

## What am I Doing This Year? ... “Ascending the Hill of NEARNESS”

yāšab יָשַׁב - The Game of Dwelling on Earth- Pt. 2

January 7, 2024

**INTRO** ...Playing the Boardgame of “Dwelling on Earth”— the Game of Life (Existence)

**Ps 24** ...Big 3 Recap

“Most of us feel immortal in our teens and twenties, then move through life so fast in our thirties and forties that we lose sight of the journey and think only of our careers. Even in our fifties we barely hear the roar of the rapids several bends down river. ... Have you awakened to the journey of life?” **Os Guinness**, “The Long Journey Home”, p.6, 9

“the unexamined life is not worth living” **Socrates** (The Long Journey, p. 12)

... **yāšab** is a “Strategy Game”! ...Each Day, Each Week—It’s “Your Turn” in the Game ...What’s Your Move going to be (today, this week, in 2024??)

...**Philosophy inherently interacts with the Big 3 questions of our Existence:** (1) Where did I come from? (Origin) ... (2) Why am I here? (Purpose) ... (3) Where am I going? (Destiny)

### **Psalms 103:15-19**

*As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;*

<sup>16</sup> *for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.*

<sup>17</sup> *But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children,*

<sup>18</sup> *to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.*

**TEMPORARY Life—Needs TRANSCENDENT TRUTH!!**

<sup>19</sup> *The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*

<sup>20</sup> *Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!*

<sup>21</sup> *Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!*

<sup>22</sup> *Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!*

...**v. 15-16** ...Nothing like reading these words as we start Another Year! ...“**days are like grass; like a flower in a field**” ... “**the wind passes over it, and it is gone**” (the “gust of wind” that you just briefly felt—that was “2023”!!)

...What an interesting contrast! ...**subtract the Story Generated by the CREATOR—and you’re just a flower that briefly exists and then is gone and forgotten!** (v. 15-16) ...**but Insert us Into GOD’s GREAT STORY— and Now your life is filled with Meaningful Existence! ...an Existence that Needs Concepts like: “Love” ... “Everlasting” ... “Righteousness” ... “Covenant” ... “Commandments” ... “Heavens” ... “Kingdom”**

### **Psalm 24 ...Basic Instructions for the Game of Yāšab**

v. 1-2 ...**ORIGIN** (Design, Plan, Fulfillment)

v. 3-6 ...**MEANING** – **What Am I Doing Here?** ...Today ...this Week ...this Year?? **Ascending the Hill of the Lord, standing in His holy place, and seeking His face**— These describe the influence of what is ultimate in what is daily and routine! ...**Ultimately, we are a people created for the life, existence, nearness, communion, etc.—with the presence of God (the mindful, intentional, enjoyment and affectionate worship of God!)**

"It would be a delightful theme for Christian meditation to consider the ascension of Christ, in relation to his work, what we obtain by it, and the glories with which it was accompanied, when, with a shout of saved joy, he returned to his own throne and sat down for ever having finished the labor which he had undertaken to perform. But, this morning, I must take the text apart from its connection, for I desire to make it the basis of a set of parables or illustrations with regard to Christian life. I think we may fairly compare the life of a Christian to the ascent of a mountain, and we may then ask the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" This has been, in fact, a favorite metaphor, and even that mighty master of allegory, John Bunyan, who needed never to borrow from another, must have the Hill Difficulty somewhere or other to make his story complete; he must tell how the pilgrim "fell from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and knees because of the steepness of the place." Without putting any strain upon the text, I conceive I may use it as a most serious question, while I picture our course to heaven as an ascent into the hill of the Lord." **Charles Spurgeon**, "Climbing the Mountain" (Ps 24:3)

- **This is NOT a Story of Daily Self-Justification ...the "Hill of the Lord" and "the Holy Place" are places associated with the Tabernacle—and the Tabernacle was understood to be the "Dwelling Place of the Presence of God" (Ex 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.)**
  - **The ONLY Justifying Action at the Tabernacle was the Atoning Sacrifice of Lev. 16!!**
  - **The "Tabernacle of God Among Men" was the Incomparable Value & Experience of God's Presence Among Us and In Our Midst!!**

"...in Scripture the house, or dwelling, is presented as a means by which to make our fellowship with God assume a definite form. God also has a house; and the idea of dwelling in the house of our God is the richest thought that is given us, to set forth the most intimate and tenderest fellowship with Him. Purposefully, therefore, the Tabernacle of the Lord is erected in the wilderness, ...Moreover, it is stated, that at Horeb God Himself showed Moses the pattern of the Tabernacle. Hence Tabernacle and Temple were actual representations of what exists in heaven. ...And in connection with this, the ardent longing to dwell in the house of the Lord finds expression in the Psalms." **Abraham Kuyper**, "To Be Near Unto God", p. 40

**Note:** You can potentially be a Christian raised under "Gospel-Centered-Emphasis" and be greatly celebrating the forgiving/justifying grace of God—while minimizing or undervaluing what that purchased for you—the NEARNESS of GOD!!

- **Ps 51's — "Justification" ...vs... Ps 27's — "Nearness"**

**Psalms 51:1-7**

**Psalms 27:4, 8**

**...There is a "Striving after God" or a "Drawing Near" to God that is NOT about "increasing the righteousness" in our account, thus attaining some greater "status" with God! ...It is about fellowship, communion— "NEARNESS"!!**

"For many years you may have had a general love for God and yet have never come to know God. This knowledge of God only comes when love for Him begins to take on a personal character; when on the pathway of life for the first time you have 'met' Him; when the Lord has become a Personal Presence by the side of your own self; when God and you have entered into a conscious, vital, personal, particular relationship—" **Abraham Kuyper**, "To Be Near Unto God", p. 22

— But David (in Ps 24 and 27) is NOT A NEWBIE!!! ...He's not your religious friend who doesn't know how to truly be saved! ...He's a Member of God's Covenant Household—LONGING for Something DEEPER!!

“...this craving can prepare the way for higher things. For when it comes to a meeting with God, the action proceeds from both sides. God comes to him, and he comes to God. First from afar, then ever closer, until at length all distance falls away, and the meeting takes place—a moment of such blessedness as can never be expressed in words. ...Then, and only then, comes the “nearness.” ...To be “near” is to be so close to God that your eye sees, your heart is aware of, and your ear hears him, and every cause of separation has been removed; near in one of two ways: either that you feel yourself, as it were, drawn up into heaven, or that God has come down from heaven to you, and seeks you out in your loneliness, in that which constitutes your particular cross, or in the joy that falls to your lot. ...The word “near” implies that there is, Oh! so much that makes separation between you and your God; so much that makes you stand alone, feel desolate and forsaken, because either God is away from you or you are away from Him, so that it leaves you no rest, and you cannot endure it. Then everything within you draws you to Him again, until that which made separation falls away. And then there follows the meeting; then He is near you, and you know once more that you are near Him.” **Abraham Kuyper**, “To Be Near Unto God”, p. 23, 24

**...There’s a World of Difference between “Attending Church”, “Doing Religious Stuff”—and “SEEKING the Face of God” ...of “gazing upon and encountering BEAUTY” ... of “Dwelling” with God (Unhurried, an “end” not a means!!!)**

- Ps 27 ...<sup>4</sup> *One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell (yasab) in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. ...<sup>8</sup> You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, LORD, do I seek.”*
- Ps 24 ...<sup>3</sup> *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? “stand in his holy place?” ...<sup>6</sup> seek the face of the God of Jacob?*

***Is THIS My STRATEGY??? ...When it’s My Turn to Play the Game of Life ...Is THIS What I’m After More than Anything Else??***

## **The Endgame...**

**...Where’s This Whole “EXISTENCE” Game Going? —Rev 21 ...What are We Finally & Affectionately Going to Be CELEBRATING??**

**Rev 21:1-3**

**Rom 8:19, 22-25** *For the creation waits with eager longing... <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

“...this blessedness may be tasted only at rare moments in this life. And then there remains the blessedness in the life that is eternal, when the nearness to your God shall continue forever. Eternally near Him in the Fatherhouse.” **Abraham Kuyper**, “To Be Near Unto God”, p. 23, 24

**— The Rich Doctrine of Justification that Sits at the Heart of “Gospel Centrality” is a “MEANS-to-an-END”!! ...It is a Restorative and Reconciling Act! ...SO, ENTER IN to What It Accomplished!! — “Ascend the Hill of the Lord”, “Draw Near to God”!!!**

**So, What's Your Strategy as you "Ascend the Hill of the Lord"??**

"All money, talent, health, power, and pleasure in the world are God's. But the greatest treasure he can give us is life in his presence. His face—not the gifts of his hands, though they are welcome—is where we find the glory that other things fail to provide. To know his presence, however, is to "ascend" a hill or mountain (verse 3), and doing so is always a struggle. You must repent, seeking a clear conscience (verse 4). You must know your idols and reject them (verse 4). And you must wrestle in prayer to seek God's face, as did Jacob (verse 6), who said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26)." **Tim Keller**, "The Songs of Jesus", p. 42

**"Who shall ascend? ...who shall stand—Near to God; Face to Face with Him—"Tasting", "Seeing", "Experiencing NEARNESS"??**