

**The Value of Awareness [Psalm 24]**  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. In 1970, Gordon Gallup Jr developed **the mirror test**.
  - a. They took an animal, marking it with an odorless dye, seeing if the animal is aware of it.
  - b. The test: could it recognize its own reflection in a mirror as itself.
  - c. The entire test is a measure of self-awareness. By 18 months, 50% of babies know this.
2. One of the most underrated traits we can possess is self-awareness.
  - a. Understanding who you are and what role you play in society is important.
  - b. If you are not self-aware, you will say or do things that will impact those around you.
  - c. This evening, we open up a Psalm that speaks to the self-awareness of humanity.
  - d. As we examine Scripture, let's see what we can learn about God and ourselves.

## **VERSES 1,2**

*The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;  
for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*

1. The opening verses have a very simple premise: God made everything. Everything is His.
  - a. Verse two is meant to signify the power of God's creativity.
  - b. However, there are some who look to these verses to question the Bible's validity.
    - 1) It has some imagery that implies a flat earth presentation of creation.
    - 2) We saw this concept in Psalm 61 as well, and noted it as prevalent in the ANE
    - 3) People 1,000 years before Jesus did not have fully developed view of universe.
2. Take it as it's meant: This isn't a scientific description but pre-scientific poetic imagery.
  - a. The Bible was not written to inform us of modern science.
  - b. It's written with concern for spiritual imagery or thought, so interpreting it otherwise is poor
  - c. This past week, Answers in Genesis in KY made news advertising in Times Square, NYC
    - 1) They position the Bible as if it's a universal almanac to every aspect of information.
    - 2) While the Scriptures have eternal answers, it's limited in scientific scope.
    - 3) Ultimately, we Christians ought only speak as far as the text will permit
3. As a Christian, what do you need to know? **Genesis 1:1** "*In the beginning, God created*"
  - a. It's not wrong for a Christian to accept aspects of evolutionary process.
  - b. But make sure to ask yourself this: *Do you acknowledge the One who made it all?*

## **VERSES 3,4**

*<sup>3</sup>Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?*

*<sup>4</sup>The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.*

1. Understand the focus of this psalm: it's a psalm of ascent.
  - a. Note the topography of Jerusalem: the temple was located up on a hill.
    - 1) Thus, when you went to worship, you would ascend upward.
    - 2) This song is like the Hi-Ho singing of the seven dwarfs: the soundtrack of the march.
  - b. Singing this song on the way to worship, they sang the question: WHO CAN GO THERE?
    - 1) The response speaks of a pious person, non-idolaters who are living right.
2. The first two verses of the Psalm tell of the nature of the one being worshipped.
  - a. The march up the mountain of the Lord, then, was a walk towards the king of creation.
  - b. For Jews, the temple symbolizes the entire world. They believed it was the site of Eden
    - 1) There's a connection between these places.
    - 2) As such, it was a highly religious experience. This was a very sacred place.
  - c. THEREFORE, you take the requirements of VS4 seriously.
    - 1) You'd live right because you don't want to miss this opportunity.

## **VERSES 5,6**

<sup>5</sup> They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior.

<sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.

1. Why do you want to ascend the mount of the Lord? The huge benefits.
  - a. **Blessings and vindication**
    - 1) If the God at the top of the mountain made the world, what kind of blessings?
    - 2) Raffi Stepanian spends his weeks at 47<sup>th</sup> street in New York City
      - a) There is miniscule residue left by the jewelers working there
      - b) He actually “mines” the street looking for left over metals and jewels.
      - c) From his efforts, he can make from \$800 to \$1000 a week.
    - 3) It was a similar view of the temple: how many blessings can be found in that place?
    - 4) The people were encouraged to go there to mine the blessings of God.
2. The hallmark of the generation of God's people is that they would continue to seek him.
  - a. The pursuit of God is not a temporary endeavor. It's a constant, lifelong effort.
  - b. We can now review the list of those allowed to approach in worship
    - 1) Clean hands
    - 2) Pure heart
    - 3) Not lifted his soul to idol
    - 4) Not sworn deceitfully
    - 5) Seek Him
3. So who is worthy to worship in the temple? We want to think that it's us.
  - a. As they march to worship in their Sunday best, they haughtily carry pride with them.
  - b. Perhaps they think of all those pagans who aren't on this hillside journey
  - c. In their self-awareness, they're confident that they are the people they're singing about
  - d. But here's the secret: they've deceived themselves. THEY'RE WRONG.
    - 1) When grading on a curve, this list is possible. But God is holy. There's no curve.
    - 2) Our march to worship should keep us humble, recognizing that we're not worthy.

## **VERSES 7-10**

<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

<sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup> Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty—he is the King of glory.

1. The singers are commanding that the gates open.
  - a. This is before the days of garage door openers, so this is not a possibility.
  - b. What would it take for the gates themselves to open? A miracle.
    - 1) But they do open. Why? Because in is coming the King of Glory.
    - 2) Who is this King of Glory? It's the Lord God himself. How does this make sense?
2. This is actually the prophecy of the arrival in the temple of the King of Glory. It's Jesus
  - a. In Matthew 17 (and elsewhere), we read of the arrival of Jesus to Jerusalem.
    - 1) He had been there many times before, but this arrival was significant.
    - 2) This time, he rode in on a donkey, and the people shouted for his arrival.
    - 3) It was reminiscent of a Roman victory parade for a conquering king.
    - 4) Note that in verse 8, it discusses the victory of Jesus
  - b. Here is a picture of the route of Jesus; he ascended the hill up to the temple.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. This is what the ancient singers didn't understand: they lacked self-awareness
  - a. They thought the nature of their hearts made them worth of entering the temple.

- b. The one who was truly capable was the king of glory. It was the Lord himself.
- 2. You are not good enough. But Jesus was.
  - a. This is the key to the gospel: **KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND KNOW WHO HE IS.**
  - b. **Colossians 1:19,20** *"In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."*
- 3. At this point in our worship, we TRANSITION TO COMMUNION
  - a. We want to adapt our thinking to that of Psalm 24; approach the table in awareness.
  - b. **1 Corinthians 11:28** *Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.*
    - 1) As we partake today, we have a mirror placed behind the trays.
    - 2) As you take the bread/cup, look into the mirror to remember who you are.
    - 3) As you look in the mirror, you see the path to the holy God goes through the cross