

## Open the Gates

There is reason to be encouraged. God really is in control. *The earth is the Lord's and all it contains* (Psalm 24:1). I look at my life and it does not seem as though God has had the kind of influence on me that He should have; maybe I should say the kind of influence I should have let Him have. It is discouraging to look at myself in the spiritual mirror of self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5). Then, I read Psalm 24 and I am encouraged.

David asks a question of us: *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?* (Psalm 24:3). The answer is in the next verse: *He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully* (Psalm 24:4). So, as long as I have not done anything wrong, I am acceptable to God. But wait a minute! I *have* done something wrong – many somethings!! In the words of Isaiah, the prophet, *“Woe is me, for I am undone!”* (Isaiah 6:5).

Speaking of Isaiah, God had a job that Isaiah was going to volunteer to do, but first he has to be made ready. Isaiah recognized that he was a sinner and unworthy to be in the presence of Jehovah, but that problem was rectified by the angel touching a burning coal to his lips and taking away his iniquity (Isaiah 6:6, 7). So, even though he was guilty of dirty hands and an impure heart (to use the figure of Psalm 24) he was able to be purified and made ready for the task at hand.

A similar example is Joshua, the high priest during the time the remnant of Judah was rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. In Zechariah 3:1 Joshua (who seems to represent all the Jews) is standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan is standing by to accuse him. In other words, he is guilty. In verse 3, the prophet says Joshua was dressed in filthy garments. However, before Satan can win the victory, the angel of the Lord spoke: *“Remove those filthy garments from him”* (Zechariah 3:4). So, like Isaiah, Joshua was cleansed of his guilt and our enemy has nothing to say.

David continued his encouragement: *Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle* (Psalm 24:7, 8). When we see our lives in a mess, we need help. That help is God. We have to let Him have control of our lives. That means that we have to live according to His will, which He has graciously given us in His Word (the Bible). I am thankful that God is in control. When I sinned, I gave up any hope of salvation. I was ruined. Thanks be to God that He has provided a way for me to be cleansed. He provided that Way because He loves me. He loves you, too.

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