



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 8:48-59

"The Day of the Ancient of Days"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Let's turn now to John chapter 8, and we're reading verse 48 through verse 59. The context is the general celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Lord Jesus has been carrying on conversations with some of the individuals and some of the groups that were present for the celebration of that feast. And in verse 48 the apostle continues his account. And he writes,

"Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you:

but I know him, and keep his saying. (You can tell from this that our Lord didn't mind speaking the truth, and he didn't beat around the bush. He just said simply, "You're liars." There is a time when it is the godly thing to say.) Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? (You may notice a slight discrepancy in the thought here. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." That is, Abraham saw my day. And then we read that the Jews said, "Thou art not fifty years old, and has t thou seen Abraham?" In some of the manuscripts, in fact some of the best of the manuscripts therefore we have, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and has he seen thee?" or "He has seen thee." That's probably not correct, but nevertheless you can see why some scribe might have wanted to turn it around.) Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself (literally was hidden), and went out of the temple (The last words of the Authorized Version represent an inferior text and probably are not genuine. The Authorized Version concludes with,) going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Message] As you can tell from our calend of concern the subject for today in the continuing of the exposition of the Gospel of John is "The Day of the Ancient of Days." The claims of Jesus Christ are indeed stupendous. In the Gospel of John he claims to be the Son of man. That is a term, of course, that means more than he is simply, truly a man. It means that he's the Messianic king, and he's the one to whom judgment has been given. He calls himself the Messiah, and that of course, too, means that he is the Messianic king anticipated by the believing ones in the nation Israel. In chapter 5, verse 25 he is the Son of God, an expression that refers to the deity that he possess ultimately.

There's some additional claims made in John chapter 8. He for example claims in the passage that we've just read that he's the one that has power over death. "If a man keep my saying he shall never see death." He claims to be preeminent over Abraham, the great father of the faithful. Abraham was the friend of God, but the Lord Jesus is the Son of God. Abraham is the example of a believer, but Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of faith. Abraham is the father of the faithful, and all of us who have believed in Jesus Christ are called the children of Abraham, not the children of Israel but the children of Abraham. So he is the father of the faithful, but the Lord Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

And furthermore, he says that he is the possessor of eternal existence. Before Abraham came into existence, I am existing. Lord Byron, the profligate poet said, "If ever a man was God or God was man, Jesus Christ was both." This past week on Sunday I had a conversation with a very good friend of mine who comes from another city. And he came by and we discussed some of the things in the word of God. I hadn't seen him in a good while. We enjoyed a very nice conversation. He came by to talk over some theological things. And in the course of the discussion the subject of the Sonship of Jesus Christ came up. That was one of the things he wanted to discuss. And his view was to the effect that Jesus Christ was Son of God but not God. Now, I think there was some confusion in his own mind about the term God, which he seemed to think was a term that applied only to the Father. And I sought to clarify some of that as best I could by pointing out the term God is a term that applies to all three persons of the trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. There are distinctions in personality in the Godhead, but there is one essence, one God. Christians believe in one God. They believe in one God who subsists in three persons. There are distinctions in personality, but in so far as the essence of God is concerned, the Father, the Son and the Spirit are God.

Well, that didn't completely satisfy him. And so I made the statement the Bible teaches in many places, the fact that Jesus Christ was God. Well, he said, "What texts." Unfortunately, we didn't have a lengthy time to talk, because someone else was already at the house. He had come late. And so I started with a few texts that teach, I think, very plainly that Jesus Christ is God. He brought his notebook with him. He had studied. He had read a good bit of literature. And at every point he would bring up the objections that liberals had. Now, this is my good conservative friend who is a Christian. But it's obvious he had been reading liberal interpretations. I was able to anticipate most of them, because being a professor at a theological institution you have to be exposed to those things. So finally I said, "Well I am going to give you a couple of texts, and these texts are translated by your own liberal friends that you have been reading in such a way that they teach that Jesus Christ is God." And I cited a couple of texts, for example Titus 2:13, where the apostle speaks about the fact that we are looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

And I said, "Now in your own liberal translation done by men who do not believe in the deity of Christ, just by the force of text have had to translate this in a way that affirms the deity of Christ." And in order to make the point well I cited one other text that says the same thing. We discussed also the question of Son of God. I tried to point out that if a person is truly the unique Son of God, then he possess the nature of God and is therefore a divine being.

The Lord Jesus makes these tremendous claims for himself. And there are many texts in the New Testament that teach this very plainly. We could have gone on for a long period of time, because that's been a subject that I've been interested in for many years. But it's sufficient to point out that so far as the text of the word of God is concerned, it teaches that the Lord Jesus being Son of God may also be called God. Now the Jews recognize that because in the 5th chapter of the Gospel of John in connection with this they say, John writes, "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him because

he not only had broken the Sabbath but said also that God was his Father making himself equal with God." That's John chapter 5 and verse 18. So the Jewish people recognized that if a person claimed to be the Son of God that was a claim that he was equal with God.

Of course the puzzling question still is with us, why do men not respond to him then? If it is plain that he taught that he was the Son of God and therefore God, how is that there are many who do not respond to him? Well the Bible is very plain. The Bible says that men do not respond because they are blind. The Bible says men do not respond because their wills are rebellious. The Bible says, "Ye must be born again." The Bible says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him; neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned. The Bible says the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. It is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. So what we need is a new birth. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again, Nicodemus." We don't need good works. We don't need an education. We don't need culture. We do not need the church to be saved. We do not need to sit at the Lord's Table. We do not need to be baptized in water, we need the new birth. We don't need a new philosophy.

Everybody likes to joke about philosophers. Somebody has said, "Philosophy is like a mountain, you go up and you go down, but you never get anywhere." And then you've all heard the saying that "A philosopher is a man looking for a black hat in a black room, which isn't there." And that particularly is a matter for smiles when someone says, "A theologian is the one who thinks that he has found it." [Laughter] Well the facts of the matter are that the hat is there, but the philosophy cannot find it. And many theologians cannot find it. The Quaker made a very important point, "The things that we know about must be a personal experience if we are to truly know."

There is a story of a man who was denying that God answered prayer. He said in the midst of a group of men, among whom was a Quaker, there's no such thing as God

answered prayer in this world." An old Quaker who was standing by said, "Does thee not believe that God answers prayer?" "No," said the man, "I don't." "Did thee ever pray to God?" the Quaker said. "No, I never did," the man said. "Well then friend, what does thee know about it? Had thee better not be silent until thee has tested it?"

Well, it does illustrate the point that many of the things that we claim are things that we have not experienced at all. And it is important if we are to know God, that we listen to what the Scriptures say and test what they say. And the Bible says, "You must be born again." You cannot possibly understand the word of God until you have been born of God. And that's a good thing to ask ourselves if when we read the Bible we don't get anything out of it. It may not be because we do not have adequate teaching. It may not be because we do not have an adequate translation. There are people who say, "I cannot understand. I have the King James Version. I need a modern version." No, you need more than that. The King James Version is well able to communicate to us the truth of God. There are many archaisms in it, but the truth of God is there. And if you read the Bible and you don't get anything out of it. The difficulty may be that you have not been born of God.

Now Jesus has said, "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." Well, those are strong words, but those are the words that we find in the word of God. Now, in this passage in John chapter 8 we are coming to the conclusion of our Lord's discussion on the week of the Feast of Tabernacles. You notice the polemical tone of these words and conversations. There is a process of polarization going on. The period of controversy is being replaced by a period of conflict.

Let me just read a few verses in order for you to see how the enmity against our Lord is growing. In chapter 7 in verse 1 we read, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." And then in verse 13 we read, "Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews." In verse

19 we read, "Did not Moses give you the Law and yet none of you keepeth the Law? Why go ye about to kill me?" And verse 25, "Then said some of them of Jerusalem, is not this he whom they seek to kill?" And verse 30, "Then they sought to take him but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." Verse 32, "The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him." Verse 44, "And some of them would have taken him, but no man laid hands on him." In chapter 8, verse 37 the Lord Jesus said, "I know that you are Abraham's seed, but you seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you." In verse 40 he said, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God, this did not Abraham." And then finally we read in verse 59, "Then took they up stones to cast at him."

Well now the Lord Jesus is discussing his claims with the men who have made some profession of believing him according to the earlier part of the chapter. And of course he is attempting to bring them to the knowledge of the truth as he has set it forth. And they are seeking to take him and to put him to death. After he has said in verse 47, "Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God," they reply to him and say, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a demon?" Now that's a rather amazing statement. The Samaritans disputed with the Jews over the claim to exclusive rights to be called Abraham's children. Samaritans were regarded as heretical. And the Lord Jesus now is accused of being a Samaritan and having a demon. He does not bother to reply to the charge that he's a Samaritan because probably it means simply, "You are heretical." He does reply to the charge, "You have a demon."

One thing you can note about the men who are opposing him is this, they have all of our modern methodologies. A lawyer was speaking to another lawyer and asking him how should he handle cases in court. The older lawyer said, "Well, if the law is on your side, emphasize the law. If the evidence and the facts are on your side, emphasize the evidence and the facts." "But what if neither are on my side?" "Then attack other lawyer."

Well, that is really what they are doing. They do not have the facts and they do not have the law on their side, and so they are attacking their opponent, and they are throwing out wild charges concerning him.

You can learn a great deal about the nicknames the people give you. They called him a Samaritan. You certainly could learn a great deal about political individuals by the names that are given them. The judgment of the world is hardly ever truly accurate. When the nicknames are given they recognize a certain element of truth. Sometimes it's very humorous but usually nevertheless it's only a certain element of the truth. The reason being the world admires that which is low and scoffs at that which is pure and noble. So the nicknames that the crowd gives are usually nicknames that have an element of truth in them but are basically false.

Now in the Old Testament God said to his prophets, "I want you to stand up, and I want you to tell Israel their transgressions and their sins." And that's what the prophets did. They spoke plainly. Today, in a democracy, a man cannot get along if he does not flatter. He flatters the people. He tries to get them to vote for them by telling them how great he is and how great they are. And when someone stands up and tells the truth, then of course he is attacked. He's no longer for the people. He's no longer for the poor. He's no longer compassionate and so on. Well, you know the story, that's part of being a politician evidently, because they've found out that that's the way to get elected. You certainly can tell a great deal by the things that people say about you. Some of those rotten eggs that are flung at people turn out to be roses in flight. The praises of a good man and the scoffs of loose living and godless ones are valuable certifications of character.

The church which does not earn some nicknames is not really doing its job. And so when a church is given a nickname by the world, you can be sure it ought to be a name that is somewhat of a slander. If it's really doing its job it will be something of a slander. There may be an element of truth in it, but basically it will be a slander. If, for

example, a Christian in distinction from other people is called a gloomy and sour visaged individual, well that's not necessarily bad. That represents a certain element of truth. A Christian is an individual who is a very, well shall I say, he's a very solemn individual because he's concerned about the really important things in life. And those who call them gloomy and sour faced frequently have the notions of pleasure as effervescent immorality. No wonder they speak of Christians in that way. So when they called the Lord Jesus a Samaritan, well there may have been some element of truth in it. He's not preaching the same doctrine that the leaders in Jewry are preaching, that true. But at the same time he was giving them the truth.

Now, the Lord Jesus replies to this, and he does not pick up the Samaritan charge, but he says in the 49th verse, "I don't have a demon. I honor my Father. Ye do dishonor me. And I seek not my own glory. There is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying he shall never see death." The Apostle Peter said that the Lord Jesus when he was reviled, "reviled not again." We have an illustration of that here. What he says simply is, "I give honor where honor is due. They do not. When I say that I am the Son of God or when I make these statements about you, they are not the products of demented self-assertion, but they are evidences of submission to God."

Now he says, "There is someone who seeks and judges." That's in verse 50. Now, that's an interesting statement, because what he's saying essentially is there is one person who seeks my glory and who judges the rebellious. And of course that person is the Father in heaven. In other words, he's saying, "You see, you really are men under judgment. There is someone who seeks my glory and who judges those who negatively react to it. You are under judgment. It is not unimportant where you give the glory." And further, "If a man keep my saying he shall never see death." That's a statement that means he will never experience permanently death. There is a story of a German pastor who was asked the question, "Are you afraid of death?" He said, "Which death do you mean? Jesus my Savior said, 'He that believeth in me hath eternal life.' And he said, 'He

that believeth in me shall see death.' Why should I be afraid of that which I shall not even see?" So Christians have been given great promises. "And everyone who keeps my saying he shall never see death."

Now, you know, of course, that I like John Calvin. I really should have lived in the 16th century, because I like the 16th century. I like the fact that men there said what was on their minds and in their hearts and didn't apologize. They didn't do little dances around the truth, as my Baptist friends over in Alabama and Mississippi say, a "toe dance around the truth" they like to say. They just spoke the truth. Now, Johnny Calvin said this, [Laughter] "Christ promises eternal life to his disciples, but he demands disciples who will not merely nod their assents like donkeys." Ever seen fellows preach and people say [Laughter]. They go out and live just like they had been living when they came in. But here they nod their assents like donkeys. Now Calvin went on to say that "They should not profess with the tongue what they do not really accomplish in their lives. But God wants men who will keep his word as a precious treasure."

Now, there are lots of people in Believers Chapel when Dr. Johnson speaks they will say. When Mr. Storm speaks they'll say; when Mr. C. speaks they'll. We're not looking for people, so Jesus said, who nod their heads in assent like donkeys but men who will really; truly hold the word of God as a precious treasure. And Jesus says, "If a man keeps my saying he shall never see death."

Now the Jews respond to this and they say, "Now we know you have a devil." Abraham's dead, the prophets are dead. And you say, "If a man keep my saying he shall never taste of death." There may be some point in that "taste." Jesus said you shall never experience permanently death. And they say, "You mean to say that we will never taste death. It's possible they have in their minds all along simply physical death. Now everybody, except those who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, shall taste physical death. Jesus is talking ultimately about eternal death, eternal separation from God. So it's perhaps possible that they misunderstand what he's talking about. But they

do see one thing. They do see that he claims to have preeminence over Abraham. And so they go on to say, "Are you greater than our father Abraham and the prophets that are dead? Who are you making yourself out to be?"

Well now, the Lord replies to that. He said, "If I honor myself my honor is nothing. It's my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say that he is your God. You've not known him, but I know him. And in fact, if I should say I don't know him, I'd be a liar just like you are." Those are sharp words. Someone might say, "He's not a very loving man." But he was; he was the supreme illustration of love. What magnificent love it is on God's part to tell us what we really are. You don't love your children when you don't tell them what they are, do you? No, you love your children when you tell them what they are. And Lord Jesus, as the great loving representative of a God who is love, tells us what we are. And those men with whom he was speaking are liars. And he said, "I know him. If I were to tell you I didn't know him, I'd be a liar just like you. And furthermore, you make great claims to be a follower of Abraham. Let me tell you what Abraham was really like." And so he says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw it and was glad. My honor is not self-given. It is God-given. And even Abraham, the one who you call your father, he rejoiced in me." And of course the point is, if you were followers of Abraham, you would rejoice in me too.

What does he mean when he says Abraham rejoiced to see my day? Well I suggest to you without going into lengthy explanations of what commentators have said, some have said some good things, and others have said good things, even though they may not wholly agree. It's probably safest to say that he was speaking about the whole of our Lord's life and ministry on the earth. Abraham rejoiced to see my day, first coming, second coming, and cross in between. He rejoiced to see my day. When did he rejoice? Well we cannot be absolutely certain. It's possible when God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and gave him those original promises and said, "Abraham, I'm going to make your name great. I'm going to give you a land. And furthermore, Abraham, in you shall

all the families of the earth be blessed." It may have been at that time that Abraham understood a great deal about the plan and program of God and saw that it would ultimately find its conclusion in someone who would come from him. And he rejoiced.

Or it may well be that when God called him out and said, "Abraham, look at the stars," in the 15th chapter of Genesis. And Abraham looked there, and God said, "So shall thy seed be," that numerous seed. And Abraham believed in the Lord and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness, that it was then that he rejoiced in the day of Christ. Because he recognized that he could not have a great spiritual seed like that apart from the seed who would come. He was interested in that, as that chapter indicates. Or it's possible that later on in the 17th chapter when Sarah was there and after Ishmael had been born, and it's evident that Ishmael is not to be regarded as the seed. And God says to Abraham, "Abraham, from Sarah shall come the seed." And of course, Sarah was long past the age of giving birth to a child, and so was Abraham, almost one hundred years of age. And the Bible says that they laughed.

Most students of Genesis like to say that's the laugh of incredulity. Jewish people regarded that as the laugh of faith. It may be then he rejoiced to "see my day." Or it may be when he offered up Isaac, and it finally dawned on him something of the significance of the coming of the Messiah. We're not really sure. We cannot be absolutely positive about that. Jewish people had some interesting things to say about. One Jewish tradition says that Abraham saw the whole history of his descendants in the vision from genesis 15, when he rejoiced with the joy of the Law. And there's another statement that says, "Abraham whom Thou lovest, unto him only Thou showest the end of the times secretly by night." So there was good Jewish tradition to the effect that Abraham did see into the future. And when our Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," that would not have been an absolutely strange thought to the people with whom he was speaking.

But what does it mean here when it says, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Well, it could mean, of course, he saw it back in the Old

Testament times. He saw it and was glad. He rejoiced to see it, that he should see it, and he saw it and was glad. That's possible. Or it's possible he saw it at the birth of Christ. There's some reason for thinking that's probably not the truth. He might have seen it at Isaac's birth, rejoiced then, but saw it later. It's even possible that when we read here, "He rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad," it's a reference to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus and Abraham is one who is looking out from heaven as the plan of God unfolds. That is not an absolutely impossible meaning, because we do read about Moses and Elijah meeting the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration and speaking with him of his Exodus which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.

We do also read, incidentally, in Paul's letter to the Ephesians in the third chapter in about verse 10 that the angels do look down here upon us, and are taught things about the wisdom of God by the church, Paul says to the intent that "Now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by means of the church, the manifold wisdom of God." Think of that, just think of it. The angels at this very moment are looking down upon you while you're sleeping. What are they learning from the church? Well that is a very solemn thought to think that angels are taught by God through the church, his manifold wisdom. We are a spectacle. We're like a stage. The angels do look down, and God's teaches them things by the things that are happening on the earth. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Maybe our Lord has reference to that. We are not absolutely certain. Is one of those things about which we cannot be absolutely sure, but it's evident that the point he wanted to make is very plainly made. And that is that Abraham is not in sympathy with the attitude of the men with whom he's speaking. Abraham rejoiced to see him, and he saw it and he was glad. And if you were really followers of Abraham you would be rejoicing in what you see of my ministry too.

Now then, in verse 57 we read, "The Jews said unto him, You're not yet fifty years old. And have you seen Abraham?" Isn't that an interesting saying, "You're not yet fifty

years of age." Well the Lord was only, well let's just say thirty to thirty-three years of age." Why did they not say, "You're not yet forty years of age?" Some manuscripts actually have that, thinking it's a mistake. But it's probably, "You're not yet fifty years of age, and you've seen Abraham." Well it may mean, "You're not even an old man, and have you seen Abraham?" Or if the other text is accurate, "You're not even an old man and has Abraham seen you?" I'm intrigued by this reference to our Lord's age of fifty years, not yet fifty. I don't know about this, but I'd like to suggest to you that there may be some evidence of the fact that the Lord Jesus, because of his sympathy with men, and because of the burdens that he bore, the unselfishness that he manifested in his life, the way that he entered into the feelings of men, that some of that was seen in his physical appearance. That the troubles of men, and the burdens of men and women, and the problem of being the Messianic king in a society of sinners may have made it's mark upon his own face physically. We cannot say, of course, that that is true, but nevertheless one wonders why they said, "Thou art not yet fifty years of age," when he was relatively a young man, less than thirty-five, not yet middle aged. Browning, in one of his poems, makes reference to the fact that "this life of mine must be lived out a grave thoroughly earned." The Lord Jesus is the most beautiful illustration of that.

Now then we read in verse 58 the Lord Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham came to be, I am." Before Abraham came into existence, I am. Now notice he does not say, "Before Abraham came into existence, I came into existence." He does not say merely, "I preceded Abraham." That would mean, of course, that he was preexistent. Before Abraham came into existence, I was, or I came into existence; but before Abraham came to be, I am living. I go on living. It is undeniably a claim of eternal existence, eternal self-existence no doubt as it is stated in other places. To Abraham becoming becomes, to Jesus existing. It reminds me of the statement made in the 90th Psalm in which the author of the Psalm, Moses the man of God, says, "Before the

mountains were brought forth or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. "Before Abraham came to be, I am living."

Now, one must appreciate the language of the Bible to understand this, but this is the language of deity. Back in the Old Testament, as we pointed out in an earlier message, when God told Moses who he was in order to Israel's coming question, "Who is that has appointed you deliverer?" God said, "I am that I am." Now through the Old Testament that becomes the language of deity. In fact, when you get to the prophets it not only is the language of deity but it is the self-existent Yahweh. "I am." When Jesus says "Before Abraham came to be, I am" he was claiming to be that covenant keeping God. One German scholar who has studied in some detail this question has said, "This is Jesus' boldest declaration. It means, 'Where I am there is God. Where I am there God lives, speaks, calls, asks, acts, decides, loves, chooses, forgives, rejects, hardens, suffers, dies.' Nothing bolder can be said or even imagined than for Jesus to say, 'I am before Abraham came to be.'" That's the kind of Savior we need. We have to have a Savior who is an eternal being. We cannot be saved by a demigod.

My friend who came to my house was arguing that Jesus Christ was not God but the Son of God. He would have him to be a little bit less than God, a demigod. No one can be saved by a demigod. Furthermore, no one can even know that we have a message from God if Jesus Christ were not God. It is absolutely essential that the Lord Jesus come from heaven and give us a word from God. We can never be satisfied with prophets, apostles, priests. We can only be satisfied with a message from God. Only that kind of message can be authoritative. That is why it is absolutely essential that we have a Savior who is God. That is what he is.

There's a story that Alva McClain the founder of Grace Seminary told thirty years ago in a meeting that we were having together. Dr. McClain was a very godly man and a very good theologian. He said he had a friend who was a very good scholar who taught at an institution. He was a good Christian. He said he came to him with a problem, and

his problem was this. He said, "You know, we have a little girl, she's come into our home. And we promised the Lord that we would instruct her in Christian truth. We've tried to bring her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We've taught her about the gospel. We've taught her the gospel of Jesus Christ. We've taught her everything that we possibly can teach her that she can grasp. But he said, "Dr. McClain a strange thing has happened. She now wants only to pray to Jesus." Well Dr. McClain said, "The first thing I said to him was, 'Leave her alone, she already knows more than most theologians know.'" And the man replied, "But what about the trinity?" And Dr. McClain said, "Well anyone who prays to and worships Jesus will never have any problem with the trinity." And that is true, because if he is truly God, then of course we have a Father who is God and a Son who is God. And it's very easy to accord deity to the Spirit who is called the Spirit of God.

Well there are only two responses possible to a message like this. One of them is to respond positively and believe. And the other is to take up stones and stone, because that was the requirement of the Law. The Jews did the latter, that is those that were talking with him. They took up stones to cast at him illegally, because you were supposed to do this only after proper trial. But they took up stones to stone him, because they did not respond. Others did respond, of course. So let me close this morning by saying to you, there are only two ways to respond, to believe or to pick up stones and spiritually throw them at him and refuse the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pledge that what he says is true is his magnificent claim to be the self-existent God. His day is not over yet. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." If Abraham looked down at the incarnation and saw that he's still looking down, and he's looking forward to the Second Advent. Then the day will come to a conclusion, for his day climaxes in the Second Advent, but then it is too late.

May God in his wonderful grace, because we've spoken rather plainly with you this morning, May God in his wonderful grace convince you of your sin and guilt and

condemnation, and may you flee to the cross where the Lord Jesus has offered the atoning sacrifice by which forgiveness of sins may be the possession of believers. Come to Christ. Believe in him. Do not neglect the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Come bow at his feet, acknowledge his deity, his Savior-hood. Receive the forgiveness of sins.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent revelations of truth. And oh God, may the Holy Spirit speak plainly to us. May we not nod our heads in assent like donkeys. But may we truly regard these magnificent words as precious treasures and by thy grace seek to...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**