



Zephaniah Wk. 8
Woe to the East
By Pastor Jody May 06/21/2026

[CALL TO HEAR]

Zephaniah 1:17-18 ESV

- ⁸ "I have heard the taunts of Moab
and the revilings of the Ammonites,
how they have taunted my people
and made boasts against their territory.
- ⁹ Therefore, as I live," declares the LORD of hosts,
the God of Israel,
"Moab shall become like Sodom,
and the Ammonites like Gomorrah,
a land possessed by nettles and salt pits,
and a waste forever.
The remnant of my people shall plunder them,
and the survivors of my nation shall possess them."
- ¹⁰ This shall be their lot in return for their pride,
because they taunted and boasted
against the people of the LORD of hosts.
- ¹¹ The LORD will be awesome against them;
for he will famish all the gods of the earth,
and to him shall bow down,
each in its place,
all the lands of the nations.
-

**Pastor – "People of God, this is the Word of God."
People – "Thanks be to God."**

Pray

Illustration

If you are a sports fan, you know what **taunting** is. Part of the FIFA World Cup is living with the knowledge that America has never won it, and we get taunted for that fact by the rest of the world, all the time. If we don't win big



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in the Olympics every 4 years, we get jeered by the Europeans and held in contempt by the communist countries. If we don't dominate the World Games those alternate years, it gets brought up by foreign media how we failed. Everyone likes to jump on the one who wins the most or who seems to have the most favor. It is so tempting for others to jeer at those who seem to be the ones who win more than others. If you are an American patriot, then you understand what it means to be hated for having the best athletes in the world.

The word for [taunting](#) in the text today though doesn't just mean to make fun of. No, it is a word used to describe the feelings behind getting made fun of. It is the expression of contempt towards another, it is to cast shame in public on those you dislike, it is to scorn or project an attitude of extreme disgust or contempt. In effect the person taunting is expressing an aggressive action against another in an attempt to do everything they could to make them feel demeaned.

It is what political/religious liberals use when they see a strong man and call him chauvinistic, it is what they use when they see a stance against alternative lifestyles and call people trans/homophobic (baseball pitchers), it is what they use when you're part of a majority and you refuse to accept their definition of discrimination, and they call you a racist. It is meant to demean, it is meant to silence you, it is meant to discourage, and it shows their heart towards those that think differently than they do. To taunt another in such a way shows that your heart is full of deceit and envy.

So, to sum up, if you are a patriotic sports fan and a true Christian, then you definitely understand what it means by the words taunt/revile in the text.

Introduction

The Devil has been using this tactic since the beginning. To taunt others, that is to use actions to get people to give up, that has always been his plan. He did this as a reaction from his first engagement with God's people. While having no friends among God's new creation he uses words to entice Adam and Eve in to following his advice, using words to take favor from God, to try



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and earn the unrightful spot of worship. Then in the midst of God addressing the accused here's the verdict.

Genesis 3:14-15 ESV

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put **enmity** between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;

Satan, you will never know what it is to walk upright as was intended, you will never hold a position rightful esteem. When people choose to listen to you it will always be less than what you were intended for. You who were once favored above all messengers and are now lower than the beasts of the field in my eyes. Not only that, but to ensure a divide between you and me, I will, says the Lord God, put enmity between you and the woman between her offspring and yours. Forever, my children will not follow you, will not desire you, will not befriend you, and because of that you will hate them! Taunting by this world comes from those that are at odds with God's people, enmity is personal hostility, because loathing is all the Devil can ever drum up for us! The Lord of lies takes our worship of God as a personal insult to who He is! He loves to taunt because by Grace, we have gotten the favor of God!

But that's not the end of it, there is more to this enmity. What God does, and you see this all through the Bible, is God's promise to bring down the prideful, to bring down those who taunt/revile his people.

Isaiah 13:11 ESV

I will punish the world for its evil,
and the wicked for their iniquity;
I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant,



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and lay low the **pompous pride** of the ruthless.

Proverbs 16:5 ESV

Everyone who is **arrogant** in heart is an abomination to the LORD;
be assured, he will not go unpunished.

And when the proud go down everyone knows that it was God Himself that does the tearing down. So, here's the principle that is developed in Zephaniah today, here's the main point of our sermon that these scriptures support.

MP

The LORD Eradicates the Proud
Exalting His Name
Ensuring His Worship.

It is not luck, it is not misfortune, it is not bad Karma, it is the mighty hand of God that thwarts the proud especially when the proud try to bring down His people. In the process of that judgment, God exalts His name, He gets the credit, He is the one doing the saving and because of that He alone will receive the worship for it. Not only that, but there will also even be some of those who once came against Him who will now abandon their love of false gods and worship the one True God! God works all things to the good of those that He elects to call unto Himself, even the process of correction. So today we will split up this topic under three points. First, we will look at the **Taunting of the People of God**, who it is that is doing it, and how they went about it. Secondly, the **Response by God to their pride**; God will not let these affronts go as He promised so what shall be His intervention. Then lastly, **His overthrowing of Idols causing people to Worship Him**. Even when God acts with justified wrath people are still saved and corrected.

1. The Taunting of the People of God.

⁸"I have heard the taunts of Moab
and the revilings of the Ammonites,
how they have taunted my people
and made boasts against their territory.



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Well, who exactly are these folks? Well perhaps to understand their dislike against God's people it would be good to know that these are **kin**, they are cousins. Both the Moabites and the Ammonites came from Lot. In [Genesis 19:30-38](#) you will find this incredulous story of incest by Lot and his two daughters. The oldest one got pregnant first by her father and called her son Moab, and the younger when she gave birth by her father called him Ben-ammi, the father of the Ammonites. Both conceived after getting their father drunk, both conceived out of fear of being alone and unprotected being outside the covenant of God, both tainted by the wickedness of the cities where they lived Sodom and Gomorrah.

What we see develop, much like with the Edomites (Esau) over time, is the arguing over birthrights, land rites, and who had claim to the inheritances. It's like when we watch one of uncomfortable scenes in a movie where the cousins are gathered in the lawyer's office to hear who got left what by grandad, so they all can gloat over who was loved more. There was some long-term bitter rivalry going on here that God is finally addressing. What Satan has done over time is he has passed on his bitterness to the people for being overlooked (**easy to seduce the 'entitled'**). The sad reality though is they too had opportunities to be a part of God's people if they would have repented and followed Him. Satan works hard at making people believe that it is God's people who are the ones causing a problem.

In Numbers 22, it was the Moabites (King Balak) who sought to hire the prophet Balaam to speak against the people of God, to try to curse them as they were going into the land of inheritance that they had been promised by the Lord. His donkey saved his life but even then, he devised a plan to use Midianite women to lure them into idolatry. Eglon, the obese king of Moab in Judges 3, subjected the people of God to slavery for almost 20 years, and you saw how that panned out thanks to Ehud. Conflict with Moab and Ammon is seen throughout the entire Bible, and that conflict is always seen within the terms that the prophet is outlining here, of how these nations tried to humiliate and disgrace the people of God.



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1 Samuel 11, it was the Ammonites who invaded Jabesh-Gilead, and they demanded in order to pursue peace with them, that the people of Jabesh-Gilead, the people of God who had inhabited that city, would have to do what in order to not be destroyed by them? Gouge out their right eye. They say it directly, in order to bring disgrace upon them.

Satan is trying to subvert the promises of God by boasting against the people of God. He uses the sin of coveting to get people in this world to hate God's people, to practice enmity. And in fact, Moab and Ammon did this again a little while later. In 2 Samuel chapter 2, when David sent emissaries of peace to Ammon, you know how they treated his emissaries of peace? They shaved off their beards, stripped them of their clothes, and sent them back to David half shaved and naked, seeking to disgrace the people of God. You see, the sum and substance of the existence of these two nations, Ammon and Moab, was to taunt and to revile and to humiliate the people of God. They were the mouthpieces for the Devil and how he really feels about God's people.

The nature of their taunt?

Lastly, Zephaniah points out they made *boasts against their territory*. That is, they pushed in against their physical territorial boundaries all the time. You see back in that day there was no border patrol, there was though constant warfare over the neighboring cities and the land on which they dwelt. They denied the right of their Ancestor Abraham to a take and live in peace on what was given to Him. At the time Zephaniah writes this Moab and Ammon were already vassals of Assyria. They were already paying ransom for their kingdoms, when to have permanent security, they could have embraced their own kinsmen and established the Kingdom of God ensuring it by covenantal promises.

You see taunting to God's people is meant to wear you out, turn you off and shut you down! All around the world we have Christians being silenced, on the run, and even being killed. It is never enough for the world to recognize the fact that culture flourishes, governments work efficiently, and people are comforted when God's people are left to live. There will be enmity between us and them, not because we start it, but because we can't surrender to them what is not theirs.



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Christians, family, Highlanders, we live in a day where this type of taunting has entered the church. When we have a pastor impostor [Anna Flowers](#) who says that Jesus' words are not to be taken literal when He says, "I am the way". That is a voice for Satan because he can't have our worship. Or another *impastor* Anglican [Bishop Susan Bell](#) attempts to repent of her denominations exclusion of LGBTQIA2S+ folk, along with the evils of conversion therapy, transphobia, biphobia, and exclusion. What they do is bully their own people from a false pulpit, they try to call out God's people for believing something different than what they are pushing, and then they pat themselves on the back for being so friendly with the world. That is Pompous Pride, that is self-exaltation, and according to God's Word they are now under His wrath. That's the point, if you are friendly with the world then you are not of God, because God said we will always be at enmity with it.

Christian, don't you fall for this nonsense, for these false teachings, for this hypocrisy, for the Lord's name is at stake and that is more important than getting along with false prophets. God's revealed will in His Word always must override our desires to be liked by others. The Lord will eradicate the Proud so stay far away from them!

2. The Response to Pride by the Judgment of God.

- ⁹ Therefore, as I live," declares the LORD of hosts,
the God of Israel,
"Moab shall become like Sodom,
and the Ammonites like Gomorrah,
a land possessed by nettles and salt pits,
and a waste forever.
The remnant of my people shall plunder them,
and the survivors of my nation shall possess them."
- ¹⁰ This shall be their lot in return for their pride,
because they taunted and boasted
against the people of the LORD of hosts.



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The first thing we see is that **God makes a decree, and He basis it in the power of His own name.** When something is as serious as the sin of Pride or the promise of Salvation there is only one being that can make a promise and keep it.

Genesis 22:16-18 ESV

¹⁶and said, "**By myself I have sworn**, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

God declares, He swears by Himself, that what He says will come to pass. We have seen the blessing of Abraham in the blessing of offspring brought about through the nations, therefore - we know God is good for His Word; no one can thwart His plans. In the same way when God says He will deal with the prideful we can put full confidence that their judgment will come to pass.

Moab and Ammon are going to go the way of the Cities, Sodom & Gomorrah, in which they were still close to those places obliterated by the judgment of God. Both Moab and Ammon become vassal states of Babylon but that still did not spare them from hostile takeover. When God's people go back home after exile Sanballat the Moabite and Tobiah the Ammonite tried to stop Nehemiah from building the wall ([Nehemiah 4:7-9](#)). They tried slandering them to Artaxerxes 1, they tried stirring up fear in their hearts with threatening letters, but they could not thwart the plans of God. Nehemiah, and **this is important**, when he felt afraid, when he became aware of the evil schemes of these men, he prayed, and not only prayed for protection but that they would be paid back!

Nehemiah 6:16 ESV

¹⁶And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.



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The *enemies fell greatly in their own esteem*, a.k.a. their Pride was demolished by God! Moab after this event soon disappears from History totally and Ammon gets absorbed into the Persian Empire. Then all the land comes under the control of Rome, which eventually the church comes into control of spreading the Gospel.

Before moving on family let me take this opportunity to encourage and perhaps correct us where necessary. I know that sometimes I too have felt overwhelmed by this world, I too am tempted to be silent and let the world have its' way. Sometimes we all get lured into putting our hopes and dreams into the gods of this world because we can see how that has worked out for others. We stop looking at the realities of God's Words, the things that have come to pass, and we are willing to give in and accept what the world offers. Like Moab and Ammon, we become ok with accepting what the world gives us if we but become its' vassal servants. We fall to the lies of Satan believing we were overlooked for blessing in this life. If we will but accept the names it calls us, if we accept the new definitions for sin it comes up with to make things seem more tolerant, if we accept its' views on God's law and that it is not important anymore for our lives. It will just leave us in peace. But that is never the case.

The promise of God is to pay back the prideful, the plan of God is to exalt His name, and His glory He shall not share with another ([Isaiah 42:8](#)).

Gospel Challenge: There is another way of looking at trials and persecutions family. When we encounter hard times, I tell you, I challenge you, to see these trials as tools that God is using to purify our lives, to increase His glory, to make us more like His Son. So that the world may come to know His name. There is a greater inheritance promised to us if we endure now, to hold onto the promises of God they have always come true, but the promises of the prideful have always fallen flat. The world cannot save a single person, but the Grace and Mercy of God can save all those that call on the name of Jesus! Don't give into the scorn family, Jesus is worth it!

3. The Overthrowing of Idols and the Spreading of the Worship of God.



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- ¹¹ The LORD will be awesome against them;
for he will famish all the gods of the earth,
and to him shall bow down,
each in its place,
all the lands of the nations.

The Lord will be AWESOME, terrible, or fearful, He will leave His people speechless when we see how He deals with these taunters, and their words of accusation will be whisked away out of their mouths. The Lord when He moves, when He tears down pompous pride, He does it publicly so that all the world will know, He moves.

And because of the demonic deities tied to these hateful people, God will remove them as a source of pride. He will handicap their ability to answer any requests. Much like He did in Egypt when He moved with a strong right arm, when the plagues were cast against Egypt and all their gods were helpless. He made them look weak, helpless, and in return they became famished of proper worship.

Then it says all will bow down, each in its place. They don't have to come to Jerusalem, no temple visit required. Wherever they are, when they witness the awesomeness of God, they will bend the knee, they will be silenced, and they will worship Him. So, family how does God do such a miraculous thing?

First David foretold of it in his Psalms.

Psalm 22:1;6-7 ESV

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
- ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and **despised** by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me **mock** me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

King David not only gives an account of His life but points to the greater King who is to come, of the King who would come to build a new temple for



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worship, and for that work He would be slandered. To the point in the height of His great work, in the bearing of sins of many, God will turn His head away, and the wrath of God will be poured out on this Righteous man. Why does the King of Kings do this?! Out of Love for the Father.

Psalm 69:7-8 ESV

⁷ For it is for **your sake** that I have borne **reproach**,
that dishonor has covered my face.
⁸ I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my mother's sons.

All through our Lord's life, for all the good He did, for all the works He accomplished, for all the love He poured out, He was constantly taunted/reviled.

John 8:48 - He is called a Samaritan and said to have a devil. John 10:20 - "He has a devil and is mad." Matthew 11:19 / Luke 7:34 - He is called a glutton and drunkard. -Mark 2:7 / Luke 5:21 - He is accused of blasphemy. John 7:12 - He is called a deceiver.

Even in His hometown people were offended at Him - Matthew 13:53-58 - Mark 6:1-6 - At Nazareth they were filled with wrath and sought to throw Him down headlong. Luke 4:28-29 - Some said He was beside Himself. Mark 3:21 - Matthew 12:24 - He is accused of casting out demons by Satan; Some said He had a devil - John 7:20 - John 8:48, 52 - John 10:20 - Some called Him a deceiver - John 7:12 - Many were scandalized by His teaching and walked no more with Him - John 6:60-66

Those that thought they deserved more than Him, those that were envious of Him, those that wanted to use Him, and those that hated His Holiness, all those that believed the lie of the serpent that this man held something back from them in His love! The problem was their sinful reflection was cast against His pure image of what man ought to be, and they spurned Him for it.

What could keep our Lord going!?

Psalm 69:9 ESV (John 2:17)



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⁹ For **zeal** for your **house** has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

Yet, there is a price for this Zeal, that even in the agony of crucifixion He is mocked and scorned.

By passersby: They mocked Him, wagging their heads and taunting Him, saying in effect, *"You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself."* They twisted His words and used them as ridicule. ([Matthew 27:40](#); [Mark 15:29-30](#))

By the chief priests, scribes, and elders: They sneered, *"He saved others; He cannot save Himself."* ([Matthew 27:42](#)) This was bitter mockery, treating His willing sacrifice as weakness rather than power.

By soldiers: They humiliated Him, dressed Him in mock royalty, struck Him, and jeered, *"Hail, King of the Jews."* ([Matthew 27:27-29](#); [Mark 15:16-20](#); [John 19:1-3](#))

By the criminals crucified with Him: At least initially, He was insulted even by those suffering beside Him. ([Matthew 27:44](#); [Mark 15:32](#); [Luke 23:39](#))

By the public charge over His head: *"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"* ([Matthew 27:37](#); [Mark 15:26](#); [Luke 23:38](#); [John 19:19](#)) was meant in part as a public accusation and political mockery.

Even in pain, while on the Cross, Jesus never forgets the focus of His mission, the reason for His Incarnation!

Psalm 69:29 ESV

²⁹ But I am afflicted and in pain;
let your salvation, O God, set me on high!

And it did, the Salvation of God was to offer the only begotten as a perfect Sacrifice so all may know of the tragedy of the cross and the grace of God. What an awesome sight it was, that in 2,000 years man cannot quiet that day from Calvary, evil cannot snuff out this act of love, time cannot erase the saving wound. And because of that we who were called are saved.

Psalm 69:32-33 ESV



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- ³² When the humble see it they will be glad;
you who seek God, let your hearts revive.
- ³³ For the LORD hears the needy
and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

The Lord sets His people free; He creates worship in those who were once against Him. Those who once taunted/reviled His people, now become His people by the man who was lifted high. Look to Him family and see your Savior high and lifted up and know it was for you that he endured the taunts so that you and I who were once prisoners of this world are now brought in as God's family.

[CALL TO OBEY]

1. Refuse the sin of pride; humble yourself before the Lord.

Moab and Ammon were judged \"for their pride\" (v. 10). The call is not merely to notice their sin, but to flee it in ourselves. Church let us Put away boasting, self-protection, and contempt for others. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, for He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

2. Do not fear taunts of men; entrust yourself to God who hears.

The Lord says, \"I have heard\" (v. 8). His people do not need to live in panic, bitterness, or retaliation. They are to trust the Judge of all the earth. People of God, stop handing your peace over to the scorn of the world. The Lord has heard every taunt, every boast, every proud word. Therefore, obey Him by standing firm, speaking truth without fear, and leaving vengeance in His hands.

3. Third, obey while mercy is still extended.

Verse 11 moves from judgment to worship: the Lord starves the gods of the earth so that the nations bow to Him. The obedience called for is exclusive worship and renewed allegiance. Let us cast down our functional idols—approval, comfort, reputation, wealth, political security, and control—and bow before the Lord in fresh obedience. Let your home, your speech, your prayers, and your Lord's Day worship show that God alone is your confidence.



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MP

***The LORD Eradicates the Proud
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Charge

Beloved, repent of pride wherever it lives in you. Refuse to be ruled by the mockery of this age. And return to the Lord with whole-hearted worship, because He alone hears, He alone judges rightly, and He alone saves.

Prayer

Communion

Mark 14:22-25 ESV

Institution of the Lord's Supper

²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. I will give that reminder today from the words of the Apostle Peter in his letter 1 Peter 2: " ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. " All praise to our Savior, who loved God perfectly, enduring the curses of many, and providing the obedience we could not.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. It was because of our taunts, our pride, our envy, and our betrayal that Jesus hung on that tree. Again, I call you to hear the



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Apostle Peter's words, 1 Peter 2:" ²⁴ *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*" Thanks be to our Lord for His eternal sacrificial love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand and recites:

The LBCF 1689 Chapter 2 Of God and of the Holy Trinity Paragraph 2. Who Is God?

God has all life, 17 glory, 18 goodness, 19 and blessedness in and of himself. He alone is completely self-sufficient. He does not need any creature he has made and does not gain any glory from them. 20 Rather, he demonstrates his glory in, by, and to creatures he has made. He alone is the source of all being. Everything is from him, through him, and to him. 21 He is completely sovereign over all creatures, and does whatever he wants by them, for them, or to them. 22 He can see everything openly and clearly. 23 His knowledge is infinite and infallible, independent of any creature. God's knowledge is never dependent upon anything or uncertain. 24 He is perfectly holy in all of his decisions, works, 25 and commands. He deserves from angels and people the worship, 26 service, and obedience that they owe to their creator, and also anything else he requires from them.

17. John 5:26; 18. Psalms 148:13; 19. Psalms 119:68; 20. Job 22:2-3; 21. Romans 11:34-36; 22. Daniel 4:25, 34-35; 23. Hebrews 4:13; 24. Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18; 25. Psalms 145:17; 26. Revelation 5:12-14

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that tears down prideful and lifts up the Son, so all His people are saved.



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Go in the name of the Son, who endured the taunts and slander of enemies so He might make some of them family thus glorifying His Father.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, who causes us to repent of sin, who puts steel into our spines when enduring reproach, and now go and tell the world why He's worth it!

[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

1. What part of Zephaniah 2:8–11 stood out to you most, and why? This is a good opening question because it lets people enter the discussion personally and naturally.
2. What does this passage teach us about how the Lord responds to pride, mockery, and hostility against His people? Where do you see the sin of pride most clearly in this passage?
3. In what ways are we tempted to fear the pride and power of men more than we fear the Lord? This moves the conversation toward heart-level application.
4. How does this passage encourage believers who feel discouraged by the arrogance of the world around them? When have you been comforted by the truth that the Lord sees and hears?
5. How should the truth that the Lord alone will be worshiped shape the way we live this week in our homes, church, and daily callings? How does Christ's reign help us face a hostile world with steadiness? What would it look like for us to fear God more faithfully this week?



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