THE QUESTION

Did the early Christians connect Matthew 5:8 with Psalm 24:3–4?

Asked by a THF member on October 4, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 8 numbered quotations · the 24 early Christian passages and 116 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-the-early-christians-connect-matthew-5-8-with-psalm-24-3-4

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Not in so many words, but they joined the two ideas closely. Clement of Alexandria and Justin quote Psalm 24 about the clean hands and pure heart, and Origen, Clement and others read Matthew 5:8 the same way: only a heart cleansed from sin can see God or stand before him.

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POINT 1 OF 7

Clement reads Psalm 24 as the mature Christian

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement quotes Psalm 24:3–6 as a picture of the reward of godliness. He says the psalm points to the mature believer, and he reads the face of the God of Jacob as the Son, which shows he read the psalm as a Christian text about seeking and seeing God.

1

“The one who is innocent in his hands and pure in his heart, who has not lifted up his soul to vanity or sworn deceitfully to his neighbor.”

later in the same passage

“It also seems that David, in passing, showed that the Savior is God by calling Him "the face of the God of Jacob," who preached and taught concerning the Spirit.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 7.10 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 10, page 6** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

Clement ties the vision of God to Matthew 5:8

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

In the same book Clement describes the clear vision of God that mature souls reach, and then names Matthew 5:8 as its source. Read beside his use of Psalm 24, this is the closest these passages come to joining the two texts.

2

“They embrace the divine vision, not in mirrors or through mirrors, but in a vision that is surpassingly clear, absolutely pure, and never satisfied.”

later in the same passage

“Such is the vision that is attainable by the pure in heart.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 7.3 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 9, page 6** Read it in the library ›

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POINT 3 OF 7

Justin applies Psalm 24 to Christ's ascension

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Justin quotes Psalm 24 in full, including the clean hands and pure heart. He reads the opening gates as heaven opening for the risen Christ. He does not mention Matthew 5:8 here, but he treats the psalm as a Christian song about entering God's presence.

3

> “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He who is clean of hands and pure of heart, who has not taken his soul in vain, and has not sworn deceitfully to his neighbor: he shall receive blessings from the Lord, and mercy from God his Savior.”
>
> *later in the same passage*
>
> “Therefore, it is shown that Solomon is not the Lord of hosts; but when our Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, the rulers in heaven, under God’s appointment, are commanded to open the gates of heaven so that He, who is the King of glory, may enter and, having ascended, may sit at the right hand of the Father until He makes His enemies His footstool, as shown by another Psalm.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Justin Martyr,** *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 130–165 AD) **Source 5, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

Origen says only a pure heart sees God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen explains Matthew 5:8: God is seen by the mind, not the eye, and a heart must be cleansed of evil to see him. He adds that we need God to create that clean heart, and points to the prayer of Psalm 51. Grace and our effort work together here.

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4 “To see God belongs to the pure heart, from which evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, the evil eye, and every other evil thing no longer come.”

later in the same passage

“But since the strength of our will is not enough to obtain a perfectly pure heart, and since we need God to create it, he who prays as he ought offers this request to God: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.””

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *Against Celsus* 33 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 14, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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POINT 5 OF 7

A polluted heart cannot look upon God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen states the rule behind both texts. God is invisible because he is not a body, yet he can be seen by a pure heart. Anything that would truly behold what is pure must itself be pure.

5 “For it does not fit the order of things that a polluted heart should look upon God. What would worthily behold what is pure must itself be pure.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *Against Celsus* 69 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 15, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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POINT 6 OF 7

Purity means freedom from every sin

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Chrysostom reads the pure in heart broadly. He says Jesus means people free from all sins, not only from sexual sin, because every sin stains the soul. Theophilus makes a similar point with the picture of a rusty mirror.

6 “By pure, He means not those who are free from fornication only, but from all sins. For every sin brings filth upon the soul.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on John* 73 (c. 386–407 AD) **Source 19, page 7** Read it in the library ›
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7 “When there is rust on a mirror, it is not possible to see a man's face in the mirror. So also, when there is sin in a man, that man cannot see God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Theophilus of Antioch,** *To Autolycus* 2 (c. 169–183 AD) **Source 7, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 7

Barnabas already used clean hands and pure heart

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Epistle of Barnabas repeats the phrase pure hands and a pure heart and says no one can rightly keep God's holy day unless pure in heart. It shows the psalm's language was in Christian use very early, though Barnabas does not quote Matthew here.

8 “If, therefore, anyone can now sanctify the day which God has sanctified, unless they are pure in heart in all things, we are mistaken.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Barnabas,** *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 70–132 AD) **Source 1, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- None of these passages says outright that Matthew 5:8 explains Psalm 24.
- Clement quotes the psalm and the beatitude in different chapters, so the link is our reading of his thought.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 24 early Christian passages and 116 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–24, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 25–83, in Bible order), then 57 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain).

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"… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *24 passages from 12 writers*

Barnabas, *c. 70–132 AD · sources 1–2*

1 *Epistle of Barnabas* **Quote 8, page 5** "directly to Moses on Mount Sinai, "And sanctify the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart." And He says in another place, "If my children keep… [continues online] **read ›**

2 *Epistle of Barnabas* (1885 English; on point 7) "shalt love Him that created thee: thou shalt glorify Him that redeemed thee from death… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome, *c. 88–99 AD · source 3*

3 *Second Epistle* 11 (1885 English) "us therefore serve God with a pure heart, and we shall be righteous… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · source 4*

4 *Shepherd* "all will keep them who cleanse their hearts from the… [continues online] **read ›**

Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · source 5*

5 *Dialogue with Trypho* (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 3** "that is clean of hands and pure of heart: who has not received his soul in vain, and has not sworn guilefully to his neighbour: he shall receive blessing from… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · source 6*

6 *Diatessaron* 8 (1885 English) "Arabic, p. 32] Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in their hearts: for they shall see God" **read ›**

Theophilus of Antioch, *c. 169–183 AD · source 7*

7 *To Autolycus* 2 (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 5** "there is rust on the mirror, it is not possible that a man's face be seen in the mirror… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 8–11*

8 *Stromata* 5.1 (on point 2) "the pure in heart shall see God," Matthew 5:8, when they arrive at the final perfection… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Stromata* 7.3 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** "is the vision attainable by the pure in heart… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Stromata* 7.10 **Quote 1, page 2** "has not lifted up his soul to vanity or… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Stromata* 2.20 (1885 English) "in the flesh, pure in heart, sanctified in word… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · source 12*

12 *Against Marcion* 19 (on point 7) "that has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not taken God's name in vain, nor… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 13–16*

13 *Against Celsus* 45 (1885 English; on point 4) "says also that we look upon nothing that is pure, although our endeavour is to keep even our thoughts free from all defilement of sin, and although in prayer we… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Against Celsus* 33 **Quote 4, page 4** "it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Against Celsus* 69 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 4** "it is inconsistent with the fitness of things that a polluted heart should look upon God… [continues online] **read ›**

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16 *Against Celsus* 4 (on point 4) “according to the declaration of our Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God… [continues online] **read ›**

Novatian, *c. 240–258 AD · source 17*

17 *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* 28 (1885 English; on point 4) “that He says, Blessed are they of a pure heart, for they shall see God, it is understood to promise the contemplation and vision of the Father… [continues online] **read ›**

Archelaus, *c. 270–300 AD · source 18*

18 *Disputation with Manes* 1 (1885 English) “also to what Scripture has to say on this subject: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God… [continues online] **read ›**

John Chrysostom, *c. 386–407 AD · sources 19–24*

19 *Homilies on John* 73 **Quote 6, page 4** “when He says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Homilies on First Thessalonians* (1885 English; on point 6) “Blessed, it is said, are the pure in heart… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Homilies on Matthew* 16 (on point 6) “there, "The pure in heart shall see God… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Homilies on John* 70 (on point 6) Since these men had cast away all wickedness from their souls, and had stayed with Him with a pure mind, He therefore says, in agreement with the word of the… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Homilies on Matthew* 15 “The pure in heart shall see God… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Homilies on Matthew* 15 (1885 English) “are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *59 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

25 **2 Chronicles 23:19** And the gatekeepers were stationed at the gates of the house of the Lord, so that no one unclean in any matter should enter. **read ›**

26 **Job 16:17** Yet there was no unrighteousness in my hands, and my prayer is pure. **read ›**

27 **Psalms 24:3** Who shall go up to the mountain of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? (Septuagint Psalm 23:3 (Psalm 24:3 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

28 **Psalms 24:4** He who is innocent in hands and pure in heart, who has not taken up his soul for a vain thing, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor. (Septuagint Psalm 23:4 (Psalm 24:4 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

29 **Psalms 24:5** He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and an act of mercy from God his Savior. (Septuagint Psalm 23:5 (Psalm 24:5 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

30 **Psalms 24:6** This is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Pause. (Septuagint Psalm 23:6 (Psalm 24:6 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

31 **Psalms 73:1** A Psalm of Asaph. How good is God to Israel, to the upright in heart! (Septuagint Psalm 72:1 (Psalm 73:1 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

32 **Psalms 73:13** And I said, “Surely in vain have I justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent.” (Septuagint Psalm 72:13 (Psalm 73:13 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

33 **Psalms 119:2** Blessed are those who search out his testimonies; they will seek him out with their whole heart. (Septuagint Psalm 118:2 (Psalm 119:2 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

34 **Jeremiah 10:7** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

35 **Jeremiah 14:1** And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah concerning the drought. **read ›**

36 **Jeremiah 14:2** Judea has mourned, and her gates have been emptied, and they are darkened on the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. **read ›**

37 **Jeremiah 17:26** And they will come from the cities of Judah and from around Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the land of the plain, and from the hill country, and from the south, bringing whole burnt offerings and sacrifices and incense and grain offerings and frankincense, bringing praise to the house of the Lord. **read ›**

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38 **Jeremiah 23:3** And I will gather in the remnant of my people from all the land where I have driven them out, and I will settle them in their pasture, and they will increase and be multiplied. **read ›**

39 **Jeremiah 23:4** And I will raise up shepherds for them, who will shepherd them; and they will no longer fear or be dismayed, says the Lord. **read ›**

40 **Jeremiah 31:1** At that time, said the Lord, I will be God to the family of Israel, and they shall be my people. (Septuagint Jeremiah 38:1 (Jeremiah 31:1 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

41 **Jeremiah 31:2** Thus said the Lord: I found him warm in the wilderness with those who had perished by the sword. Go, and do not destroy Israel. (Septuagint Jeremiah 38:2 (Jeremiah 31:2 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

42 **Jeremiah 31:11** For the Lord has redeemed Jacob; he has rescued him from the hand of those stronger than he. (Septuagint Jeremiah 38:11 (Jeremiah 31:11 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

43 **Jeremiah 32:1** The word that came from the Lord to Jeremiah in the tenth year of King Zedekiah; this was the eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. (Septuagint Jeremiah 39:1 (Jeremiah 32:1 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

44 **Jeremiah 36:11** Micaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the Lord from the book. (Septuagint Jeremiah 43:11 (Jeremiah 36:11 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

45 **Jeremiah 50:12** your mother has been greatly ashamed; she who bore you for good things has been put to shame; she is the last of the nations, a desolate place, (Septuagint Jeremiah 27:12 (Jeremiah 50:12 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

46 **Ezekiel 4:17** so that they may lack bread and water; and a man and his brother shall be ruined, and they shall waste away in their unrighteous deeds. **read ›**

47 **Ezekiel 8:6** And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what these are doing? They are committing great iniquities here, so that I should keep away from my sanctuary; and you will see still greater iniquities.” **read ›**

48 **Ezekiel 11:4** Therefore prophesy against them; prophesy, Son of man.” **read ›**

49 **Ezekiel 11:13** While I was prophesying, Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. And I fell on my face and cried out with a loud voice and said, “Alas, alas, O Lord! Are you making a full end of the remnant of Israel?” **read ›**

50 **Ezekiel 17:9** Therefore say: Thus says the Lord: Will it prosper? Shall not the roots of its tenderness and its fruit rot? And all its early shoots shall wither — and not by a great arm nor by many people — so as to tear it up from its roots. **read ›**

51 **Ezekiel 22:30** And I sought from among them a man who walked uprightly and stood before me wholly in the time of anger, so that I should not utterly blot her out; and I found none. **read ›**

52 **Ezekiel 33:3** and he sees the sword coming upon the land, and blows the trumpet and warns the people, **read ›**

53 **Amos 1:1** The words of Amos, which came in Accarim in Tekoa, which he saw concerning Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. **read ›**

54 **Malachi 1:13** And you said, “These are wearisome,” and I scorned them, says the Lord Almighty. And you brought in what was seized, and the lame, and the sick; and if you bring the sacrifice, shall I accept them from your hands? says the Lord Almighty. **read ›**

55 **Tobit 3:14** You know, O Lord, that I am pure of all sin with a man, **read ›**

56 **Wisdom of Solomon 1:1** Love righteousness, you who judge the earth; think of the Lord in goodness, and seek him in sincerity of heart. **read ›**

57 **Wisdom of Sirach 38:10** Put away trespass, and direct your hands rightly, and cleanse your heart from all sin. **read ›**

58 **1 Enoch 58:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

59 **1 Enoch 58:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

60 **Matthew 5:3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **read ›**

61 **Matthew 5:4** Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. **read ›**

62 **Matthew 5:5** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. **read ›**

63 **Matthew 5:6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. **read ›**

64 **Matthew 5:7** Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. **read ›**

65 **Matthew 5:8** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. **read ›**

66 **Matthew 5:9** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. **read ›**

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67 **Matthew 5:10** Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **read ›**

68 **Matthew 5:16** Even so, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. **read ›**

69 **Matthew 5:48** Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. **read ›**

70 **Matthew 13:16** But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. **read ›**

71 **Matthew 17:2** He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as the light. **read ›**

72 **Matthew 23:26** Blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and the platter, so that their outside may also become clean. **read ›**

73 **Luke 11:39** The Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. **read ›**

74 **Romans 4:7** "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. **read ›**

75 **2 Corinthians 6:6** in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love, **read ›**

76 **1 Timothy 3:9** holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. **read ›**

77 **1 Timothy 5:22** Lay hands hastily on no one. Do not be a participant in other people's sins. Keep yourself pure. **read ›**

78 **2 Timothy 2:21** If anyone therefore cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful to the master, prepared for every good work. **read ›**

79 **Titus 1:15** To the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled and faithless nothing is pure; both their mind and their conscience are defiled. **read ›**

80 **Hebrews 10:22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our body washed with pure water; **read ›**

81 **James 4:8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. **read ›**

82 **1 John 3:3** Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure. **read ›**

83 **Revelation 14:5** In their mouth was found no lie, for they are blameless. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *57 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 2:1

Exodus 20:7

Psalms 24:7 · 90:4 · 116:15

Isaiah 1:13

Jeremiah 6:16 · 17:16

Joel 2:12

Matthew 5:32 · 5:40 · 5:42 · 7:12 · 7:15 · 8:10 · 10:10 · 10:28 · 11:27 · 15:19 · 16:27 · 23:27

Mark 2:19 · 12:41

Luke 6:30 · 12:5 · 14:33

John 14:6 · 14:7 · 14:8 · 14:9 · 14:12 · 14:15 · 14:23 · 14:26 · 14:28 · 15:1 · 15:9 · 15:21 · 16:7

Romans 1:25 · 2:29 · 4:3 · 8:9 · 8:29 · 12:3

1 Corinthians 1:19 · 1:20 · 1:27 · 7:18 · 13:12 · 14:6

2 Corinthians 13:3

Ephesians 6:9

Philippians 4:18

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2 Timothy 3:2

Hebrews 4:15

James 1:8

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Did the early Christians connect Matthew 5:8 with Psalm 24:3–4?” on October 4, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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How to cite this study. The Historic Faith, “Did the early Christians connect Matthew 5:8 with Psalm 24:3–4?” Early Church Questions, published November 9, 2026, https://thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-the-early-christians-connect-matthew-5-8-with-psalm-24-3-4. To cite one quotation, add its number and source, for example “quote 1, source 10.”

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THE END OF THIS STUDY