

PSALM 15

1 [A Psalm of David]. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

It seems fair to say that the questions posed by this verse should be top priority to any sincere, thinking person. Yet, look around, and see that these questions get next to no consideration in today's world. Those alive today, our peers, have virtually no concern for these vital and fundamental queries.

What constitutes a true and genuine citizen of the kingdom of God, the New Testament church, is what we are presented with in this passage. Who will sojourn, abide and dwell in the house of the Lord? Who is qualified to dwell with God? Who shall reside and have his constant and perpetual mansion in the holy hill of Zion? As Benson says: *Who shall be permitted and enabled so to worship thee in thy church on earth, and enjoy and improve the privileges thereof, as to dwell with thee in heaven for ever hereafter?* **But ye are come unto mount Sion[.]** (Hebrews 12:22).

Consider these observations of the holy hill of Zion:

- It's the place of God's habitation, where he dwells forever (Psalm 9:11; 76:2);

- It is the seat of the throne, reign and kingdom of Christ (Psalm 2:6; Isaiah 24:23);
- It is the object of divine promises innumerable (Psalm 125:1; 128:5);
- From there did the Gospel proceed and the law of Christ come forth (Isaiah 40:9; Micah 4:2);
- It was the object of God's special love, and the place of the birth of his elect (Psalm 87:2, 5);
- It is the joy of the whole earth and beautiful for situation (Psalm 48:2); and,
- Salvation and all blessing came forth out of Zion (Psalm 14:7; 110:2; 128:5).

Additionally, this writing from Pink regarding Hebrews 12:22 (**But ye are come unto mount Sion**) is helpful:

David, after having taken Mount Zion from the Jebusites, made it the place of his residence, so that it became 'the city of the great king.' There he reigned and ruled, there he issued his laws, and thence he extended the sway of his peaceful scepter over the whole of the holy land. From that circumstance, Mount Zion became the great type of the kingdom of God, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the head and Sovereign. As David ruling upon Mount Zion in the palace built there as his royal seat, issuing his commands which were obeyed all over the land, so our blessed Redeemer has been exalted according to God's promise 'Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion' (Psalm 2:6); and there sitting as King in Sion, issues His mandates and sways His peaceful scepter over the hearts of His obedient people.

Implicit in this language is the notion that such abiding will be temporary in the overall scheme of things. After all, a tabernacle, like a tent, suggests temporary living facilities. The dwelling here contemplated is sojourning and not a permanent home, which comes later for those considered here. **By faith [Abraham, our spiritual father] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.** (Hebrews 11:9).

This “holy hill” we read of is referenced in other parts of the Bible. For example, **[y]et have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.** (Psalm 2:6). And inherent in the “tabernacle” is the seat of the ark, the symbol of God’s presence. **And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.** (2 Samuel 6:17).

Here is the unfeigned cry of those people who are called to mind in this verse: **Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?** (Song 1:7). Surely this verse and other similar passages were in mind when the songwriter penned these words:

*Where dost thou, dear Shepherd
Resort with thy sheep
To feed them in pastures of love?*

*Say, why in the valley of death should I weep
Or alone in this wilderness rove?*

*Oh why should I wander, an alien from Thee
Or cry in the desert for bread?*

*Thy foes will rejoice when my sorrows they see
And smile at the tears I have shed*

**² He that walketh uprightly, and worketh
righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.**

Beginning here, and running to the end of this Psalm, we have answers to the questions presented in verse one.

Walks uprightly: The person here described is without guile or hypocrisy, who loves and serves God and he loves his neighbor -- and this he does regularly as the word “walking” suggests. The word “walk” in the Scriptures is often used to denote the manner of life; life being represented as a journey. **Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.** (Proverbs 28:18).

The prophet Isaiah on an occasion described for us that person who shall abide with the Lord in Zion, using language similar to that presented in this verse: **He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.** (Isaiah 33:15, 16). All of these characteristics help

us better understand what the Psalmist refers to as he that walks uprightly. Remember, Job was **perfect and upright**. (Job 1:1).

Works righteousness: Does right; that is, he does what is proper to be done in relation to God and man. One of John's epistles help us get a handle on this: **Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** (1 John 3:7-9).

Speaks truth in his heart: This is an interesting phrase, wouldn't you say? The meaning seems to be that he both thinks and speaks the truth. Dr. Gill does a good job of surveying the scope of this passage: *[R]eceives Christ who is the truth, and the Gospel the word of truth into his heart, and makes an hearty profession of the same before men; and both speaks according to his light in the Scriptures of truth, whenever he speaks of divine things; and in common conversation speaks truth from his heart to his neighbour, and does not speak with a double heart, or say one thing with his mouth, and intend another in his heart[.]*

³ He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Still describing that person who shall abide in the Lord's tabernacle, we have here a word picture dealing primarily with the treatment of neighbors. A neighbor is one who is relatively close to us as we live out our days and is therefore easiest within our reach and most liable to injuries which one man can do to another.

Generally and comparatively speaking, the Lord's children do not use their tongues to slander and detract from the reputation of others, or make the faults of others a regular topic of discussion. Timothy warned against being **busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.** (1 Timothy 5:13).

Of course, that's not to say the Lord's people don't address the sins of neighbors. Jesus clearly enjoined us to love our neighbor. (Matthew 5:43 – **Thou shalt love thy neighbor**). And while we should not **go up and down as a talebearer**, we are directed **in righteousness to judge (our) neighbor.** (Leviticus 19:15, 16). Indeed, here is the mandate: **Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.** (Leviticus 19:17).

So, in assessing our duty to those around us: no backbiting, no doing evil and no taking up a reproach against them. As to that last item, the original language is most interesting and conveys the idea of stripping trees of their fruit. We are not to strip honor and reputation from a person. Of course, that would require there be honor and reputation, in the first place.

⁴ In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

One can perceive at least two meanings of this opening clause. One would be along these lines: This person, who dwells in Zion, is despised and rejected in his own eyes or by his own estimation; that is he thinks humbly of himself. He does so, on account of his vileness and the imperfection of his obedience to God, esteeming others better than himself.

The second would be this: This person does not show or hold respect for a man of base or bad character on account of his wealth, his position or his rank in this life. Consider Benson on this text:

*In whose eyes — In whose judgment and estimation; a vile person — An ungodly or wicked man, * * * is contemned — Or, thought meanly of, notwithstanding his wealth, or honour, or greatness, or even his learning and knowledge: who does not admire the person of such a one, or envy his condition, or court him with flatteries, or value his company and conversation, or approve of, or comply with, his course of life; but judges him a miserable man, and a great object of pity; abhors his practices, and labours to make such ways contemptible to all men, as far as lies in his power.*

But, and contrariwise, this same person, a child of God, honors them that fear the Lord. He highly esteems and cordially loves them, shows

them great respect and kindness, even though their worldly condition is mean or obscure.

The last sentence of this verse is, at first glance, somewhat puzzling. **He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.** Again, we are considering those who abide in the Lord's house. How about this? This language describes an individual who is just to his word and faithful to his promises; one who is honest and upright in his dealings, even though in doing so he may cause harm to himself. In other words, somebody you can count on. This language describes one who has *made a promise, or entered into a contract, that is likely to turn out contrary to his expectations, to his own disadvantage; but who still adhered to his engagement, one who is not at liberty to violate an agreement simply because it will be a loss to him, or because he ascertains that it will not be, as he supposed, to his advantage.* (Barnes).

⁵ He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

Charging reasonable interest on loans while making your way through this life, in and of itself, is not improper. However, a member of the Lord's flock does not seek profit in the loaning of resources to other members of that flock. **If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.** (Exodus 22:25). Similarly, concerning a brother that is poor, we read: **Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy**

God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase. (Leviticus 25:36, 37).

Reference to taking a reward relates to bribery, which of course would be improper. The gray headed Samuel could gratefully say he avoided such conduct: **Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? And I will restore it you.** (1 Samuel 12:3).

Finally, the last clause suggests that the person who adheres to these admonitions shall constantly persevere in God's church here on earth, with all the attendant benefits, and upon death will forever be with the Lord. Harkening back to verse 1, he shall abide in the Lord's tabernacle and shall dwell in his holy hill. Or, as the Savior described it: **Therefore whosoever hear these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.** (Matthew 7:24, 25).

This verse tells us that such a person **shall never be moved.** Do you know what's immovable? A pillar! **Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out[.]**

(Revelation 3:12). Elsewhere it says (using similar language) if we **do these things, [we] shall never fall.** (2 Peter 1:10).

Strive to satisfy these criteria.

The Lord's Supper

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. * * * * Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, 21).

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

LUKE, CHAPTER 24