This resulted in His visage being marred and His body becoming without form as a worm. He was brought "into the dust of death." He died death in its damnatory sense. He tasted death for every man. He died a death of deaths. He died with our sins upon Him. He died in the dark, in sorrow, with our guilt on Him, forsaken by God, and with the Father's face turned away from Him. The sting of death was stinging Him to death, and when He died, death was robbed of its stinger.

6. Sufferings from the Hands of the Gentiles -- vs. 16:18. Many and varied were the sufferings inflicted upon Christ. The combined characteristics of two species of ferocious animals (the "many bulls" and the "roaring lion" representing demons and Satan) were not sufficient to represent all the means of His sufferings. Another figure is before us, that of the dogs. "Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me." These dogs were the Gentile soldiers. The Romans were in authority, the Jews could not legally condemn or execute any one. The Jews must enlist the Roman authority. Christ was not only mocked by the Jews, but also by the Gentiles. The soldiers mocked Him, placed a mock-crown composed of thorns upon His head, stripped Him, put a mock-robe on Him and a mock-reed in His hands and ridiculed Him. It was the soldiers who carried out the execution, nailed Christ to the cross and thus pierced His hands and feet. Crucifixion was, the Roman method of execution. This prophecy was given through David by the Spirit almost a thousand years before the Roman Empire existed. These "dogs and the assembly of wicked," which inclosed Christ were less ferocious than the "lion." As hunters surround their game with a circle and gradually encompass

them with an ever narrowing pack of hounds, such is the picture before us. In the center stands not a trembling deer, but a suffering, bleeding, dying, innocent Man.

The custom of the time was that the garments of the executed fell to the lot of the executioners, therefore, "they part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." The sufferings Christ bore, caused from the shame and reproach of nakedness, cannot be fully comprehended by man. As the Savior and Substitute for a fallen race, He shed His blood to cleanse us and gave up His garments to clothe us. The first Adam, by his fall, lost the robe of innocence and righteousness, and ever since then the human race has worn clothes second-hand. So the Last Adam, taking man's place, could die in no other manner than in shameful nakedness to provide a robe of righteousness for the sons of God. The prophecies concerning the sufferings of Christ were so literally and minutely carried out that they fit history, even as the skin fits the body, or the glove the hand. The clothes became the property of the soldiers, according to the usage of the Romans. The outer garment probably was divided into four parts by ripping the seams. The under garment or His vesture was seamless, therefore, worthless if parted. This led the soldiers to "cast lots" for His vesture.

7. Prayer for Deliverance Answered -- vs. 19-21. In these verses, we again view the Suffering Saviour praying. This cry for deliverance was heard. The cry made during the time He made atonement for sin was ,not heard, but sin having been atoned for, He was heard. This we learn from Hebrews 5:7. "Deliver My soul from the sword," that is, from death and the abyss. His soul was not left in Hades neither did His body see corruption, (Ps. 16:10). "My darling," can not mean the church, for the church was yet a mystery and not revealed until later (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:5). The marginal note in the Bible reads "My only one" and is so in the original. It is His sinless, holy human body. He prays that His body after death will be delivered from the power of the dog, that is, from being destroyed by the Gentiles. Pilate, had the authority over His body. Satan may have tried hard to destroy this body and make impossible the resurrection. The legs of the two thieves were broken to hasten their death. Satan would instigate the soldiers to break the bones of Christ. But none of His bones could be broken, neither could the Scriptures be broken. One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side after He was dead. This no doubt was done in malicious rage. He did not feel it, nevertheless, it released the blood that was shed in His inner cavity. John saw this and bare record. In answer to Christ's, prayer, Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus, begged the body of Jesus. Pilate commanded His body be given them, and they wrapped it in clean linen and gave it a decent burial. His human body was constructed by the Holy Ghost and was a new creation. It was prophesied that He should not see corruption. This body was sinless. Death or corruption had no claim thereupon, consequently it was preserved in death, changed in resurrection, and Christ ascended in it, then was glorified, and will in this body come in glory. Not only did Christ pray for His body, which after death would be helpless, but Christ also prayed to be delivered from the lion's mouth that is, that His soul might be delivered from Hades and be united with His body, and that the body be resurrected with great power.

II. The Glory That Follows -- vs. 22-31.

A great transition follows in these verses. The change is that of a great tempest to a great calm; of darkness to light; of suffering and death to resurrection, life and glory. The prayer of Christ for resurrection is heard. In these verses, the crucified, risen and living Christ is heard in

testimony and praise. The blessed results of redemption unto Israel and all nations is anticipated. The scope of this vision reaches into the glorious millennium and into the blessed state of the eternal ages. It was not possible for His body to see corruption; it was not possible for His soul to remain in hell, nor for His body to remain in the grave; neither was it possible for the tomb to remain sealed. But His soul must be raised up out of hell; His body must be raised out of the tomb on the third day according to the Scriptures, and after forty days the resurrected, immortal Christ must in soul and body be carried up into heaven to be glorified and exalted.

1. Christ Celebrating in Resurrection -- vs. 22. The risen Christ is speaking unto His Father, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." This He did on the day of resurrection. To "declare" is to make known, or publish, and this was His first concern. Christ has a great love and concern for His Father and for His believers. His brethren are those who have a relation to Him through the new birth and faith. The flock was scattered the day the Shepherd was smitten. The first work of the risen Christ was in regathering, calming and comforting His flock. Christ, the Father, and the brethren are grouped together as one. Christ prayed to the end that all might be one, "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." (John 17:21). In this we see the great condescension, of the Son of God and the high exaltation of the sons of men. "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." On one occasion, Christ appeared and revealed Himself unto above five hundred brethren.

2. Israel Redeemed, Restored and Rejoicing -- vs. 23-26. [I shall insert right here that while I respect Joshua Stauffer as a Christian writer, I disagree with his Pre-Millennial views expressed in the remainder of this chapter, and, I refer the reader to my own views as expressed in my book, "His Appearing and His Kingdom," hdm0124. -- DVM] One of the great benefits of the death of Christ is that atonement has been made for the national sin of Israel. God's dealings with Israel have always been and always will be national. Israel was called as a nation. The Lord said, "I will make of thee (Abraham) a great nation" (Gen. 12:2). Israel was delivered out of Egypt as a nation. They went through the Red Sea as a nation. In the wilderness, Israel was miraculously sustained as a nation. Joshua led them across Jordan into Canaan as a nation. They were to be a blessing to all the nations of the world. They failed as a nation. As a nation they rejected Christ their King and crucified Him. Their sovereignty was removed from them as a nation. They are scattered as a nation. They are in part blindness, as a nation. But the gifts and callings of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29). God cannot fail in His plans and purposes. Christ has made atonement for their national sin and failure. We read, "He shall save His people (Israel) from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:26, 27). Also, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). And again, "For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed" (Joel 3:21). After the day of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:4-7), Israel will be born again as a nation (Isa. 66:7, 8), then she will be forgiven and restored. It is then that Israel will fulfill her calling and fit into God's program as a nation. This will not be in the church age, but after the, fullness of the Gentiles be come in, then all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:25, 26). In verse 23, the Risen Christ invites the redeemed nation of Israel to join Him in praising, fearing and glorifying the name of the Lord. The ground for praise, and the reason He invites them to join Him in praise is seen in verse 24. It is because God heard Him in His cry for resurrection. He was the afflicted and the despised One. The Father did

not despise nor abhor, neither did He hide His face from Him, but for a moment. His hiding was not final nor eternal. It was only while He was made a sin offering. This is good ground for praise. Everybody should shout and rejoice because this has been accomplished. All unsaved people have reason to praise God, for there is hope for them if they are yet out of the grave and hell, they may be saved. The great congregation (v. 25), is redeemed Israel; that is, all the redeemed Israelites of all generations and the redeemed Israelites in the Millennium. It is before the great number who will be as the sand of the sea shore and as the stars of heaven that the glorified Christ will praise and honor the Father. It is then that He will pay His "vows before them that fear Him." Man must praise and honor the Son before the Father. The Son will praise and honor the Father before all the redeemed saints. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied;" that is, all who take the right attitude before Him will find a feast. These in turn will praise Christ. Praise (see vs. 22, 23, 25, 26) will course and recourse from earth to heaven, and heaven to earth. Men will praise God for the death and resurrection of Christ and will glorify Him, and the Son will praise and honor the Father because He was heard and delivered in the resurrection. Christ sees the gift of eternal life coming poor lost sinners who seek Him, and He cries out, "your heart shall live forever."

3. Gentile Nations Turning to Christ -- vs. 27-29. That the Gentiles should shave and enter into the blessings of Israel is no new revelation. The prophecy of Noah predicted that Shem would be in the Messianic line -- the line of blessing, and that Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem, that is Shem would give shelter to Japheth (the Gentiles) and let him be a sharer with him of the blessing. To Abraham, the Lord said, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (Gen. 12:3) and "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). Isaiah writes, "and in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign, of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek" (Isa. 11:10). "Thy seed (Israel) shall inherit the Gentiles" (Isa. 54:3). "Beheld thou shalt call a nation, that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God" (Isa. 55:5). No Old Testament prophet saw the Church, and that out of both Jews and Gentiles should be gathered a people for the name of Christ and the body of Christ, the Building of Christ and the Bride of Christ. Not until Israel as a nation is redeemed, regathered and restored will great national blessings come to the Gentile nations such as are prophesied in the Old Testament. The secret of national blessings coming to the Gentile nations is for Israel to be reborn, restored to her country and live under the reign of King Jesus. It is then that "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." The salvation of the world will not be in this age. Blessings must come to Israel as a nation before blessings can come to the Gentiles as nations. Conversion in this age is individual, and in the next age it will be national. The King of all Israel and the Governor of the nations of the earth will be the crucified, risen, exalted and glorified Christ. The King will be Saviour and God. He will be "remembered" and all will "worship" before Him. The vision brightens till it covers all the future. He sees His ransomed people enjoying the fruits of His sorrows. The "ends of the world" turn to Him; all the "kindreds of the nations" worship Him; all kingdoms are given to Him, and the nations bow beneath His scepter. He sees the heathen world rescued from its idolatry, darkness and unbelief, (v. 29). There can be no salvation outside of Christ. Without Him "none can keep alive his own soul." He must save and sustain. He makes alive and keeps alive. He is the Author of our faith and of our salvation.

4. The Sons of God Proclaiming Redemption's Story -- vs. 30, 31. Christ was the "corn of wheat" that fell into the ground. Thus He will not abide alone. He was the "Seed," Seed is reproductive. Everything will bring forth after its kind. The new race of sons of God will be even like Him. "A seed shall serve Him;" that is, all born of God, become sons and servants of God. This is but natural. As soon as a sinner is saved, he becomes a personal worker and becomes interested in the salvation of others. Many servants of the Lord have devoted all their lives; suffering, sacrificing and denying themselves in telling "redemption's story" to lost sinners. This they did gladly because the love of Christ constrained them. Like their Lord and Saviour, they went forth weeping, bearing the precious seed, so that there will be a greater harvest of sons of God. Nothing but the new birth and the grace of God would ever lead many to devote their lives and service to Christ and His cause. In this they are like the Lord of the harvest. "It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation:" that is, it shall be counted unto the Lord for His generation. All who are saved become His generation, sons of God, the household of God, His seed, His progeny, even His own. The Revised Version reads, "It shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation." So it has ever been since Christ died and arose. The gospel story has been told to every succeeding generation. The story is worthy of passing on from generation to generation. All who have been born should be told that they must be born again. All who believe become the generation of the Lord; that is, the new and redeemed race of sons of God. "They" (v. 31) that shall declare His righteousness are the "seed" and "generation" that will proclaim God's wonderful works, which must be published unto the oncoming generation that they, too, may believe and become the seed and servants of Christ the Lord. This is to continue until the Lord comes from heaven to gather His own unto Himself. Then the blessed results of redemption will continue throughout eternity, never ceasing, but ever increasing.

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03 -- THE PSALM OF THE CROOK -- PSALM 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

* * *

Much has been written on this Psalm, probably more than on any other Psalm. There may be several reasons for this. One reason why this Psalm is so great is that it is so simple. Simplicity is ever a mark of greatness. There are only one hundred eighteen words in this Psalm. Ninety-three of these words are monosyllables. A child can easily read it. It frequently is found in some Second and Third Readers of school text books. Yet it has depth that, for three thousand years, readers, expositors and writers have not discovered, or exhausted.

Another reason this Psalm is so great is its quality. There is much in it because it is full of Christ. "Little is much when God is in it." God is more concerned with quality than He is with quantity. This Psalm can be easily and distinctly repeated in two minutes. Yet in these words of two minutes duration, there has been comfort, hope and cheer for all saints through the last three thousand years. It still reads as it ever read. It has not changed, nor has the Lord of this Psalm changed.

One of the great factors of this great Psalm (though many are unconscious of what makes it so great, so real and rich to them) are the pronouns. In this Psalm, there are 17 personal pronouns, singular in number, present in tense; and thirteen are in the possessive case. This makes it rich, real and personal. It does not read, "Our shepherd," or "We shall not want;" nor "He maketh us to lie down," nor "He leadeth us," etc. To read it thus, would lose much of its value to us. It is true that God loves the world, and Christ loves the Church. Many have the impression that God loves the world as a mass; that He deals with humanity as a whole. It is comforting to know that God has an individual love and a personal interest in every individual. God is faithful, loving and patient in His dealings with His children. He deals with each one individually. He lavishes all of His love on His sheep; will make all of His grace abound toward them; and will give all of His time, attention and affection to each individual as though he was His only object of love. His ears are ever open and His eyes are upon each believer as though he were the only person that required His care. God gives each believer the same personal and individual attention. He is God; therefore, He is able to do so. Christ, the Great Shepherd, has a personal interest in, and exercises great care over each sheep in His fold. This Psalm reads, "my Shepherd," "I shall not want," "He leadeth me," etc. The tense is present in all of these pronouns; but the last verse is in the future tense, which makes it all the better and secures eternal comfort and bliss. The sheep of the Good Shepherd are well repaid in the present life for following Him; in the life to come, the Good Shepherd of the sheep will eternally reward them.

The predominating thought throughout this Psalm is: "The Lord is my Shepherd." That is the reason, "I shall not want." If He is Lord and Shepherd, there can be no room for wants. This Psalm teaches all that He is and does.

"The Lord is my Shepherd," therefore, I shall not want.

"He maketh me to lie down," therefore, I shall not want rest.

"In green pastures," therefore, I shall not want food.

"Beside the still waters," therefore, I shall not want drink.

"He restoreth my soul," therefore, I shall not want restoration.

"He leadeth me," therefore, I shall not want guidance.

"Thou art with me," therefore I shall not want companionship.

"They comfort me," therefore, I shall not want comfort.

"Thou preparest a table before me," therefore, I shall not want a feast.

"In the presence of mine enemies," therefore, I shall not want victory.

"Thou anointest my head," therefore, I shall not want joy.

"My cup runneth over," therefore, I shall not want anything.

"All the days of my life," therefore I shall not want anything in Time.

"Forever," therefore, I shall not want anything in Eternity.

This Psalm begins, "The Lord is my Shepherd," and ends with the Lord, "in the house of the Lord." It begins with the sheep in the "pasture" of the Lord, and ends with the sheep in the "house" of the Lord. It begins with the Shepherd present with the sheep on earth, and ends with the sheep present with the Shepherd in heaven. Between the first and last verses, there are ten personal pronouns of the Lord. Five are in the third person and five in the second person. Christ is spoken of in verses 1, 2, 3 and 6, and spoken to in verses 4 and 5.

A remarkable feature of this Psalm is that there is no suggestion of sin. Christ atoned for all sin in Psalm 22, and on the cross cried, "It is finished." In regard to the believer, his sins have been forgiven and sin as a principle has been cleansed before he can truthfully say Psalm 23. Sin must be dealt with in the believer before Christ becomes Lord in that life. The believer then is at peace with God; has the peace of God and the God of peace. All is peace in this Psalm.

This Psalm beautifully illustrates Christian life after the believer has entered into the sanctifying grace. Christ, the Good Shepherd, tenderly leads and cares for His sheep. He provides for the sheep. He goes before. When the sheep follows the Good Shepherd, it shall have no wants. The sheep lies down in green pastures; is led beside peaceful waters; experiences continual restoration; walks in paths of righteousness; glorifies the name of the Lord; walks through the valley of trials and darkness; is supported by the rod and staff of the Lord; enjoys feasts in the presence of the Lord and of enemies; receives anointings; its cup is running over; is surrounded with goodness and mercy all through life, and then has an eternity with the Lord in the House of the Lord.

Everything in this Psalm speaks of perfection and fullness. Christ possesses all the attributes of Deity. As God, He is as old as He can be, as powerful as He can be, as wise as He can be, and as loving as He can be. Deity is without increase or diminution. In His humanity,

Christ has all the attributes of a sinless, holy Man. In Him is perfection. Not only is He perfect God and perfect Man, but there was perfection in all His words and works. There was perfection in the sacrifice He made when He offered Himself without spot unto God. He is perfectly qualified to be the Good Shepherd. He is the best Shepherd in the world. He has made every provision for our salvation. There is no room for wants when He is accepted. Throughout the Psalm, everything has been, provided for; there is no need for more; there can be nothing better, no addition. If the sheep trusts, obeys and follows the Shepherd, there will be no wants, no hunger, no thirst, no going astray, no fear, no lack in time, or in eternity.

Verse One

"The Lord" -- One of the characteristics of the Lord is abundance. The Lord has over one hundred and seventy-five names. Name is indicative of character and nature. One name could not possibly reveal all that He is in all His attributes. The natural name for Deity is God. The sinner addresses Him as God. When the sinner is saved, he can address Christ as Saviour. Then the believer can go deeper with God and enter into the sanctifying grace. It is then that Christ the Saviour becomes Lord in that life. For Christ to be Lord, He must be Supreme, be above and over all. We must become surrendered and subdued unto Him. If the Lord cannot be Lord of all, He will not be Lord at all in our lives. Paul says, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." It takes the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the believer to enable him to say in truth and in deed, "Jesus is Lord." Then he can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," therefore, "I shall not want." To know this in experience, the believer must be consecrated, yielded, surrendered and subdued before the Lord. To make this matter clearer: Suppose a young man hires out to a farmer for a stipulated amount each month. The young man's time, will, strength and obedience belong to his boss, who is lord over him. After working a few days, his master says to him one morning, "I want you to take the team and cultivator and plow corn today." Then the young man replies, "No, boss, I am going to repair the fence today so the cows will stay in the meadow." Who would be boss in this case? The young man would be boss, of course.

The Lord announced His suffering, death and resurrection to the disciples. It was then that Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." Who was Lord? When Christ becomes Lord in our life, He is Supreme; He has the preeminence and we are surrendered unto Him. He is over us and we are under Him. When He becomes Lord, we are His property, His servants, and are on His hands. The responsibility rests upon Him. Every care is rolled on Him. He is to carry every burden and supply every need. Our part is to be submissive and obedient.

"My Shepherd." The tenth chapter of John is a good exposition on Psalm 23:1. There we learn that the Good Shepherd is our gate, guard, guide and God. He knows His flock personally and calls them by name. He promises salvation, liberty and food, if we enter into His fold and flock. The Good Shepherd loves and suffers for His flock. He has laid down His life for the sheep. Surely the Man Who loved us enough to die for us, will be true unto us, and we dare to trust Him because He is ever true to His own.

"I shall not want." The reason we shall not want is that we have the best Shepherd in the world. When we have Him, we cannot wish for more; we cannot have more. The Good Shepherd

can so satisfy us that we shall not want. It is not a spiritual, healthful sign when people have too many wants. David wrote this Psalm, being a man of many cares, duties and responsibilities; and there might have been a thousand and one things which he might have desired. In another Psalm (27:4), he writes of his one great ambition in life: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." It often, is the case, people have many wants, and what they want is not what they need. There may be some cases where people do not want what they need or what the Lord wants them to have. Too many wants lead us to become nothing but spindlings.

In a field of beets, we see some foreigners chopping out young plants. They chop out a dozen and probably leave only one, or leave one every twelve to fifteen inches. We might suggest, "Is this not a shame, a waste and a loss?" No. If this were not done, all would be spindlings. They are weeded out in order to raise a larger crop. Many wants lead to many disappointments. Christ knows what to weed out of our lives, where to lead us, what gifts to endow us with. There is a state that we can attain in grace where the Christian can be satisfied in Him. Paul testified, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11).

To say, "The Lord is my Shepherd" means great condescension on His part and great promotion on our part. In order for the Lord to become the Good Shepherd, God became Man, a Saviour and Substitute for all men and the Man of sorrows. He came from a throne; was born in a manger and died on a cross. As the Good Shepherd, He must die for His sheep. The sheep could not die for Him, for He needed no sacrifice. Neither is sinful man capable or qualified to make atonement. This great condescension provided the means for our promotion. He, the Son of God, became the Son of Man that sinful sons of man might become sons of God. In order to be able to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," we must be His sheep. No one can be His sheep unless he has been converted and had his nature changed. The unconverted are not sheep, but are described as goats, and wolves. The sheep become the special object of His love. The Shepherd does the active part. The responsibility is assumed by Him. The sheep are His property. He possesses, provides, protects, guides, feeds, leads, anoints and fills our cups to overflowing. The sheep take a passive part. They submit, obey, love, walk, trust, feast and dwell with the Shepherd.

Verse Two

"He maketh me to lie down." This is a great secret that the sheep needs to learn. How often He makes us to lie down! The surrendered life is a powerful life. The submissive life is an impressive life. O, how often the Christian has to learn this lesson over! A hard lesson to learn is to give up; to keep still; to take hands off and to cease our efforts. When sheep are satisfied and have no wants, they lie down. It is claimed that when sheep are hungry, scared or nervous, they do not lie down. But when the shepherd picks a sheep up in his arms and makes it lie down, the sheep submits, lies down and is at peace.

"In green pastures." This is where He makes us to lie down. The marginal rendering is interesting and beautiful. It reads, "in pastures of tender grass." It is good of the Shepherd to

select the place where His sheep shall feed and lie down. This He does, where the grass is short and tender. This grass is green, not dead and dried up. It is always fresh, always rich, always tender and never exhausted. There is no need or fear of biting the bare ground when the grass is long enough for the flock to lie down in. If people had their own way, they would feed where the grass is tall, rank and tough. If people could have their own way, they would do big things, become popular and famous. We often have observed that cattle feed where the grass is short and tender, leaving big tufts, rank grass, thorns and thistles alone. If God can put a sense in the nose of a cow that she will leave weeds, thistles and rank grass alone, and feed where it is short and tender; surely God can put a holy discernment within our soul that we will not feed on anything unsound, poisonous or popular; but feed where He pastures. He makes the sheep to lie down that it will be rested. This rests and strengthens the sheep for walking. The sheep is not forever to lie down, but is to journey on.

"He leadeth me beside still waters." That is, waters of quietness. The Shepherd seeks the highest good of the sheep in all things, in this life and in the life to come. Water is one of the greatest necessities of life. In relation to the physical, it is next in importance to air and followed by food. Sheep do not like to drink at a falls; at turbulent or swift waters. These waters, where He leads, are never failing. Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." In John 7:37-39, we read, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive." Water symbolizes the Spirit. The Spirit has a close relation and a special interest in the sheep, for He is the executive of the Godhead. The Lord leads by His Spirit. The ways of the Lord are gentle, easy, peaceful, blessed and joyful. God speaks in a "still small voice." The Spirit is very tender in His workings. When the Shepherd leads and the sheep follows, the sheep will be refreshed, satisfied and full of joy, because His paths are paths of peace and His ways are ways of pleasantness.

Verse Three

"He restoreth my soul." "He", not His servants or ministers, does the restoring. When sorrowful, low in grace, or weak, He is our joy, our strength, our all in all. How often His children need restoration! He saved us from ruin and sin and seeks to reclaim us from any subsequent failure. He restores to original purity. When the sheep wanders, the Shepherd restores it; that is, turns it back into the path. The Lord turns His sheep from their errors or wandering, then leads them in paths of righteousness.

"He leadeth me." He, as the Good Shepherd, personally leads His sheep. He does not drive, force or coerce them. If we follow, it must be voluntary. He is the great Leader and Commander of His people. His leadership assures His presence, blessings, safety, and protection. He goes before, therefore, we can safely follow.

"In the paths of righteousness" He leads us into, them, and then leads us in them. The paths He leads us in are narrow; they may be rough, but they are right paths that lead in the right direction, that will land us in the right place. His ways and commandments are not grievous to the Christian, for he delights in His will.

"His name's sake." This is why He leads us in His paths. It is for His name's sake, not our name. His name is the name that is above all names. The angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." God has ordained, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." This holy name has been blasphemed, despised and defamed by man; but God has honored and exalted it above all names. This name is so great and important that he that believeth on the Name of the only begotten Son of God shall be saved. Whatsoever we ask in His name, He will do. The Father sent the Comforter in His name. Paul was commissioned to make known this name among the Gentiles; and out of the Gentiles, the Father will select a people for the Name of Christ. This Name is so great, it must be honored. The Good Shepherd leads in the paths of righteousness, and nothing will honor and exalt that Name so much as when His sheep follow where He leads them. When any one seeks a great name and fame, and to attract attention to himself, this, detracts from His Great Name. When the believer seeks only to glorify that Name, leaves the glory alone, desires it not, asks it not, he can go as deep, as far and as high with God as he desires. No one can glorify that Name any better than to follow the Shepherd, do what He says, go where He sends and be what He wants him to be.

Verse Four

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." The "yea" means a "yes," or an "amen" response of the sheep to the Shepherd in being led in the paths of righteousness, regardless of where He leads. A valley is a low place, a dark place, a narrow passage, In Christian experience there are periods of joy and of sorrow, of easiness and heaviness, when the way seems bright and when it seems dark. This is not literal or physical death that is in view here, however, this verse and Psalm has been a help and comfort to many dying saints. It especially applies to this life. It is the "valley of the shadow of death," and is to be distinguished from the "valley of death." If there is a shadow, there must be a light somewhere. For the time being, everything seems dark; the sheep cannot see, cannot feel, the time seems long, the battle is fierce, the fiery darts of the enemy fly thick and fast, the trials seem heavy, the Lord seems afar off and the path dark and dangerous. How did the sheep get in the valley of the shadow of death? By disobedience? By transgression? By going astray? By rebellion? No. The sheep gets in the valley of the shadow of death by being led in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. Sometimes people may say when thus led, "I will not stand for it;" "I will not put up with it ;" or "I will not take it." By doing this, they lose the blessing and the great and holy Name will not be honored and glorified. The Shepherd leads us there. When in the valley, we are to "walk through" and this will be the way to get out again. All through history, walking has been the most used, the best and safest mode of traveling. The sheep is not to turn around and go back, to shrink or fear, but to "walk", and "walk through." Walking may be slow, but it will be safe and sure. As long as we walk, we make progress. Enoch walked with God. He did not fly, run, nor go by spurts; but his was a daily, steady walk without a break. There is nothing to fear. No one needs to be afraid of a shadow. A shadow cannot stop a man from walking, or close up a path.

"I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." He led us there. He is present. He will not leave us. We have nothing to fear. We are on His hands. We are where we are because He led us there. The thing to do is to be true and walk through. C. H. Spurgeon writes, "The worst evils in life are those which do not exist except in our imagination. If we had no troubles but real troubles, we should not have a tenth part of our present sorrows. We feel a thousand deaths in fearing one, but the Psalmist was cured of the disease of fearing." Christ and fear cannot dwell together. His presence is with the sheep when He leads them through the valley as truly as when He makes us to lie down in green pastures, or when He leads beside the peaceful waters. From the very fact that in verses one and three, the Shepherd is spoken of, and in this verse He is spoken to, proves His presence is with the sheep when it is in the valley.

"Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." These are in His hand. They are employed for our safety and comfort. The "rod" is a club used for defense against assailants. He is well able to wield it and to defend us. His "staff" He lends us to lean on in our weariness. Both the "rod" and the "staff" comfort us. With these He protects, defends, preserves from danger, brings back, guides, reproves and chastens. The rod and staff have been interpreted to mean the Spirit and the Word. The Christian has these in this life to comfort him in his journey, especially while he walks through the valley. The Spirit and the Word comfort, guide, support and encourage. They both point to Christ and to heaven.

Verse Five

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." From this we learn that the "valley of the shadow of death" is not physical death, for after death comes rest and heaven for the saints. There will be no enemies in heaven. Death is the last enemy for the saint. This table is prepared for us after we walk in "the paths of righteousness," that lead through the "valley of the shadow of death." When the sheep follows and walks through, the Shepherd will then spread a table of good things for a feast. Many do not have a table spread before them because they do not follow, or go through the valley.

A beautiful illustration of this verse is, when Christ was in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. The Spirit and the Word were His stay. For forty days he was tempted, and during these forty days He fasted. For forty days there was no voice from heaven, no blessing, all was testing. The Spirit led Him there. He remained there until the Spirit led Him out. He was true. He did not fail. He overcame Satan. He passed through the valley of the shadow of death. He feared no evil though He was surrounded by the Evil One. After Satan fired every shot he had at the Son of Man and ended all the temptation, what else could he do but leave Christ for a season? Then a table was prepared for Him, and the angels ministered unto Him. This was in the presence of His enemies. The Spirit was as truly with Him during the forty days and at the end as He was at the banks of Jordan when the voice of the Father was heard; for Christ, after the feast, returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.

"Thou anointest my head with oil." In the Bible, we learn that men were anointed for different purposes. In the Orient, the host anointed the guest. This was done in the preparation for the banquet. This gave smoothness to the head and produced a fragrant odor. Anointing stands for consecration. All of God's great men are anointed men. Moses was anointed to lead

Israel out of Egypt. Aaron was anointed to be the High Priest. This holy anointing oil indicates recognition, separation, fragrance and unction. David was anointed to be king. Prophets were anointed when inaugurated to higher service. The anointing set them apart for holy service. Anointing stands for power, authority, comfort, joy and healing. This is beautifully illustrated in the prophecy written by Isaiah concerning Christ, which was read by Christ and fulfilled in Christ: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to. bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison, to them that are bound... to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This was true of Christ and to some degree needs to be true: of every follower. The anointing prepares us for the banquet-for refreshment -- for comfort for rest -- for joy -- for indument for service -- for entrance into heaven and the presence of God. Before the High Priest passed the veil into the holy of holies and entered into the presence of the Shekinah glory, it was necessary for him to have his head anointed with oil. The oil and the anointing are typical of the Holy Ghost and the precious and gracious work of the Spirit fitting us for life, for service and for entrance into the presence of God.

"My cup runneth over." This represents an abundance and an over abundance. A cup full -- enough; a cup running over -- more than enough. Our cup runs over with love -- with joy -- with peace -- with victory -- with praise -- with blessings -- with inspiration. Our part is to carry our cup upright and let it overflow. It overflows that we may have the fullness and that others may be refreshed. Our cup may not hold much but it may overflow a great deal. It is not a question of our capacity, whether our cup is large or small, for the entire well or the whole fountain is available for its overflow.

Verse Six

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." This verse takes in all Time and all Eternity. It takes in all that any saint could wish for in Time and Eternity. We can wish for nothing better than goodness and mercy in this life, nor can there be anything better or higher in eternity than to dwell in the house of the Lord with the Lord. The sheep is not talking to the Lord, but about the Lord. "Surely," means truly, certainly, verily, so be it, amen. It corresponds to "I know." The Christian is an "I know" person. He knows for he has the Word of God on which to stand. If the sheep can say "surely" or verily, how much more can the Good Shepherd say, "Verily, verily." The Gospel in which Christ declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd, the double verily is used twenty-five times. "Verily, verily," means, surely, surely; truly, truly; certainly, certainly; amen, amen; so be it, so be it; indeed, indeed. It is doubly sure, coming from the Father and from the Son.

"Goodness and mercy," are two attendants. These wait on us. Goodness may refer to our temporal blessings and that which pertains to the need of our body -- the outward and physical. Mercy refers to our spiritual blessings. Grace is God's undeserved mercy and loving kindness. Mercy is even a more tender word than grace. "Follow" means pursue. The Good Shepherd is with us, goodness and mercy follow us; beneath us are green pastures; beside us are still waters; before us is a table; around us are enemies, and ahead of us is the house of the Lord. What more

could we wish? This brings us even to the journey's end. This is the crown and hope of the Christian.

"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The house is a dwelling place. This house will be heaven and our eternal home. The journey being ended, the sheep will never more roam. The saints will "dwell" in the house of the Lord. To dwell, is to abide -- to stay. This will be the last move for us. This suggests much. It suggests rest and permanency. There will be no more pilgrimage, for the journey is ended, the battle is over, the victory is won, and the crown is gained. In the light of added revelation, the house of the Lord is the New Jerusalem. This is the city Abraham looked for, and when he saw it in vision, he was content to dwell in tents. It spoiled him for this world. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Christ has been gone now for nineteen centuries. No one can conceive the magnificence, the grandeur, the beauty and glory of that place. While Christ is with the Father preparing the place for us, the Spirit is in the world preparing us for that place. John the Revelator, saw the descent of the Bridal city and gives a brief description of the material, the walls, the foundations, the streets, the river of life and the tree of life.

"Forever" implies infinity of time, which is ever lasting and lasting ever. It is time without end. Our dwelling in the house of the Lord of necessity must be forever. If it were not forever, that would mar the joy and bliss Of heaven. There are some things in this present life which are enjoyable, but they do not last. If the Lord would assure us a safe arrival in the New Jerusalem and promise us that we could live with Him for a thousand years and have every blessing and privilege heaven can afford, our joy could not be full and complete. A thousand years is a long time. It is thirty-one years longer than Methuselah lived and twenty times longer than the average person lives. After enjoying heaven a thousand years, no one would then be willing to go into oblivion or to be annihilated.

If the Lord would assure us of heaven for ten thousand years with all of its glories, which would be much longer than the history of the human race, even this would fail to make our joy full and complete. The saint would not then desire to become non-existent. Ten thousand years with no longer to live would mar heaven for us. If the promise were made for a million years, this too, would mar our joy. Now a million years is a long time and longer than our minds can fully realize, but eventually a million years would come and be gone. The thought of an end mars the joy for us. Should the Lord say, "You may live with Me forever and live without dying; have joy without sorrow and drink of the water of life freely, and eat of the tree of life, without any end," we would exclaim, "Now we can enjoy ourselves, this is exactly what we want, life! life! everlasting life!" Now this is exactly what the Lord has promised to His followers.

Eternal life is more than quantity, or time never ending. Every person will consciously exist forever somewhere. Life is the opposite of death, even as death is the opposite of life. Life is a union or unity. Unity is two or more elements in right relation to each other. Death being the opposite of life is therefore a separation. The divine inbreathing in the creation of Adam was vastly more than the filling of his lungs with air. Adam became a living soul. He received physical life and also spiritual life. The divine inbreathing was the impartation unto Adam of the quality of life God had. By virtue of this life, Adam could love, please, fellowship, believe, obey and commune with God. Spiritual and eternal life is a special quality -- the highest quality of

life, and the quantity also is eternal. Eternal life is not a patching up of our old lives; neither is it taking our natural life and stretching it out to extend through eternity; nor can it be merely existing through eternity. Eternal life is a union with Christ. It is Christ in us and we in Christ. True life consists in fellowship with the Father and the Son. It is life to know Christ, the Good Shepherd. Just think, of this Blessed, Loving, Person, Who is our Redeemer and Bridegroom; and to know Him is life! What will it be to see Him! to be like Him; to forever look on His face and then to be with Him forever! This will be bliss -- "in the house of the Lord forever." Let us thank God for the Psalm of the Good Shepherd.

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04 -- THE PSALM OF THE CROWN -- PSALM 24

1 The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall 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 ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.

* * *

This is a Psalm of David. It beautifully sets forth the ascension of the Crucified and Risen Lord. It is very probable that David received his inspiration to pen this Psalm on the occasion when the ark was taken from the house of Obed-edom to Mt. Zion. David's first attempt to move the ark ended in failure and defeat. The ark was placed on a new cart. In this he imitated the Philistines. Uzzah put forth his hand to support and protect the ark when the oxen stumbled, but the God of Israel did not need to be supported, upheld and protected by human hands as the gods of the nations. Uzzah was judged and fell dead, which was a warning to all people. The day

ended in defeat, and fear. David went to his house in sorrow. On the second occasion, David inquired of the Lord, consulted the Bible and sacrificed unto the Lord. This resulted in a day of joy. David danced before the Lord. This inspired history is found in the sixth chapter of Second Samuel.

The ark of the covenant, with its contents, is a beautiful and interesting type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man. The wood and gold typified His humanity and Deity. The wood was overlaid with gold on the outside and on the inside. This preserved the wood. So the Deity glorified His humanity. The contents of the ark were the two tables of stone on which were engraved the ten commandments by the finger of Deity. The law was perfectly kept within the ark. So in the heart and life of Christ, the law and every requirement of God was perfectly kept and met.

By inspiration the eye of the prophet David looked a thousand years beyond the typical upgoing of the ark to Mount Zion and saw its great Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Crucified and Risen Lord ascending into the hill of the Lord, even heaven and the presence of the Father. Then his eye looked beyond the ascension of the Lord, across this age unto the second coming of Christ and a second ascension, when Christ as Lord of hosts and all who are in Christ will with Him ascend into heaven at the end of the age. Then David saw beyond the end of this age; He saw Christ as the glorious King, Who in the beginning of the Millennial age will enter the city of Jerusalem, accompanied by His saints and take the seat of the throne of the Lord in Mount Zion and rule gloriously, victoriously and universally.

The words of this Psalm are not the words of David, but of the Spirit, Who gave them unto him. In verses 1-3, the Spirit is speaking unto God concerning Christ. In verses 4-6, God is answering the Spirit, in relation to Christ. In verse 7, Christ the Risen and Ascending Lord speaks; in verse 8a, the everlasting door keepers speak; in 8b and 9, Christ is the speaker; in 10a, the door keepers, and in 10b, Christ.

I. Christ as Creator -- vs. 1, 2.

The Lord is the theme of this Psalm. The earth belongs to Him by creation. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." All worlds belong to Him by creation. The entire universe is His. The earth is His not only by creation, but also through redemption and inheritance. This earth and the fullness thereof belong to the Lord in a peculiar manner and in a sense that no other world belongs to Him. The Lord of glory came from glory, and from the dust of the earth, by the operation of the Spirit, received a human body. In this body, His Deity was veiled. In this body He lived, labored, died, was resurrected, ascended and will come again. The Lord Jesus Christ has a relation to earth as well as to heaven. Because of His incarnation and human birth, He is a member of the human race. He is a new creation and a Head Man. He stands as the Head of the new and redeemed race of sons of God. The "fullness thereof" is His creation, especially man in whom He takes a special interest. While it is true, He is the Owner; yet, at the present time, He is not Possessor. Well would it be if He and His people possessed more of it. It might help His children along. We, as often the case is, may own some things, but some one else may possess them, illegally. So the earth is in the possession of Satan the usurper, and much is possessed by wicked men. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the earth is the Lord's in a threefold manner --

by creation, by redemption and by inheritance. The day will come when He shall return, having the title deed to this earth in His hand, and set His feet on this earth. Then He will enforce His redemptive rights, oust the usurper, wrest the world from Satan and take possession of it with the fullness thereof, then in a fourth and new manner, the earth will be the Lord's, even by right of conquest. Then the meek shall inherit it with Him.

II. Christ as Redeemer -- vs. 3-6.

A two-fold question is asked: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?" Since the Lord (Christ) is the subject of this Psalm; and the earth is His; and He came to this world to redeem it, the Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity is asking God the first Person, concerning Christ the God-Man on earth and His ascension.

The Bible is remarkable in that most questions that are asked in it are also answered therein. If the reader will carefully observe, the answer generally is found in the context. The answer to this question is given by Him of Whom the question was asked -- even God. The answer is found in verses 4-6.

Starting for heaven and ascending the hill of the Lord is up-hill business. Not every man is qualified to ascend up to heaven. The sinner is retrogressing and going downward. Heaven is likened to a holy hill and is always expressed as being up. Hell is the extreme opposite of heaven and is likened to a pit, or a dark hole, and is always expressed as being down-down literally, morally and spiritually.

No one fits this description and meets the condition as does Christ, God's Representative Man. He has all the qualities required to ascend into the hill of the Lord, and to stand in His holy place. He could have ascended into heaven from the mount of Transfiguration on His own merits without dying, but if He had, He would have entered alone, for no one else then could have entered in with Him. Christ is the One Who had clean hands and a pure heart. In His outward life and in His inward life, He was righteous and holy. He never lifted up His soul unto vanity; He never swore deceitfully; the blessing of the Lord was on Him.

All who are in Christ, shall ascend into the hill of the Lord. By faith we are conformed to His image and that gives us a right to ascend. No one with dirty hands, or a black heart can ascend, or stand before God. The sinner has unclean hands and an impure heart. By grace through faith an experience is wrought whereby the unclean hands can be washed and made clean. Hands stand for doings. Uncleanliness stands for sin, that is, sinful doings. The doing of sin, actual or committed, must first be dealt with and washed, or forgiven. Christ always had clean hands, He knew no sin, hence He needed no washing for He was the Holy One. After the washing of forgiveness, when the hands have been made clean of all committed sins, there is another work of grace that is also wrought by the Spirit through grace, that is, a cleansing. The heart speaks of the inner and hidden life. The impure heart speaks of sin innate, inborn and in the nature. Christ was pure in heart. He was born holy. He was born without sin in His human nature. He was pure in heart and had no need for cleansing. But all men, after the washing of their hands (regeneration), need a cleansing of the heart to make them pure in heart. Since man is

not pure in heart, by faith he can be made so by the blood of Christ and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

After experiencing regeneration and sanctification, the believer is commanded to live the practical life. Christ lived without sin, error or mistake. He was absolutely holy in nature, work and conduct. The believer who has by faith entered into Christ, is admonished to live and walk worthy of the heavenly calling. The person who meets these requirements will court the blessing of the Lord upon his life.

III. Christ in Ascension -- vs. 7, 8.

Here we get a beautiful picture of the ascent of God's Representative Man, Who lived a holy life, died a vicarious death and was miraculously resurrected. His incarnation, anointing, ministry, death and resurrection occurred on this earth. He had come to do the will of His Father, He always sought His face, that is, His Father's approval. Forty days after the resurrection, the fullness of time came for Him to ascend to the Father. Christ was first in resurrection, first in ascension and first in glorification. No human, being had ever passed through the everlasting doors until Jesus ascended as the God-Man. It was essential for Christ to ascend. It was that He might be glorified and that He might glorify the Father. He ascended that the Spirit might descend. He ascended as the Forerunner for us, to prepare heaven itself as an abode for us, to fulfill prophecy, to await the complete subjection of His enemies, to await the completion of His Body, the Church, and to receive a kingdom from the Father.

He challenged the gates and the everlasting doors to be lifted, and to swing open, to permit Him to enter into the presence of the Father as a Man. These doors are addressed as intelligent beings, and are personified. He introduces Himself as the "King of Glory," Who is about to enter inside the everlasting doors. The question comes to him, "Who is the King of glory?" -- a question full of meaning. Who is He in person, in nature, office and work? What is His pedigree? What is His rank and race? What authority makes such demands? The answer is most instructive and inspiring: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." His eternal God-head, His oneness, with Deity and His Almightyness are declared. Thirty-three years before this challenge, He left the bosom of the Father. On earth He assumed humanity; lived, loved and labored; was crucified, dead and resurrected. He was "mighty in battle." This earth has been the great battle field of the universe. This earth, of all worlds, is where man in the image and likeness of God was created. This is the world in which Satan goes to and fro and walks up and down. This earth, out of all worlds, is fallen, and cursed, and is the moral arena of the universe where conflict between right and wrong is being waged. This world of all worlds is the spectacle of heaven and hell, of God and angels, of saints and Satan, of men and demons. Think of this old battle-scarred world! Think of all the battles of nations, the bloodshed, civil strife and revolutions! Then think not only of the carnal warfare, but of the spiritual conflicts that millions of saints have come through with shouts and victories! But most important of all, this earth is where the Son of God came to be born and die to redeem it. On this earth, He was "mighty in battle." In the wilderness, He fought the battle lost by Adam in Eden. Fasting forty days in a wilderness instead of feasting in Paradise, He, as a Man, with man's weapons, overcame Satan and defeated him. All Satan could do was to leave Him for a season. On this earth, He waged the battle of grace, laid down His life, shed His blood, and died with a shout, "It is finished." He was

victorious in life, in death, in resurrection and in ascension. He conquered everything below Him. He conquered sickness, leprosy, disease, the elements, Satan, demons, death, Hades and the grave; then arose victorious with the keys of death and Hades hanging on His girdle. He walked out of the domains of the dead and the grave immortal and alive for evermore. In all this He is the almighty Christ, the great Champion and Victorious Lord. Never again can He be touched by Satan. After waging the battle of grace, the greatest battle ever fought on earth, He ascended in victory, in triumph and as the "King of glory," Who had been "mighty in battle." He Who had been victorious on earth, in Paradise, in hell, and in the bottomless pit, ascended far above all things to be crowned with glory and honor and to sit at the right hand of the Father.

What a welcome the Son received! What rejoicing there was among the angels! What shoutings there must have been in the upper regions! What a blessed time the Holy Trinity had for ten days in being united, before the Spirit should descend! For nineteen hundred years the Man of glory has been in glory, waiting to be revealed in His glory when He shall come in glory.

IV. Christ In His Second Advent -- vs. 9, 10.

Christ shall come again. He is awaiting the fullness of time and the command of the Father. When He returns in relation to His own, they shall be gathered unto Himself. In relation to the world, He will take possession, subdue all His enemies and set up His kingdom and will be King of the earth. Then in a truer sense than now will be, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

Since Christ has ascended as "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," many through the nineteen centuries of His absence have been washed and their hands made clean, cleansed and made pure in heart and are prepared and qualified to ascend the hill of the Lord, and to stand in His holy place. There will be another ascension. Even as the first resurrection concerns all the blessed and the holy, Christ being in the first resurrection, and the first-fruits, so before the first resurrection will be consummated, there will be another stage at the rapture; then again, another stage at the Revelation. As Christ's resurrection was only a part of the first resurrection, so Christ's ascension is only a part of the fulfillment of the ascension. In a sense much needed and most true for the safe development of this theme -- Christ's ascension is not yet complete. Christ, the Head of the Church has ascended, but the corporate Christ, that is, His Body, the Church, has not yet been taken up into glory. The complementary ascension awaits the time for the number required to complete His Body. Then the type will be carried forward into a wider, deeper and higher fulfillment, when Christ with all saints at His side, will again challenge the gates to lift up their heads (v. 9) and the "King of glory" will come in -- into the hill of the Lord (v. 3). The reply comes, "Who is this King of glory?" (v. 10); and the answer will come back, "The Lord (Jehovah) of hosts, He is the King of glory." The "Lord of hosts," means, the Lord of a multitude. An innumerable number will accompany Him. The Lord of hosts will lead this redeemed multitude who have clean hands and pure hearts into the presence of the Father.

Attention to the Kingship of Jehovah is to be noted. "The King of glory" will be none other than the Glorious King. As King, He will enter, be enthroned, and be worshipped. Thee

Creator of the beginning of the Psalm, is the Glorious King in the close of the Psalm. In the presence of the Father, the saints will receive their crowns.

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THE END