



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 41: 22-23

“The Moral Claims of Predicted Prophecy”

TRANSCRIPT

Tonight our subject is, I have slightly changed it, “The Moral Claims of Predictive Prophecy.” One of the great claims of Christianity is its claim to possess predictive prophecy, and I would like for you turn back a few chapters to the 41st chapter of Isaiah, and let's read again a couple of verses that we studied a few weeks back. Chapter 41 verse 22 and verse 23, and you will notice that in these two verses, the prophet claims that the God whom he represents is one who can predict the future. Verse 22,

“Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.”

So, one of the claims that the prophets made for the god whom they represented was the fact that he could foretell the future. And this is a tremendous claim. It is a claim that is made not only by the God of the Old Testament, but it is also made by Jesus Christ who was able to predict his death, burial, and resurrection. It is also something

that the apostles themselves have endeavored to do; predict the future. And we have in the New Testament, in the New Testament writings, predictions of the future in the form of prophecy.

And furthermore, so far as we know the prophets of the Old Testament our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles of the New have never been wrong, never. Jesus Christ's average was not one out of 999 or 999 out of a 1000. His betting average is 1000 percent. The betting average of the prophets is 1000 percent. It is not that they said we are correct 95 percent of the time, we are correct 90 percent of the time, or we are correct 50 percent of the time. They did not predict as the weather prophets predict the weather today, there is a 5 percent chance of the fulfillment of this prophecy or there is a 60 percent or 90 percent chance of the fulfillment of this prophecy. They were 100 percent correct.

One of the most amazing things and one of the most significant things for Christianity is the fact that in the Old Testament it has been said that there are over 300 prophecies of Jesus Christ, which have been minutely fulfilled. Now, I do not know about the number, and that's relatively unimportant. All you have to do is read the New Testament and notice those little statements that it might be fulfilled, that it might be fulfilled, that it might be fulfilled, that it might be fulfilled and don't stop there. Well, there are many other fulfillments which are implicit, many other allusions to the Old Testament that are divinely intended allusions, which are not introduced by the words that it might be fulfilled. And they are intended to show to us infallibly that Jesus Christ is the promised one of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Now this is an amazing thing, and if you were a mathematician and you were to try to plot what this really would mean; a man able to predict the future without any failure for hundreds of times the odds against this would be, well, so big that we couldn't write on across the room probably. It is one of the claims of Christianity, within it, we have prophecy that is reliable and accurate. Justin Martyr, the first Christian apologist said, "To declare a thing shall come to pass long before it is in being, and then to bring it

to pass this or nothing is the work of God.” So, what we have to do with in predictive prophecy is the work of God.

Some of you I know because you came up and spoke to me between the classes, read in the paper yesterday of Louis Gippnar, who advertises himself as a clairvoyant. The heading was in *The Dallas Morning News*, “Psychic Gift of God.” Very interesting article and a very long article too. I read it through, in fact, parts of it I read again. He claims this is a gift of God, and I cannot dispute him, it may be that he has some sixth sense that I don't have. I know I am not very capable of understanding what you are thinking, and I cannot even understand what my wife is thinking, much less you. So as far as ESP is concerned I am very weak. [Laughter]

But now I noticed that even Mr. Gippnar acknowledges that he was not perfect. He said his hunches test 87 to 89 percent correct. Now according to the Bible he is not a true prophet. I am not suggesting he has never had a hunch that is correct. I had a hunch the Cowboys were going to have a good season last year myself. It turned out pretty well too. I also had a hunch that we were going to beat Cleveland, and that one was not so good. So, I wind up one for two, 500 percent my hunch. And I was impressed too by the fact that Mr. Gippnar was honest enough to say that he felt that 99.9 percent of all seances are frauds, and I agree with him there. So, here is apparently a very sensible man, he has had lot of experience, he had contact with clairvoyance before he was born, and then afterwards too. But as far as the Bible is concerned, he is not a true prophet. The prophets were 100 percent accurate, not 87 percent, not 89 percent, not even 99 percent but 100 percent.

Now, I am going to ask you, if you will, to turn to a couple of passages in the Old Testament with me. We are going to see that this pertains to the 48th chapter of the Book of Isaiah. Turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 18 first, verse 20 through 22. Deuteronomy 18, verse 20 through 22. The claims of the prophets are not simply modern claims. Jean Dixon is a member of the long line of prophets.

Now listen to what Moses by the word of God gives us in Deuteronomy 18, verse 20. “But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.” It is a serious matter to claim to speak for God. I don't think Mr. Gippnar claimed to speak for God. “And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word, which the Lord hath not spoken?” Isn't that what you are interested in? I want to know what the Lord has not spoken, I want to know if this is not really from God, well. “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is, the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

In other words, when a prophet prophesize and it does not come to pass that is something God has not spoken. So the test of the prophets is a very pragmatic one. Does your prophecy come to pass? Jean Dixon said Walter Reuther would run for President in 1964, he did not do it. He was a false prophet. It did not come to pass. Now, she said the Republicans would win the election in 1968. That was a hunch that turned out all right. But she had already demonstrated that she was a false prophet by the fact that she failed. Now, she may have a great deal to say in, frankly if she said something from her experience in Washington and elsewhere I think I would pay little attention to it. But I wouldn't believe it came from God, necessarily.

Now in chapter 13 of Deuteronomy, Moses has something else to say about the prophets, verse 1 of chapter 13 of Deuteronomy. If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, now that means little boys who are in the first grade in summer school, a dreamer of dreams. Now, he is talking about a man who claims to receive information by dreams. “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth Thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of

dreams: for the Lord your God testeth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul.”

Now, here we have a tremendous principle, which will guide you, I think, whenever you see the prophecies of Louis the clairvoyant or Jean Dixon or anyone else. Do the prophecies, do the dreams, do the revelations agree with the word of God? Do they agree with truth? Truth has primacy over miracle. Let me say that again because we are going to see as we study the Bible that God occasionally permits miracles to be performed even by false prophets. Truth has primacy over miracle. Believe truth as found in the word of God, first of all.

If I should, for example, introduce to you a man tonight and say this man comes from God, and he were to stand up here and perform a couple of miracles before our eyes and then went on to say Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, then what should you say. This man comes from God, he performs miracles, no. You should say this man does not come from God. He has performed miracles but he has denied truth and truth has primacy over miracle. He has demonstrated the falsity of his mission by his words even though he may have been permitted to perform the miracle.

That is why, by the way, I am never disturbed when someone says, I have spoken in tongues. If it is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, I think it is; if it is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, truth has primacy over miracle. But I think furthermore we shall discover of course as we study that that was not really speaking in tongues anyway, but even if it should happen. If there should stand here a man who could speak in the tongue of a tribe of South America, which he had never heard, and then we are to deny the truth of the Bible cleanly. I should not pay any attention to the miracle, for truth has primacy over miracle. That is what he says right here.

Now, of course, I am not talking about, prophecies about rain, 5 percent chance of precipitation tomorrow, 40 percent chance of precipitation tomorrow. The weather bureau no longer predicts rain, they make book on rain. Now, this 48th chapter of the

Book of Isaiah is right on the point of this because you will notice that as God sets himself forth before Isaiah and Israel in this chapter, he sets himself forth as one who is able to predict the future, and he in a sense lays all of his claims upon the line of his ability to predict the future.

Now, it is really chapter 48, an earnest appeal to the disobedient house of Jacob in captivity in Babylon to hearken to the message of the prophecy of God that Babylon is going to be destroyed, taken over by Cyrus the Persian and that Israel is going to be allowed at least a remnant of them to go free. Jehovah is the true God and he deserves obedience, and that is the message of the chapter. Remember, Isaiah, in the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, in a sense carried forward a 150 years and he prophesied from the standpoint of the children of Israel who are in captivity in Babylon and the remnant alone is obedient to God, and he prophesied to them that Cyrus the Persian is going to come and take Babylon, which he did in 539 BC, and he is going to issue an order that will allow a remnant to go back to Jerusalem. Now that is the standpoint from which these chapters are written.

And here in chapter 48, Israel is going to be reminded of the promises of deliverance, the remnant is going to be addressed, God is going to summon them to obedience and he is going to try to substantiate his claims by reference to the kind of person that he is. Now, let's read verses 1 and 2, this is the long-suffering promise of deliverance verses 1 through 11 in capital A the summons, 1 and 2. “Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah.”

Now, he is addressing the Judean exiles primarily because you see Judah is the Messianic tribe, further Isaiah was a prophet to Jerusalem primarily, and so he is interested in the Judean exiles. He says, who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, and in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, they say, we are of Jerusalem; and stay themselves upon the

God of Israel; we trust in the God of Israel. Like we say in the United States, we trust in God -- that was their boast, the Lord of hosts is his name, they said. But you see, they do not do this in truth nor in righteousness, their conduct does not conform to their creed.

They say we are from the holy city. We have learned from the inscriptions that at the time of the Maccabeans, a few hundred years after this, on the coins of the Maccabeans there were issued coins that had this statement; Jerusalem the holy, upon them, the holy city. So they themselves spoke of their city as being holy. They spoke of their great God, the Lord of Hosts is our God. But Isaiah said, you call yourselves after that city, you say our citizenship is in the holy city, you say that the Lord of host is your God, but you do not do this in truth nor in righteousness, your conduct does not conform to your creed. Is that a 1969 sin.

Sometimes in Believers' Chapel we have a person stand up in one of our meetings when we have opportunity for a person to stand up, and he will say, "I have been in lots of churches around the city, but I have finally come to the Church." I always say to myself, wait a little while. I agree with you, this is where I want to be, we are trying our best to keep the word of God as a standard and hush to it and if we find something in the Bible that disagrees with what we think or what we are doing we hope we have the grace to become subservient to it, but we are surely not perfect.

And then furthermore, often times the very moment that we begin to boast in what we are and what we have, if we don't live up to it, oh what judgment we bring upon ourselves. So, be careful. Our conduct should agree with our creed. That means that when we acknowledge that God is the true God and Jesus Christ is the one who has died for us and we worship him as the Son of God, that means that God has the right to expect us to serve him truly and to serve him in righteousness.

The holiness of the city and the holiness of God laid an obligation upon the Israelites and the holiness of our God and the truthfulness of the doctrine that we profess lays a claim upon us. We have an obligation to live up to this. We only make people

stumble when we claim that we are following God closely and we really are not. They wonder what kind of God we really have. Now that's the summons.

Now the substantiation and his method is to refer to his own fulfillment of prophecy. He says, verse 3, I have declared the former things from the beginning. Those are the things that he prophesied in the Exodus. He said what he was going to do. He was going to take Israel out of Egypt. He was going to bring them into the Promised Land, and that has come to pass. I have declared the former things from the beginning and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them, I did them suddenly and they came to pass, I am that kind of God. Not 87 percent of my prophecies came to pass, not 89 percent, but 100 of them came to pass. “Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is as an iron sinew, and thy brow bronze or brass.” Doesn't that describe many of us who are Christians? We are a stiff-necked bunch. I have been around Christians so long that it seems to me sometimes that all of us are just as stiff-necked as we could possibly be, and our dross or just as brass and bronze. The prophets really knew how to describe the Israelites and us, it seems to me.

I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I showed it to thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my carved image and my melted image hath commanded them. In other words, God said, I showed you what was going to come to pass and I brought it to pass, and the reason I brought it to pass and showed it to you ahead of time was because if I had not done that you would have said that your idol had brought you out of Egypt and brought you into the land, and all of the other things that came to pass that I prophesied you would have attributed them to those false idols that you learned to worship.

You know, today in the 20th Century when a man trusts in God and he receives an answer to his prayer, some of his Christian friends often say, you know that really wasn't an answer to the prayer that was what you naturally expected. It's amazing. That's the beginning of the philosophy that leads to the idol did it, not God. God now appeals

for the future, verse 6. Thou hast heard, see all this; and will ye not declare it? I have shown Thee new things from this time, the things of Cyrus. Cyrus is going to come, he has referred to Cyrus, remember, in chapter 44, Cyrus is going to come and the Persian is going to take the city of Babylon in which you are, and I am telling you that ahead of time. Actually Isaiah told them 150 years ahead of time. He prophesied in the latter part of the 8th Century. And this did not come to pass until 539 BC, 150 years later.

And so God says, I am telling you now some new things. I am going to tell you specifically what they are too. Cyrus is going to take the city of Babylon and you who will be in captivity are going to be delivered. Verse 7,

“They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, behold, I knew them. Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.”

In other words, I am telling you some new things, so you will see the kind of God I am. Now he speaks of the salvation, Capital C in our outline the salvation that he is going to bring.

“For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut Thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver or not in the midst of silver; I have chosen Thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory onto another.”

Now, what he means by these words, which begin with verse 9, is simply this. “His wrath after Israel returns from the captivity is going to be muscled for a while. He is

not going to exert his full wrath upon them, he is going to refrain himself. Their refinement is not going to be so severe as refinement in silver, silver was a metal that was very, very difficult -- with difficulty melted. It is much more difficult to melt silver than gold and consequently the fires when silver were melted had to be heated very hot. And so God says, for my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut Thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen Thee in the furnace of affliction. I have given you some disciplinary activity, but I have not treated you as a man might treat his silver. I have refrained myself.

Now if I had utterly destroyed you, if you had been utterly destroyed by my discipline, what would the Heathen say? They would say their gods did it. The Babylonians would say, we were responsible for Israel's demise, and God's glory would be stolen by the gods of Babylon. And so he said, he would not allow his name to be polluted. He would discipline them but he would not discipline them completely. That's what he means here.

Now, what is he saying practically? Well, he is saying this, there comes a time when God must discipline. He must discipline the nation and he must discipline us. Have you ever felt the discipline of God? I am glad I have a God who disciplines. I don't like his discipline. But I am glad I have a God who disciplines. Would it be a terrible thing to have a father who never disciplined you? I can still remember my father's discipline of me. I can still remember the razor strap. I can remember the hairbrush, and I can remember a whole series of disciplines, which my father seem to have well organized and I am so thankful I had a father like that who disciplined me. I would be far worse a character apart from Christianity had it not been for my father's disciplining. A father who does not discipline is a father who does not love. And when we contracted with God, this eternal relationship that we have with Him, we got a father who disciplines and He does.

Luther said, "One of the three best books in my library is affliction." I read a sermon last night by Mr. Spurgeon on this tenth verse. In the course of it, he told the story of a woman who was about to die. One of her friends came to her and said, "Would you rather live or die." She replied, "I would rather God's will were done." But they said to her, "If you could choose whether you should live or die, what would you choose?" She said, "If the Lord were to leave it to my will I would beg him to be so good as to let it His will and not mine." When you have the discipline of God, you have the discipline of a heavenly father, he knows exactly how much to discipline us.

Now the chastisements of God are, generally speaking, for three reasons or of three types. They are retributive. For example, David was disciplined by God, and he was disciplined by God because of the sin of Bathsheba. And God said, "The sword shall not depart from thy house David." That was retributive. That was punishment, discipline. That was punishment or punishment of a disciplinary character, but punishment, retributive because of what he had done.

And then there is chastisement that is preventive. Paul had a thorn in the flesh. He had a thorn in the flesh that he might not be exalted over much and he might not get too proud. He had some eye trouble. I think every now and then if you looked at Paul, it must have been a rather gruesome sight. A physical ailment that was repulsive. Not only to Paul but repulsive to others, and he besought the Lord thrice for that. But God said, "no Paul, no Paul, no Paul." As prayers were instant so far as I know every time with a no and finally he accepted it. And he realized that God's strength is made perfect in weakness, and it was through this very physical ailment that he had that was repulsive that was the means for the manifestation of the power of God and the glory of God. So, sometimes our chastisements are preventive.

They prevent sin and then of course sometimes they are educative, they are designed to lead us all into another step in the Christian life. We are on the first step now, we want to get to the second step. You don't always get to the second step by

reading the Bible. Sometimes God sends something into the life that advances you from the first step to the second step, and so they are educative. Like the psalmist. He had a great deal of trouble understanding about the things that were happening around him. It was a very much of a middle struggle with him and a spiritual struggle, and finally he went into the sanctuary, he said, "After all of the struggle to understand" and that can be very terrible middle trials and strengths and then he learned.

Job had the experience of the boils and the loss of his family and the loss of his property, but he came to see God and then he said I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. By his experience he came to understand what he really was in the sight of God. That was a chastisement that was educative. Job wrote his book to tell us about it, tell us what a wonderful blessing it was. That is why Jonah had his experience too and that is why he wrote his book. He wrote his book to show us how God dealt with him and advanced him from step two to three and three to four by the judgments of God.

Luther also said, "My temptations had been my masters in divinity as teachers." You can go over to Dallas Theological Seminary and go all the way through the seminary and advance to roll 99 in knowledge of the Bible and still be on roll 1 in the experience of the truth of Christianity. There is a great deal of difference between understanding the Bible and knowing the truth of the Bible in your life. These things come not without experience and affliction and temptation and struggle and trial are things that God sends to us to teach us. So he says, "I have refined Thee but not as with silver, I watch the flame under the crucible, I keep it, and I keep it just hot enough so that the dross is separated from the pure metal and that is what he did with Israel.

I told you when we were expounding the Epistle to the Hebrews, some of you at least, probably the minority of you in this room, of the story of the girl who was losing her sight and she was visited by W.E. Sangster, and she said, "Mr. Sangster, God, it seems, is taking away my sight." Mr. Sangster said, "Jesse don't let him take it away, give

it to him." She said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well just pray God, O God if it is your will that my sight be taken, give me the grace to give it to you." Now then verse 12 through verse 16 we have the plea of God for faith on the part of Israel. This is verse 12 through verse 16. And there are several basis of this plea, let's read the first one, verse 12. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; that is the first basis. Hearken, trust me you are my called one.

You see, when a person has by faith in Jesus Christ become united to God, he has come to belong to the family of God in this age in which we live, and the Bible speaks of us as having been called and because of faith we have been called to service. And so this plea for faith on the part of God to Israel is a plea that is based upon the fact that they were called. For they were called in Abraham to a great future.

Now, the second basis is Israel's covenant God. Let's read on. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; who among them hath declared these things? The Lord hath loved him: that is Cyrus, he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous, or his way shall be prosperous. Come near unto me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God and his Spirit, hath sent me. Israel has called to faith because of the God they have. He is the one who is. Did you notice what he calls himself? verse 12, I am he, I am the first, I also am the last. He is the omniscient and omnipotent one, completely sovereign, sovereign in time.

Notice, I am he, I am the first, I am the last. That is the fundamental clause of the Old Testament prophet's creed. We have our apostle's creed, they have their prophet's creed and their prophet's creed is this, I am he, I am the first and the last, I am the beginning and the end, I am your covenant-keeping God. And so because I am you

should trust me. He is sovereign in time because when time began he had already existed, when time concludes he shall go on existing. And remember what we have been saying all along in chapter 41, chapter 43, chapter 44 when we have talked about I am he, what have we been saying this is a reference to? Who is the one who is I am he? Who is he? Jesus Christ.

When you turn to the New Testament, you discover it is our Lord Jesus in the Book of Revelation who says, "I am the first and the last," "the beginning and the end," "the alpha and the omega." He is Israel's covenant-keeping God, it is He who led them out of the land of Egypt through the Red Sea, into the wilderness, through the Jordan, into the promised land, it is our Lord that is why he speaks in the Gospel of John, I am, I am, I am, I am, trying to bring home to their dull heads and hearts that he is the I am of the Old Testament. Sovereign in time, sovereign in space, he is the one who spread out the heavens the Hebrew text says with the palm of his hand.

You know, my wife paints, and every now and then I notice she gets to a certain stage in painting in which she puts down her brush and she starts smearing like this. And I don't know what in the world she does with that, but I just watch it and she does it, she will smear here and she will smear there and I often want to say that is illegal. Painters paint with the brush but she will smear with her finger here and there. And you know, if God had a lump of clay like this, he is so great that he made the earth, created out of nothing, brought it into being and then when he made the heavens he just kind of took his finger the palm of his hand and just sort of did it like this.

And all that we see in the heavens is the product of our sovereign God, just a little smearing with his hand like this. That is what the Hebrew text says, he spread out the heavens, smeared them out with the palm of his hand. Not only that, but he is sovereign in history. He has announced his will openly, he does not give us prophecies like the Delphic Oracle, prophecies, it can mean this or that or that and then when something comes to pass, he says, Ah, you see, that was it. He says ahead of time, his name is

Cyrus, that is his name, he will come, he will take Babylon, does it all openly and brings it to pass. Now, that kind of God is a God you can hearken to, isn't it? Hearken unto me Israel.

Now, did you notice that last clause in verse 16? And now the Lord God and his spirit has sent me. This is the third basis for this faith. The divine calling of Israel's covenant God, the Lord God has sent me and his Spirit. The Hebrew text reads, the Lord God has sent me and his Spirit. Who is the me? Well, who has been talking up to this point? The one who said he was I am, the one who said he is the first and the last, the one who said that he is the beginning and the end in other places. Then he says, the Lord God has sent me, I am he first and the last and his Spirit.

Now, we have three persons here. Don't we? The Lord God, I am he, and his Spirit. No question about who the Lord God is. Now, me is already been speaking, me is I am he. One who is sovereign in time, sovereign in space, spread out the heavens, sovereign in history. I would say that he is a God, too. Wouldn't you? If He is sovereign in time, sovereign in space, sovereign in history, the eternal one who made everything, I would say He ranks as a God. So, here we have then finally his Spirit. 1, 2, 3, the Lord God, his spirit, and the one who is sovereign in time, sovereign in space, sovereign in history. The Lord God has sent me and his Spirit.

Will you look at chapter 49 for just a moment? Look at verse 1. Listen, O coasts, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb. Then we have this great chapter on the servant of Jehovah, who is identified in the New Testament specifically with Jesus of Nazareth, that is the me, he is talking in chapter 49. Well, you know what we have here then an Old Testament passage that seems to suggest that there are three persons in the Godhead. Now, as far as this passage is concerned, we might discover a fourth somewhere else but we never do, but this we can say there is a Lord God; there is another one, who is God who is called or calls himself I am he, who is the creator; and then the Lord God has a Spirit, who can be sent so he must be personal,

not simply an influence. So, we can say there is a Lord God, His spirit, and this eternal one; three persons in the Godhead.

Sometimes when you are talking with a Jewish man about the Trinity for -- he has a difficulty with the Trinity, he has been told over and over and over again, here O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord, and he will say something like this. The only thing you need to know to know that Christianity is false is first grade arithmetic. One plus one plus one does not equal one. That equals what? Three. How can that be one God with three divine persons? First grade arithmetic could tell you that. But you see actually his own statement, the Lord our God is one Lord denies what he claims. There are two words for one.

Remember in our systematic theology last time when we talked about the eternal Trinity, we said Jehovah our Gods -- I am translating literally, Jehovah our Gods is "Jehovah a unity." *Adonai Elobenu Adonai Ehad*. You see in Hebrew, there are two words for one. One is *ehad*, another is *yahid*. This word is a compound unity. This is absolute unity. The compound unity word *ehad* is the one that is used when we read that man and wife shall marry and they two shall become one flesh, compound unity, not absolute unity, compound unity. One flesh, but they are two. They are two who have been united in matrimony, but they are two in unit. This word is absolute unity. This is the word that is used to Abraham's son Isaac for example, his only son, absolute unity, not two regarded this one, one, this word in the Old Testament is never used of God.

Jehovah our God is Jehovah Ehad, a compound unity. As a matter of fact, as the progressive divine revelation unfolds we could take the *Shema Yisrael*, the great credo of Judaism and say Jehovah our God is Jehovah a trinity. Now, Jehovah our God is Jehovah a Godhead, compound unity, and the details are spelled out as the revelation unfolds. Here in Isaiah we are getting preparation for the time when we shall read of Father, Son and Spirit. So, the servant says the reason you should obey God is because I had been sent by him, and I have been sent as your God to make the covenant. So, we believe in a

trinity. Timeless, spaceless, single, lonely, yet sublimely three, Thou art grandly, always, only God in Unity! Lone in grandeur, lone in glory, who shall tell Thy wondrous story
Awful Trinity?

Now just a couple of minutes. We have finally, you might expect a loving petition to obedience. If they were called upon to hearken and given a basis for it, now they are called upon to obey, if I may make that distinction, this is the response to revelation. He says in verse 17, "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God who teacheth Thee to profit, who leadeth Thee by the way that thou shouldest go. Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been like a river." And I won't read the rest of this, but you will notice the chapter closes with; there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked. That by the way refers to those within the family of Israel who have not obeyed professing believers called wicked.

Obedience, what a tremendous thing obedience is. It is the secret of happiness in the Christian life, O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been like a river, thy righteousness like the waves of the sea. When I was in Scotland, I went out to preach in a little community called Maddiston. There was a wonderful little church there, I went out on Wednesday night, this was the one church in all of Scotland to me that seem to be alive. When you went in -- and it was much more alive than many of our churches, too, over here -- but when you went in this little church it was just alive, it was Wednesday night for the prayer meeting and it was packed and jammed.

And when I got up to speak, it almost seemed as if I had some of the apostles helping me. A preacher knows when he is struggling and he knows when he is having an easy time, and I really had an easy time. It was wonderful, everybody just hung on every word that you said. And I went home and spent the night with a man who was a preacher himself. He told me a story.

He said, "Lewis, there was once a parson and he had a little son, and his son's name was Conrad, and from the beginning like you might expect a parson to do, he

taught his son to obey him." And he said, "One day they lived in a little village and they wondered down near the railroad tracks near the local train station and there was a bend in the train track and he somehow the lost touch with his child and suddenly he heard the sound of the limited that was coming, that was not going to stop and it came around the bend and he looked off and there was his little child playing in the middle of the track."

He said, "The only thing he could do was to shout out Conrad lie down, and the little boy immediately, instantly laid down and the limited passed over him, and he got up safely." And then Alex Smith turned to me and he said, "You know, I don't know of any better illustration of the words of Scripture, honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. In the spiritual life, to obey is the response to revelation."

We have had great revelations, we have a great and sovereign and magnificent God, and when he says lie down, you shall lie down, and we shall discover that giving him the honor of obedience is the secret to a happy and joyous spiritual life. You have been good students, now it's time to quit until September. So, let's go after a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this wonderful text, which we have been studying. We recognize that there are many difficult sections in this wonderful prophecy, but O father help us to catch the spirit of the greatness of our God and may our obedience be the kind of obedience that brings peace like the river as Isaiah has spoken.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.