

Last week was the beginning of a new series entitled *All Belongs To God*. Today is *Part 2*.

As we began this series we were first reminded of a base nature of mankind that thinks it knows what is best or knows what is right. It's just the way human nature is. Everybody has an opinion. That's one thing I really hate about "news" today. It's about people's opinions. That's all they do. They ask different ones about what they see, and maybe they've written a book about the area. I think, "You've got to be kidding me!" They have very slim knowledge about things and yet they give their opinions and it's like this is news? I get very frustrated with that kind of thing. But anyway, everybody has an opinion, so just ask anybody, see what they think. I don't know what that proves or what that does, but it doesn't do me any good.

But we know that it doesn't; in other words, human nature doesn't know what is best, doesn't know what is right. The base nature of mankind has a spirit that's filled with pride. It's just the way we are. I love the process whereby we see God working with us in a specific manner. You can look back through time; you can look back over sermons and see how things are going in a particular way. I'm always amazed by that, inspired by that, because you see what God is doing and how He teaches us and gives us a focus so that we can learn more. This is the same kind of a process.

A lot of this right now has been a process of learning about this matter of pride, about where it comes from, about what God wants us to focus upon and get rid of in our lives, and that's just a horrible nature, pride. It really is. It thinks it knows best. People basically just don't want anybody telling them what to do, and when it comes to God giving laws, human nature really doesn't like that and so people have, like in churches, go to the church of your choice...but go. Come as you are. Come as you are. That's a wonderful one. So people do. Pick out your own beliefs. You think, what a nightmarish system, what a number Satan has done on this world.

But that's not so in God's Church. The stronger God's Church becomes, the more God gives to it, the less there are people who like it, candidly, even in the scattered Body.

So again, it's a nature that acts as though it knows best. It's a spirit that acts like it's God. But it doesn't think that way. It doesn't think, "I'm acting like God." It doesn't understand that. It doesn't understand the spiritual meaning of what is said by that statement. If you were to say that, you know, we act like God, people would say, "No, I don't!" "You think that." "No, I don't!" Because they don't understand. But we're to understand what we do when pride is in the way, when spiritual idolatry is in the way.

That's the definition of it in many ways; spiritual idolatry is lifting something up before God. The obelisk, whatever it is, the idol, whatever that idol is, we're lifting it up before God and that

makes us like God then. That's what we're doing - what we want to do, how we see it, and whatever. It's hard for us to see that nature, but we need to see it.

Then we were reminded about a verse that was covered in the last series entitled *Fighting for God's Way* and it was about a self-reliant spirit that needs for no one else to tell it what to do. I'm going to read that again in Revelation 3:17. You don't need to turn there.

**Revelation 3:17**—**Because you say, I am rich**, again, a spirit of pride, of self-reliance by our actions. We don't think that way, but that's what's reflected by our actions by what we're doing or not doing, that we lift ourselves up like God. That's what this kind of spirit is. It's a spirit that raises itself up like God. It goes deeper than that and that's why we've gone into Ezekiel as well to discuss some of these things, to see what that spirit really is and what it's like.

**...and increased with goods**, have much to merchandize, **and have need of nothing**, have need of nothing - self-reliant. "I have my own opinion, my own way of seeing things." **...and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked**. That's what we are like without God if it's not a matter of God's spirit.

So anyway, finally we went to Ezekiel 28 where God speaks about what happened to Lucifer as he changed to Satan, became known as Satan. But we first focused on the verses that preceded that that speak of a prince or a leader, if you will, of Tyre. To me, it's an awesome thing to understand because the Church hasn't really grasped this in times past, and frankly, the world has really been confused by some of these things because they haven't understood what it's talking about later in Ezekiel, that it is about Lucifer, that it is about Satan.

But to understand why the first few verses are mentioned and then a little bit later when it talks about the king of Tyre, that's about Satan, but the prince of Tyre is another matter. But there's a reason why God puts both there like that and we're to learn from that. It has a great deal to do with what this sermon is all about, and candidly, what some of the things of the Feast site in Spain have kind of sparked, in that sense, that God has used, I feel, to drive the point home even more so, about what we're discussing here.

So, **Ezekiel 28**, again, I'm just going to catch up on a few verses here and discuss some of this. **Verse 1 ...Because your heart is lifted up and you have said, I am God...** Again, it isn't that he said that, but his actions did, the way he was living did. We as human beings do exactly the same thing. We don't say those things verbally. We don't think them in our mind, that "I'm placing myself ahead of God." We just don't tend to think that way. But if we can begin to grasp some of this, of what it's talking about in a deeper way, that we are putting things before God, then it should shake the tar out of us and help to actually stir up a greater sense of a battle within us, a desire to fight self, a desire not to let this happen, and an ability to see that every time we do something that is contrary to what God says we're putting God below us.

You think, what a sick mind! But that's the way we are as human beings and God made us this way for a purpose - so that we could learn this.

**Because your heart is lifted up and have said, I am God, and sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas...** I think of what it said about the man of sin. Same thing. It's said a different way, what Paul wrote, but what he did, you know, where you sit, how you think, what you have done you've raised yourself up above God. We can see that easier than we can see ourselves. We can see what someone has done in a case like that and how devastating, how destructive it was to God's Church, the Apostasy, but sometimes in that process we fail to see our own nature that's like that. Because it is.

That's what God wants us to see, what our own selfish, self-reliant, human nature is like. Though we have desired to put the old person to death in a watery grave it's still with us when it comes back up. But it's a constant battle to fight against that and to desire to keep the old person drowned, if you will, dead. But it's always there.

We go through a process of becoming more and more refined, we grow spiritually, but there is always going to be human nature in you, which means there is always going to be sin in you until we're changed. We can't help it. But God wants us to grow more spiritually, to esteem Him more, to glorify Him more, to understand what we're doing so that we can battle it more readily, more perfectly, so that we can see it more quickly when we're doing those things. Because when you see things the way they are they're so ugly that you don't want them to be in you. If that's our choice, if we can really address that ugliness.

**Because your heart is lifted up and have said, I am God and sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas, yet you are a man, and not God, though you set your heart as the heart of God.** So only God's heart is true. Only God's heart is right. He is God! He did create everything. Everything is His. He is perfect in righteousness, in justice, in all that is true and right and good. We're not and we have to see that difference. It becomes more and more magnified the more we can grow spiritually. So it's a matter of how we think in our heart. So God's thinking is right, but ours is screwed up, and that's what we have to battle.

**Verse 4—With your wisdom and with your understanding you have gained riches for yourself.** I think of how nations oftentimes are then. Whether it be communities or other people, or just anything in society, groups of people who have bound together, they consider themselves, as a whole, better than someone else or other groups that have come together. Whether it be cities, you think of different universities, different battles that people have, rivalries they have when it comes to basketball, football, different things, and they all know they're better. They have these battles that they fight. It's just the way of human nature.

**...and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries.** But it all belongs to God. And how long can you keep it? How is it going to profit you? Incredible. Our thinking is so short-sighted. It truly is.

**By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches...** So it's kind of a mockery of him in some ways. ...**you have increased your riches and your heart is lifted up because of your riches.** That's the way we are as human beings. It's incredible. Just a tendency we have.

Anyway, at the end of *Part 1* last week we were focusing on the fact that throughout the Bible there is much said about vanity and pride and arrogance of mankind. Whenever I think about some of those things I think about what it says in Isaiah and the change that God's going to bring the earth as He gets rid of the haughtiness and the arrogance of mankind and ushers in a new world because of His government that's going to reign on the earth. We oftentimes, obviously, hear those things at the Feast of Tabernacles.

So anyway, much is said in scripture about the futile, empty, and short-lived efforts of pride-filled people. Where are they? You look back a hundred years, where are they? Where are all these people? How often do you think about them? You go back a thousand years? Who thinks? Who considers them? We're here and we're gone. Those things we're to learn from. Those things are to be etched in our mind. We're nothing. We're puny. But we don't think that way, as a whole, as human beings. We think we're something.

Just, again I think of the news. You listen to people, what do they think? Oh, they're something. They're right. People get into arguments and battles and fights and twitter wars and all kinds of things because they're right. If only everyone else could see their brilliance then we'd all get along, nations would get along better. If we could just... Anyway.

So what happens between nations? What's happening right now between nations is no different than two people. I was thinking this morning. Of all the billions of people, how many do you think really agree with each other? The only ones who come close to that would be the Body of Christ because of what we believe. But even there we have our differences, our different opinions, our different ideas about things, and there you go. So with all the billions of people on the earth, to think everyone believes, as a whole, that their opinions, their way of seeing things is right, it's best for them. Just ask. No. Anyway.

But again, people fail to think in the terms of everything belongs to God. Everything is God's. Everything we have is God's. What does that mean? Well, when we come to see that more spiritually it means everything. It has everything to do then with our attitude toward Him, toward His laws, toward His ways, toward how we're going to live according to them and so forth.

So again, we came to a point in the sermon where we were getting ready to go into it about something that Jeremy mentioned in the Feast sermon that was covered in the book of Ecclesiastes. I want to review a little of that because it fits into what we're covering here today and I think basically some of what he had to say was sparked by, again, by what he saw in some of the old ruins; and some of the things that have sparked my thinking in some of this was sparked by and enhanced by what I saw in some of the old ruins. Because these things can have an impact in your thinking, in your mind. It's one thing to read about some things, it's another thing

sometimes to see them. I don't know how to explain it, but it's different how some of these kinds of things can just impact the human mind in how we think.

Anyway, he was speaking in a part of the sermon about the term "vanity" and how it's used and some of the usage of the word that was given as "something that's vain in the sense that it is lacking substance or it's fruitless, or in the egotistical meaning of the word where someone has excessive pride in ones one appearance or in their own accomplishments." That pretty much hits everyone because of what we are, how we are.

It was also explained how the word in Hebrew is used in a much more abstract meaning, in that sense, as he brought out, it's a little bit poetic because in Hebrew this word means "vapor or breath." That's what all the other definitions of vanity really come down to, if we can see them. Then he went on to say, "That it is simply 'vapor or breathe,' nothing more, nothing less. But you can start to think about what vapor or what breath is and it's something that's here now and it's gone quickly." That's our lives. You know, I think when people get older and get to a certain point where they've had certain things happen in their life (because I've felt this), you know, when you come knocking on the door a few times and you don't know what's on the other side of it, that's the world we live in; we're here and we're gone.

That's just the cycle of life, of human life, and it's something we have to address in our thinking. Thank God He has a plan and a purpose for all life to continue on. It's just not the way we think in time. But God's focus on things about time is so different than ours because of how we are as human beings. To grasp billions upon billions and trillions of years? Our minds can't grasp that. Eternity? We can't grasp that.

So we're here just a little measure, but to us it's everything because that's all we know, that's all we've experienced. But God wants us to learn more from all this and be moved by it.

Anyway, later in parts of Ecclesiastes was covered and he stated that "Solomon compares many things in this book to vapor, because that's just how life is." It's here and then it's gone. "And that's one of his main conclusions" in the book of Ecclesiastes. "We're temporary beings now and we're just here for a bit, just like a breath, we're here today and then gone tomorrow."

He went on to talk about how, "Everything we physically create is like a breath." How long does it last? A house that you live in, how long does it last? And if you don't keep certain things up, you know, if you abandon a place, if you don't live there it's amazing how fast something deteriorates. It's incredible. So we keep it up, you have to maintain. There's lessons in that going back to the Garden of Eden isn't there? To dress and keep, to maintain, to cultivate, all the things we learn that God wants us to see and understand about life.

Anyway, as he went on to say, "Things will fall apart when we are gone and nobody is going to remember them." It's just the way life is. And that's, again, going on, "God is the only source of anything that can last for eternity." As he brought out, "I think it's clear that Solomon came to

that exact understanding,” as he said.” And went on to say, “In that sense it's kind of a humbling comparison to make that of everything that we humans do it's just like a breath - nothing more, nothing less.”

Anyway, “Ecclesiastes 2:4,” skipping ahead here to this where Solomon said, “**I made great works; I built myself houses; I planted vineyards. I made gardens and orchards, I planted trees in all of them of all kinds of fruits. I made pools of water, to water therewith the wood that brings forth trees.**” In other words, he created things with irrigation systems in order to help his sapling trees, as it was brought out, and many other things that he talked about of what he did.

We think about our lives and what we have done. I think about things that I have experienced to this time in my life and these are the lessons, these are the things we're to learn, to understand there's far more beyond this that God intends. It's here and then it's gone. Its purpose is here and then it's gone.

I couldn't help but think a moment ago about once the Apostasy occurred and some groups came together, and I think of the one group that I was with in the beginning there, of how there was this great desire to use almost all the funds that they had by that point in time to buy Big Sandy. Why? Its like, “We've got to save it. That was God's college. That's where the Church was located and we need to save that and maybe be headquartered out of that area,” or whatever the thinking was in some people, “and use these funds for that.”

You think, how futile is that? It was there for a purpose for a time and then it's gone. When God's finished with something He's finished with it. I experienced that with Bricket Wood. When there is no longer a purpose for it, there's no longer a purpose for it. It's not something holy about it.

It's like what people talk about Jerusalem today. They call it the holy city. You think, “Give me a break. There's nothing holy about it!” The old city, nothing holy about it. You've got fighting factions there. Four great or major regions of the world and they don't get along. Not a one of them! They're fighting wars. They're killing each other! Holy? That's supposed to be the picture of what is holy?

So our brains, our minds sometimes are so screwed up because we don't grasp God's plan and God's purpose for us and what we need to see in ourselves that has to change.

So anyway, he went on to mention about some of this. He said, “I had the opportunity recently to visit some old Moorish palaces in Spain, and some of them have some really massive orchards and garden. These were essentially the private parks for the rulers during that time and they had a lot of old irrigation channels in them that were still being used.” So all this was done hundreds and hundreds of years ago; still there and still able to be used. But the people aren't. Those who built them are gone. They don't even know who they were. There is some history about some of them, but it's kind of scrambled in many cases. It's not too much in depth at this point in time, a lot missing.

Anyway, talked about how interesting it was to see some of these things. So anyway, again, I'm kind of amazed how that impacted, and we talked about some other things, impacted the thinking there about why this particular subject was covered. God uses those kinds of things oftentimes to teach us, to work with us, and so it is with some of the things we're talking about here.

Anyway, going on. Such things as what we're covering in this series help capture what's good for us to have deeply ingrained in our minds. That's what God is wanting from us, to have these things more deeply ingrained in our mind of what we're like, to understand what we do when we act in certain ways that are contrary to God, of what we're doing on a spiritual plane, to understand more deeply what spiritual idolatry really is, because the more you come to see it if you love God, if you really want God's way of life, it's going to make you sick. It should make you sick. Whenever you sin, it should really make you sick, and if you have certain battles that you have in your life, which we all have as human beings because we're the product of things that go way, way back. We're molded and fashioned in certain ways. Thank God He's altering and transforming what's in the mind.

But there is still that which is engrained in us which will be with us until we're changed. There are certain battles within all of us because of what we've experienced that hasn't been good that are some of our greatest battles. They truly are. The more we can come to see where we're not responding in a proper way and come to understand what we're doing when we raise up this spiritual idolatry, the more ugly it is, the uglier it is (perhaps is the better way of saying it), the uglier it is to us and we really see it, the easier it's going to be to conquer it, the more quickly you're going to see it when it happens.

Now, if I can experience this in this last week you can experience it in your life as well. You think this isn't real? It is real! If we can come to see these in a deeper way, each one of us, of certain things, I don't care how small it is, whatever the thinking or whatever the thought might be that comes into the mind or whatever a habit might be that we have, I don't care what it is. I don't care if it's something as simple as driving down a freeway and you get upset about what somebody else did. Well, get a grip on yourself. There are certain things we do sometimes that are just not right, the way we act, the way we respond. God wants to see that.

Because until you really hate something and you see it for how ugly it is, what's going to be the motivation to change? I hope that makes sense in a very powerful way. Because indeed, the quicker we can come to see this is against God, I am not going to do something that's against God.

I don't know if you think this way, but there are times because of the Sabbath I'm able to fight things easier - because it's God's Sabbath. Does that make sense? It's God's Sabbath and just by nature, because my mind is focused more on the Sabbath because of God's spirit, it's easier to fight certain battles; it's easier to discard certain things that might otherwise take place and to

say no, that's not going to happen on God's Sabbath. But could it happen on the other six days of the week? Yeah, because I'm not as focused on those six days of the week. This is God's time.

Well, every day is God's time. It's how we live it, how we respond, and how I live my life is toward God, and if I live something up and act and do something that I shouldn't be doing, respond to something in a certain way, and there's a better way of doing it or a right way of doing it, then I'd better do it. But you can't really get rid of some of those things until you come to a deeper point in your life - and I'm talking about a refining process in our lives - to where you say this isn't going to happen because it's about God, it's about my relationship with God and I'm not going to do this toward God. That's the way we have to grow and think.

So our efforts without God, if God's not in it, and candidly, in our lives there are things that God's just not in - in some of our thinking, in some of our conversation. Because sometimes it's just a matter of "the way I see it," "the way I think," and sometimes the way we'll respond is not the right way, is not a good way. Is it always a peacemaker? Not always, is it? Do we have that kind of a mind where we're always seeking to be a peacemaker and working to be a peacemaker and everything that comes out of our mouth is a matter of that focus, that we're striving to be a peacemaker, to do things God's way when it comes to relationships? So again, our efforts without God are futile. They're vain, they're very temporary. They truly are.

Again here, this thing of history. We can learn much from history and that's why we're going through some of this, the important lessons of life that can become far more meaningful to us as or if we're able to learn those lessons.

Ezekiel 28. Why does God record these things? Why of something that happened so long ago and then another incident that happened in Tyre to a prince of Tyre that God addresses, and why put these two together like this? Why address it in this manner? It's for the very thing we're talking about here. God wants us to grasp more deeply indeed what our spirit is like. That prince had the same mind, the same spirit, the same attitude of the one who started it all, and that's what our human nature is like. The more we can see that the more we should be disgusted by it, "Because I don't want his spirit. I don't want his mind. I don't want his attitude. I don't want his thinking in me, but I know it is." That's the very thing God wants us to come to see more clearly, more speedily when they occur, to say, "This is how it starts."

Now, we're in a process of changing, and hopefully, reversing those things and becoming more and more refined, in unity with God, but be careful because those things can turn and move a different direction. That's what happened to Laodicea. That's exactly what happened to Laodicea. That's why God says to always be on guard, to always be on guard, to be spiritually alert.

That's why we've covered certain things like prayer and fasting and what is our real relationship like with God? Are we really looking to God day by day in our lives thinking about God? Because I know that I can't think about God in the same way the other six days of the week as I do on the



Sabbath because of what's ingrained in me. Now, I wish that I could and I'm striving to do that. Hope that make sense. Because it's a matter of thinking, it's a matter of the human mind and how we see God.

But because it's the Sabbath automatically in many ways, because this is our life, we tend to think a little bit differently on this day. We tend to be a little bit better focused, more sharply focused. But can we carry that into the other six days as well? Well, that's the battle. That's the goal. That's the way we should be as we think toward God, as we think toward His purpose and His plan for us.

That's why I marvel everything is God's and yet we tend to take credit ourselves for things we do in life. It's just the way we are, and yet nothing we have, nothing we do is because of us. That's why I love the way God addressed the prince of Tyre. "Look at what you have done. Look at what you have done. Look at all you have gained. Look at what you have done by your great wisdom; by the way you see it. Awesome!" How futile. How puny. How short-lived. How irrelevant in the scheme of things, because nothing has meaning and purpose unless it's with God. It really doesn't. History should prove that to us. What does it mean? What good is it unless God's in it? Because there is no more life unless God's in it.

What an incredible thing that God has given to us, to be some of the first to have opportunity for His way of life and to have that desire then that others able to receive it as well? So we're going to go back to Ezekiel 28 and continue on from parts of where we left off and we'll pick up a little bit of what we already covered. But the futility and emptiness of human pride, hopefully, is becoming clear to all of us, because it's sick, it truly is. Those things happen in God's Church as well.

In *Part 1* we covered the first few verses here that were about Lucifer, and then we backed up to the beginning of the chapter as we already have discussed some of these things about the prince of Tyre in the Phoenician kingdom.

But now let's pick up in verse 11 where he talks to the king of Tyre, and pick this up again even though we read a couple of these verses early on the first part of this and then continue on where we left off. Because I love how some of these things are stated and little things that God continues to reveal to us even though how many times do we read things like this in scripture? I think of different things that are done at the Feast from time to time and we go through the some of the same kinds of scriptures and God just opens up something additional as we continue to go on, things we couldn't see before. That's the beauty of growth, spiritual growth, that we can come to more deeply grasp and understand.

**Ezekiel 28:11—Moreover, the word of the Eternal came to me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation of the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Eternal, the Lord Eternal, You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden, the garden of**

**God, and every precious stone was your covering.** “You had everything! You were at the pinnacle of what I created.” He was! The pinnacle of all that God created.

**You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I had set you so.** As I mentioned last Sabbath for us to think about how that you’re in a seat, we’re here and God set us so. How blessed are we to understand that, to know that the Great God of the universe has given us this kind of opportunity. Not many have received this. Sometimes it’s hard for us to grasp the reality and how real that truly is and what it means for us. It really is difficult. The reality is you really can’t without God’s spirit.

Because I’ve seen so many come and go and sit in seats and what does it mean unless it’s in us, deep? We have to hold on to it with all of our being. We have to desire to hold on to it with all of our being. We have to fight to hold on to it with all of our being, because everything is designed out here to take it away from you, to steal you away, to pull you away.

There are great lessons in that. God wants to know, and God uses that as an arena of life for us to have the opportunity to be molded and fashioned. There’s really no other way for us in that.

**You were the anointed cherub who covered, and I set you so. You were upon the holy mountain of God.** “You were in the very government, the height of the government of God.” Things can happen. The Apostasy. Look what happened. **And you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire,** amongst the angelic realm in that position, in that place. **You were perfect (complete) in your ways from the day that you were created until iniquity was found in you.** But we have the same spirit as human beings; we’re selfish, we’re selfishly motivated, we’re filled with pride, vanity, our way, our thinking.

**Verse 16—It’s through the multitude (abundance) of your merchandise (merchandising) that’s in the midst of you that has become filled with violence.** In other words, the Hebrew really means “with what is wrong.” So he changed from what is right and being a part of what is right (because everything that’s right comes from God), to doing something different, all that’s wrong. To do something different and to go a different way, and being spirit that kind of a thing that happened in spirit to a spirit mind at that point in time was something that couldn’t be reversed because it didn’t want to be.

Because it’s different than what happens in us and that’s why it’s such a marvel to understand the mind that God has given human beings, the physical make-up with the impregnation of His spirit that gives us the ability to think. That’s not a good way of putting it, impregnation, because that’s like the holy spirit. But He’s given us a spirit essence, okay, a spirit essence that’s separate from the holy spirit and we understand that gives us the ability to be a human being as we are - to know things, to remember things, and on and on it goes. It makes us different from the animal kingdom.

But to me, it's a marvel that God can with His holy spirit then begin to change that very essence that's in us, that mind that we have. To me, that's a beautiful thing because otherwise we couldn't be saved, if we can't change. But God's made it possible in human beings to change. Within the spirit realm once it did what it did it can't change. It doesn't want to. But God gives us the ability to want to. What an awesome thing, to understand how great God is, the power of Almighty God to do what He's doing in us. I marvel that He can save us because of what we are. But He can and He does and He's going through that process. It's a beautiful thing.

That's why I love the expression "the controversy over Zion." Because with God there is no controversy. He says He's going to create something and do something and He does, but He gives us choice. There is the obstacle - it's in us - whether we chose it or not to the end because you can't just choose it at the beginning with baptism, it's something you have to continue choosing the rest of your life in this physical body.

**Therefore, I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God. I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire, from amongst the angelic realm.** It means he won't be there.

**Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty.** I think of how dumb we are as human beings that we become so lifted up by how important we think we are or how much we think we know or what we think is best. If you would just do what I'm doing or what I'm telling you you should do then your life would be better and enhanced. Well, maybe sometimes certain things are true in that area, but as a whole we just have that kind of a mind regardless of whether we think it through all the way.

**You have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness; I will cast you to the ground. I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you.** What kings? You know what this is about? It's not talking about rulers of the earth in the sense of physical carnal human beings, kings of the earth. It's talking about those that God raises up to be kings to rule.

**You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your traffic (your merchandise), therefore, I will bring forth a fire from the midst of you and I will devour you. And I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of those who see you.** I think about, who's going to see it? When is this going to happen? It's an awesome thing to know.

**All those who know you among the peoples shall be astonished at you.** Really, when you think about some of this, this is what God wants us to grasp, by what's recorded here. It's a matter of what we see spiritually, not what we see physically, not what we see even if we're spirit at that point in time when these things take place. It's what we have come to see, what we are able to come to see spiritually that God gives us the ability to grasp and comprehend what happened to him and why. To be astounded by the fact that a being who was given so much over the angelic realm could do what he did, to grasp that a third of the angelic realm followed the same attitude and spirit.

That's why it's not hard to grasp when it says at the end amongst mankind they'll be as the sand of the sea. Such masses of people who won't choose, who do not want God's way of life, and some of the minds. They'll be given opportunity, but there are going to be so many. I'm not dumbfounded by that. Instead, it causes me to wonder how many will really end up choosing God's way of life through the Millennium and the Great White Throne? How many are really going to fight for it? Because if this can happen in an angelic realm of spirit beings, what's going to happen with carnal human beings that have that nature already?

Because it's a battle to fight self. It's a battle. It's a battle for the human mind to come to the point to say, "That's the way I am and I hate it and I don't want that. I want something different. I want the mind, the being, the thinking of God. I want to be able to be a peacemaker. I don't want to have wrong thoughts and feelings and attitudes toward other people. I don't want those wrong things in life when people have relationships and clashes and the things that sometimes happen then with human beings, arguing and fighting and bickering and drama, drama, drama." That's why we have to come to hate those things with all of our being. Awesome!

Anyway, it goes on to say, it translates this when it talks about being astonished. It says, **You shall be a terror**. That's a very poor translation. It's, **You have been destruction or terror**, is what it's saying, basically, in Hebrews, **and you will never be anymore**. "This is how you've been, this is what you've caused, and you'll never be anymore." He does it all the way to the end.

Proverbs 8. So it's an awesome thing to come to understand and come to see more deeply, if you will, all that God has given to us and to understand how great God is. All belongs to God.

**Proverbs 8:13—The fear of the Eternal is to hate evil**. It goes on to tell what that evil is. So it's making a statement here, this is wise. This is a matter of wisdom. Proverbs is about wisdom that comes from God. It's about the mind of God, the thinking of God that He wants us to see, to grasp, to understand, and through the power of His holy spirit we're able to. So again, it's not fearing God, but it's fearing our relationship with God. It's about fearing what can interfere with that relationship that we can have with God when He calls us, when He begins to work with us. It's to fear to be separated from that relationship with God.

So the right kind of thinking, if we have a desire to draw closer to God, to become more at one with Him, again, obviously, is to hate evil. That's wisdom. Then it goes on to list, **Pride, arrogance, and the evil way**, because it's everything to do with pride, everything to do with self-sufficiency.

I think of companies and people that work and whether it be between nations, nobody likes anyone telling them what to do. That's why it's easy to understand how Europe feels today. They are sick and tired of being told how to run their countries. They're sick and tired of someone telling them how they should have their strategy in the world, who they should work with and how they should work. They're tired because that's carnal nature. But you have that big foot over there that helped us out of a big jam, because they don't forget those things very fast, but

anyway, saved us so that we're still here, but now they want to control everything we do and they stick a military over here to help ensure that. "Oh, it's for your protection." It's amazing what goes on between peoples and nations. But they're tired of it. That's easy to understand.

It's like in companies and corporations and how people get along and how the human mind thinks, the arrogance that's there, the pride that is there. "I know the best way. I know how it should be done." Sometimes a person may be right, some things may be better than something else. That's not the point. The point is in each person's spirit and attitude because they know. That's why there are clashes. That's why there are conflicts.

I couldn't help but think about so many times I've seen things happen in the world where there are these relationships where people come together. You see it on different programs on TV. There are different ones out there like that. *The Profit*. I don't know if any of you watch that. But anyway, there are some programs out there that this individual tries to work with people. So often the problem is within the relationships and dynamics of the people within the company, especially if it's family! It's like you've got to work with the problem in the family before you can work with the company because it carries over into how people function.

There is so much pride and there is so much arrogance involved, and sometimes to break through that it's almost an impossibility. Sometimes people learn from it and oftentimes they just don't. But that's just carnal human nature, isn't it? But we have to be able to see it. It's in all of us. It's the way we are. It's the way we are.

That's why I've seen many businesses within the Church have never worked out well. People come into a partnership, a relationship and before long somebody knows what's... "That's not the right way of doing this and this is the right way." Going way back in time I think of some of the things I've seen, it's been mindboggling. Human nature, carnal human nature, evil that comes out in relationships. But those things bring it all to the surface and we're to learn from that when they do.

In families, in marriages, whatever it might be, when there are things that don't work out you're to learn from that and you're to come to understand and see yourselves better, see? It's not a matter of being right. It's not a matter of your way is the best. It's a matter of does it agree with God? What does God say in the matter? How should you be conducting your speech? How should you be conducting your thinking, your thoughts? How should you be living toward another? It's hard to do for human beings. That's why we need conversion. That's why we need God's spirit.

Again here, to see evil for what it is, **pride, arrogance, and the evil way. And the perverse mouth**, He said, **I do hate**. Because it's all the evil way. But yet that's what's in us, and to conquer it we have to see it. We have to see it when it raises up its ugly head, if you will. We have to see it when something is being raised up above God in what we're doing spiritually, in our relationship toward God, because if it's a matter of we're not doing it God's way, if we're not in unity with God, if it's something different.

**Psalm 100:1—Raise your voices,** just means “cry out” **to the Eternal, all you lands! Serve the Eternal with gladness.** Glad to do so. Happy to do so. So there is a spirit and attitude of things we can learn from a matter of a relationship toward God and esteeming God in our thinking, in our thoughts. **Come before His presence with singing.** That means “a ringing cry,” if you will. **Know that the Eternal, He is God,** or “know the Eternal God.” **He made us,** and I love how this states this, **and not we ourselves.** You know, some of these things sometimes are kind of humorous if you see them for how it’s stated, if you can see the humor in what we’re like and say, “Yes, that’s the way we are. We resist God,” but God is saying in essence here, “See yourself realistically.”

How are you here? How are you able to have the job you have? How are you able to have the home you have? How are you able to have anything that you have? It’s all God’s and He lets us have it to learn from it in this physical life. The life we have, it’s because God gave it to us. He doesn’t owe us anything. We owe everything to God because it’s all God’s, and candidly, that will stir up gratitude and thankfulness. The more deeply we can see these things, the more of a spirit and an attitude we’ll have that’s good and healthy and right toward God. It’ll stir up a gratitude and a thankfulness more and more. We need to have that.

**He made us, and not we ourselves.** Others translate this in Hebrews as, “We are His.” Well, that’s an understatement. But I like the other way it’s stated because it means basically the same thing. We are His. We are God’s. He’s put so much out there for us to have opportunity to have if we’ll embrace it, but it has to be done His way, not our way.

**His people and the sheep of His pasture.** So we’re God’s. We’re His people and the sheep of His pasture. He has given us everything.

**Enter into His gates with thanksgiving.** So again, I think about “His gates,” about what it means here about coming into God’s presence. Do we do that all the time? How often? I think about the sermons we had about prayer and about fasting and are we doing that on a regular basis? Because every once in a while we have to be jolted into reality. Have we really developed some of those patterns in our life, that we do look to God every day of our life? If we’re not doing that, if we’re not praying and looking to God why not? What’s wrong? What is it we need to address in ourselves?

Because I know that still exists in God’s Church. There are people who need to address that more deeply. “Am I praying every day to God? Do I cry out to God every day?” Because I know the truth. The reality is that it doesn’t always happen. It’s not always happening, period. That’s just the way of human nature. We all go through it. We have to learn. We have to grow. It’s a growing process. But we should be sobered by it when we see it’s lacking, when we see that it’s not what it should be. Because it reveals something within our spirit. How much do we really want what God has offered us? How real is it to us? How excited are we that we have it?

Because if those things aren't there then we are tending to be acting more self-reliant, and that is a horrifying danger. It truly is. That is pride. That is arrogance before God. It's arrogance. And especially in us, if we can see it spiritually for how ugly that is. Because as much knowledge and as much information that God has given to us in life to see, to know and understand about His truth and His purpose, to not do some of the most basic of things in our life, such as prayer, in a relationship, if we truly want that, to cry out to God, if we don't do it, it's hideous arrogance on our part. That's what we're acting like. We're acting like God, that we're God.

I hope you can see that because I can't give that to you, what I just said. It's God's spirit. It's something we have to cry out to be able to see. What am I doing? What am I lacking? What is my spirit like toward You? The more we see that the more it can help move us to repentance and to change. Because, candidly, the uglier something is the easier it is then to fight against it, to hate it. The more you hate something, the less you're going to have it in your life.

Look at food, certain foods. Are there certain foods? Is there a food that you really don't want to have? You know, some people.... Won't mention any names. Somebody told me the other day they pretty much like everything.

Anyway, I don't. Now, depends on how it's cooked, I guess, but there are some things I prefer not to have. But if something is really foul. Oh, I can think of one. Do not give me cilantro. It's like soap. It's funny; everybody's taste buds are different. I go into a restaurant, "Does this have cilantro? Is this strong in cilantro? Or keep the cilantro out, don't put the cilantro." Mexican restaurant, "I don't want any cilantro on it." That's like saying, "Why are you here?" Really! It's like, "What are you doing in this restaurant if you don't want cilantro in it. Everything made is cilantro." Anyway, I can get through a little bit, but I'll tell you what, it doesn't take much and well, I could take a bar of Lava in there and just scrape, you know, just like you would cheese. "You want a little parmesan on that?" "Oop, a little Lava." That's what it tastes like to me. I don't know how many of you feel that way, but some people we have different taste buds. Everybody has different kinds of taste buds. Some of the stuff just sets you off.

I have to tell you a story. Jeremy likes to grow herbs and stuff down there where he's at. He grows all kinds of stuff and he knew I didn't like cilantro and he said, "Dad," he says, "I've got this stuff." He said, "It takes the place of it," he said, "and it's really good. You're really going to like it. A lot of people use this type of thing." I got down there and he gave me just a little bit to try it, to see what it's like. I tried it and it was so much worse than cilantro. I could hardly get the taste out of my mouth. It's like, "You're tasting something different than I am because I hate this!" So, see, I don't have a problem then if I know that it's in something. I hate that particular food. So it's not hard for me to say no. It's easy.

That's the way it is with sin. The uglier it is or the more distasteful it is to you the easier it is to say no to it. That's what we have to become like in all sins that are around us in life. If you have a battle, whatever your number one or number two is just ask God to help you to hate, to hate the sin and He'll help you in it. He'll help you to grow in a hatred for it, to see the evil of it more

and more. The more you can actually see the evil of something, the hideousness of something, the ugliness, to where it's so distasteful to you on a spiritual plane, it's not hard to say no.

Now, because of our carnal human nature there's going to be some things you're still going to have a battle in from time to time. But as a whole, God will bless you and help you in that process. If it's something you really, truly desire He will help you in it. Just continue to cry out. Keep asking until it's conquered.

God doesn't get tired of hearing us. You know, if there is something you want and it's for the right reason there are times that He allows us to go through a process to see what we are, to see what is molded. It's a process, too, of something being changed in us. To me it's a marvel how God works with us in the human mind and things that take place.

Anyway, I was going to read this a moment ago and I'm going to go ahead and do it because this sermon was really motivated by, and I know God gives what we need to see and what we need to have at certain times. That's why I marvel when I go back and see things that God has given to us that we're able to grow in. This was as well, in that sense of what prompts certain things, certain things happen sometimes within the Church or in the world that prompts something. But God gives those things in His time and you can go back and look at how certain things are built upon one upon another. To me that's a marvel. So was this one here.

I was thinking about some of this and thought I would just read to you a little bit here about something that some of you are going to have the opportunity of seeing. You don't have to see this, but there are other things in the world we can learn from. Sometimes it might just be reading in a history book. But it's just like reading Ezekiel 28. If there are things that can impress us, or reading through the book of Ecclesiastes, there are things like that that have happened in times past, and especially if you think of Solomon, his life, what he went through, if you think about different things that have happened in time with a being that was set at the pinnacle of God's creation at that time and what he did and then to think what we're like as puny, physical human beings, what we're capable of, and then what God grants us and gives us the opportunity for.

Because He's offering for us to become greater than the angelic realm. That should dumbfound you. To become something that's greater than within the angelic realm, to be a part of the God Family. What can you say about that and how deeply can we really grasp that? But the more we can come to grasp that or appreciate that or be thankful for that, hopefully that stirs up a greater desire for us to battle. Because we're not here very long. We're not here very long.

That's why I don't know how much longer things are going to continue on, whether things can happen January, February—we're in January—January, February yet. If they don't happen now, it doesn't mean it couldn't happen the following year, but God hasn't revealed any of that stuff. But we should understand and know that there are patterns now that are absolute as far as how



God works and so that's why we have a period of time we're looking at here to 2023 if need be. So how long? Some of the battles, things we fight.

So I think about my life. How long am I going to be around? Because God may have a different plan. We have no guarantees of what life is, how long life is, and we live it to a certain point and it's gone. That's just a part of a process and it's difficult. But candidly, I understand because of how many times that I've had this old heart worked on here that I don't know. And neither do you, and if things happen, you go forward and God will show what has to be done.

Those are the lessons we're to learn, to be humbled by that. To be humbled by that. To grasp and understand what we have opportunity for and to understand things are not in our timing.

And so, visited a particular place that had an impact in my thinking in this area about futility, about our own lives and how futile our lives are as human beings without God. It's hard for us to grasp how much God has offered to us, it truly is. There are people who have lived incredible things in human life. But not to God. And where are they and what does it mean for them in the future? Not a thing.

Candidly, it's going to be really hard for a lot of them. You realize when they're resurrected in the Great White Throne, people who have been great leaders on the earth, people who have had such a dose of vanity and ego and abundance and power, it does something to the mind and it's not a good thing. I know that not all of them, and maybe few when it's all said and done, are really going to choose God's way of life.

So we got to visit a place called the Mosque-Cathedral in Cordoba, Spain. I'm not sure how to pronounce that. But to me it was dumbfounding. You know, when you see a structure that's been there for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years?

This country hasn't been around that long; it doesn't have things you can go see that other peoples have built in times past. There's not much around, really. Three hundred years, if you can find a spot. Four hundred years? "Well, that was the rock." But I just thought I want to read part of this to you.

There is this place called the Mosque-Cathedral. Well, the reason being is because it started out as a mosque and then the Catholics came along and did their thing and so it's called a cathedral now. There are, there's no, what is that, as far as a mosque is concerned, it's not able to be considered a religious holy site, although I think it is to some of them of that particular religion.

"Mosque-Cathedral in Córdoba<sup>1</sup>: The original structure was built by the Umayyad ruler 'Abd ar-Raḥmān I in 784–786..." Now, incredible. Think about that: 784-786. Well, Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 14 something. '92? See, I've forgot all that stuff in history. You think, I've learned

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mosque-Cathedral-of-Cordoba>

since then well some sailed the ocean blue long before him, you know, and there is plenty of evidence of that. Anyway, the games human beings play.

But 784-786 to construct something you can go in and look at today and be dumbfounded by its massiveness, the work that it took. But not much about him.

It says, “with extensions in the 9th and 10th centuries that doubled its size, ultimately making it one of the largest sacred buildings in the Islamic world. The ground plan of the completed building forms a vast rectangle measuring 590 by 425 feet (180 by 130 metres), or little less than St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.” Which I’m sure everybody’s been there. Anyway, I’m just kidding. “Oh, yeah, I know the size of that thing!” Anyway, sorry, but that’s what they give here.

“About one-third of this area is occupied by the Patio de los Naranjos (‘Court of the Oranges’)...” One thing unique down there some people are going to see is there are just streets, the trees they have lining the streets are orange trees everywhere. Just oranges, oranges, oranges. They say they’re not oranges you want to eat, but there are oranges everywhere. But that’s what they’re known for in that particular area. “...and the cloisters that surround it on the north, east, and west.”

“Passing through the courtyard, one enters on the south a deep sanctuary whose roof is supported by a forest of pillars made of porphyry, jasper, and many-coloured marbles.” So what’s amazing is when you see all these things they weren’t cut out by them, they were already there. They gathered these things up. So many of the buildings and things around that region were done by, basically, the Roman Empire when it first came into the region there, long before they came across here. So it was done very early on, several hundred years even before this. They were already there. So they, as so many different peoples did when they went in and conquered an area, they would take things. Just like Carthage. I was talking to someone earlier. It might have been the Romans, and I think it was, when they came in there at one point and they totally removed every stone of a city and sometimes bury them, sometimes scatter them, sometimes take them to another area to build a different city, if you will, which is mostly the practice, moving things to another area to build up a different city the way they want it done. But they don’t want anything of that history there. They try to wipe out that history. And you think, what? That futility of mankind, all the things they build, all the things they do and who knows the people? Nobody, as a whole. There are some of them remembered in history. And the only reason I know them is because of, you know, reading about it or something, but they don’t even know much about them.

So people try to do great things in this life and nothing comes close to what you have. Nothing. The great achievements of peoples, the great achievements of things that people have constructed that you can see to this day that have been there for hundreds of years, they’re just a testimony to what we’ve covered in this sermon. Things are futile. They’re empty. They’re without meaning unless God’s in it.

How much of this has God been in? Basically, none of it. He’s just let mankind live his own ways, be lifted up, have great wars, themselves become lifted up with incredible pride. False religion,

boy, does that hit you smack on. That's kind of hard to even visit some of those places for me, candidly, sometimes especially when I get into the other section. That part isn't as hard for me as it is for the parts when they start getting into all the garbage that goes with false Christianity. Sometimes it's just hard for me to be in the environment because it's like a slow burn inside of thinking of all the history of what Satan has inspired, of what human beings have done, and garbage that's with us to this day.

That's why I marvel at some of the things that have come out in the book, of things that go back to Babylon, and just because of the languages it just went in different parts of the world, but the same beliefs and ideas that started there are with us to this day. Anyway, so sick what mankind has done.

But look what we've been given. That which is far, far greater, far, far, greater. And do we grasp it? Do we appreciate that? Do we embrace it? Do we thank God regularly throughout a week, within a week, within a month? How often are we praying? How often do we glorify God and thank God for what we have been given? Do we grasp how great it is that we've been called to bear His name? Don't take His name in vain, and all that those things mean? We're so blessed. We've been given so much.

Anyway, it says, "Passing through the courtyard, one enters on the south a deep sanctuary whose roof is supported by a forest of pillars made of porphyry, jasper, and many-coloured marbles. Some 850 pillars divide this interior into 19 north-to-south and 29 east-to-west aisles..." It's massive! And you just see, everywhere you look, rows and columns of pillars, giant, mostly marble, beautiful pillars that the Romans... I'm sure they used slavery. You think, just the making of those things, to even know they had the ability to do something. They didn't have the kind of stuff we have today. The time and the labor. It just blows the mind, it truly does, the grandeur of it, of those times.

"...with each row of pillars supporting a tier of open horseshoe arches upon which a third and similar tier is superimposed. The most exquisite decoration in the whole complex is found in the third mihrab, or prayer niche..." It's a little place you can go for prayer, I guess. "...a small octagonal recess roofed with a single block of white marble that is carved in the form of a shell and has walls inlaid with Byzantine-style mosaics and gold."

"Since 1236 the former mosque has served as a Christian cathedral..." Well, I don't like putting that word in front of it, but you know what I'm saying. "...and its Moorish character was altered in the 16th century with the erection in the interior of a central high altar and cruciform choir, numerous chapels along the sides of the vast quadrangle..." You think of all this garbage that mankind has built. You think it kind of makes you want to puke in one sense, but in another sense it's awesome what mankind has built. But that's all that's left and where are they at and what do they have? What do they have to show for it? What resurrection are they going to be in? And what have you been given? What opportunities? What do we have? Incredible. It's hard for us to grasp all that God has given to us, how blessed we are.

Just like this leader then, this individual who came in, his reign, “Abd ar-Raḥmān I, a member of the Umayyad ruling family of Syria who founded . . . dynasty in Spain.”<sup>2</sup> So things didn’t go well in Syria so he left.

“When the Abbāsids overthrew the Umayyad caliphate in 750 CE and sought to kill as many members of the Umayyad family as possible, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān fled, eventually reaching Spain. The Iberian Peninsula had for some time been occupied by Muslim Arab forces...” You know, I’m reading through this and I think, look at that same area of the world today, some of the factions, some of the families, the ruling family there, and I can’t think what they’re called. But there are these different factions within all these different tribes.

I was remarking to someone earlier about how I think of Lawrence of Arabia. I always marvel when I hear about how they don’t get along over there. But of the movie, because I think every leader ought to watch that show and learn a little lesson from it. It’s a movie but it teaches a lot. Nothing had changed. Centuries and centuries and centuries. You may be able to unite certain groups together for a time, for a common cause, but as soon as that’s over with you know what? They’re going to start killing each other again. It’s just the way of history. It’s the way of peoples.

Anyway, I don’t want to read the rest of this garbage, but just to say that what an awesome thing to realize and have it hit you in a unique way, which I hope some of the content of the sermon has. Mankind does a lot of things and they don’t last long. They may build something that lasts for a long, long time, hundreds or even thousands of years. In some cases there are things out here that have been around for a few thousand years. That’s all there is to show for it. Most that went with it has to do with bloodshed, killing, slavery, great evil, and merchandising. I marvel at the merchandising factor because everything that happened with the start of civilization, especially along the Red Sea and different travel routes that you find, the most important places were the centers of trade. Even inland the places that were centers of trade, merchandising, were the greatest because that’s where power and wealth emanated from. And what do they have? Nothing. So nothing changes with mankind. What a horrible, horrible, sick world we’ve lived in. God has watched for 6,000 years.

Psalm 24, we’ll end here. **Psalm 24:1—The earth is the Eternal’s.** We know that. We understand that. But we need to live like that, too. Though we know it by knowledge we need to live our lives like that. “Everything belongs to God. Everything that I have is God’s. The fact that I’m able to sit here has been given by God, and it’s one of the greatest blessings and gifts that’s been given to human beings since time began.” How much do we cherish it? How grateful are we for it?

**The earth is the Eternals, and the fullness thereof.** Everything belongs to God. ...the world and they that dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Eternal? And who shall stand in His holy place?

You know what this is about? It’s about what God is offering us. It’s about the opportunity to grab

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abd-al-Rahman-I>

a hold of something and recognize how precious it is and to recognize as well what it takes to receive it, that we have to come to understand ever more deeply what our carnal, ugly, selfish, self-reliant human nature is like and fight against it with all of our might. Then that's not enough. It's not enough. Because you can't do it. I can't do it.

That's where prayer comes in. You have to cry out to God, "Help me fight this battle that is greater than me. Help me to fight this because it's greater than me, it's greater than my choices and what I have chosen as Your way of life, to be one of Your children, to be in Your Family. That's my goal. That's my focus." You have to cry out for those things.

God wants to know that. He knows every thought in our mind. But it's what comes out of your heart that reflects what comes out your mind. He wants us to state those things because that's how you grow, because you verbalize it, because you think about it and you say it to your Great God. Awesome! There's a power in that. There's a process in that of transforming your very mind. Truly is. It's a beautiful thing.

**Who shall ascend into the hill of the Eternal? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart...** That's why I marvel of what God's doing and preparing us for what's coming...spiritually. Because this time is unique in all times. Awesome. **He that has clean hands and a pure heart.** How do we have that? Because we don't have that. We don't have clean hands and we don't have a pure heart. It's because of the blessing of the ability to repent of our sins which we need to do on a continual basis, to cry out to God to help us to see the things that we're not able to see yet so that we can grow more. Ask for grace and mercy.

**He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity...** See, it's a rejection of what we do as human beings in a latching on to and a grabbing hold of what God offers us, what God has placed before us. **...nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Eternal, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This the generation of those who seek Him, that seek Your face, O Jacob. Selah** Beautiful.