

# The God In Whom We Trust

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 50:4-11

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If you will, take your Bible and look with me in Isaiah 50. I want to read for us from verse 4 down to verse 11 and speak with you about "The God In Whom We Trust." This is a term which was adopted officially, it began way back in Abraham Lincoln's day but officially by Eisenhower back in the 1950s, somewhere around 1956 and we currently have it on our coins and on our denominations as far as money is concerned. There has been some battle to try to get it removed by some so-called atheists but, you know, whenever the subject has come up and people ask me my view, I always say to them, "In God we trust, my question is, which God?" Which God? If we're going to define him, then let's be clear and that's where you begin to see all kinds of scurrying and definitions and as you begin to explain to them the God that you know who is revealed here in Scripture, they'll quickly say, "Well, that's not my God. That's not the one I know."

So just saying "In God We Trust" is not sufficient to declare who he is. The Scriptures are very specific and that's what I want you to see here as we read down through here in Isaiah 50, beginning with verse 4,

4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. 5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. 7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. 8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. 9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up. 10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? [here it is] let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God. 11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

So who is this God in whom we trust? Well, the very first thing just noting from the reading here is the repetition of "the Lord GOD." He is the Lord God. Every word of Scripture is inspired and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness and so it's important to pay attention to the words. As the Scripture sets forth God, it's not just simply "In God We Trust," but it goes on always to describe who is this God. Who is indeed the God of the Bible and that's the first thing revealed here: he is the Lord God. That word "Lord" is the word that we get the name Jehovah from. If you were to transliterate it, it means "one who is." It defines his eternality. It defines his omnipresence. And when you join it with God just as it says in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," that word is the word "Magistrate." It's the word from which we have the word "Sovereign." Think of a supreme judge of the land, that's who he is. So his very being cannot be determined or defined in terms of time and limits because he is. He is the one who was, is and shall be, as described in Scripture.

When we just read here in Acts 17 on our Scripture reading, if you'll go back there and look with me, Paul lived in the same type of era. You know, if you walked around Athens and you said, "In God We Trust," they were a very all-inclusive society. They had many gods. It's just like over in India today and it was one of the challenges that I had when I went to India a couple of years ago to preach because I had Hindus attending our meetings; I had ones from different beliefs and backgrounds; and they out of curiosity, came to hear what kind of God I was preaching. And in their minds, if he was a true God, then they would just bring him into their gods that they already embraced. For them, it was important to embrace all gods and that's really what we find in politics today and religion. Let's don't be exclusive. Let's don't be too distinct. Let's don't cut anybody out. If you say that's your god, well, let's find a way that we can include him as well. That's nothing new, Paul faced it, but it didn't deter him when he walked through the marketplace and saw all of these gods and even one, as we see in verse 23, "an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." In other words, "Be it any other god out there that we have missed, here's his altar." And Paul as he walked down and saw those things, they had missed a God. Not just a god, they had missed the God.

So he speaks to that occasion there. He says that he beheld their devotions, in other words, they were devoted to their gods but he says in verse 23, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Now, what was his starting point in his message? That's what I want you to see and then what was his ending point. To what was he drawing this. I find it to be very much the same as what we find in Isaiah here and it is the pattern of any who will faithfully declare God. The starting point is in his character, his attributes, his sovereignty, his majesty and he begins there in verse 24, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord," he is the sovereign, "of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." That's a shocker because men in their religion put a lot of emphasis, not only emphasis but money, in building temples and structures and places of worship.

You can imagine what a statement this was for the Apostle Paul, the Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made with hands. I don't find anywhere where Paul in establishing churches became involved in church building programs. He left many of them meeting in homes. That wasn't the issue as to where they met but rather how they met and who they worshiped as they met together and he says that in verse 25, "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing." How much today that message is being preached in congregations of what you need to do, what you need to bring, how dedicated you need to be in order to satisfy God. Paul says, "He is not worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, "seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."

Then he goes on, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." That's another issue which people are trying to figure out, how to bring different cultures and races and languages together. Well, I'll tell you this: if God ever gives a sinner a view of who he is and the realization that there is no difference between us, that we're all born of the same blood. You want to trace your roots all the way back? Well, we all go back to our father Adam. We come from a long line of sinners and the Lord has made it so and it says there, "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." People when they see National Geographic and they kind of look at some of these places where people have lived and I hear some say, "Ew, I could never live there." Well, be thankful that the Lord didn't appoint you to live there then, but there are some he appointed to live there and he determined the bounds of their habitation and if you don't live there, thank God for whatever freedom or bounds he has given you because he can just as easily make our comfort to be a strait place, a narrow place, if he so pleases. That's such a God as he is.

But you see there in verse 28, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art," and then you'll notice those three words, "and man's device." That's not the God I want to worship is one of man's device; one that man has shaped and told me about. No, I need to know the Lord God and this is where Paul is headed. He began with that foundation as to who he is, such a God he is who is sovereign over all and he ends here which showing how Christ is that God. The very Christ, this one who came in the flesh and this is one of the reasons why God said, "You shall not have any graven image before me." All the way back there when he raised up Israel, he declared it. Why? Because he purposed only to have one image of himself and that was his Son. He's the likeness. He's the visible image of the invisible God and that's why we don't have any images today because Christ never left us a picture other than in his word and other than the elements that we partake of, the bread and the wine. Those are pictures but his purpose is that we might know him as he is in this word and his image revealed to this heart, his character, as Isaiah spoke of, those that trust in the name of the Lord. Name means his character but this is how God has purposed to reveal himself. The God of the universe condescended to come to this earth in the body of a man just like we sit here. What an amazing thing.

In verse 31 here in Acts 17, Paul says that, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he," the Lord God, "will judge the world in righteousness," not in your righteousness but in that righteousness which he worked out as a man. He, the sovereign Judge and Lord, will judge the world in righteousness "by that man whom he hath ordained." That could be referring only to one and that's his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

So you can see it all points to the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's who this Lord God is and as we come back here to Isaiah 50:4, we looked at this last time but I wanted to come back to it. In reading it, you might think, "Well, this is Isaiah speaking here," "The Lord GOD hath given him the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." But as you read on in verses 5 and 6, suddenly we realize, "No, this is not Isaiah speaking. This is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ of whom it is said here, "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, and hath opened," verse 5, "mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

So, who is this God in whom we trust? He's the Lord God but he is specifically none other than this one who came to this world, the Lord Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. That's why we have to be very specific as Peter was in front of that Sanhedrin. When they asked him, "By what name is this man staying whole?" he could have said, "By Jehovah God," and gone home Scott free, but he didn't. He said, "By the name of Jesus of Nazareth." He very specifically used a term that he knew would be an offense to them, the fact that this one who died on a cross, on a tree, was none other than God. You see, they saw that as being cursed and it was. "Cursed is every man that hangeth on a tree." The Lord put his Son there in order to pay the sin debt of sinners such as we that he might be a just God and Savior. He did not shortcut this matter of his justice.

So when we're speaking of the Lord God, you know, even when we say to people, "I commend you to the Lord," if you're not more specific than that with them, they just think you're talking about their God. "Oh yeah, thank you. I appreciate it." I know the Lord has to give us wisdom as to know when to speak and when to be quiet but we certainly have to be more specific than what we're hearing that somehow there's some higher power, let's pray to a higher power. Let's pray to the Almighty. Let's address our prayer to God. Even those terms when you're in a mixed congregation, I'm not comfortable to pray or even to let someone think that I'm praying along with them. I stand there and look straight ahead. You see other people looking around and sometimes they wonder why you're not doing like they wanted the three friends of Daniel to do, bow down when the trumpet sounded.

There is matter of some discernment here in defining who God is. When you look in John 1, and I'm just trying to give us some help because we don't live in any different society than Isaiah did or Paul. It's very religious. Very devoted. The poll is still out there, 83+%

of the people in the United States still call themselves Christian. On what basis? That's a broad term any more until you get down and start talking to people about the God you know, the one who has been pleased to reveal himself in you through the Lord Jesus Christ. You notice how specific the Spirit is in John 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That's how it begins so we know this one declared to be the Word was from the beginning with God but was God. Then as you read down in verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh," so it wasn't just left ambiguous that, "Oh yes, there was a being from eternity and there was one with him that was like him." No, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." How specific can you get? Well, it even gets more specific as it says in verse 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." So it is here in Isaiah, he's the Lord God but in the immediate context we see that this is none other than Jesus Christ himself.

So how does the Lord reveal himself in his Son here? Well, he's defined in Isaiah 50:4 as "he that has the tongue of the learned, to know how to give instruction," and notice specifically, "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." I know we pray that for ourselves whenever we run into somebody that's going through a particular distress and trial like a phone call from one of our policy holders earlier this past week, to tell us that her husband had just committed suicide and this is somebody that you walk in and out of the office every day, known her for the last six years, works in a very prominent position here in town. What do you say? What do you say? It's difficult sometimes to find a word in season or to say something at a time like that that doesn't appear trite because here is a soul that has entered into eternity. I have no hope that her husband knew the Lord. It may be an opportunity in time to talk with her but at this particular time, that's not what she's thinking of and so we sometimes are at a loss for words but our Lord was never at a loss for words. When he says, "Come unto me all ye that are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest," he's speaking a word to the weary.

This was his prayer as a man. Sometimes we wonder, "What did our Lord pray?" As I've mentioned before in Bible class in some of our other studies that God becoming flesh was not like a play that you play a part and you act it out and then when it's all done we have a party and it's all over. As a man, there was a real suffering. As a man, he had to lean wholly upon his Father as any other man and do it with perfection. You see, that's where we failed. Given the same task, we sin. We fall. We come short of the glory of God because we're sinners, but the fact that he was God in no way lessened as a man his need to depend entirely upon his Father and that's what we see here in this particular portion of Scripture.

"That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." That's why when we find our Lord in crowds and you think about perhaps the one with the adulterous woman, he didn't just start babbling. He addressed the accusers and dealt with them until they were gone and then he spoke a word in season to that weary one, the one who had been brought and condemned by the law and it was a word of forgiveness. You think of Zacchaeus in all that crowd and he spoke a word to Zacchaeus in season and

said, "Zacchaeus, come down. Today salvation is come to thy house," and if you're the Lord's you know exactly what I'm talking about. Out of all the crowd of religion, there you were laboring and striving, thinking yourself perhaps to be better for it or perhaps struggling with knowing you weren't better for it and God let you struggle for a while, but then the Lord brought a word home in season to your heart from this word and spoke peace to your heart.

That's his to do, a word in season. He that has the tongue of the learned. All the rest of us pale, all the rest of us fail, but not him. I think about that in messages all the time, how to speak a word in season and I always come away feeling like a failure because I know that unless the Lord speaks peace to a sinner's heart, there is no peace. You can talk about it all you want to but it's the Lord's work to do. That's true of our children. It's true of our acquaintances. When we pray for the lost among us, that's it, that this be a word from the Lord.

Grace was poured into his lips. If you see in Psalm 45:2, this is a prophetic Psalm, as they all are, concerning Christ but the psalmist says, "My heart," in verse 1, "is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Then he says, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." That's speaking of Christ.

Grace poured into his lips and certainly such grace was granted our Lord not only to speak but coming back here to Isaiah 50:5, to submit to the will of the Father. There in verse 5, "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." Some read that opening of the ear to mean a hearing and a discerning but, as I mentioned, that opening of the ear is more that of the bondsman when he determined not to go free but to stay with his master and they took an awl and bore a hole in that bondservant's ear against the lintel and once that ear was bored, it meant that he was bound forever to his master.

Such was the willing submission of our Lord in coming into this world, wholly submitted to the Father, so that even whatever constraints he felt in the flesh as a man and even there, I don't have words to describe what it is for infinite to be put into a finite body and to live and breathe to where he even slept. There was no sin in him. He was never diseased which would be the evidences of sin but he hungered. He thirsted. He slept. He became weary. All of these things, he was troubled in his spirit. The next time you lay awake at night troubled, not knowing the answers or direction, think of him who is the forerunner. He never, ever swayed, never, ever doubted his Father and I think that's probably one of the biggest burdens for any that are taught of the Lord, not so much that we go through trouble, but that knowing what we know of God, we still doubt. We're no better than anybody out there that he should just cast into hell. I don't know if that troubles you, but it troubles me. Why should I doubt him who has always been faithful to this sinner? And yet we're flesh, so you can imagine whatever struggles you're facing, the Scriptures say he was tempted in all things such as we are yet without sin and for that reason he's a faithful high priest and it says, "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace to find grace to help in time of need."

There is, like we've seen, not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No, not one. No, not one. Lowly in the sense that he humbled himself and bore our sorrows. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief and yet he never, ever shirked back. Even when he prayed there in the garden, "Lord if it be possible that this cup be taken from me," it wasn't a shirking back from what was before him but it was a casting of himself on his Father as a man. Total dependence that his Father would sustain him, uphold him, all the way to the cross.

That's why we read here in verse 6, "I gave my back to the smiters." Do you suppose they could have smitten him had he not given his back to them? When they came to arrest him in the garden and he said, "Whom do you seek?" and they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," he said, "I am." He used that word Jehovah and they fell back. He could have defeated all of them at that particular time but he gave his back to them and his "cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: and he hid not his face from shame and spitting." Do you suppose that he knows who we are? Sometimes I think we get in our minds that we'd better clean ourselves up first and then present ourselves to him. There is no greater hypocrisy. It says, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died."

That's how we come, as sinners. He knows us and yet it says he hid not his face. We can talk about from shame. He's talking about the very rebellion that's in us for which he laid down his life. He didn't back off from it so to somehow think like I was raised to believe, you'd better be careful, little hands, what you do. Be careful, little eyes, what you see. I remember as a little kid thinking, "Oh, I've got to be careful because there is a God up above looking down. It says 'in love,' but still be careful." It all had to do with how I lived and there are many adults that have grown up with that thinking. No, he sees our shame. He sees our spitting and yet in all of that, he didn't shirk back from the cross.

So he's the Lord God. Secondly, he's a God who became man and fully acquainted with our sorrows and griefs and yet was patient in his suffering. Obedient in his suffering. Then the final point I would have you see here is that, in verses 7 through 9, he is the God who accomplishes all his will and purpose. Nothing hindering. A courageous Champion, if you will. Think of David and Goliath. I believe that story shows us a picture, a representation. There wasn't anybody there that was willing to take on Goliath. He was the champion of the Philistines and yet here stood David with his sling and his smooth stones and with one stone fell that giant. That's a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who where all others could not stand, he did and he accomplished what he was given to do.

You can see in verse 7 our Lord's faith. In the Scriptures it speaks about we're saved by the faith of Christ, well, what was his faith? Here it is, "For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded." His confidence was that so satisfied would be his Father with his work, that work of substitution, taking the place of sinners guilty, worthless, undeserving as we are, and yet the Lord would help him. Would see to it through him and that he would not be ashamed and with that confidence he says, "Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. That was stated even before he went to the cross.

Here is his reason, verse 8, "He is near that justifieth me." We talk about the sinner needing to be justified, but he is near that justifieth Christ. Christ was justified in his work. In other words, God looked upon everything he did and said, "It's good. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." So doubt yourself but don't doubt him as the sin bearer, as the redeemer, as the substitute. He was upheld and he went forth and accomplished. He went forth to conquer and conquered. Such is the God that we know and serve, in whom we trust.

If there really are people in hell for whom Christ died like some say there are, there is not a person sitting in this room that can have any confidence then. You'd have to say, "Well, maybe he died for me and I'll end up in hell too." Where is the hope in that message? There is none. The confidence is that all for whom he paid the debt he has justified. That upon completion of his death, God declared once for all righteous everyone for whom he laid down his life. You know, if the Father justified him, which he did, that means all that he represented were justified in him because he was like the high priest bearing the names of the 12 tribes on that breastplate. If our name has been written in the Lamb's book of life, and Christ has paid the debt and God has risen him from the grave, which he has, ascended on high and seated him at the right hand of majesty on high, that's where we're seated.

So the trial is over. The debt has been paid and the fact that I trust in that Savior today, trust in that one who came, lived, died and rose again, is an evidence of God's grace otherwise I'd never trust him. It's a twofold declaration that where Christ said, "Of all that the Father gave me, I'll not lose one. I'll lose nothing," he said. But he also said, "All that the Father has given me shall come to me." And he said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." A lot of preachers try to bolster people's hope on the last part of the verse. They say, "See, it says there, if you come to him he won't cast you out," but my hope is in the first part of the verse, "That all that the Father has given me shall come to me." If I have come to Christ and rest in his person and his work alone for salvation, there is only one reason I've done it and I'm doing it and it's because he drew me. He draws every one for whom Christ died.

So that's where we look, but as far as Christ is concerned, so perfect was the work that he accomplished. Yes, he calls upon his Father for help. As a man, he did so, and yet we find here, "He is near that justifieth me." Did God hear him? Yes. Therefore he says in verse 8, "let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me." There is none that can undo what Christ has done. What man has done can be undone, but not what Christ has done. So sure and so perfect is that work.

He says that again in verse 9, "Behold, the Lord GOD will help me." He didn't say hope to help me but will help me. "Who is he that shall condemn me?" If Christ has paid your debt, there is none that can condemn and that ties in with what Paul said over in Romans. It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns? Any that oppose this message, any that will continue on in their works and die in their sin, it says, "they shall all wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." Just take and brand new suit or dress, blouse,

whatever and just put it away in a closet and don't touch it for about 40 years and then go in there and grab it. What happens to it? All the fibers begin to break down. You haven't even worn it. All it has to do is hang there and given time it's going to start breaking down, decompose. That's just the nature of anything that man makes and if that's true in natural things, why on earth would I ever, ever put my confidence in the works of these hands regarding spiritual and eternal things? The declaration of Scripture is clear that all of that shall wax old as a garment. If it's a garment of my righteousness that I have put together, it's going to wax old and the moth will eat it up.

But here is the hope as we conclude in verses 10 and 11, "Who is among you that feareth the LORD?" Fear the Lord, how? Not in a cowering fear, slavish fear, wondering what's around the next corner, but fear in the sense of reverence. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD." Notice, "among you." It's not everybody that fears the Lord. Just because they come to a place of worship doesn't mean they fear the Lord. This is talking about heart work of God in the heart of a sinner that would cause that one to revere Christ above all.

"That obeyeth the voice of his servant." Notice, that's speaking of the voice of Christ. Preachers want you to obey their voice but they're not the servant spoken of. Isaiah wasn't the servant spoken of here, this is Christ. Obey his voice in that you hear it. Christ said, "My sheep hear my voice," so it's speaking to this very distinctive people for whom he came but "that walketh in darkness and hath no light?" Not darkness in the sense of being lost because it says they fear the Lord and they obey, they have heard his voice, but in darkness as far as calamity, as far as trouble. Will we know dark days? Absolutely. I marvel. I think about it even in terms of this congregation, how the Lord has guided us and protected us. Yes, we've had trials and things but you think about the Lord keeping his hand upon us. Here we are 16 years later, meeting together and worshiping. It's a testimony to his grace and mercy.

But, dear friend, we're going to know dark days. There are going to be days where we wonder where the light is, but even that, the Lord purposes and in that he says, "let him trust in the name of the LORD." In other words, never doubt. Never doubt. And what? "Stay upon his God." It is a specific God, distinctive God. A natural man cannot stay upon our God because their mind is fleshly, worldly, they run to men or to solutions that they try to come up with. No, stay upon your God. If this God is your God, stay upon him. That word "stay" means "lean completely; cast yourself utterly upon him."

You say, "What's the alternative?" Well, be thankful that the Lord hasn't left you in idolatry because there are those that he leaves. It says in verse 11 clearly, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks." Kindling a fire in the sense of doing something of the works of your own hands. He says, "Go ahead and walk in the light of your fire. If all of this that I have declared to you does not cause your heart to turn, then continue as you were."

"Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled." People get excited when they've got a fire going. They find some comfort in the works of their hands but he

says, "This shall ye have of mine hand." That's interesting because he's a God of the universe. There are some that he has determined to let continue in that way, but he says, "ye shall lie down in sorrow." In the end, it will not stand you in good stead. In the end, it will fail you, anything that is not totally of Christ and Christ alone.

So as we begin this new year, I pray that the Lord would grant us hearts to look to this God and trust in his name and may his word be spoken to our hearts, to the weary, it says, in season. Certainly, I'm a needy sinner. I trust you are as well.