

Title: **A SANCTUARY OR A SNARE?**
Text: Isaiah 8:13-16
Subject: *God's Purpose in Christ's Incarnation*
Date: Tuesday Evening — December 18, 2007
Tape # Z-45a
Readings: *Jim Grant and David Burge*
Introduction:

In Isaiah 7, 8 and 9, we have three prophetic chapters that describe the incarnation and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. In these three chapters the Lord God declared the virgin birth of Christ, his purpose in sending his Son into the world in human flesh, and that which would be the result of his incarnation.

Here is an inspired declaration of Christ's incarnation and virgin birth
(Isaiah 7:14.) —

(Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Look at the first three verses of Isaiah chapter 8. Here is a picture of our Immanuel.

(Isaiah 8:1-3) “Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz. (2) And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. (3) And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz.”

This son born to Isaiah and the prophetess (not a female prophet, but the prophet's wife), Mahershalalhashbaz, typified our Savior, the promised Immanuel, the promised God-man Deliverer. His name means, “hastening to the prey,” or “speedy to spoil.” That is precisely what our Savior, Immanuel does. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who came into this world in human flesh, “hastening to the prey” and “speedy to spoil.” Of him the psalmist sang, “*Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey*” (Psalms 76:4).

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“The prophet’s son never heard himself called by this name, but it served to remind every faithful Israelite that heard it, of the Lord’s hastening his purposes of redemption. And though the captivity of Babylon lay between, yet the glorious redemption from sin, death, hell, and the grave, by the Lord Jesus Christ, was seen beyond it. Hence faithful men were taken by the prophet to witness the record. (See Isaiah 8:1-4. Psalm 76:4.)”

— *Robert Hawker*

Here is the sure result of our blessed Savior’s incarnation (Isaiah 8:18; 9:6-7).

(Isaiah 8:18) “Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.”

(Matthew 1:21) “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

(Isaiah 9:6-7) “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

In verse 13 of chapter 8, we read...

“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread.”

“*The Lord of hosts*” is Christ, Immanuel, God with us, the Lord of the armies above and below, of angels and of men, God over all, the true Jehovah. He is sanctified by us, when we declare him to be and worship him as “*the Lord of hosts*,” ascribing our holiness to him, looking to him for it. — “*Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread*,” that is, let him be the object of your faith and worship (1 Peter 3:15).

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(1 Peter 3:15-16) “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (16) Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”

But what was God’s purpose in sending his Son into this world in human flesh? Of course, many answers could be given to that question; but in Isaiah 8:14-16, the Lord God declared two specific reasons for the incarnation.

(Isaiah 8:13-16) “And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (15) And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. (16) Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”

Proposition: The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world that he might be to all men either a sanctuary or a snare, a sanctuary of everlasting life or a snare of everlasting destruction. — Is the Lord Jesus a sanctuary for your soul; or is he a snare to you?

A SANCTUARY

To some the incarnate God, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is a Sanctuary. — “*He shall be for a sanctuary!*” He is a Sanctuary to all who trust him. That is exactly what Isaiah tells us in our text. What a blessed Sanctuary he is!

(Isaiah 8:13-14) “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let* him *be* your fear, and *let* him *be* your dread. (14) And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

A SANCTUARY FOR SAFETY

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First, the Lord Jesus Christ is a sanctuary for safety. — That is to say, he is a place of refuge for guilty sinners. He is a hiding-place, an ark of safety, a sanctuary from the wrath of God.

We frequently use the word “sanctuary” this way. In the Old Testament God appointed **six cities of refuge** (Joshua 20:1-9) where men who were guilty of manslaughter might flee for sanctuary. Within the city of refuge, within the appointed sanctuary, the avenger of blood could not touch him. There the guilty one was under the protection of God’s own law.

(Joshua 20) “The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, (2) Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: (3) That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. (4) And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. (5) And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. (6) And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. (7) And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which *is* Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. (8) And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. (9) These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.”

Like those cities of refuge, our Lord Jesus Christ is a place of secure refuge and sanctuary for every sinner who flees to him. The moment a sinner believes on Christ, he is safe. Believing on Christ he is safe in life, safe in

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death, safe in judgment, safe in eternity. The wrath of God cannot touch any sinner who takes refuge in Christ by faith (Hebrews 6:18-19).

(Hebrews 6:18-19) “That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (19) Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;”

Illustration: Noah’s Ark

Faith in Christ gives sinners refuge and sanctuary in Christ. If you believe on Christ, if you trust his blood and righteousness for your acceptance with God, if you forsake all confidence in yourself and put your confidence in Christ alone, your immortal soul is secure, saved, and safe forever. Nothing can destroy you (Romans 8:32-39).

- No sin shall be laid to your charge.
- No condemnation shall be executed upon you.
- Nothing shall ever separate you from the love of Christ.

Do you ask, “**How can faith in Christ give me eternal salvation?**” It is right that you should. True faith is not a leap in the dark, true faith walks in the light. I want you to know why you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and know what faith in Christ is.

God is angry with man because of sin. His anger and wrath are justified, because we have broken his law. And our sins against God must be punished. Every sinner must be slain forever under the wrath of God in hell. — “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*” — “*The wages of sin is death.*” But the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, interposed himself. He stepped in between an angry God and guilty sinners. And the blows of vengeance and wrath which should have fallen upon us fell on him. The debt which we owed to God was charged to Christ, and the penalty of sin was exacted from him. Yes,

“Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owed.
Sin had left a guilty stain,
He washed me white as snow!”

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“He bore, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”

Now hear me well. — If the Lord Jesus Christ suffered the wrath of God in our place, we cannot ever be called upon to suffer the penalty of the law. If Christ paid our debts, they are canceled, and we are no longer in debt. If Christ became my substitute and died in my place, then God’s justice will not allow me to be punished for sin.

“Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding surety’s hand,
And then again at mine!”

(Galatians 3:13) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:”

(John 11:47-52) “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. (48) If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. (49) And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, (50) Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. (51) And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; (52) And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

But for whom was this great sacrifice made? **For whom did the Son of God suffer and die?** For whom did he shed his precious blood? I know this...

- Christ did not die for those who suffer the wrath of God in hell.
- Christ did die for and redeemed God’s elect (Isaiah 53:8; Hebrews 9:12).

But **who are those elect men and women for whom Christ died as a Representative and Substitute?** They are all who believe on him! Any sinner, in all the world, who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is God’s

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elect. Faith in Christ is both the fruit and the evidence of election and redemption.

Let's look at **John 3:16**. — “*For God so loved the world.*” — Most people stop right there and interpret the whole Bible by those words, declaring that the love of God extends to all people without exception. But read the whole verse. And read the verse in the light of the whole Bible. “*For God so loved the world,*” — this much, no more, and no less, — “*That he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” The love of God and the work of Christ extends to and is limited to “*whosoever believeth in him.*” If you do not trust Christ, and you die in your unbelief, the death of Christ has nothing to do with you, and you have no part in the love of God. God loves none but those who have believed and those who shall believe on the Lord Jesus. Christ died for believers, believers and no one else. But for every sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ atonement has been made. Christ has born the wrath of God for every believer. And God cannot, in justice, punish any believer for sin. If you are a believer, Christ died for you. He has paid your debt. Your soul is secure before God and always has been.

- We read our names in the book of life by faith in Christ.
- We prove our election and calling by faith in Christ.
- And we know our interest in the Savior's blood by faith alone.

To believe on Christ is to hide in him and find sanctuary in him. Fearing God's anger, I take refuge in Christ, trusting the blood of his cross to protect me from the wrath of God. **Justice itself puts a canopy over my soul. Justice will not allow a ransomed sinner to be slain under the wrath of God.** This is substitution. It is the very heart and essence of the gospel. (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ is a sanctuary from the wrath of an angry God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is also a sanctuary from all fear. When you think of the sins of your past life, the failures of the day, and the sin that is in your heart, do not hang your head in morbid fear. Rather, cast your soul upon Christ and take sanctuary in his precious blood.

Illustration: The anchor of your soul is not within you, but in Heaven. Cast anchor upon your exalted Substitute, and fear not.

And Christ is a sanctuary from all our cares (John 14:1-3).

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(John 14:1-3) “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.”

None of us live without trouble. Worry, anxiety, fretfulness, and fear shake the most immovable men of the world. No man is so strong that he does not know the meaning of fear. Bodily pains, troubles of soul, and an aching heart are things we all know. But Christ is a refuge and sanctuary from care.

Illustration: Joseph Scriven — “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

There is only one sanctuary for our souls — Christ Jesus the Lord. It is a very easy thing to find sanctuary in him.

- He is accessible.
- The way is clear — Faith.

Illustration: “Jump Son!”

If you have fled to Christ for sanctuary, let others know that there is a place of asylum and safety for sinners.

A SANCTUARY FOR WORSHIP

That is the first meaning of our text — Christ is a Sanctuary, for safety. **Second, the Lord Jesus Christ is a sanctuary for worship.** We often hear people talk about holy places, and holy things, and holy lands, as though one place is nearer God than another. Sometimes people call church auditoriums sanctuaries. Such talk is nothing but a relic of Jewish ceremonialism, or the result of Roman Catholic idolatry and superstition. — Christ is our Sanctuary (John 14:6; Hebrews 7:25).

We come to God only in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. All true worship is spiritual, Christ-centered worship. He is our ark. He is our altar. He is our mercy-seat. We have no use for

- Religious Symbols — (Pictures of Christ, saints, angels, etc.).
- Superstitious Emblems — (Crosses, stars, etc.).
- Idolatrous Relics — (Shrouds, coats, shoes, tombs, etc.).

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- Pagan Holy Places, Days, or Things — (Israel, sabbaths, altars).

Christ is our sanctuary for worship. You may worship God anywhere, if you come to God through Christ. But if you do not come to God through Christ, you can worship nowhere! You and I can have nothing to do with an absolute God. We must come to God by way of a mediator. And the only mediator God will accept is Christ.

- We offer sacrifice to God only in Christ.
- We pray only by Christ's merit.
- We gather for worship only in Christ's name.
- We render service to God only by Christ.

Jesus Christ is our only sanctuary for worship. We cannot approach God in any other way. In the Old Testament, the holy of holies, the inner sanctuary, the place of God's presence symbolized Christ our Sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1-5).

(Hebrews 9:1-5) "Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. (2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. (3) And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; (4) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (5) And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

- The Golden Censor — Christ's Intercession.
- The Mercy-Seat — Christ's Propitiation.
- The Golden Pot that had manna — Christ the Bread of Life.
- Aaron's Rod that Budded — Christ the Power of God.
- The Tables of the Covenant — Christ our Righteousness.

A SANCTUARY FOR LIFE

Christ is a Sanctuary for safety and a Sanctuary for worship. And, *third*, **the Lord Jesus Christ is a sanctuary for life**. He is the believer's dwelling

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place — (Psalm 90:1; 91:1-16). We are priests of God who live in the sanctuary, in the holy place. We live in Christ.

(Psalms 90:1) “LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.”

(Psalms 91:1-5) “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (3) Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. (4) He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler. (5) Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;”

(Psalms 91:9-10) “Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; (10) There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

(Psalms 91:13) “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.”

Christ lives in us, and I thank God for that (Colossians 1:27). We rejoice in that. But, more importantly, we live in Christ. He is our dwelling place.

- In His presence.
- Under His watchful eye.
- In His fellowship.
- In the place of mercy.

And soon, we shall enter into heaven’s glory — But we will be no nearer Christ, and never fully in Christ, than we are right now.

I want you all to know and use Christ as a Sanctuary —

- For safety!
- For worship!
- For life!

“*He shall be for a sanctuary!*” But that is not all the text declares.

A SNARE

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To some the Son of God is a Sanctuary. Blessed are they who find sanctuary in him! But to many he is a snare. Look at Isaiah 8:14-15. — “*And he shall be for a sanctuary; — but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*” We know that this refers to the Lord Jesus Christ because both Paul and Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tell us that the text is talking about Christ (Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8). To the proud, self-righteous religionist, to those who will not trust him, the Lord Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

Who are those to whom the Lord Jesus is a snare? The Lord God identified them to Isaiah in Isaiah 8:6 as those who “*refuse the waters of Shiloah, that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah’s sons.*” — They are those who refuse the soft, peaceable rule of Christ, the waters of life and grace flowing from Jehovah’s Sent One, and trust in another. — They are those people Amos describes as “*Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?*” (Amos 6:13). They are set before us distinctly in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Romans 9:32-10:4).

(1 Corinthians 1:18-25) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

(Romans 9:32-33) “Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (33) As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a

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stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

(Romans 10:1-4) “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

And this, too, is by divine appointment.

(1 Peter 2:5-9) “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (9) But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

A SOLEMN CHARGE

Now, in the light of these things, as he anticipated the coming of Christ to redeem and save his people, God’s prophet was given a very solemn charge in verse 16, a charge to every man who stands as I do at this hour to speak to eternity bound sinners in the name of God. Because many “stumble and fall and are broken, and are snared, and are taken” (v. 15), Isaiah gives every prophet and preacher the instructions God gave him as his prophet. — Standing in this pulpit to speak to you in the name of God, as God’s ambassador, it is my responsibility to faithfully deliver to you the Word of God without addition, without subtraction, without adornment. With simplicity and plainness of speech, I am responsible under God to give you his Word. In verse 16 we read God’s commandment to every preacher.

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(Isaiah 8:16) “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”

“The Testimony” is the Word of God. It is the Word he had given to his prophet, particularly the Word he had just given Isaiah concerning the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (7:14; 8:14-15). **The Testimony of God is the gospel of Christ** (2 Timothy 1:8-12).

(2 Timothy 1:8-12) “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; (9) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11) Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. (12) For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

The preacher is responsible to “*bind up the testimony*” **as something indescribably valuable**, taking great care that no part of it be neglected or lost. By diligent study, prayer, and preparation, he is to bind it up in his own heart and mind like a priceless treasure.

Then he must, by his preaching “seal the law among my disciples.” “*The law*” here does not refer to the ten commandments, or to the ceremonial law of Moses, but to the whole Word of God. It is the whole doctrine of Christ. It is the responsibility of every gospel preacher to establish God’s saints in the doctrine of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-14; 2 Timothy 4:1-4).

(Ephesians 4:11-14) “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14)

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That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

(2 Timothy 4:1-4) “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; (2) Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; (4) And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

Standing before eternity bound sinners, speaking in the name of God, as I now do, it is my responsibility to deliver to you the Word of God. **When I do, I claim for myself the right to be heard.** I do not preach without preparation. I do not give out leftover, rehashed sermons. And I do not simply repeat that which I have heard someone else say, or something I have copied down from a book.

When I come to the pulpit to preach the gospel, what I preach to you in forty-five minutes is the result of many hours of labor in study and prayer, labor spent for your soul. That gives me the right to be heard. **But that does not give me the right to be believed, obeyed, and followed.** I do not claim for myself a right to blind loyalty and allegiance. No man, no matter how sincere he may appear to be, myself included, is to be given unqualified allegiance (Read 1 John 4:1). **It is your responsibility to try what I say by the Word of God** (Isaiah 8:20). — “*To the law and to the testimony*” (to the doctrine of Christ revealed in the testimony of God given in the Book of Holy Scripture) “*if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is not light in them!*” — Compare Galatians 1:6-8.

(Galatians 1:6-8) “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

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I have come here this hour “*to bind up the testimony*” and “*seal the law,*” to bind up the gospel as a precious treasure, so that nothing be lost, and to seal the doctrine of Christ to you. Let me wrap this message up by giving you eight plain statements. Here are eight, stubborn, irrefutable statements. They go right to the heart of true Christianity. You will either accept or reject these eight statements. There is no middle ground; and you will find it impossible to be indifferent regarding them. There is no room for compromise on any of these eight points. I say, regarding every man who claims to be a prophet or preacher sent from God that which the Lord God said to Isaiah. — “*To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is not light in them!*”

(1.) **Either the Bible, is in its entirety the holy, inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God, or it is in its entirety a lie by which the souls of men are eternally deceived and damned.** If the Bible not the Word of God, throw it away. But if it is, as it claims to be, God’s Holy Word, we better pay attention to it. It claims, as such, a total sway over our lives. It must be our only rule of faith and practice.

(2 Peter 1:21) “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”

(**Psalms 138:2**) “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”

(**Psalms 119:128**) “Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way.”

(2 Timothy 3:16-17) “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

(2.) **Either God almighty is absolutely sovereign, in total control of all things, at all times, or there is no God.** Again, there is no middle ground between these two poles, between God’s absolute, total sovereignty and absolute, total atheism. To speak of a god who is not totally sovereign is

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utter nonsense. Atheism is far more sensible than Arminianism. If God is, he is sovereign!

(Psalms 135:5-6) “For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods. (6) Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”

(Daniel 4:34-37) “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: (35) And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (36) At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. (37) Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

(3.) **Either man is totally depraved, utterly dead in trespasses and in sins, or there is nothing wrong with him and he needs no Savior.** There is no such thing as partial depravity or partial goodness before God. Either we are totally sinful and depraved or we are totally righteous and good. There is no middle ground.

(Psalms 14:2-3) “The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. (3) They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.”

(Jeremiah 17:9) “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

(4.) **Either God chose to save some of Adam’s fallen race to salvation and eternal life in Christ before the world began, as the Bible says he did, or no salvation is possible for any man.** Salvation is God’s

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prerogative, not man's. Grace is God's gift, not man's choice. If God does not choose to save and choose whom he will save, no sinner can ever be saved.

(Romans 9:13-18) "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (14) What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. (15) For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (16) So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (18) Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth."

(5.) Either the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is altogether and alone the effectual Redeemer and Savior of his people, or he is a fraud and a failure. Again, there is no middle ground, no room for compromise. Either Christ did what he came to do, or he is a failure. If he is a failure, he is not God, and we have no Savior.

(Isaiah 53:10-11) "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

(6.) Either we are regenerated and called to life and faith in Christ by the irresistible power and grace of God the Holy Spirit, or there is no such thing as salvation. The only hope for a dead sinner is free and sovereign grace, grace that asks for nothing and gives everything, grace that waits for nothing and does everything.

(Psalms 65:4) "Blessed *is the man* whom thou choolest, and causet to approach *unto thee*, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple."

(Psalms 110:3) "Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power,

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in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

(John 6:63) “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.”

(7.) Either God’s people are entirely free from the law, as the Scriptures declare us to be, or we are yet under the bondage of the law and entirely obligated to keep it perfectly. There is no such thing as being partially under the law and partially free from it, not in biblical terms. The only way sinner can satisfy, fulfill, and establish the law is by faith in Christ (Rom. 3:31). — “*Ye are not under the law, but under grace*” (Romans 6:14). — “*We are not under the law, but under grace*” (Romans 6:15).

(Romans 7:4) “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

(Romans 8:1-4) “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

(Romans 10:4) “For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

(Galatians 3:24-25) “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

(8.) Either every saved sinner shall persevere to the end, being preserved and kept by God’s infallible, immutable grace, or none shall. The perseverance of the saints is demanded by the purpose of God, the purchase of Christ, and the power of the Spirit.

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(Philippians 1:6) “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:”

(Jude 1:1) “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:”

(Jude 1:24-25) “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, (25) To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”