



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 3:14-15; Luke 24:25-27

"The Necessity of Christ's Death, part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Well, it's so nice to have all of this cold weather. One of the good things about it is that you've got a good excuse for staying home and not going out and risking your life with all these Yankees [Laughter] driving around on ice and snow like they know how to do it. And the rest of us skidding and sliding around. It's pretty dangerous for those fellows that are squares and straights just driving down the road like that. Incidentally, Charles you were saying, Dr. Howard, pardon me, one of our Elders, you were saying that we were looking for paid nursery helpers. We will also accept unpaid ones too, will we not? [Laughter] I wanted to clarify that. We didn't get a response at all to the other way. [Laughter]

One of the things that I have particularly enjoyed on Wednesday nights, listening to Curt Daniel is realizing as he's been going through the cults, and remembering how many people are in the cults today. How irrational the viewpoints of so many people are in our day. It really is amazing. If you will look at the tenets of the cults: the tenets of Mormonism, the tenets of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the tenets of unity and various other cults that he has been outlining to us excellently, one cannot help but feel, after listening to them, how is it possible for a person with a sound mind to believe these particular doctrines that are so obviously inner contradictions? And I think one of the things that

come home also from that is the blindness of our age spiritually. It truly is a remarkable thing. I encourage you to come and listen to Dr. Daniel, he's given us some excellent studies and I know that your understanding of not only the cults and their viewpoints will be improved and clarified, but also, I think, you'll have some of the same response that I have had to it and you realize how deep in blindness and darkness the minds of so many 20th century people are when we talk about spiritual things.

Our Scripture reading is rather short today. So, will you turn with me first to Luke chapter 24, and I'll read verse 25 through verse 27 and then we'll read John 3:14 and 15. So, Luke chapter 24 verse 25 through verse 27, this is the interview that our Lord had on Emmaus and in the 25th verse speaking to those who were accompanying him along the way, "And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the concerning himself in all the Scriptures."

Now turn over just a few pages to John chapter 3 and we'll read some verses that I know are very familiar to you, verse 14 and 15. John 3:14, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whoever believes may in him have eternal life." Incidentally, the reason that the New American Standard Bible translates that 15th verse, "for whoever believes may in him have eternal life," is that the expression, "believing in him," is with the particular preposition, "in," that is used here, is never found in John's literature, and since he uses the expression "believe in" so often, this is instead of the preposition "ace" which means "almost into," he uses "in" here. In the light of that, it's the conviction of the translators that we should not, therefore, render it, "Whoever believes in him may have eternal life," but, "Whoever believes may have eternal life in him." In other words, the prepositional phrase goes not with the verb, "believe," but with, "having eternal life." That's why it is rendered that way. You may have wondered, if you didn't wonder, then what I've said is largely insignificant for you.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks and praise for the weather that Thou doest give to us, and as we look out and as we feel the cold, and the bright sunshine today, we give Thee thanks. We know that it's something good for us ultimately. We thank Thee for the way in which Thou doest care for us constantly providing the things that we need in a physical way.

Especially do we give Thee thanks for the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as he is set forth in the Scriptures, and as he has made himself known in his incarnation and as he at this very moment is praying for those who belong to him.

We give the thanks for all of the blessings of spiritual and physical life. Thou art surely good to us. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the whole church of Jesus Christ and not simply the local manifestation here in Believers Chapel. We pray that the whole body may experience Thy blessing today as in many places many believing people meet around the word of God with one another to hear the word, to have fellowship with one another and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of him who loved us and gave himself for us.

We pray for our assembly here. We pray Thy blessing upon our deacons and our Elders, and the members, and the friends, and the visitors who may be here today. We ask Lord for spiritual blessing upon us. May we, by Thy grace, be able to serve Thee fruitfully in our day.

We pray for our country and for our president as well. For other local churches in this community, we pray for them also and ask Thy blessing upon them.

And Father we particularly remember those who have requested our prayers who are suffering for various reasons or who are in difficulties for various reasons: have decisions to make that are difficult, have physical problems and ailments, some who are

in the hospital, we pray especially for all of them and ask, Lord, that Thou would give healing in accordance with Thy will, and encourage those who are friends and loved ones, and give wisdom and guidance to those who minister to them.

We ask Thy blessing upon us in the meetings of this day. May the Lord Jesus Christ be lifted up in them. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Usually during the week, Mrs. Ray will call me on about Monday or Tuesday and ask me the topic that I will be speaking on in the coming messages, and I will give her the message in order that she can put it in our bulletin, that is the title. And every now and then, in doing that, I sometimes feel along about Friday or Saturday that maybe that's not the topic that I should speak on, but since it's in the bulletin, I know it's going to be in the bulletin, I don't want to embarrass her by having something in the bulletin that's not true. And so I have these misgivings from time to time about whether that's really the specific thing that ought to be our topic.

And I rather felt that way about the topic that I'm going to speak on today because it's not an easy topic, and sometimes I feel that because of some interests of mine I, rather standing behind a pulpit like this, am in the position of imposing them upon others, not the content so much in the sense of having you believe something that maybe you wouldn't want to believe, but rather just the topic itself. And the topic on which I'm going to speak today, and probably for the next two Sundays, is a topic of theological interest and really of great practical interest and importance, but nevertheless, one that probably would not be the common kind of topic that a person would choose to speak on Sunday morning in our Evangelical churches. Now, not that that would not be a good idea, in fact, the reason that such topics such as the one I'm going to talk on are not undertaken, or the fact that it's not, is one of the reasons why the evangelical church is so weak and anemic doctrinally. So I wanted to warn you ahead of time the subject today is going to be a theological topic and probably for the next two as well.

The subject is the subject in our bulletin, "The Necessity of Christ's Death." It might seem strange to you, if you're a simple Bible reader, to even have a topic like that, until you read modern theology and the things that individuals are saying who are prominent in the evangelical, and really in the Christian world because the question of the necessity of Christ's death, his death mind you, is a topic that is constantly debated and particularly by professing Christian liberal preachers and theologians who would deny that fact that Christ's death is necessary for human salvation. John Calvin was the first to recognize the important distinction of the offices of Christ, that is the office of prophet, the office of priest, and the office of king. And he was the first Christian theologian to gather the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ around these three offices of prophet, priest, and king, the prophet representing God with men, the priest representing man before God, and the king who rules over men for God. So Calvin and others as well, for the Lutherans followed him in this, felt that this would be the most effective way to analyze and propagate the work of Jesus Christ as the mediator. All of these men, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil and therefore all were Messianic figures. So when we think of Christ, Messiah, then we should think of the prophet, the priest, and the king, the Lord Jesus, who represents God with us, as priest representing us before God, and as king, ultimately, to rule over us for the Lord God.

Now when the priest represented men before God he made the offerings by which fellowship was consummated and carried on between men and God. So the priest, representing men before God, made the reconciling offerings. Now the great offering that the Lord Jesus Christ made was a satisfaction, that is, he, in the gift of himself, satisfied God's requirements and his claims against us. His satisfaction anti-typically effected an expiation of sin. That is by what he did on the cross, sin was expiated, paid for. And God was propitiated, his holiness and righteousness satisfied, and by the death of Christ, the Father was rendered able, consistent with his perfections. That is, his perfections of mercy and holiness and justice, to reconcile us in mercy, to renew us, and to, finally, exalt

us to the dignity, to the excellence, to the blessedness of the sons of God. So when we think of the Lord Jesus Christ as priest, we think of him as offering that offering, that satisfaction. Theologians for many centuries called it a *satisfacio* or the making of that which was sufficient. *Satis* in Latin means sufficient. *Facio* means to make. So *satisfacio* was the satisfaction, Christ's work by which he satisfied God's requirements for his people.

Now the apostles preached this fact, we believe. Paul said to the Corinthians, "I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." When Peter stood on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem by the temple he said,

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

That, of course, was the *satisfacio*, that is the satisfaction. And he says, "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." Later when Peter writes his first epistle, in the very 1st chapter, he speaks again of this fact when he says, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." So Peter affirmed the same thing that Paul did. He affirmed the death of the Lord Jesus, and that it was the ground of the redemption of men.

When we turn to Revelation chapter 5 and verse 9 and 10 and read the vision that John has given us there in chapters 4 and 5, the climax of it is the statement in verse 9 and verse 10 in chapter 5, "And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take

the book and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." So, it's quite clear that the apostles, Paul, Peter, and John, thought that the Lord Jesus had offered an offering by which men are brought into fellowship with the Lord God, and each one of them affirms the necessity of the death of the Lord Jesus for the accomplishment of that.

When I was going through theological seminary, I had the privilege to sit under Lewis Sperry Chafer, and one of his favorite topics was the subject of propitiation. He used to love to ask us to consider the publican in Luke chapter 18 and what that appeared to teach. And you know the story I'm sure, he also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt. Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax gatherer or a publican. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, "God I thank Thee that I'm not like other people, swindlers, unjust, adulterer, or even like this tax gatherer. I fast twice a week. I pay tithes of all that I get." But the tax gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes toward heaven and was beating his breast saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." And the expression that is used there in the original text means something like, "God be propitiating to me, a sinner."

And Dr. Chafer, I don't agree necessarily that he said, like to make this point, that by virtue of the fact that Christ had died upon the cross, this prayer that the publican offered, "God be propitiating to me, a sinner," was really out of date because, looking at it from our standpoint, the cross has already taken place, and by virtue of what the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross, as I said in the introduction, God is rendered able consistent with his perfections in mercy to reconcile us, renew us, and finally, exalt us to the dignity and excellence of the sons of God. In other words, God has been made propitiating. And so, Dr. Chafer used to like to stress the fact we don't pray, so many

evangelists use that as the sinners prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner, God be propitiated to me," is the force of it. He loved to say, "We don't have to say, 'God be propitiations to me, a sinner,' for God, by virtue of the cross that has taken place, is propitiations toward us." He is propitiations. We don't have to beg him. We simply receive what he has accomplished for us in his saving death.

I've been reading recently John Stott's book on *The Cross of Christ*. I suggest you read it. It's not a perfect book, by a long shot, but there are many nice things within it. And on one of the pages, he has a comment from Sir Alister Hardy-- incidentally, I was writing my notes, and there was on the television screen yesterday or the day before, a commercial that has those two fellows that look like Laurel and Hardy, and so I noticed, I was looking in my notes after I had finished it and I have a little thing here, "Stott on Sir Oliver Hardy," [Laughter] he was no Sir Oliver Hardy-- but Sir Alister Hardy a British who was former professor of (as the British say) zoology at Oxford, was friendly to all kinds of religious experience because he spent a lifetime investigating it, nevertheless, Sir Alister expressed his inability to come to terms with the crude beliefs he thought so many orthodox churchman entertain.

He was invited to deliver the prestigious Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, and those have been published under the title *Divine Flame*, and he asked whether Jesus himself would be a Christian if he were alive today. "I very much doubt it," Sir Alister replied. "I feel certain that he would not have preached to us of a God who would be appeased by the cruel sacrifice of a tortured body. I cannot accept either the hypothesis that the appalling death of Jesus was a sacrifice in the eyes of God for the sins of the world, or that God, in the shape of his son, tortured himself for our redemption. I can only confess that, in my heart of hearts, I find such religious ideas to be amongst the least attractive in the whole of anthropology. To me, they belong to quite a different philosophy -- different psychology -- from that of the religion that Jesus taught." In other words, the idea that our Lord died on Calvary's cross and died for sinners and shed his blood in order to

propitiate a righteous and holy God in our benefit is something that for Sir Alister Hardy, a very intelligent and perceptive thinking, man is a crude doctrine which he cannot, as a Christian, accept and even affirm that Jesus would never have said things like that.

Now when you think of this, you realize we're living in nineteen hundred and eighty eight and one would think that the Christian church, and mind you this is all taking place within the Christian church, one would think that the Christian church had finally reached some kind of consensus on this. That's a testimony to the blindness of our age and that every generation must find its faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, thinking about that, ask yourself the question, "What has the church believed down through the years? What has that body of individuals who have been the greatest of the thinkers in the Christian church, spiritual thinkers, what have they believed?" Well, it is an overwhelming consensus that the Christian church has believed that it was an absolutely necessary and essential should shed his blood for the forgiveness of our sins. It's the doctrine of the Reformed churches.

On the Calvinistic side, it's the doctrine of the reformed churches. On the Lutheran side, and believe it or not, it is expressed in Roman Catholic Theology, they like to take it back by their requirement that we only receive the benefits through the sacramental system, but nevertheless, affirm that Christ did make a satisfaction. He did propitiate God. It's found in the Augsburg Confession, it's found in the apology for the Augsburg Confession. These are historic Christian documents. It's found in the Formula of Concord, in the Second Concord, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Formula Consensus Helvetica and the Westminster Confession of Faith. In other words, this broad Christian consensus exists that it was necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ to make a satisfaction.

Now in the light of that, I think it would be worth our while to think for just a few moments, I'll try to make this as brief as I possibly can. Why is it that individuals who are religious men leading religious men, professors in theologian institutions, pastors of large

churches that are supposedly Christian churches, why is it that they find it difficult to believe that Jesus Christ died and offered his blood as a satisfaction in our place and stead and for our benefit? I'm going to just mention a couple of objections, and then next week, the Lord willing, if you come back after this morning, then I want to take up a couple more, and the following week two or three more. There are about seven important objections that have been offered, and I don't want to burden you with all of them at one time, but we'll do it out in that way. So just a few of the common objections, the heretics, ancient and modern, have challenged the necessity of the death of Christ, moral influence theories, governmental theories of the atonement, vicarious repentance theories of the atonement, theories of the atonement in which a ransom is supposedly paid to Satan, and we won't deal with all of the details of these, but today just two of them.

One of the objections to the necessity of our Lord's death is the denial of God's justice, what is called his distributive justice. That is, the justice that requires him to render to men what is their due for those who have committed acts of sin, judgment, for those who have responded to the word of God positively, divine rewards, so the denial of God's distributive justice. Many have asserted the remission of guilt without any satisfaction at all. God's work, after all, it is said, is to forgive. I don't know that any necessarily, as theologians, quote Heinrich Heine, the well known German literary figure, who said, on his death bed, "God will pardon me-- *Dieu me pardonnera, c'est son métier*-- that is, it's his trade." "God will pardon me, that's his trade." So that one may expect according to Heine, that God's work being to forgive, that he will forgive us just simply on the basis of the fact that he is a forgiver, for no real theological reason, no real foundation. He will just forgive. And I submit to you that that is what the average person in the street believes today, that God will just forgive, that there is not real ground for divine forgiveness, he just will forgive.

And so they deny his distributive justice, his essential justice. But the Bible ascribes justice to God as an essential attribute. I'd like to just turn to a couple of passages. We don't have time to turn to too many, but I'd like to turn to a couple of them. and, of course, you remember the passage in Isaiah chapter 6 and verse 3 where Isaiah has the vision of the Lord God and he hears the seraphim saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts," but let me ask you to turn with me to Exodus chapter 34 and verse 7. In Exodus chapter 34 and verse 7, these words are said with reference to the Lord God, "Who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation." Notice, he is a God who forgives, but at the same time, "He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished."

Now turn over to Numbers chapter 23 and verse 19. In Numbers chapter 23 and verse 19, we read these words, "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" So he is a individual who will not leave the guilty unpunished. He acts according to his essential being, and his essential being is a just righteous being. Satisfaction is a necessity of the divine nature. He cannot treat evil as he treats good. He cannot clear the guilty without any foundation whatsoever. That would produce chaos in human society. If, for example, it doesn't make any difference to God whether an individual is favorable toward him or unfavorable toward him, he just forgives. That's chaos. That would be chaos in all of our moral life. So to deny the distributive justice of God is something that is fundamentally erroneous and ultimately chaotic and destructive of morality.

A second objection is that satisfaction, the requirement of the death of Christ, makes God inferior to man. Man freely forgives, but you say God cannot forgive without a sacrifice. Therefore, God is less charitable, less merciful, and less good than man. Can

you imagine that? Thinking theologians saying the idea that God requires a sacrifice, a bloody sacrifice to satisfy his holiness and righteousness, makes him a figure worse than man himself, less charitable, less merciful, and less good than men. Now this objection shows the shallowness of the thinking of individuals who make statements like this and repeat them to others in our theological institutions and in the religion departments of our colleges and universities. It ignores these important truths. God is no sinful human ruler. A sinful individual might forgive like that because he is a sinning man himself. And therefore he might sense, because he is such a sinning individual, that the grounds of his accusations and charges against another are grounds that might not be really totally accurate because he's a finite being, and he's a sinning individual himself. But earth's holy judge, the Lord God in heaven, must deal with guilt because of his holy nature, and because of his holy will, and because of his omnipotence. He judges righteously, and he must, because he is essentially a righteous individual, respond in his activities righteously. We might conceive of a judge on earth who is responsible to carry out the law, execute the law, to supervise the application of the law in our society, in private, forgiving, but when he is behind the desk as the judge, it's his responsibility to uphold the law of the land, and he doesn't have the freedom to do otherwise. One may be kind in one kind of circumstance but not in the other.

One of our great justices of the Supreme Court once said, "When I, as a justice, am tempted to not apply the law, in its accuracy and as written, I remember that I have a responsibility, not simply to that individual, but I have a responsibility, supremely, to my country." So, when we think about God as a righteous individual, he exercises his justice in the light of his being, and he is a just and righteous being. His glory is his own most proper end and aim in all of his activity. We say that we, as human individuals, are individuals designed by God to glorify him and enjoy him forever. Well, if it is man's chief end to glorify God and enjoy him forever; is it not also God's glory and his own most proper end to receive such glory from men and to recognize that to be completely

true to himself, he must be the end and the goal of all of man's activity? He's the only person that is worthy of our worship and homage. Further, God is under no obligation to redeem men at all. The moving cause of the atonement and the provision of it is the good pleasure of God. The apostle states that in Colossians chapter 1. He states it also in Galatians chapter 1 as well.

And finally, when we say God is inferior to man, that blasphemous statement, we forget that God, at his own cost, has wrought the atonement. He sent his Son to save his enemies, and I think the statement of William G. T. Shedd puts it so perfectly, "There is mercy," Mr. Shedd says, "In permitting another person to do for the sinner what the sinner is bound to do for himself; and still greater mercy in providing that person; and greater still, in becoming that person." So to say because God forgives by requiring a satisfaction, that he is less charitable, less merciful, is to forget that God didn't have to redeem anybody. We all were sinners. We could have been sent off to an eternal separation of God justly. Look at your own life and you'll agree with that. Justly, he could have done that. But he did make provision for redemption. Furthermore, he not only made provision for redemption, but he made provision at infinite cost to himself. He sent his own Son to satisfy his holiness and righteousness in his sacrifice on Calvary's cross, and when he cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" that was the climax of the satisfaction by which you and I are saved. So, to say that he is less merciful is to fail to remember, he didn't have to redeem anyone, but at great cost to himself, he gave his Son, and furthermore, in the final analysis, at even greater mercy, he, himself, in the second person of the trinity, was the satisfaction that he required. How can we say, how can we possibly claim, man is more charitable than God? How foolish. But this is the doctrine that is proclaimed in many of our institutions. So I affirm on the basis of this so far incomplete treatment, it was necessary that Christ should suffer.

Now we have a few moments. I wish we had five more, but I want to turn to our passage in John chapter 3, in order that we can see that this is not something that is not

found specifically stated in the word of God, the Lord Jesus, in the famous interview with Nicodemus, had some things to say on this very point. Nicodemus was, as you know, a cautious, admirable, old man who came with questions about seeing and entering the kingdom. He had some to the Lord Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these things, these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." It's obvious that he is interested in entering the kingdom and seeing the kingdom, and so Jesus replies to him in that way. He talks about the necessity of the new birth, the nature of the new birth, and the manner of the new birth. It's not surprising that a theologian, for that's what Nicodemus was, he was one of the outstanding teachers of his day, Jesus calls him, "Art thou the teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?"

It's not an unheard of thing for individuals, who are professional theologians, to be ignorant of the simplest things that have to do with spiritual life, and Nicodemus was one of those men but, there was one other thing about him that's different. Nicodemus, in spite of all of the deadness abounding around him in his own theological environment, had come to a sense of personal need and was willing to go to the Lord Jesus to ask him questions. There was an openness about him. Jesus in the midst of this replies about the new birth, states, in verse 14 and 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believes in him should have eternal life."

Now you know the story. It's a simple one. The story of the children of Israel and rebelling against the leading and feeding of the Lord God, despising the food that God was giving them, thinking that because there was no water, because there was no food, and what they did have was a abominable in their sight, they complained to Moses desires to go back to Egypt, of course, for the old life. And as a result of it, God to his rebellious children, sent among them venomous serpents. These serpents were called fiery serpents because when they bit an individual it was like fire in their bodies, and they

were affected with something that must have been very much like a fast working malaria, and as a result they began to die.

And finally the children of Israel came to Moses, made confession of the fact that they were wrong in what they were doing. Moses appealed to the Lord God and the Lord God said, "Moses make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole." And the text said he made a brazen serpent. In fact, the serpent of brass, that term serpent is very much like brass, so the implications are there is some connection with sin in the Garden of Eden, so the *nachash*, which is the serpent, *nachash*, *nachosbeth*, the serpent of brass was put upon a pole, designed to represent, we know now, sin under judgment. And Moses was told to tell the children of Israel, "If anyone looks," simply looks, "Having been bitten by the venomous serpents," "If anyone looks at the serpent on the pole, he shall live." Now Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Later on Jesus will say, "If the Son of man be lifted up, he will draw all men unto him," and in the 19th chapter, we read of the Son of man being lifted up and hanging upon a cross. It's obvious the Lord Jesus is referring ultimately to the fact that he must shed his blood on Calvary's Cross and by that means bring life.

The analogy, my, the principle parallels between the incident in the Book of Numbers and this are so many, the Israelites stand for sinners, their physical death stands for spiritual death, the serpent represents the Son of man. Isn't that strange, the serpent represents the Son of man? Why? Because we read in the New Testament, "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. That's what he was, hanging on the cross at Calvary, the serpent, the antitype of the serpent, representing sin under judgment. Jesus said that's necessary, "the Son of man must be lifted up," the lifting up representing the cross, the healing that followed physically representing the eternal life that flows from looking to him, looking in the Old Testament and in New Testament times represented by believing.

Isn't that interesting? To look, simply to look, one didn't look, and then run off for some kind of salve to put on the place where they had been bitten by the serpents. It was simply to look, not to pray it through, not to undergo any kind of sacrament, but simply to look. In the New Testament it is simply to believe. It's not to be baptized. It's not to go through the Roman Catholic Sacramental system. It's not to pray through. It's not to do good works. It's not to prepare oneself for this. It's simply to believe, that the Lord Jesus Christ dying upon Calvary's cross made a satisfaction for sinners, paid the penalty that God demanded as a righteous individual who must justly deal with us for that's his essential being, a righteous, as well as loving, individual. So, and incidentally, anything less free, less easy, less immediately effective than the simple look and the simple antitypical believe is surely not of God. That's why in the New Testament over three hundred times belief is said to be the term by which we enter into life.

There are three great words. I just mentioned them. Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever," whosoever, no questions about who's elect and who's not elect. If you want to know who is elect, come to Christ, believe, and rejoice in your election. And if you see another individual who has recognized his lost condition and has come to Christ and has believed, rejoice in his election. "Whosoever," God doesn't allow us to look into the Book of Life and read there the names of the elect. We simply know that there are such. "Whosoever believeth may have life." To Nicodemus, as a result of this interview, the hour of the cross became the hour of his triumph. And one of the great things of the Gospel of John is the fact that when Jesus died that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus came requesting the body of the Lord Jesus and were involved in the burial of him. So that interview that he had with the Lord Jesus was on the way to the ultimate triumph of him.

I say to you that was Nicodemus' response. What's your response? Nicodemus' response to the message, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Thou shall be saved," was to

come to faith in him. What he said to him, to Nicodemus, he says to us. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." In order to possess eternal life, Jesus must, the atonement is necessary, he must be lifted up. "That whosoever believeth in him may have life." He's the supernatural, all sufficient, infallible, only individual remedy. "His blood can make the foulest clean, his blood availed for me." Has it availed for you? Do you know him as your own personal savior? Do you know that deep down within you belong to him? And do you recognize the cost at which you have been redeemed? May God help us to truly appreciate it. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for these words that the Lord Jesus spoke to Nicodemus so rich and so full of meaning for us. And we remember also the words he spoke to the disciples on the Emmaus road. "Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things?" We puzzle, Lord, at times as we reflect on how religious men can so fail to understand the Scripture and so woefully lead astray individuals who look to them for spiritual understanding and guidance. We can only reflect upon how blind we individually are. Apart from the sight that comes through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We thank Thee of the light that Thou hast given to us. Help us Lord to realize it is done for a purpose that we might be fruitful servants of him. Lord, for those who may be in the audience who do not know Christ as the satisfaction for their sins, by the...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]