

GOSPEL TRUTH FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT
December 11, 2016 morning service
Isaiah 45:20-25

Did you see the atheists coming against Christmas putting up their billboards and saying, “Don’t go to church on Christmas”? Well an atheist would say that because our atheistic friends say there is no God. We have agnostic friends and they can’t tell whether there is a God or there’s not a God. They say maybe, maybe not. We have friends that we would mark as materialists. They just live for stuff. This man would boast he doesn’t even need God if there is one because he has everything that he needs. A fool, a fool wishes there was not a God. He says in his heart there’s not one and he’s sure hopeful that he’s correct but the Christian answers that he cannot do without God. There’s a lot of confusion in our culture today about the God question. Who is the Lord? Is there a God?

Isaiah, as we’re looking in these select passages through November and December, Isaiah has a clarion word for all of that. In Isaiah 45, I begin reading this morning in verse number 20 and invite you to follow along as we look at gospel truth from the Old Testament. Isaiah makes it crystal clear when He says these words. Isaiah 45, verse 20:

*“Gather yourselves and come;
Draw near together, you fugitives of the nations;
They have no knowledge,
Who carry about their wooden idol
And pray to a god who cannot save.
Declare and set forth your case;
Indeed, let them consult together.
Who has announced this from of old?
Who has long since declared it?
Is it not I, the Lord?
And there is no other God besides Me
[That’s a good place to say Amen. There is no other God besides Me],
A righteous God and a Savior;
There is none except Me.
Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;
For I am God, and there is no other.
[That’s another good place right there.]
I have sworn by Myself,
The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness
And will not turn back,
That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.
They will say of Me, ‘Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength.’
Men will come to Him,
And all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.*

*In the Lord all the offspring of Israel
Will be justified and will glory.”¹*

In Isaiah’s day there were people walking with all kinds of idols saying, “This is God. This is God. This is God. This is God.” But Isaiah stepped forth and says there is but one God, Elohim, Jehovah is His name. No one else, not another. He said, “If you’ll turn and look to Me you can be saved. All the fugitives of the world, come to me and you can be saved.”

What are these truths that Isaiah shares with us today? These are simple. You know them but I want to remind you of them one more time. Three things, three truths I want you to see that Isaiah springs forth out of this Old Testament passage. Number one, he says to us, there is one God. Now you’ve got your Bible open to Isaiah chapter 45. Just look back to the first of this chapter. Go to verse number 5. He says, “I am the Lord. There is no other besides Me. There is no God.” Look in verse number 6. “There is no one besides Me. I am the Lord. There is no other.” In verse 14, “There is no one else, no other God.” In verse number 18, “There is no one else.” In verse 21, “There is no other God besides Me.” At the end of verse number 21, “There is none except Me.” In verse 22, “I am God and there is no other.”

Do you think Isaiah’s trying to get a point across? There’s just one God. There’s not any other gods. You can make up a bunch of foolishness if you want to he says but there’s just one God. One. That word here is Lord and it means Jehovah and Jehovah in the Hebrew tongue means the existing one. There are some that are called gods but they don’t exist. They’re false. There is the word today, alt, A-L-T, everything is alt righteousness. It’s fake. It’s alt news. It’s an alternative. Let me tell you, there are no alt gods. There’s just One and He is Jehovah Lord.

It goes on to say that He is God. That word God there means Elohim. Elohim is the Hebrew word and it means He is the ruler. He is the King. He is the God of the universe. Now not everybody believes there’s a God as I said. There are atheists that say there is no God. There are agnostics that cannot make up their mind and they say, “Well, maybe so. Maybe not.” There are materialists. There are fools. But for those of us that are saved and we believe the Bible, there is one God. Now let me tell you, you don’t need to halt about this. You don’t need to back up and when the God conversation comes, you need to put forth that you believe and you trust the Lord God.

There is a whole generation. They are in our colleges today and they’ve just graduated from our schools or they’re working and we call them millennials. We love that congregation of millennials. We love those young people. We’re grateful to God and some of them are standing strong but there is a wide stream through the millennial generation that they question many things and one of the things they question is God. You’ll need to talk with them about evidences that God exists. Let me just give you three of them to think about this morning.

¹ Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

We believe there is a God. We stake our life on it that there is a God but why do we believe that? Let me just give you three evidences. Number one is the universe, the universe. We look at it. We think of the huge universe that we've studied in science. Where'd that come from? Where did the universe come from? Well animals come from parents. Plants come from seeds. Houses come from builders. Cars come from factories. So where did the universe come from? It came from the universal one. There is behind that grand design a designer. The universe, just think about it. You're sitting on a planet today and it's spinning and it's not upright. It's tilted just right. That planet is spinning and at the same time it's spinning around a sun. If it were not going at the right speed, tilted at the right place, and going at the right pace, let me tell you, you couldn't hang onto that pew because it would sling you off.

Some of you couldn't be moved with dynamite. You're saved and seated and stuck. Well I would to God he would just let gravity go for a minute in some of our churches and kick some of us out of the pew but He doesn't. He's got it wobbling just right, tilting just right, spinning just right, going around just right and that's just our part of our solar system and you go out and it just goes beyond.

You know, this week John Glenn died. I'm old enough to remember when he made those five laps. He became such a hero President Kennedy wouldn't let him fly anymore. He had to get his AARP card before they'd let him go back up. When he was an old man they sent him up like a senior. You know. We could not have the space program today. If we were starting today, neither President Obama nor President-Elect Trump could do it. It would not be done. You want to know why? Because PETA would not allow a monkey to go before a man. They wouldn't do it. They would burn down the White House to keep that monkey out of that deal. We sure wouldn't let a man go but we went and began and finally a guy walked on the moon. Friend, we've not even touched the hem of the garment. Something is behind the universe. It is the universal one. It is the universal maker. His name is Jehovah, Elohim, the Lord our God.

Not only is there the universe. There's creation that surrounds us. The design. Every design reflects its designer. Last night I drove to Santa Rosa County and I went right at sundown and as I was going across the bay I looked and the sun was setting and the water was as smooth as this floor and it was just painted with gold. It was glorious. What a sunset. I went to a Christmas gathering and when I finished we were kind of out in the country and Liz and I had to walk to our car about as far as here to the back door. As we walked, we just looked up and it was like God had thrown diamonds against black velvet. There were just stars everywhere. We went home and had a good night's rest and got up this morning and I peeked out the window after reading my Bible and the same sun was coming but on a different side and there was a glorious glow of the sunrise as it started over those pine trees next to my house.

Where'd all that come from? There's a design. It goes down over here. It comes up over there. The designer. Every design reflects its designer. This is a Coke.

Where'd that come from? This is where this came from. Billions of years ago there was an explosion and a meteor broke off and out of that meteor came a caramel goo and over the millions of years it changed and formed and out of that meteor came this aluminum substance and it formed just so it would fit in a man's hand. It gathered that caramel goo inside. It even, after two million years, developed a pop top on top of it and then paint fell from the skies and it fell in the form of a "C" and an "O" and a "C" and an "A." And in two million more years it put Cola on the end of it. It put just the right amount of caffeine and sugar to kind of give you a little get up and go.

Now you don't believe that, do you? Where'd this come from? A tree and God put a pop-top on it. It comes green and if it's green it doesn't mean go, it means stop. When it gets yellow, it means go, not caution. When it turns black it means no and then it recycles itself. Something made this to where you can just hold it in your hand and when you pop its top and peel it, it always has four peels and it's curved just so you can eat it just right. It's good for you. Where'd that come from? You know where that Coca Cola came from. Somebody made that. You know where this came from.

Someone made this. He is our Creator because every design reflects its designer. If you want to know more about that, you ought to read Hal Seed's little book on *The God Questions*. He gives that illustration there. I'm going to give them away to every visitor that comes on Christmas Eve to Olive at one of our three services, at 4:00, at 6:00, at 11:00. If you're a guest, I'll give you one of Hal Seed's little books, *The God Questions*. It answers four great God questions for us about the Bible, about God, about suffering, about a Savior. There is one God. The universe says it. The Creator says it. Our sense, thirdly, our sense of morality.

Do you know there are some things that are right and some things that are wrong no matter where you go? You just go about anywhere and you'll find if you take the life of another man or a woman, it's wrong. God has made us that way. Now we argue about right and wrong in some areas but this sense of morality, that there are things that are correct and things that are incorrect. Sometimes we do have changes of opinion but let me tell you, God's not changed His mind. Let me tell you, friend, if it's wrong to kill your 50-year-old friend, it's wrong to kill that baby in the seventh month of a mother's womb. There is this sense of morality. Well if there's not a God and there's no judgment, tell me why I can't just do whatever I want to do and it's none of your business because God has set an order among people. Later he gave Revelation but even the conscience of man in Romans 1 speaks that God has made us and He has designed us to know right and wrong.

Isaiah says – don't miss it – there is one God. Secondly, Isaiah says there is one Savior. Look at it right here in the text. He said in verse 22: *Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.* "Turn to Me." If you're reading the King James this morning it doesn't say turn, it says look. "Look to Me and be saved." Anybody can look. Anyone can turn and look and come be saved. There is just one Savior. Jesus is His name. Anyone can come. You don't have to have prestige to come. You don't have to have a certain educational level to come. You

don't have to have any status in this world. As a matter of fact, often your prestige and your status and your education will get in your way of coming to Christ. You don't have to have any of that. Anyone can turn and look and come to Christ and be saved. All you've got to do it look, turn.

The word turn is the word repent. Turn from your sin and turn toward God and come to a Savior who is on a cross, dying for you to an empty tomb, raised for you. Turn and come. Notice He says, "Look to Me." Now we want to be saved. We're just looking in the wrong places. Some people in the Old Testament wanted Moses – I'm telling you, Moses can't save you. Buddha can't save you. No priest can save you. No pastor can save you. No ritual can save you. No ordinance can save you. These boys didn't get saved by being put under water today. You don't look to ritual. You don't look to confirmation. Some of you were confirmed as a 10-, 11-, 12-year old. Let me tell you, your confirmation will land you in hell if you miss Jesus. He doesn't say turn to confirmation, turn to ritual, turn to a pastor, turn to a priest, turn to Moses. He doesn't say turn to Baptists. He says, "Turn and look at Me."

Come to Jesus and He will in no wise cast you out. I'm telling you, Jesus will receive anybody. Anybody that'll come, Jesus says, "Come to Me and I'll save you." Amen. Did you hear old Lamar Jackson last night? I saw it on the news after I got home. He was the Heisman Trophy winner last night up in Louisville. He's faster than a meteor. They gave him that award and the first thing he said was, "I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." When I heard that I'd like to done a back flip. I said, "I don't know if he's just playing games or word games or if his momma made him say it. I don't know. I don't know the boy but I'm here to tell you, he threw the 'J' word right out there." I said, "I don't know if He's a Baptist or not but he'd make a good one, I'm telling you right now."

"Look to Me." Look to Jesus. There's just one God and let me tell you, there's just one Savior. "Turn and look at Me." I'm not big on reading stuff to you but I am going to do it this morning. I got a testimony I want to read to you. The greatest preacher in my opinion since the Apostle Paul was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Now I may or may not be right about that but he was powerful. While in England on the trip that you gave us I went to Spurgeon's tabernacle. You see him there in that colored part of the picture and then on the other side you see him standing by what's called his preaching rail. Southern Baptists now own that preaching rail. It's at Midwestern Seminary. I have a picture of myself standing at Spurgeon's preaching rail. What a powerful preacher of the gospel that man was, that curved rail. We call it a pulpit but he called it the preaching rail. When it was sold the Midwestern Seminary got it and all of his library. If you're ever in Kansas City you ought to go by our school and go in and ask to see it. It's a wonderful, wonderful display of all of his books. You can find them with the curator. They'll show you. They won't let you touch his books but they'll point and show you where he wrote different things.

I want to read to you Spurgeon's story. Listen to the old preacher from London.

“I’d been about five years in the most fearful distress of mind as any lad could have.” He was a little boy. “If any human being felt more terror of God’s law, I could indeed pity and sympathize with him.” He said, “I was scared to death of God. I thought the sun was blotted out of the sky that I had so sinned against God there was no hope for me. I prayed. Lord knows that I prayed but I never had a glimpse of an answer that I knew of. I searched the word of God. The promises were more alarming than the threatenings.

“I read the privileges of the people of God but with fullest persuasion that they were not for me. The secret of my distress was this. I did not know the gospel. I was in a Christian land. I had Christian parents but I did not understand the freeness and the simplicity of the gospel. I attended all the places of worship in the town where I lived but I honestly believe I did not hear the gospel fully preached. I did not blame the men, however. One man preached the divine sovereignty. I heard him with pleasure but what was that to a poor sinner who wished to know what he should do to be saved? There was another admirable man who always preached about the law but what was the use of plowing up ground that needed to be sown? I knew it was said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved’ but I did not know what it was to believe in Christ.

“I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair and now had it not been for the goodness of God and sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning when I was going to a place of worship. When I could go no further I turned down a court and came to a little primitive Methodist chapel.” This is a Baptist preacher.

“In that chapel there might be a dozen or maybe 15 people on that snowy morning. The minister did not come that morning. He was snowed up, I suppose, somewhere. A poor man, a shoemaker, a tailor or something of that sort went to the pulpit to preach. The poor man was obliged to stick to his text for the simple reason that he had nothing else to say. The text was, ‘Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.’ Isaiah 45, verse 22. He did not even pronounce the words right but that didn’t matter. There was, I thought, a glimmer of hope for me in that text. He began thus. ‘My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says look. Now that does not take a great deal of effort. It ain’t lifting your foot or your finger. It’s just look. Well a man need not go to college to look. You may be the biggest fool yet you can look. A man need not be worth a thousand dollars a year to look. Anyone can look. A child can look but this is what the text says. Then it says, “Look unto Me.” Many look to themselves. No use looking there. You’ll never find comfort in yourself. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by and by. Jesus Christ says, “Look unto me.”’

“Then the good man followed up his text in this way. ‘Looking unto Me. I’m sweating great drops of blood. Look unto Me. I’m hanging on the cross. Look, I ascend to heaven. I’m sitting at the right hand of the Father. Look to Me.’ When he’d got about the length and managed to spend for ten minutes or so he was at the length of his tether. He’d gone as far as he could go preaching ten minutes. Then he looked at me under the gallery and I dare say with so few present, he knew this young boy to

be a stranger. He then said, 'Young man, you look miserable.' Well I did but I had not been accustomed to having remarks made on my personal appearance from the pulpit. However, it was a good blow struck. He continued, 'You'll always be miserable. Miserable in life, miserable in death if you do not obey my text. But if you obey now this moment you will be saved.' Then he shouted, 'Young man, look to Jesus and look now.'"

Spurgeon said, "I did look to Jesus Christ. I looked until I could've looked my eyes away and in heaven I will look still and I will look with joy unutterable. There and then the cloud was gone. The darkness rolled away and that moment I saw the Son. I could've risen that moment and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to him. Oh that somebody had told me that before. Look to Jesus and be saved."

Friend, I don't know who you are today but if you're going to get saved, you're going to get saved like every person's ever gotten saved. You'll get saved like this great, old preacher got saved when he was just a young lad as he said, 12, 13. You've got to look to Jesus. Nothing more, nothing less. You've got to come and look to Jesus. Turn to Jesus.

Friend, there's just one God and I'm here to tell you, there's just one Savior and that Savior died for you and he stands this morning with his arms wide open. Look at Him. Look at Him. Look at Him dying on the cross as Spurgeon said. Look at Him bleeding for you. Look at Him with an empty tomb. Look at Him sitting at the right hand. Look at Him. Trust Him. Look and be saved.

There's just one God. There's just one Savior. Then this text says, "There's just one judgment." Look at it. Verse 23. I have sworn to myself the words gone forth from my mouth in righteousness and will not turn back that to Me every knee will bow." Does that sound familiar? "And every tongue will confess." Paul picked it up in Romans chapter 14 and verse number 11. Look at what Paul said. Paul said it this way: *It is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."* He picked up on it not just to the Romans but he said it again to the Philippians in chapter 2 and verse number 10: *So that at the name of Jesus [he's quoting from Isaiah 45] every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and [those] on earth and [those] under the earth.*

How many of you have ever had a knee replacement? How many in here have had a knee replacement? Lift your hand and say Amen. Alright. Oh it was fun, wasn't it? They take that knee out and it used to be that they just put another one in. Now they give you one tailor made just for you. They measure you up and they find out and they put that – I got to reading this text and I got to wondering. Lord, is it the replacement or the old knee that's going to bow? Because I know you're sovereign and you can bring everybody. The Lord and I chucked because it's not here, it's here. What you do here gets directions from what you do here. When you look, you bow.

Now there are some people sitting in this room today, you're a half infidel. You don't know if there is a God. Some of you are full and you say, "There's not a God. I've just come to see what's going on at this church." Let me tell you this. You can walk out of here and you don't have to believe. You don't but you mark this down. You will go to judgment and you will bow your knee and you will confess Jesus is Savior, Lord, God, King. You will bow. You say, "Oh no, not me." Oh yes, you will. Because every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to swear allegiance that Jesus is the Lord.

Friend, you dare not go to death having not bowed the knee. This morning you ought to look and believe and bow the knee and say, "Lord, I confess you. You are my great God, my Creator. You are my Savior." So that when you stand one day in judgment, you will have already bowed your knee and you'll be following strong after King Jesus.

I met a sweet girl. She's here to get married. She's getting married Saturday from Mainland, China. I met her this morning over here. If you come to judgment from Mainland, China you're going to bow the knee. Our Romanian friends that I have great admiration for, you go to judgment from Romania, you're going to bow the knee. You die on Sand Mountain in Rosalie, Alabama where the tornados came through and destroyed three churches and three people died just a few days ago. You come from the buckle of the Bible belt, I'm telling you, you're going to go to judgment, you're going to bow the knee. Not just at Christmas, not just when you get to feeling a little ooey, gooey. You will bow and you will confess and you will believe that Jesus is the very Son of God. Friend, if we're going to confess Him over there, we ought to be about it here. We ought to bow here and live for Him all the days of our life.

My wife has studied the Bible since she was a little girl. We'll be married 40 years next Sunday. I invite you to our reception next Sunday night. For the first 30 years that I knew my wife she was as sweet a woman as ever I met. But in the last ten years of her life she has picked up the mantle of a prophetess. She don't give a rip who you are nor where you come from. She will speak truth into your life. Not mean but truth sometimes sounds a little harsh. There was a young mother in our church this week came to her with tears in her eyes. She said, "Ms. Liz, I just feel bad. I'm so busy. I don't have time or take time to play with my children like I should." My wife never batted an eye. She said, "God didn't call you to play with your kids. He called you to train your children." That's a good word. I know some folks playing right through no discipline. You're not supposed to be playing with your kids. You're supposed to train your children. Playing may have a little something to do from time to time but you're supposed to train them up to love the Lord because you're going to send them off one day and all the wolves are going to come against them and they're not going to remember that you play G.I. Joe. They're going to remember that you took them somewhere to get character.

I said to her later after I heard it, I said, "That's kind of mean, wasn't it?" Because you see, when we first got married I was a prophet and now I'm the one that's real sweet. The older I get, the nicer I am. The older she gets, the more mean and

prophetic she gets. We just kind of swapped places. So I'm trying to hold her back. We had another couple this week and I was just kind of thinking, well what should I say? And she just – pow.

I want to make like my wife this morning. If you don't get saved this morning you're going to hell, son. If you don't bow your knee now, you're going to bow it and He's going to say, "Depart from Me. I never knew you." That's the way my wife would say it if she was here speaking this morning. So just barring from her latter reign, prophetic role, Spurgeon was the first person I ever heard say this. I'd heard it and then I found it in one of his sermons. Turn or burn. He's got a whole sermon entitled that. I found it the other day and read it. Turn, repent, or burn. We used to use that in college during the Jesus movement. I didn't even know he said it. Then we said get justified or get French fried. It was just a little update.

There's just one God. He loves you. He made you. There's just one Savior and He died for you. You've got two knees and you need to bow them here before you're made to bow them over there. In a moment when Jon sings, come, look, turn. When Jon sings, come. Like these two boys being baptized, if you've been saved, come, be ready to be baptized. If you're here today and never joined this church then come. Come today and say yes to the Lord Jesus Christ. Come and we will receive you gladly.