

The God of Jacob

Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the Lord
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek the face of **the God of Jacob**.

Selah

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

Who is this King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory!

Selah

There is a lot of theology in this psalm! We could meditate upon it for a long time and still not exhaust the depths of its meaning. But for this brief

devotion, I would like to draw your attention to three little words: ***God of Jacob***.

You probably didn't think much of those words when you first read them, for maybe you don't know much about Jacob. But this is what you need to know about Jacob: he was not a nice person. In fact, he was quite the scoundrel.

He was born, as we would say today, into privilege. He was the son of Isaac who was the son of Abraham. God had promised Abraham that the Saviour was going to come from him; be one of his descendants. That promise was passed on through Isaac, and now would be passed on through one of Isaac's twin sons, Jacob or Esau. Neither one was a good candidate to receive this promise! At least, not by earthly standards.

And Jacob, well, he did not have the ***clean hands*** and ***pure heart*** spoken of by this psalm. We might even say he had "affluenza" - that's the word used today when talking about spoiled rich kids. Jacob he was sick with his desire for affluence. The simple word is greedy. He took advantage of his famished brother to buy his right as the first born for a bowl of stew, and then he deceived his father - dressing up as his brother - to steal his brother's blessing. Esau got so mad that he vowed to kill Jacob, forcing Jacob to run away to live with his uncle in another land.

So who do you think God chose to be the one from whom the Saviour would come? It was Jacob. That's what those three little words, ***God of Jacob***, mean: that the promise would come down to us through this not very good man.

That's good news! Because maybe you can relate to Jacob. Maybe you've made mistakes in your past. Maybe you've taken advantage of others, deceived someone for your own gain, and lived as a not very good person. That's actually true for all of us. If God would only choose good people to be His own, there would be no one to choose from! Not one of us is worthy to ascend the hill of the Lord. Not one of us is worthy to stand in His holy place. Not one of us has ***clean hands*** and a ***pure heart***.

That's why God promised a Saviour. A Saviour who is the King of glory Himself! The Son of God who would come down from heaven and be born as a man, as we will soon celebrate at Christmas. He came down to fight for us. To battle against sin and evil, and win. That's why the psalm says that He is ***the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle***. And He won that battle for us by dying on the cross and then rising from the dead.

So now, because of Jesus, we have the ***clean hands*** and ***pure heart*** that we need! Not because we're so good, but because He makes us clean and pure in the forgiveness of our sins. And with our sins forgiven, this too: the ***gates*** and ***doors*** of heaven and now open to us! For they open to Him, and He is taking His own with Him through those gates into glory and life. Even someone like Jacob. Even folks like you and me.

So what good news is in this psalm! And what good news is contained in those three little words: ***God of Jacob***. Our God is the God of sinners - sinners who He loves, washes, and saves. Yes, He is the God of Jacob. And He is the God of *(your name here)*.

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the God of Jacob, the God - and Saviour! - of sinners like me. Help me not to sin, but when I do, help me to repent and confess my sins to You, and know that You will forgive, wash me clean, and restore to me Your promises. Help me to celebrate my Saviour this Christmas and not get caught up with "influenza," but to see the greatest gift I could ever receive lying in the manger. There is the God of Jacob. There, in swaddling cloths, is my God, born for me! There is the mighty Lord, the King of glory. For me! Amen.