

BOOK YOU CAN TRUST # 6

Open in your Bibles with me, if you would, to Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 41. And just to kind of track you where we are, where we've been, we started several weeks back. In fact, this is our sixth week looking at the book that you can trust. The first week we looked at seven reasons why I personally believe that the Bible is a book we can trust. Then we took two weeks looking at what Jesus thought about the Bible and of course his apostles, and we even mentioned the historical accuracy. And those are the first three reasons why you can trust the Bible. Jesus trusted it, his apostles were utterly convinced that the book that they were writing, they were writing not of themselves, but from God. And every time they mentioned any event historically, it has been incredibly verified by archaeology. Then we looked for two weeks at the scientific accuracy of the Bible. That's the actual fourth reason why you can trust the Bible because it's scientifically accurate. In fact, the Bible is thousands of years ahead of science. The Bible accurately talks in distinct detail far ahead of the scientific world about the realm and the laws of the universe that God put together. Then we saw creation and saw how you can trust His book because scientifically it is true and that even what God said, the 13 specific elements of His creative week, every one of them fits scientifically with what He said.

Now this week we're going to look at probably what has touched more lives than anything else from the authority of the scripture and that's prophecy. And there are many people I have met over the years, And this fall, I count just finishing my 19th year this fall, I remember studying for the first time, pastoring in Georgia, and I began meeting people that were saved by being brought to the scriptures through prophecy. Maybe it was through Hal Lindsey's Late, Great Planet Earth or some other book that made them think that maybe there is something in the Bible that they should look at. And they started searching, and through prophecy, through fulfilled prophecy, through pre-written history, as God writes down events into the future, they were drawn to Christ. So this week we're going to look at prophecy, probably the best know part of prophecy.

Next week, Lord willing, we're going to look at what I think are the five events that changed the course of the world. God prophesied 'em and every one of 'em have happened already. And every one of them verify that God is in charge.

But this week, chapter 41 of Isaiah, starting in verse 21. And this is Isaiah, who's writing almost 700 years before Christ, and as he's writing, he's building his case against idolatry. And the children of Israel were drawn into idolatry.

And idolatry is whenever we worship something we should use or use something we should worship. That's kind of a neat definition someone thought of. That means that you can worship money, and we're supposed to use money, or you can worship your job, or you can worship pleasure, or you can worship whatever.

And whenever we worship something we're merely supposed to use, that becomes idolatry, and whenever we use something we're supposed to worship... And people use God, you know, they kind of use Him as a genie. And they rub Him and say, I command you to do this and you must do that. And they kind of rub on the bottle like this. That's idolatry, too, whenever you use God, who alone is to be worshipped.

But here Isaiah is talking about the futility of idols. He says in verse 21, "Present your case," says the Lord. Remember I told you 3,800 times the writers of scripture say they aren't talking, God's talking. There's one right there. There are 3,799 other times that it says that. But, "Present your case," says the Lord, "Bring forth your strong reasons," says the King of Jacob.

That's an interesting name of God, the king of Jacob. Jacob means deceiver, supplanter, push people out of the way. God is the king of sinners. In fact, the only people in heaven are going to be sinners. None of those good people will get to heaven, because God only takes sinful people. He only takes people that know they're sinners. He only takes people that admit they're sinners. He only takes people that allow Him to wash away their sins like He did to Jacob.

But look at verse 22. "Let them bring forth and show us what will happen." In other words, He's saying, let them tell the future. He said, line up your idols. Get 'em all, put 'em out on a shelf, you know, they can't get up by themselves. Pile them all up there, put a little something behind 'em so they don't tip over and let 'em tell us what's going to happen in the future. And he listens. Anybody have anything to say?

Continue in verse 22. "Let them show the former things, what they were." Well if they can't tell the future, let 'em tell us about our origin. Let them tell us where we came from. Let them tell us what began this universe, because see, idols don't know the future and they don't know the past. They don't know anything. In fact, a little bit later Isaiah says, you take a log, he said, and you cut part of it off, and make your idol out of it, and put it on the shelf. And you take part of it, and you start your fire, and cook your dinner. And what he's saying is, you know, what makes the part you put on the shelf more powerful than the part that cooks your dinner? It's all equally inanimate and powerless.

Continuing in verse 22. "That we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods." Okay. Whoever can tell the future, whoever can tell the future... Not like the Enquirer, you know, that vaguely, you know, there will be an earthquake somewhere on the earth in the next 10 years. I mean, I can do that, you know? But let them tell to the minutest detail people, places, events, cataclysmic events, world rulers, kingdoms that will take over other kingdoms, conquerors that will conquer other kingdoms, locations where people will be born, exact details of how people will die, the exact timing of

when people, you know? Let them tell the future that way, God says, and then we'll know they're gods. And what He says is hands down, God says, I'm the only one that can do that. And it's true.

Even the great astrologers and magicians and soothsayers of Daniel's time, one of the most elaborate groups there ever were, the Chaldeans. When confronted with the king that said, tell me what I dreamed last night, they said, no one on this planet can do that. And Daniel said, my God can. My God can. So can yours this morning.

And this morning, what is the simplest and, yes, most profound evidence that the Bible offers to us of its veracity is the reality that this book, when it was written, was more than one-third prophetic. In other words, as the men wrote, as the 40 authors that were utterly convinced they were writing God's words wrote those words down, one-third of them were prophetic portraits of future events. Prophecy fulfilled is an irrefutable verification reserved to the Judeo-Christian scriptures alone. Prophecy is the missing element in all other sacred scriptures of the world's religions. There is not one world religion that has prophecy in it. Not one. They're not dumb enough to try that one. They know they can't tell the future so they don't even try.

If you search this morning the Koran, if you search the Hindu ???, if you look at the Baba ???, if you look at the book of Mormon, if you look in the sayings of Buddha, if you even look at some American cults like the writings of Mary Baker Glover Patterson Frye Eddy???, who started Christian Science, if you contrast... She had seven husbands. And in the end she couldn't even find one of them that worked, you know, I mean, she just kept turning them in for a new one. But if you look at all of them, and you contrast them to the Bible, what you find is that the scriptures alone, the holy scriptures from God contain detailed prophecy of the future.

Dr. Wilbur Smith who had about 20,000 books in his library and read all of them, wrote this down. Whatever one may think about the authority in the message presented in the book that we call the Bible, there is a worldwide agreement that in more ways than one it is the most remarkable volume ever produced in the 5,000 years of writing on the part of the human race. Why is that, Wilbur? Because it's the only volume ever produced by man or a group of men in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individuals, to nations, to Israel, to every group of people on earth, to specific cities, and to a coming one who is to be called the Messiah. It's the only book. It's the only book that talks about, describes and names who's going to come to save this world. And it was written and He was prophesied 4,000 years ago, and He came right on time just as they said.

The ancient world had many different devices for determining the future, known as divination. But not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature, which are

the two large literature groups, even though they use the words prophet and prophesy, can we find in any of them any real, specific prophecy of a single, historic event to come in the distant future. There's not one. Go through all the Greek writers, go through all the Latin writers, all of western civilization you'll not find one prophecy of a future messiah. Neither can the founder of any cult in this country rightly identify any ancient text specifying that they would come. Not one.

When I say prophecy this morning, and when I say this book you can trust because of its prophetic content, I'm talking about detailed, specific descriptions of future events. Not just a few. It's not like we found four or five, you know, that we can kind of line up. There are literally hundreds of them. Hundreds of detailed, specific descriptions of future events. They're not close calls.

It's not like, oh, you remember when the fabulously wealthy Crotaia??? went to the, to see the Delphian Oracle? Probably a lot of you remember that from history? You were sleeping then, and chewing gum, and putting it under your desk. I know you. I did the same thing. But in the old days, they used to go to the Delphian Oracle, and they'd stand in front of the oracle at Delphi. And Delphi was a rift, a volcanic rift, and there were poisonous gases that came up through the rift. And they had suspended a chair over that rift. And the Delphian Oracles would go there and be lowered out over the rift, like that. And they would smell all this gas, and as it slowly intoxicated their system, they would start babbling and speaking in gibberish or the same word most people think of for tongues. They would just speak a gibberish. And then another one of the oracles would interpret what they said from the... They weren't breathing the stuff; they were standing on the shore of the rift, and they'd say what they said. So king Crotaia??? the last and most wealthiest of all the great kings of Lydia??? was going to face the Persians in battle. So he went to the Delphian Oracle, and gave him lots of money, and said, what's going to happen? And they said, when you go to battle, a great kingdom is going to fall. And you all know the story, he was utterly decimated. And when his people came back and said, why did you let him go? They said, because a great kingdom did fall; it was his. That's kind of a vague prophecy.

God doesn't do it that way. It's not a close call. It was fulfilled to the letter. These are not historical accounts that tell us how it unfolded. They were prophecies written centuries and often many tens of centuries before the event happened, and we don't have to change one word of what they say. They utterly were fulfilled as written. That's what I mean by prophecy.

And because of this undeniable verification of history that was pre-written by God, may I impress upon your hearts this morning that the book that you hold in your hands, is unlike any book in the universe. And with that truth deeply upon your hearts today and in the days ahead, shouldn't you treat it differently? Shouldn't you trust it? Shouldn't you obey it? Shouldn't you decide today if

you've never met the one that sent us this book, that you need to meet Him? And if you have met Him, shouldn't you decide you're going to make some steps toward Him today? Because He has undeniably revealed Himself to us.

Well, when we started in this series six weeks ago, I said there were seven reasons why you should trust God's word. 1) Jesus Christ trusted it; 2) His apostles and prophets thousands of times said they were totally convinced that they were sharing the very word of God; thirdly because every time the Bible has been pinned to the wall for verification, it's come out historically ahead of those who write history. The Bible records things history didn't even know about. And when they finally put the spade into the ground, they found what God said was there. And then we saw scientific accuracy. But the prophetic accuracy of the Bible is what I'd like to share with you this morning.

1) And if you want to turn with me to Psalms 22, that's the first place we're going to start. Because this morning Psalms 22, and you might want to jot some of these down. I'm going to give you an awful lot of references. That's why there's space on the back of your bulletins that you can look at. But there are prophecies, first of all, about Jesus Christ. And this is, what I said this morning is the easier of all the things. Because most people know about Jesus Christ and the prophecies. They know about Christmas. They know about Easter, they know about Good Friday and all that. Let me tell you this that there are no less than 300 specific prophecies in this book about Jesus Christ and about His coming the first time to earth. And those who won't believe the Bible, are faced with this mountain of 300 specific snapshots that hadn't even appeared yet on earth. And the snapshots are so remarkably accurate that you know that they're snapshots of Christ.

So what do people do with that? What do you do with a book that writes down facts 2,000, the facts start 2,000 years before the event. Two-thousand years before Jesus came on the planet, it was told exactly how He would come, and for 2,000 years, the details got more, and more, and more detailed, and more of them. What do you do with all that, if you don't believe the Bible? Well, what you do is, and this is what liberals say, they say that Jesus arranged, while He was here on earth, 'cause He was just a normal person, He bought people out, and conjured them, and cajoled them, and kind of got them to do what He asked them to do. Okay?

So I'd like to show you what Jesus talked people into and arranged, okay? This is really interesting, okay? Some divine details about His first coming. And I want you to listen with me because after this list, I came to the conclusion that it would take nothing less than the omnipotence of God to arrange these details. And I don't know how Jesus did it if He wasn't God. Okay?

1) Jesus arranged to have His death described 1,000 years - a whole millenium - before it took place with

the precision of a medical research report. I mean, that's how detailed His death is written down. It was written down about 1,000 B.C. by a man named David. As the Holy Spirit moved his heart, as he put that pen across parchment, Psalms 22, let me show you. It says in verse seven, "All those who see me," Psalms 22:7, "ridicule me." What's that talking about? It's talking about the mocking crowd. You want to read about that? That's in Matthew 27:39 and Mark 15:29. And it says that the people that saw Jesus up there on the other side of the main road outside the walls of Jerusalem hanging up on that cross, it says that they just jeered Him and mocked Him. Now, who would know that but God?

Well, here's another one. It says in verse eight, He trusted in the Lord, let him rescue him. Now what did they say in Matthew 27:43 and Luke 23:35? They said, if you're the Messiah, why don't you have God get you down from that cross? They taunted and said, why don't you get rescued by God? A thousand years before the event, David was allowed by God to see Christ hanging there, taunted, with people saying, why don't you ask God to rescue you? Boy, Jesus arranged to have His death described by someone that lived a thousand years before Him. And He arranged for people to come by and to mock Him. That isn't all.

Look at verse 14. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. What's that? Well, do you remember when, what they did is they took Him and they put Him on the crosspiece, that's what they nailed Him to. And then they lifted up that crosspiece, because this part always stayed in the ground. I mean, they didn't dig a new hole every time. And I know when you watch the movies, that's how they do, you know, they go like this and like that. But most likely, they already had the cross there, the central part sticking up. And they just took the other part and they dropped it in. And so here He is hanging and they dropped Him in and so that was, because He was connected to the crosspiece, that pulled His bones out of joint. And then they nailed in the rest, His feet on the little pad that was there. But you know what? Jesus had His bones out of joint. None of them were broken. And we're going to get to that. But all of them were out of joint. How? Because of the method of execution.

But not only that, verse 15, my strength is dried up like a p???, my tongue clings to my jaws. I tell you what, people that are guillotined don't say that. People that are hung don't say that. People that are stoned don't say that. People that are electrocuted don't say that. People that are drowned don't say that. It's only someone that is in a protracted, long, excruciating death like crucifixion that would say my tongue clings to my jaws. And that's just what Jesus said in John 19 and verse 28. I thirst. And that's exactly what David saw.

Verse 16, for the dogs who've surrounded me, the congregation of the wicked has enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. That's not the way usually you execute someone. You don't usually pierce their hands, you don't pierce their feet. Jesus had to arrange for an execution that was totally contrary

to all Jewish executions, that was totally unknown 1,000 years B.C., because the Romans are the ones that cooked it up, finding it from the Carthaginians???. And Jesus had to arrange to have an execution that would match what David wrote 1,000 years prior that they would pierce His hands and His feet.

And then look at this, this one I think really takes the cake. They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. There's two different things here. One is they're dividing the garments. The other is they're gambling for something. And if you closely note what it says in Matthew 27:35 and the other accounts, what happens is Jesus' garments, other than His outer robe, they divided up between the four soldiers. But His outer garment was so nice that they didn't want to have anything happen to it, so they cast lots and gambled it away. Now how did He arrange for that? How did He arrange that what David said 1,000 B.C. would happen when He was up there immobilized on the cross? How did He talk them into gambling and not tearing His garment?

Well, here's another one. If you want to look at Isaiah... It goes Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah. Chapter seven. And I'm going to speed up and just read references. But if you want to catch this one, you can. Jesus had to arrange to have a man living 700 years before He was born named Isaiah foretell that His birth would be like no other birth ever on this planet, that it would be a miraculous, virgin birth. Now, Jesus had to arrange that, but it was before He was born. But the skeptics don't know what to do with that. In fact, seven centuries before the event happened, Jesus said that this event would be a miracle and guess what happened? It became the dividing line of all western history between A.D. and B.C. I mean, everything hearkens back to this event when the Christ was manifest. And here's what it says, "Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin," a woman who had never known a man physically, would conceive, which is a miracle. And shall bear a son, And here's what His name will be. He is named before His birth, 700 years. His name will be Immanuel, which being interpreted is "God with us."

Read Matthew chapter one. That's exactly what the angels said. Well, I'll continue much faster.

Third, Jesus had to arrange that He would be able to die with some thieves, okay? So He had to make sure it was a group setting. He also had to be buried in a rich man's tomb, He also had to arrange that He would be disfigured by beatings and through the whole ??? affair, He had to arrange that He wouldn't say anything. Right, that's what Isaiah 53 says. And Isaiah 53 tells us that every one of those events is going to take place. And I'll just point 'em out to you if you're following along. In Isaiah 53, He would be disfigured, in verse two. It says in the middle of the verse, there is no form or comeliness when you see Him. There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, and we hid our faces from Him. He is totally disfigured. Look at verse seven. He was oppressed, He was afflicted,

yet He opened not His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. I mean, the governor couldn't get Him to talk. The king couldn't get Him to talk. The religious rulers couldn't get Him to talk. He only spoke seven words from the cross. And each one had a profound ocean of meaning. It also says that He, verse nine, would make His death or His grave with the wicked. He had to die with some wicked people - for them and with them - and be with the rich in His death. He's going to be buried in a rich man's tomb. Isn't that amazing that Jesus could have someone say that 700 years before He was born? Before He was even in existence, according to liberals. And then it would happen just as He said.

Well, Micah chapter five tells us that Jesus had to persuade His parents before He was even born or could talk to them, to travel all the way to Bethlehem, which was out of the whole region they lived in, so He could be born there. How come? Because a little known prophet named Micah gave us the exact location of His birth. In Micah 5:2, it says "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me He that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from everlasting."

Ever doubt who Jesus was? He is everlasting. Isaiah said He is the wonderful counselor, the everlasting father, the prince of peace. Jesus is God, the Son.

Luke 2:4-7 tells us that Joseph did just what the Bible said. He went up out of Nazareth in Judea to the City of David called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, who was great with child. And when the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, she brought forth her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, laid him in a manger. Because there was no room in the inn.

Did you know it took the greatest emperor of the Roman Empire, Caesar Augustus, to call for this taxation and census, and he got the whole world involved so that God's word would be fulfilled.

Jesus' first coming has a lot of details. But you know the divine details about his death, listen to this, there would be 43 prophecies fulfilled in a single day when Jesus died. These prophecies include the details of His betrayal. In Psalms 41 and Mark 14:10 records that. His being forsaken by his disciples, Zechariah said that 600 years before it happened. In fact, the actual price of his betrayal is listed in Zechariah 11 in verse 12. Can you imagine that Jesus had to arrange that Judas would trade him for exactly 30 pieces of silver? Now, Judas, when you make the deal tomorrow, you know, don't go for 31 and don't settle for 29. You've got to get 30, okay? Could you do that for me? You know, I know you're going to betray me. Could you do it for 30? I'm really banking on this. You know, can you imagine that? What would be done with the betrayal money? Can you imagine Jesus had to convince those hardened religious leaders to use the betrayal money. Those greedy men they were to give away those 30 pieces

of silver so that a very specific piece of real estate could be purchased. Zechariah 11:13 said that that's what would happen, that they would use the money to buy a field. His ??? were predicted in Isaiah 50, his trial being furthered by false witnesses was predicted in Psalms 35. What would be done with his garments? From the cross Jesus had to arrange that the Roman soldiers would divide his garments into four parts but not tear his robe but gamble for it. Because Psalms 22:18 said they would do that. His death by crucifixion was totally contrary to the normal Jewish method of execution by stoning. But Jesus was to be crucified that He would thirst, that He would be given vinegar to drink, Psalms 69:21 tells us that. That they would pierce His side. You know He had to arrange that the Roman soldiers would thrust a spear into His side instead of coming up with a club and just beating the daylights out of His knees until they were just crushed and falling off, to make sure that He was dead. Jesus could never have convinced them to do that, rather they were unfolding the plan of God. His place of burial was spoken of in Isaiah as a rich man's tomb. And so it happened. But you know I think the greatest fete of all is that Jesus somehow had to convince 500 people that after He died, that they should be so utterly convinced that He actually came back to life, that they should give up all hope of comfort and all future material gain in this life to spend the rest of their now endangered lives trying to convince everyone they met that what they believed about Jesus was true. And the people they told had to tell someone else. And the people they told had to tell someone else, because guess what? Someone told me. And someone told you. And all of us when we hear this message, are so utterly convinced it's true, we want to tell other people.

Well, there are many other prophecies. That's just what the Bible teaches and it happened. These were by no means all the prophecies fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus, but these were all fulfilled in one day. Some of these prophecies depended on their fulfillment ??? the actions of his enemies, people who knew all the prophetic scriptures and had no interest in seeing any of them fulfilled in the person of Jesus, that they would do just what the scripture said. Then, too, some of the prophecies depended on the actions of His executioners, on Roman soldiers who crucified him, on those who had not the remotest idea that they were fulfilling the Bible. And they all did it just like the Bible says.

All told, the Bible says He was to be born of the seed of Abraham, that was 2,200 years before He was born. He was. He was to be born of the tribe of Judah, in Genesis 49. He was. He was to be born a descendant of David. He was. He was to be born of a virgin. He was. He was to be born in Bethlehem. He was. That he had to be moved off and shuttled to Egypt. He was. That he would be announced by an angel herald???. He was. That the spirit of God would anoint Him at His baptism. He did. That He would start His ministry in Galilee, of all places. He did. He would preach the gospel. He did. That He would be having a ministry of tenderness, and compassion, and transparency. He did. That He would be rejected by His relatives. He was. That the whole nation would reject Him. They did. That He would ride triumphantly into Jerusalem. He did. That

He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. He was. That His own friend (END OF SIDE ONE) he did. That all of his friends would forsake Him. They did. That He would be buried with the rich, that He would be raised from the dead, that He would ascend into heaven, that He would take His place at the right hand of God, and that He would exercise a priestly office in heaven. He is. Just like the Bible said. In fact, everything the Bible ever said about Jesus Christ first coming took place to the detail, and to the letter, and to the minutest detail.

Well, what does all this mean? What about us and this book that we have around and keep with us at times? The question is, do you know the one that sent the message of this book? Do you know Him personally?

It's interesting in Webster's dictionary if you look up the word to "know" has three levels of the definition. The first one is to, to be acquainted with. The second one is to recognize, and the third is to experience. Knowledge has three levels.

Some people are just able to recognize Jesus, ;you know, they see a church, they see a cross, they hear about Christmas, they hear about Easter. They just recognize him. Others are kind of acquainted with him, you know, they kind of get into it and confirm a little baptism here and there. But you know the only ones who go to heaven are the ones that have experienced Him personally.

And I think this is interesting what Webster says. He said there are two things you cannot know unless you have experienced them. He said, they are pain and hunger. He says, if you have never been in pain and never been hungry, you cannot know them. You can experience the Eiffel Tower from afar, you can look at the Coliseum from a picture, but he said you can only *experience* pain and hunger.

I'd like to add to the dictionary a third one. You cannot know life eternal until you've personally experienced Jesus Christ. Do you know the author of this book intimately, personally? Do you see the unshakable conviction of those 40 men who wrote it down? Do you have a similar unshakable conviction about your origin, your purpose in life, your destiny someday? Do you follow the unique message of this book? Have you bowed to the King? Are you seeking to glorify God in your life? Do you see that all truth, more truth, and nothing but the truth is contained in this book? God is the author and director and He has a great ending for those who follow him. Where do you fit?

I'd like to read to you Matthew 7:20-23 before I close us in prayer. This is Jesus who was asking a whole crowd of people by the seashore one day - and we stood there not too many weeks ago and we thought about these very words - as thousands of people were just milling and following Jesus. I mean, He was giving out free bread, and He was healing 'em, He was doing all this good stuff and they couldn't get enough of it. And then He preached this sermon, and guess what? The majority of them wouldn't follow Him anymore. It says in John

six they said, boy, that's enough of that. We're not going to... No bread is enough to hear stuff like that. You know, we don't want to hear that stuff. It bothers us. This is what He said, "Therefore by their fruit you'll know them. Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." That means you can go through religious liturgy and say all the right stuff at the right time. You can get confirmed, you can get anything you want externally, and say all the Lord, Lords you want to say. It doesn't matter. Jesus said, "Not everyone that says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one that does the will of my Father which is in heaven."

And you know what? That's impossible. Did you know it's impossible to do the will of God unless you have a new heart? Unless you get a heart transplant. That's what the new birth is. A new heart I will give you. A new spirit I will put within you. It's not saying the right words, it's not being in the right place at the right time. It's intimately experiencing the great physician Himself. Taking out our old, wicked, hard heart and putting a brand new one inside.

Jesus continues. "Many will say to me in that day..." What day is that? The judgment day. Lord, haven't we taught, I mean I was a Sunday School teacher. I was a deacon, I was one of the Ladies' Auxiliary. Didn't I do great? I cast out demons, I did wonderful works. "And I'll profess to them, I never knew you." You were acquainted with me. You can recognize me. You never experienced me. "This is life eternal," Jesus said, John 17:3, "that they may know Thee. Know, intimately experience. Look at the last words. Verse 23 of Matthew seven, "Depart from me, you that were iniquity." If you've never been saved from sin, you've never been saved from hell.

I went to visit one of our businessmen the last couple of weeks. He said, you want to see hell? I said, what do you mean? He said, come here. He took me over to this little tiny peephole going into this gigantic, several-story-high furnace. He said, you know what my industry is? He says, I buy the sulfur from the oil wells, from the refineries, he said, and I put it in this great big tank farm, and I melt it at 280 degrees. And, he says, and then I pump it into this big, big furnace, he said, and I burn it. He said, when you look through that peephole, he says, you're looking into a lake of burning fire, sulfur and brimstone. He said, it's liquid brimstone burning.

Tell you what, it was an eerie sight to look through that little tube into that cauldron of burning liquid sulfur erupting, exploding in flames. I thought about that. In fact, I haven't stopped thinking about it. 'Cause that stuff, if it gets on your skin, wouldn't come off. It would just cling and burn. And God says I'm going to give you endless life, but because you rejected my son, you get to spend your endless life in a lake of burning sulfur. You'll never be able to die. You'll never be able to cease experiencing the horrors of being burnt alive. Now who would ever do anything that horrible? God said, anyone who rejects the good news of Jesus will spend forever in the lake of fire.

Let me ask you this. Where will you go when God looks at you someday? Mom won't be there. Your wife won't be there. Your husband won't be there. Your Sunday School teacher won't be there. Your spiritual leader won't be there to say, oh, they were pretty good. Just Jesus will be standing there and He'll say, you never took my free gift. You were too busy or something was more important. You didn't want to ever give up your sin. You didn't want to humble yourself. And He'll say, cast them in the lake of fire.

Let's bow for a word of prayer before we go today.

Father, I think of the words of the hymn writer who said, what will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be. Some day your heart will be asking what will He do with me? I pray that this morning that you will prompt our hearts to do one of two things. Because your book is the book we can trust, and because no one can refute it, because it's either not believed or believed to bliss, we have to make a choice. I pray, first of all, for anyone that's here this morning that's never met the Savior, that they won't leave. Father's Day lunch is not half as important as meeting Jesus. How I pray that they will stop their life today, and if your spirit is drawing them, come to meet Jesus. And for those of us who have met Him, may we this morning, make a choice to take another step toward him. We'll thank you for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Before we're dismissed, I want to tell you two things. One is that Terry Devitt and his team are here this morning. And they're a group of people that love to introduce people to Christ. And every week there are those that come that have spiritual needs and they minister to them. They are men and women, they will take you to a quiet place, they'll open God's word and introduce you to Christ. Number two, if you already know Christ, and you're struggling and need to take a step toward Him, let me detail some steps you can take. Number one, some of you agreed at Christmas time you were going to read the Bible through. Are you still reading it? You should be halfway. Why don't you take that step and just say, I'm going to keep on. Some of you have decided you're going to be part of ministries, like discipleship ministries here, but you know, it's gotten warm, and the bass boat is there, and you know, you're starting to have... You ought to take that step and say I'm going to invest my life in what lasts forever, not what is temporal. Others of you have been just sitting by the sidelines, you say, you know it's time to jump into ministry. You need to do that. You need to get committed. Some of you need to start serving and not just sitting there at the highchair eating all the time. You need to start working, okay? Some of you need to make another step of commitment in your spiritual lives. You need to start saying no to some things. You shouldn't be caught dead in some of the places you go. Christians should be holy and separate from things of the world. You need to take those steps toward Christ. For some of you it means, maybe you need to get baptized and unashamedly profess Christ. You're going to see that tonight. Some of you need to do that. Some of you need to identify with this

church and say, I am associated with a church that believes the Bible, teaches the Bible, where I am shepherded and ministered to. Whatever it is, you need to take that step today for Christ.

Let's all stand and we'll be dismissed with just a benediction. If you have a spiritual need, if you need to pray with someone, if you need to meet Christ, if you need to take that step of membership or baptism, or you're struggling with some sin, you want someone to help you, Terry is right here. Just come up and smile. He'll ask you what you need. There are men and women in both the balcony and downstairs. A lot of them wear those counselor tags, and they'll minister to you. Let's bow and we'll see you back tonight for a great night.

Father, you are the one who alone are able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before your presence with exceeding great joy. And from our hearts, we say that all glory, and majesty, and dominion, and power be thine both now and forevermore. Amen. And God bless you.