

Jehovah The Incomparable God

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He really is ministering to a people who have lost hope. What is the remedy that he proposes for the very painful and very serious condition? Well, he might have said to them, "Friends, the time has come for us to get ourselves a new religion. It was all very well, that old teaching was good enough for our old forefathers, it was fine for Moses, it was fine for David, but you know, times have changed and look at our situation. The answer to our problems is to get ourselves a new religion." He might have said that but he didn't, although there are many people saying that today, aren't there? Many people saying the very same thing today.

Or he might have said, "Now, look, come fellows, let's get together. We can't sit around here, you know, like this, being mournful and miserable." In fact, he might have said, "I've written this little song and if you all bring your guitars, we can get together and we'll sing this little song which is entitled 'We can all be happy in Babylon.' And so we'll get together and we'll have this little party and we'll sing and we'll sing and we'll sing, and it will all be okay." Well, he might have suggested that but he didn't.

Or he might have said, "Now look, let's get busy here and round up the leaders and round up men representative of the tribes as much as we can that in our present situation. Let's get together the best men that we possibly can and let us have a conference. Let's have a great conference and we will thresh out the difficulties that are before us, we'll deal with these problems, and we will come up with some solutions one way or another. We have to do it, let's get together and do it." He didn't do that, of course, either, did he?

He didn't do any of those things but what he did do is express for us in that marvelous little statement in this chapter and at the end of the ninth verse, he said to them, "Behold your God! Say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'" He sets before them their God. He knows, you see, that that is, in fact, the only real antidote to their problems. He sees clearly, this great prophet, he sees clearly that the answer to their problems lies in they firmly grasping the glory and the reality of their God.

Isaiah knew although, of course, he lived before the prophet Daniel, but you remember the statements of Daniel 11:32 and Isaiah certainly appreciated and knew this spirit as Daniel says, "the people who know their God, the people who know their God shall be

strong, and carry out great exploits." Isaiah knew that. He understood that. He recognized that what this people needed beyond anything else was to know their God, to see their God, to have a spiritual understanding and insight and perception and grasp of the glory and the grandeur and the greatness of God, and so he, this great evangelical prophet as he's sometimes called, Isaiah sets before them Jehovah as the incomparable God, and that is our theme this evening, "Jehovah The Incomparable God."

He points out to them that he is incomparable in his power. Notice verse 12. I hope you have the passage open before you. Notice verse 12, "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?" Is there any creature great enough to take the waters of the ocean, as it were, in their hands? Is there any creature who is able with his hand to measure the heavens? Can you gather together the dust of the earth or put the mountains in scales, he asks, and weigh them and tell us what they weigh? And to ask these kinds of questions, of course, is to provide the answer because the idea is preposterous. All of these things are humanly speaking from a human perspective preposterous. They're ridiculous. They're foolish. The oceans, the mountains, the sky above us, the dust of the earth, all these things are so immense as to be utterly beyond our computation and understanding and yet all of these things, he says, are in the hands of God.

They're in the hands of God and, of course, even using that terminology he's using what, remember that wonderful word, one of those two wonderful words I keep throwing at you? Anthropomorphic language. He's using the language of men and the parts of men. Hands, for instance, but he's using them so ably and so graphically. He speaks of God and he says, "Yes, only God can take these things in His hands. And all of these things can, indeed, find their place in His hands." Creation is the product of his will. All of it is under his power. All in the hands of God.

In verse 22 he uses that fascinating expression, "It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers," he says. Some have felt that this expression that he's used here in terms of the circle of the earth is perhaps a reflection of the spherical shape of the earth, and that the Bible is reflecting that. Well, there's a great deal of debate about that as to whether that is the case, whether it is possible in terms of understanding this passage. It really doesn't matter all that much to us, it's an interesting thing to speculate about, but what is clear and what is important and what does count to us is that the Lord God rules over the earth.

He has established this and he is seated on his throne, and again, you see, in using that kind of language we're using figurative language in a very real sense, but we understand what we mean by that. I think we recognize that, don't we, that when we say that God is on his throne, we understand what we mean. God rules. God reigns. God is the sovereign Lord and he is exalted and how wonderfully the prophet expressed it here, that the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers in his sight. Oh, from the great ones, the lowest peasants, they are, says the prophet, like grasshoppers in the sight of God.

And again in verse 26, "Lift up your eyes on high," he says, "see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing." And we could read that and, in fact, the opening of this verse, we could read it as a question. It might well be good to read it in that way, "Lift up your eyes on high, And see; Who has created these things? Who brings out their host by number?" Of course, the answer is God and only God himself.

What a breathtaking display we have when we observe the heavens. As many of you know, Jessie and I, God willing, are heading to our old haunt out east in Nova Scotia, in that mighty metropolis called Porterville where there's about 75 people. Maybe it's grown since we were there. Maybe it's 85 now. That'll suit us just nicely. And you know, I've told you before of how we were down there in that little isolated beach, little stony beach, very very few lights around, and I told you before of how sometimes we come out and stand on that stony beach late at night and look up into the blackness. It's so dark around and, oh, the glory of the heaven. The glory of the heaven. Wonderful to behold. Wonderful to see. It's overwhelming and, indeed, we might find ourselves asking the question, you remember that Napoleon asked his troops, I referred to the illustration a few weeks ago, "Gentleman, who made these?" Who made these? How can we explain these. Men, of course, may and do try to escape from God. Men are always running from God and they hide behind the evolutionary theory, but when you stand still and you hear the voice of God that says, "Be still and know that I am God," and when you look at that incredible expanse of the heaven, and when you see the glory of God revealed above you, you recognize there's only one true answer to the question, "Who made these?" God made them. God made them and he knows their number and he has placed them in their places. He's put them in position. The Almighty God.

We sing together sometimes, don't we, that grand hymn that some of our young folk enjoy especially to sing,

"I sing the mighty power of God
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad
and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at his command,
and all the stars obey."

The great hymn. It's a lovely hymn setting forth to us once again the wondrous power, the incomparable power of God in terms of creation.

So God is incomparable in his power. He is also, this passage tells us, incomparable in his wisdom. In verse 13 we read, "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him?" Now the book of Proverbs says that in the multitude of counselors there is safety and when it comes to men, that's a very wise thing, of course, to

recognize, for as we sometimes say, the best of men are men at best. But when it comes to God, it's an altogether different picture, isn't it? When it comes to God, to this God that Isaiah speaks about, that Isaiah is portraying before his people and before us, that Isaiah is endeavoring to have us grasp and ponder and think about, who is there to counsel God? This is the question, is it not, the question of Isaiah? Who is there to give God advice and instruction? Does God need, the prophet is asking us, does God need anyone to explain things to him? Does come to us, as it were, and say, "Now look, there's something I don't understand here. Would you give Me your thoughts on this? Would you explain to Me how you see this?" The idea is ludicrous, isn't it? That's good for us. Of course, we're always doing that and rightly so. We seek out one another and say, "Well, what do you think about this? Explain this to me. Can you shed light on this?" God never needs to do that and [unintelligible]. Unless, of course, he's using the literary device, so to speak, to draw something out of us. How can you counsel to God? Counsel the God who made the human brain? How can you counsel the God who created the rose? How can you give advice to the God who brought the laws of the universe into being? Does God, such a God need man's opinion? The answer is no, of course.

I've said before, haven't I, some of you may remember I have often mentioned the fact that no one is really and truly speaking original. All that we know comes somehow or another from other sources and from other people. There is nothing new under the sun, says the Scripture, and so when people give the idea that they are indebted to no one, that they are totally original, we have to say, well, here's a person with an inflated ego. Here's someone with ludicrous ideas of their own abilities. All of us draw from others. All of us are the result of things that have come from others.

You remember the incident I shared with you some long time back I suppose, but some of you may remember it, the incident with respect to Charles Spurgeon and one of his students, and one of his students had written something and in it Spurgeon recognized a large section that was his but the student hadn't acknowledged it, and this was considered to be a very serious offense. This, of course, is what we call plagiarism, that you take someone else's work and you present it as though it was your own. And so it was felt by the faculty of the pastor's college, Spurgeon's college, that this student was guilty of plagiarism and this was viewed very very seriously. And so in he was brought and it was demanded, "Now you have plagiarized Mr. Spurgeon's writing." "No," the student said, "that's not so. No, I haven't." Well, of course, the faculty insists, "Look, there's no question about it." And they tried to break him down but the young man kept insisting, "No, I have not plagiarized Mr. Spurgeon. I did not." He said, "I did not refer to Mr. Spurgeon's writings at all in producing this essay." Well, this was a very serious thing. Eventually the student did make an admission. He said, "No, I didn't copy anything from Mr. Spurgeon but I did refer to the writings of William Jay," and William Jay was a famous preacher from the city of Bath in England, and a very well-known preacher in earlier times. He said, "I took something from the writings of William Jay." And then Spurgeon, the light came on in Spurgeon's mind. Spurgeon was a man with an extraordinary photographic mind and he could read a section in a book and it was there and he could quote it virtually at length. Those who knew him, he would say that he could go to one of the thousands of volumes in his library, almost any one, and he could

tell you where such a section was and he could quote it without looking at the book very often. And what had happened was that Spurgeon had read something from William Jay and it had just filtered into his mind and without he realizing it, he had quoted Jay in his writings, and therefore when this poor student quoted Jay in his own essay, they all thought immediately, "He's plagiarizing Spurgeon." It wasn't so, and I can imagine that the great man was slightly embarrassed but at least the student was off the hook.

You see, none of us are totally and completely original. All that we know we've learned from others, but with God it's altogether different. Altogether different. He is the sum of all knowledge. He is the embodiment of all wisdom and he needs no advisor and no instructor and no counselor. He's incomparable, says the word of God, in terms of his wisdom.

Then again he's incomparable in his worthiness as the great prophet, and so we observe in verse 16 his statement, "And Lebanon," he says, "is not sufficient to burn, Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering." Now Lebanon, of course, was very famous in ancient times for its trees. You remember the expression we come across in the Bible, "the cedars of Lebanon," and it had these great forests with many trees and teeming with wildlife in these ancient times. And the prophet is really saying if you were to engage in a ceremony of sacrifice and you were to bring all of the timber from the forests of Lebanon and all of the wildlife from those forests of Lebanon and offer them to God, you still could not express the glory and the excellence and the greatness of God.

Now there were times in the Old Testament when there was an astonishing number of sacrifices offered by the Israelites to God. Let me just direct you to 1 Kings to try to illustrate this. In 1 Kings 8, amazing, remarkable statements here in 1 Kings 8 and in verse 66. 1 Kings 8. Now have I got the right verse here? Verse, someone said, what, 3? 63. 63, I hear. Alright look at 63, "And Solomon," yes, "offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD." This was, of course, a special occasion. It was the dedication of the temple. But look at those numbers: 22,000 bulls, 120,000 sheep.

Now admittedly, of course, there were thousands of people that had gathered for this extraordinary occasion and all of them would have brought their offerings. Yeah, we recognize that but at the same time these amazing numbers reflect a desire and an attempt and an effort to try to express something of the worthiness of God; to try to express in this way the greatness and worth of this one that they were worshiping and whose place of worship was now being dedicated. And yet Isaiah is telling us that there is, in fact, actually no possible way for any of us to really express the incomparable worthiness of God.

Worship, of course, is the recognition of the worth of God. He is worthy of our praise. He is worthy of our homage. He is worthy of our lives and it is our duty, we are believing people, if we are Christian people, it is our duty to give to God the very best that we have. It is our solemn obligation before him, and yet to recognize even when we do that we can

never adequately express the worthiness of God. All perfection shines in him. All that is good and righteous exists in him. All that is lovely, excellent, admirable, desirable, all of it is in him. There is none, says the Scripture, there is none like unto the Lord our God.

And so the prophet teaches us that he is incomparable in worthiness, and he teaches us also that he is incomparable in his sovereignty. Now this is brought out in a number of verses in this great passage that we've read. Look at verse 15 again, "Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the balance; Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing." Verse 17, "All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless." Verse 23, "He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless." Verse 24, "Scarcely shall they be planted, Scarcely shall they be sown, Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, When He will also blow on them, And they will wither, And the whirlwind will take them away like stubble." And all of these statements are expressing this incomparable sovereignty of the great Jehovah, for here is a God, says the Scripture, who is supreme over all things, who rules over all things. Nations, as we've said before, can be very impressive. Nations can be very impressive and, of course, in the days of the Bible there were nations that were impressive as there has been in our own day. Very impressive indeed, and yet as the Scripture, in the sight of God they are not. Nothing. They're a drop in the bucket. You take a little pebble and you drop it in the bucket and there's just a little ripple and it's gone. They are, says God, like the fine dust of the balance. You have a scale and you have the dust in the balance and you just blow it off. It's gone. These nations, says the prophet, are like that in the sight of God. Men and nations may rebel against God, they may rise up in anger against God but God can handle them. God can take care of them.

And in that 24th verse as we've noticed, he speaks in terms of blowing on them. They will wither, the whirlwind will take them away like stubble, all of this, you see, speaking in terms of this incomparable sovereignty. David knew about it, didn't he? In Psalm 2 he wrote about it. In Psalm 2, you will remember that is the Psalm that begins, "Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.'" And the response of God is, "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall have them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 'Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.'" And do you remember that in the book of Daniel 4:35 that even Nebuchadnezzar, this extraordinary figure in the book of Daniel, again set forth the might and the sovereignty of God when he said in verse 34 and 35, "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" No one can say that says this ancient king.

And what can we say about that wonderful statement, we use the word incomparable again perhaps, the incomparable statement of 1 Chronicles 29. What a moving and

glorious statement David makes as he comes toward the end of his life. In 1 Chronicles 29 and beginning at verse 10, "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name." What a magnificent statement that is and it reflects the view of a man who had seen something with the eyes of the soul and with the eyes of the spirit of the glory and the sovereignty of Jehovah. He reigns. He reigns over life and death. He reigns over the forces of nature. He reigns over the events of history. He reigns over the salvation of men and women. He is incomparable, says the word of God, in his sovereignty.

Now my dear friends, this is the God, this is the God that Scripture brings before us. This is the God that the prophet by divine inspiration directs us to. This is the God and he brings this God and the Scripture brings this God before you tonight, before me. Is there a Christian here this evening perhaps discouraged? Is there a Christian cast down? Is there a Christian here this evening who feels the awful weakness within himself, within herself? My brother, my sister in Jesus Christ, God says to us through his word this evening, "Behold your God. Look away from yourself. Look away from your weakness. Look away from your circumstances. Look away from all those things that would discourage and undermine and trouble you. Look away and behold your God." Incomparable in power and in wisdom and in worthiness and in sovereignty, excellent and magnificent in all of his ways and in all of his glorious being, behold your God, says the Scripture. See him. This is what Isaiah was saying to Israel in their sin, in all of their discouragement, in all of their need. He's saying, "Behold your God," and he's saying it to you this evening as well and saying it to me also. What an incredible privilege it is to know such a God.

There is another well-known passage not in Isaiah but in his companion prophet in Jeremiah, another verse or passage that I so often read to you and exhort you to read. You recognize, remember what it is? Jeremiah 9:23, "'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the LORD." Oh, what a great statement that is. I think was it not just recently that I exhorted and encouraged the young people to memorize a certain verse of Scripture and if you're doing any memorizing of Scripture, here's a passage that certainly deserves to be memorized, is it not? Here's a passage, young people, if you should memorize and go over, it sets out before us, does it not, the glory and the majesty of God Almighty.

"Let a man glory in this," says God, "not in wisdom, might and riches, but that he understands and knows Me." And this, you see, is the God who goes with us. This is the God who goes with us into the week immediately before us. This is the God who has promised never to fail us nor forsake us. This is the God, extraordinary and amazing

though it is, this is the God who loves his people, his unworthy, his weak, his wandering, his failing, his people. He loves them and he guides them and we began the service tonight, didn't we, singing,

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand."

Oh, brother, how glorious to know this God in all of his excellence and might and majesty and glory who has promised that he will not fail us nor forsake us and says to us, "I love you. You are Mine." So for a child of God, for a believer to see something in this passage of the excellence of God ought certainly to strengthen us, to help us.

And what about those who are here tonight outside of Christ? What about those who are here tonight as unbelievers, non-Christians? What about you in the light of what we've seen this evening, my dear friend? Well, I have to say to you as I've said many times before, this is the God that you must come before in judgment. This is the God against whom you have sinned. This God of might, this God of sovereignty, this God of power, this God of glory, this God of excellence, this God before whom all the assembled hosts of heaven fall in adoration and worship, against this God you have sinned and that's not a light thing. That's not something to be taken lightly. And yet this also is the God who has sent forth his beloved Son and offered him up on the cross of Calvary for an atonement for sin. This is the God, as we said this morning, who has sent forth his Son, and the amazing nature of the love and mercy of God is directly related, you see, to the amazing reality of his extraordinary being and majesty and greatness. It is why the apostle who wrote, the author of the book of Hebrews said, "How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" How can we escape? We cannot escape and if you're here this evening, whoever you might be, whatever your age might be, if you're here this evening, my dear friend, as a resister of Christ, as a rejecter of Christ, as an ignorer of Christ, as one outside of Christ, you need to realize and recognize that this incomparably great and mighty God is the one before whom you will stand to answer on that great day.

Oh, but tonight in the light of this word, in the light of this Scripture, you might hear the voice of God in the gospel calling to you and you might respond to him and say in the words of the old king, "O, Lamb of God, I come." Blessed be God for his greatness and his glory, his incomparable glory and may we know him and praise him all of our days.

Let's pray.

We bow, O Lord, again in Your presence and acknowledge this evening Your greatness and Your glory. O Lord, how amazing it is that You should give to unworthy men and women, sinful men and women the unspeakable privilege of knowing You, of being in fellowship with You. No wonder the Apostle John said, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." Our Father, grant us, we pray, that those who are indeed Your children might revel in the greatness

of Your being and will You again, we pray, in Your sovereign grace and mercy draw to Yourself in Jesus Christ and through the gospel of the blood of the cross and the gospel of redeeming grace, draw to Yourself those who perhaps came into this place lost and without a Savior. And to Your name, O God, shall be all the glory. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.