

SPIRITUAL ASSURANCE VS CARNAL PRESUMPTION

ISAIAH 28:14-20 • TV-001B

A television broadcast sermon delivered

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH, 1975

By

HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published

MAY 04TH, 2022

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY

Zebulon Grace Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

PH: 606-631-9053

Spiritual Assurance vs Carnal Presumption

TV-001b

Isaiah 28:14-20

“Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.”

TV-001b

I want to speak to you today on the subject: **“SPIRITUAL ASSURANCE vs CARNAL PRESUMPTION.”**

Now this is an important message and I'd like for you to get your Bible. Would you get a Bible please and open it to **Isaiah chapter 28**? I hear from many people who say in their letters, “We follow with you as you're teaching God's Word in our own Bibles; we read our Bibles along with you.”

And I'd like for all of you to do that. I don't want you to believe anything because I say it. I'd like for you to see it in God's Word. *“The Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if these things be so.”*

It's not right for us to form our theological opinions and then approach God's Word. Let us approach God's Word and then form our theological opinions. Let's subject our thoughts to the Word of God. He said, *“Your thoughts are not my thoughts and your ways are not my ways.”*

So, let's come to God's Word as a little child. Let's come to God's Word with an open mind and an open heart and say, “Lord; I'm just a child, teach me. Reveal thy Word to me and reveal thy way to me. Speak to me through thy servant.”

I believe I'm God's servant. I believe God called me to preach the Gospel and I'm trying to be true to your soul and I'm trying to be faithful to God's Word and I'm trying to preach for the glory of Jesus Christ.

And I want you to turn to **Isaiah 28** and let's think on the subject of **“SPIRITUAL ASSURANCE vs CARNAL PRESUMPTION.”** There's a lot of difference between having assurance and having presumption.

First of all: Assurance is not hard to find; assurance of salvation is not difficult to find. Actually, if you take a poll of ordinary people on the streets, in the offices, in the stores, and in the home, you'll find more optimism about eternal life than you find out. You'll find more confidence than you will find fear.

In fact, for every one person who believes that there's a possibility he could face God in the judgment unprepared and be sent to hell, for every one that you find who fears being lost; you'll find ten who are not afraid at all. Well, they just know everything's alright between them and God, you know, and they're going to heaven when they die, ten out of eleven, maybe more than that.

But my friends, you'll find assurance, first of all, where you expect to find it, among the faithful.

Now John said, *“We know we've passed from death unto life; (we know that).”*

And then Job said, *“I know that my redeemer liveth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh, I'm going to see the Lord, I myself, not another.”*

Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed. I’m persuaded He’s able to keep that which I’ve committed to Him against that day.”*

David said, *“The Lord is my shepherd.”*

The apostle Peter said, *“We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.”* That’s assurance and that’s confidence and you expect to find it among these men. But I want you to note this; their confidence and their assurance was not in their feeling and not in their experience.

You don’t hear the apostle Paul say; “I know I’m saved because I had an experience. I know I’m a child of God because I feel like I’m a child of God. I know I’m a child of God because I’m doing the best I can. I go to church every Sunday, give my tithes, and try to live right, and pay my debts, and therefore I know I’m saved.” No sir! Every one of these men had assurance but that assurance was based upon Christ Jesus. *“The Lord is my shepherd. I know whom I have believed. I know my redeemer liveth. We are redeemed with the blood of Christ.”*

And Luke wrote in the book of **Acts 4:12**, led by the Holy Spirit, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

Paul said, *“Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ the Lord.”*

You know, where we find assurance though, is among the faithful. But my friends; you find assurance among the religious but lost also.

Now we know the Pharisees were religious. We also know they were lost. We know they were Orthodox and we also know that they didn’t know God. They rejected Christ. Christ tells us that. He calls them, *“Hypocrites.”* He calls them, *“Whited sepulchers.”* He calls them, *“A generation of vipers.”* Therefore, they were deeply religious but they were lost.

But do you know what they said? “One of them stood in the temple and prayed thus with himself; I thank you God I’m not like other men. Why God; I’m not an extortioner, I’m not an adulterer, I’m not unjust. I tithe my income. I fast twice a week, not once, but twice a week. And I give alms to the poor. I’m not even like this Publican. I’m alright.” You’ll find assurance among religious men whom Christ calls *“A generation of snakes.”* You’ll find assurance among religious people of whom our Lord said, *“They’re hypocrites; they’re whited tombstones. They appear beautiful on the outside but inside they are full of dead men’s bones.”*

You’ll find religious drunks who sing songs like this:

**“Build me a mansion next door to Jesus
And tell the angels I’m coming home.”**

Now that’s confidence. He doesn’t want a cabin in the corner of glory; he wants a mansion next door to Jesus. And he wants all the angels to lay down what they’re doing and stand out there by the gate and welcome him home.

But my friends; the saints of old didn’t sing songs like that. The saints of old said this:

**“Here I raise mine Ebenezer
Hither by thy help I’m come
And God I hope by thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home.”**

But assurance is not hard to find. You find it among the religious but lost. And my friends, you’ll find assurance among the wicked.

When Adolf Eichmann was arrested and put in prison; this man whose hands dripped with the blood of six million people, this man who had murdered six million, a man responsible for many of the six million people who were slain in Hitler’s gas chambers and torcher concentration camps. He was sitting there in a prison cell and a preacher came to see him. And this preacher began to talk to this man about his soul, the fact that he was going to meet a holy God. And this preacher suggested to him from the Bible that, *“There’s one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”* And do you know what this murderer of people said? “I don’t need a mediator. I can go directly to God myself.”

Now my friend; assurance is not hard to find. You’ll find some of the most wicked people on earth who feel like that they’ll be sure to wind up in heaven. And I’ll tell you this; here’s a tragic thing. If you’ll look at the book of **Matthew 7:22** you’ll find people who bring that carnal presumption even to the judgment.

It says in **Matthew 7:22**; “They shall say to me in that day, (in the day of judgment, in the day when they’ll stand before the great white throne of God); they shall say to me in that day: Why Lord; we preached in your name, surely we’re not lost. Surely we’re not going to be separated from thee. Surely we’re not going to be cast into the place of weeping and wailing. We preached in your name and we cast out devils in your name. And we did many wonderful works in your name.” But I will say unto them, Christ said; *“I never knew you.”*

What are you saying preacher? I’m saying this; that this thing of confidence, religious confidence, religious assurance, is not hard to find. You’ll find it among the faithful, of course, among the believer, among the men who know Christ.

But you'll also find it among the Pharisees and the religious but lost people. You'll find it among those people who are most wicked. You'll also find it even at the judgment.

So, it's not enough just to have assurance. You say, "I know I'm alright." Well, let's go on with the message. It's not enough to have assurance. Let's make sure that we're not deceived.

You say, "Well I know I'm not deceived." If a man is deceived he doesn't know he's deceived or he's not deceived. I can be deceived and you can be deceived and the only way we can find out whether or not we're deceived is to look into the Word, not to look into our hearts.

The Scripture says, "*The heart is deceitful above all things.*" "But if I know my heart," well that's the very instant you don't know. "*The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.*"

And Christ said, "*In the last days anti-christ shall rise and shall go to and fro and deceive if it were possible the very elect.*" That's mighty powerful word. So, let's look into God's Word.

First of all in **Isaiah chapter 28**; it says here in **Isaiah 28**, "*Wherefore, hear the Word of the Lord ye scornful men that rule the people in Jerusalem.*" These are religious leaders. These are preachers and prophets and evangelists and pastors. These are the rulers of the religious people.

"*Because you have said we have made a covenant with death.*" Now my friends, we're not afraid to die. That's what he's saying here. "*You've made a covenant with death.*" We're not afraid to die.

Most people die pretty easily. Most people don't fear death. They have some opium of religion or drugs to make them die easily but they don't fear what's out yonder and they don't fear who's out yonder.

The Lord is saying, "*This is what they've done; they've made a covenant with death.*" And go on; they are saying this; "We believe in hell. We think there ought to be a hell but not for me, not for me. We think some folks ought to go to hell but not me. We think some folks are going to hell but not us. We have an agreement with hell."

Now read the next line; "*And when the overflowing scourge shall pass through*" to whom is He speaking, the religious leaders, the people who rule there in the holy city? They rule in the religious world.

They say, "When the overflowing scourge passes through, the wrath of God passes through, it won't come unto us. It may sweep away others but not us." That's presumption. "For we have a refuge of lies but we have a refuge. And we have a hiding

place. We're hiding under falsehood but at least we're hiding somewhere. We've got a refuge."

Now here's what they're saying, these religious people; its carnal presumption. They said, "We're not afraid to die. We've preached there's a hell. We believe there's a hell and the wrath of God falls upon people; it won't come unto us. We've got a place to hide."

God says, "*It's a refuge of lies.*" "We've got a foundation on which we're building" and God says it's a false foundation.

Now watch this next verse, **verse 17**; God says, "*Judgment will I lay to the line.*" Now what's He talking about there? Let me illustrate: Most of you men have done carpenter work and you know besides a hammer and a saw and a nail you've got to have a chalk line. If you're going to do good work in building a house you've got to have a chalk line.

What does a chalk line do? You put it at a given point and take it to another given point, strike it and everything that's outside that line has to be cut off. You can put your eye on it and it looks pretty straight but put the line on it; it's a different story.

God says, "I'm going to lay the line of judgment and the line of righteousness and measure you by it." You're going to be measured by God's holiness. You're going to be measured by God's righteousness.

The line which shall be stricken is God almighty's line of holiness and you're going to see and I'm going to see just how far off we are, how far off our religious profession, how far off our standard of holiness, how far off our personal righteousness when God strikes the line.

Look at the next statement; God said, "*Also, righteousness is going to be put to the plummet (plumb bob).*" Do you know what a plumb bob is? Well most of you men do; you've got a brick wall here and you drop a plumb bob and you're going to see if it's straight.

Now your eye will deceive you. You can look at that wall and say, "It looks pretty good." And we look at folks lives. We can't see their hearts, we can't see their imagination, we can't see their attitude, and we can't see their motive.

We can't see the jealousy, hatred, envy, lust, and all of these things inside. And we put our little eye upon their religious profession and we say, "Well they're alright." But God's not going to put the eye on them; He's going to put the plumb bob on them, the plumb bob of holiness, the plumb bob of absolute, immutable, immaculate, holiness, God's holiness.

And God says; “When I put the line down and when I drop the plumb bob I’m going to sweep away your refuge of lies.” That’s when it’s going to be exposed. He says, “Your hiding place is going to be filled with the waters of wrath when I lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plumb bob.”

Now let me make some statements. I wouldn’t offend you for the world but these things need to be said. When God stretches the line of His righteousness, when God almighty drops the plumb bob of His perfection; these money-loving, glory-seeking, Gospel-butchered preachers, are going to be exposed. The true motive of men’s hearts is going to be exposed.

If our motive has not been the glory of God we’re going to be exposed when God drops the plumb bob of righteousness and the line of holiness. That’s so! And these Bible quoting, church going, race hating, compromising, cheating deacons and Sunday school teachers, who went to church on Sunday and lived the other six days lying, stealing, swearing, cursing, and cheating people, are going to be exposed.

The human eye doesn’t see these things but God sees them. And God says, “I’m going to expose your refuge of lies. I’m going to route you out and I’m going to flush you out of your false refuge in that Day of Judgment.” The overflowing scourge of God’s wrath is going to pass through.

I’ll tell you something else, the cold, pious, legalist, who called Jesus Christ Lord with his lips, while his heart was far from Christ, who cleaned up the outside and appeared beautiful to men, while on the inside he was full of corruption, excess, and dead men’s bones; he’s going to be exposed.

And the dear folks who sang in the choirs dressed in their robes of piety singing, “Oh How I Love Jesus” and then the rest of the week with their tongues gossiped and slandered and abused other people; they’re going to be exposed.

There’s a day of wrath and there’s a day of judgment coming. There’s a day, God says, when I’m going to drop the plumb bob and I’m going to snap the line and your sins are going to be exposed.

Now I’m telling you this; the hot-shot, well-dressed, Hollywood evangelist, who’s gone up and down the country robbing churches, living off the fat of the land, while they compromise the Word of God and give false hope to millions of people in order to report souls won to Jesus, report baptisms, report successful campaigns, are going to be exposed.

The song writer said:

**“I dreamed that the great Judgment morning
Had dawned and the trumpet had blown
The nations were gathered for judgment**

Before God's shining throne

**From that throne came a great shining angel
And he stood on the land and the sea
And he swore with His hand raised to heaven
That time was no longer to be**

**The moral man came to the Judgment
But his self-righteous rags would not do
The men who had crucified Jesus
Had passed off as moral men too**

**The rich man came to the Judgment
But his riches had melted and vanished away
A pauper he stood before the Lord
His debts too heavy to pay**

**The man who had no use for the Gospel
Not today; I'll straighten it out by and by
No time now to think of the Word of God
But at last he found time to die**

**And oh what a weeping and wailing
As the lost were told of their fate
They cried for the rocks and the mountains
They prayed but their prayer was too late."**

God says, *"You religious folks; you say you've got a covenant with death, you're not afraid to die. You say you're in agreement with hell. You think there ought to be a hell but not for you. You say you've got a refuge, you've got a hiding place."*

But I'm telling you this; God says, "I'm going to lay judgment to the line someday. I'm going to snap the line of my righteousness and measure you by it. I'm going to drop the plumb bob of righteousness and measure you by it and when I do your self-righteous rags are going to be exposed. Your refuge of lies is going to be exposed and your foundation of flesh is going to be destroyed. And your hiding place is going to be flooded with God's water of wrath."

Now watch this: He says in **verse 17-19**; and He said *"You'll be trodden down by it. And it'll be a vexation, only to hear the report of it, (not to be involved in it, but only to hear the report of it)."*

It's going to be a terrible, horrible, experience, just to hear the report of it, a vexation just to understand what's going on and the expose of false refuges.

But my friends, there is a hiding place and there is a refuge. Back here in **verse 16**; after the Lord says all this to the false professor, to the carnally presumptuous; He says, *“Therefore, I say unto you, I lay in Zion a stone.”*

There is a refuge and that refuge is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the stone. He’s the stone over which the builders stumbled. He’s the stone which the builders rejected. He’s the stone, the corner-stone.

He’s the foundation stone which God laid first, upon which He built His holy temple of living stones, true believers. And the true believer builds on Christ, not on his fearlessness and not on his faithfulness and not on his feeling but he builds his hope on Christ.

Let me go back to those confessions that I gave in the early part of this message. David said, *“The Lord is my shepherd. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in paths of righteousness.”* He does all this for me.

Paul said, *“I know whom I have believed.”* Peter said, *“We’re redeemed with the blood of Christ.”* The true believer rests on the stone which God laid, not the stone which I have laid or am laying. My assurance comes not from my religion, from my works, from my self-righteousness, but from my Lord.

What does the believer believe about this stone? Christ is God who has come in the flesh. Christ is our representative who faced the law and obeyed it. Christ is our substitute who took our sins to Calvary’s cross and paid for them.

Christ is our risen justifier. Christ is our Advocate, our High Priest at the right hand of God. Christ is our coming King. Christ is our life. *“When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you appear with Him in glory.”*

Who is the hiding place, Christ? Who is the refuge in time of storm, Christ? I will say of my God; He is my refuge, He is my strength. That’s the place to hide. If you want to be safe from the overflowing scourge of God’s wrath; flee to Christ. He’s the city of refuge. Hide in Christ.

If you want your building for eternity to stand; don’t build it on the shifting sands of religion, morality, works, goodness, so-called; build it on the rock Christ Jesus. God said, *“I laid this stone; man didn’t lay it.”*

The Baptists didn’t lay it, the Methodists didn’t lay it, the Presbyterians didn’t lay it, and the Catholics didn’t lay it. God said, *“I laid it.”* It’s God’s salvation and God’s Gospel and God’s Son.

Secondly: He said, *“I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone; (another foundation can no man lay than that which is laid), Christ the Lord”*

And this stone is a tried stone. How was Christ our Lord tried? Well, when He came down here to this earth robed in human flesh He was tried by the law. The Scripture says, *“He was tested in all points as we are, yet without sin.”*

Christ was a human being. He is God. *“He was in the world. The world was made by Him. The world knew Him not. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”*

So listen to this Scripture; *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.”* So Christ as a man was tried. This stone was tried by the law of God and it stood faithful, perfectly faithful.

This stone was tried by man. They tried every way. It was tried by Satan. Satan took Him upon that mountain of temptation and said, *“If you’re the Son of God cast yourself off. If you’re the Son of God make this stone into bread. If you’re the Son of God worship me and I’ll give you the kingdoms of the world.”* Christ stood firm and unshaken.

He was tried by man. They called Him a wine-bibber. They called Him a devil. They spit upon Him. They scourged Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head. They slapped His face. They plucked out His beard. They cursed Him, they swore against Him. They hired false witnesses against Him. He never opened His mouth.

He was tried and finally Pilate said, *“I find no fault in Him.”* He was tried by the Heavenly Father who said, *“This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.”* My stone, my foundation, is a tried stone.

And I’ll tell you this; I try Him every day and I find in Him my comfort, I find in Him my security, I find in Him my sufficiency and He never fails, He never fails. I don’t care what the situation is; He never fails. I find in Him all I need. *“He’s made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”* He’s all I need. He’s a tried stone.

And then God says, *“Behold; I lay in Zion for a foundation.”* Don’t you rest in that false foundation. Don’t hide in that refuge of lies. God said *“I’ll flush you out of it someday at the judgment.”* Hide in Christ.

“I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone; a precious cornerstone.” Now Christ the Lord is not only precious to the Father, He’s not only precious to the angels, but He’s the most precious thing to the believer.

We hear about His precious promises. We hear about His precious Word. We hear about *“He is precious, behold, He is precious,”* not only the precious blood but *“He is precious.”*

“His name yields the richest perfume

**Sweeter than music His voice
His presence disperses my gloom
And makes all within me rejoice**

**I should were He always thus nigh
Have nothing to wish or to fear
No mortal as happy as I
My summer would last all the year**

**And content with beholding His face
My all to His pleasure resign
No changes of season or place
Would make any change in my mind**

**While blessed with a sense of His love
A palace, a toy, would appear
And prisons would palaces prove
If Jesus would dwell with me there.”**

And then something else about this stone; God says, *“It’s a stone, it’s a tried stone, the precious cornerstone, and it is a sure foundation; it shall not fail.”*

**“Swift to its close
Ebbs out life’s little day
Earth’s joys grow dim
Its glories pass away**

**Change and decay
All around me I see
Oh thou who changest not
(Sure and steadfast)
Abide with me.”**

Oh what a sure foundation we have in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ!