

## Discernment Needed

*Radio Broadcast*

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 8:16,20

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### **Shreveport Grace Church**

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Welcome to the Grace Abounding Broadcast brought to you by the congregation of the Shreveport Grace Church that meets at 2970 Baird Road in Shreveport, LA. My name is Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you today a message that seeks to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ in his glorious person and finished work of salvation accomplished for sinners at the cross. Please stay tuned.

I'm reading for you today from Isaiah 8 and I'd like to speak with you about how you can know whether somebody that is speaking for God is truly of God. This is an important question because there are many voices today whether on the radio or in organizations around the world on the internet, many, many voices of people that proclaim to be sent of God and speaking for him but how is it that we can know for sure. Well, here in Isaiah 8, we have a very specific instruction given of the Lord as to how we can know. This is not something new. A lot of people think that the multiplication of religions is something new today. No, it began all the way back in the beginning of time since the fall of Adam. You remember that in the book of Genesis, they gathered together under a leader by the name of Nimrod and you can go back and study about this man, but they sought to build a tower unto the Lord. Now, many people may not know it but that was the first attempt to try to organize religion. The tower, the ziggurat, was a place of worship. It was a worship center and so by the works of their hands this one leader, Nimrod, gathered people together and attempted to build a monument, a religious monument unto God and God scattered them. That's why we have so many languages today because that is not how God purposed that he should be worshiped. In fact, the worship of the true God today is in simplicity.

There again, in the Garden after the fall when Adam and Eve sought to clothe themselves with fig leaves, God took off those fig leaves and clothed them with animal skins. You stop and think about it, how would you get animal skins to clothe them? Well, there had to be a sacrifice. Blood was shed. So in the simplicity and yet solemnness of that sacrifice, it depicted and pictured what God had purposed to do to save sinners many millennia later through the death of his Son. That's how God is to be approached. It's not in man's religion. It's not through his works or his attempts at being zealous for God. No, it is in the singular obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ whom God sent into this world over 2,000

years ago, who came, lived and died, rose again and is ascended on high where he is seated now at the right hand of the majesty of God on high, seated because he has finished the work. He is there to intercede on behalf of everyone for whom he shed his blood.

So that's the simplicity of the way of worship and how God is to be approached. It's not in buildings. It's not in budgets. It's not in programs. It's not in religious organizations. It's in the Son and I believe that's what we see here in the prophet Isaiah 8 where the Lord commanded him, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." The testimony, that is in Scripture always in reference to the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, bearing witness of his person, of his offices as prophet, priest and king, and of the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ alone. When the Scripture speaks of grace, it is without condition. It is God's unmerited favor towards sinners whom the Lord Jesus Christ came in this world to represent and that grace in giving of that grace is without repentance. In other words, God gives it freely.

So here the instruction to, "Bind up the testimony," that word "bind" it denotes taking care of it just as you would have something valuable that is not to be lost. It is to be cared for. It is to be carefully set forth. "Bind up the testimony," that's what, by God's grace, I attempt to do when I speak with you is to declare unto you the Lord Jesus Christ but do it carefully. He is precious. His blood is precious to God the Father. That blood that he shed is the salvation, is the justification of sinners and therefore it is to be carefully set forth. It's not to be perverted. It's not to be changed because I think that it could be stated better one way or another, but declared as it is in truth.

Now, there is much here in this chapter that time would not allow me to uncover but I would have you look in Isaiah 8, now in verse 20, because this portion begins in verse 16, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." To seal the law is to show that all of the law, everything that is written and when it speaks of the law, it's talking about all that is revealed here of God. It is summed up in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 5:17, when the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth, he said that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. You see, there is that law of God that had to be fulfilled in order for God to be just and declare righteous or acquit sinners. He doesn't just set aside his law. You see, in Adam we fell and God's law was violated all the way back there from the beginning of time and so now the only way of acceptance is through the Lord Jesus Christ who came and fulfilled the law. He accomplished it in every jot and tittle and he did it to the satisfaction of God the Father. We know that because he died but then he rose again. He was put to death for our offenses as sinners but he was raised for or because of our justification. God the Father would never have raised him had he not satisfied the law.

So all of this is in this verse, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law," but notice, "among my disciples." There are many today who will not receive this word. They are rebels. In fact, we all are by nature. It takes the Spirit of God and of his grace to reveal Christ in us and draw us unto him and cause us to bow to him in repentance, otherwise we never would. Such rebels we are. But a disciple, that word "disciple" is actually "a learner." We

never stop learning. If you ask me today, "Well, what are you learning?" Well, by God's grace and by his Spirit, I continue to learn of Christ. I am a student of his person. I am a student of his work. I am a student of his glory. I never stop learning. I pray God never take his hand off of me to where I become interested in anything else. Paul wrote that to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 2 where he said he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified. It wasn't because he didn't know anything else. He was a very intellectual man. He had been raised in some of the best educational systems of his day, albeit false religion, but he knew the languages more than the common man: Hebrew, Greek, many other languages. He says that the Lord gifted him to speak and if he had so determined, he could have gone toe-to-toe with the best philosophers of his day but he said, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

So this is the testimony. This is what it is to seal the law. To seal something is to put the authority on the law. Why was the law given? Well, to reveal the holy nature of God, we know that from Scripture, also to show that man is nothing but sinful in his nature. You see, the law is that light that once shined upon. Even the best works of man condemn man as a sinner. But thirdly, it was given as Paul wrote to the Galatians, to bring us to Christ like a mentor, like a tutor, pointing us to Christ. It was established until Christ should come and fulfill it and having fulfilled it now, we know that salvation is of him. The law has been sealed up in Christ. All of the authority of the law is in Christ's hands. He prayed that before he went to the cross in John 17. He thanked God and glorified God that the Father had given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life unto as many as the Father had given him.

So his disciples are those whom the Lord has made so. There are many today that profess to be the Lord's and yet, as it says in Matthew 7:21-23, "Many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not done many mighty works in your name? Have we not cast out demons in your name? And the Lord will say, I never knew you. Depart from me," he calls them, "workers of iniquity. I never knew you." So for any person to take the glory to themselves for anyone to assume that somehow this matter of salvation is a cooperative between Christ and themselves, they condemn themselves by that very thought. They are not the true disciples. The true disciples are ones whom the Lord has made so by his Spirit and by his grace.

But now, verse 20, when we read here in Isaiah 8, "To the law and to the testimony," so do you see the connection? "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." We're not to make excuses for preachers who do not speak according to this word. "To the law and to the testimony." In other words, why was the law given? Speaking there of the writings of Moses and the prophets, all of Scripture, why were these things given? What is the testimony of God? Again, I come back to the question with which I introduced this message and that is: how can we tell whether a man is truly speaking for God or not?

Well, look with me in John 5. Here it says if one does not speak according to this word, so I'm not making this up. This is not according to Ken's word but according to this

word, in other words, God's word revealed here in inspired Scripture, it is because there is no light in them, in other words, they're lost. I know that's difficult for some to accept that somehow a person could be a preacher and still be lost but such is the case. In fact, the case more often than what many realize but here in John 5, our Lord said this of the religious leaders of this day. Now, you talk about men who set themselves up as moralists in their generation and who preached works; they preached the law. These even down to separating parsley leaves and making sure that people tithed every bit of fruit of the ground that grew, so detailed they were in exacting the law upon men and yet they were not pointing men to Christ because they themselves were blind. There was no light in them. They were not speaking according to the word.

Again, why was the word given? Why do we have this inspired word? Well, the Lord Jesus says this here in John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." So is it good to search the Scriptures? Yes, I would recommend that you get a copy of the King James version of the Bible. I recommend the King James version because it is that translation which is closest to the original. There are many other so-called simplified translations today when you go into various bookstores but I will tell you they are nothing but commentaries on the Bible so it's called a dynamic equivalent. Someone sat down and looked at the original and then decided, "Well, it might be better said this way," and so they write it that way. But don't you think that if this is the word of God and that to the law and the testimony if they speak not according to this word that you would want to know exactly the original and that the translation be true to that? In the years that I have studied various versions of Scripture, I have to come back and conclude that this version right here is the one that you need to have. The King James version because it is closest to the original, even down to putting in italic, those translators back in the 1600s, when they translated from the original text, they put in italic words where they could not find an equivalent. You talk about carefulness and that's important because they didn't want to add to or take from what the original was declaring.

So search the Scriptures. Yes, find you this translation of Scripture. Yet it says here, these that in Christ's day had the word, these Pharisees, these scribes, that's what a scribe is, he writes. They carefully copied the Scriptures. That was the only way that a person could get a copy. There weren't printing presses back then. That's another area where people take for granted the fact that we can hold God's word in our hand today. These are being published on printing presses today but back then copies were made by hand of the Scriptures. And yet even there we see the arrogance of men because they prided themselves in being those keepers of the Scripture.

So this is who the Lord is addressing here when he says, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life," but what does he say? "They are they which testify of me." That's the word "testimony." To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God. John wrote that in John 1:1. He said, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Then in verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh." When was the Word who is God made flesh? Well, when Christ came and dwelt among us. So there is no

question that he is God and all of that is revealed here in the word. You say, "Well, why doesn't everybody that reads the word see it?" Well, Isaiah 8:20 says, "because there is no light in them." You see, unless the Spirit of God by his grace grants light to a sinner no matter how intelligent that sinner may seem to be, it's not by natural science, it's not by our own reasoning that we're going to come to know the Lord. No, it takes him revealing himself to us and that light in us is what draws us unto him.

So these religious leaders even of Christ's day who, yes, searched the Scriptures. Don't be fooled because you see somebody reading the Bible, that somehow just because they read the Bible then they are spiritual. There are many who read the Bible in darkness. Paul said that even of his Jewish brethren where the Scriptures were read every Sabbath day in the synagogues and yet he said that there was a veil over their heart. They were blinded. Why? Because they didn't see Christ as the Word. They didn't see what this word had to say of him and there are many today that way. They read the Bible as if it's a subject index. "Let me see what it has to say about tithing. Let me see what it has to say about witnessing. Let me see what it has to say about sin. Let me see what it has to say about judgment." All of these different topics. Dear friends, this word is not a topical index. From Genesis all the way to Revelation, according to what Christ said here in John 5:39 when he said, "they are they," the Scriptures, "which testify of me." That means that anybody who opens this book ought to have but one theme, one message and that is Christ and him crucified.

We need to answer these questions and have them answered for us, not from men but from the word. Who is Christ? And what did he accomplish when he came to this earth? For whom did he accomplish it? Why did he lay down his life? And where is he now? Well, we know that he's God in the flesh, that's who he is. And that he came and lived out a life of perfect obedience to the law. In order for sinners to be saved, that law had to be satisfied so that's the answer we find in Scripture. That law being satisfied by the perfect obedience of a substitute. Not our own personal obedience. Ours is tainted. Even our best righteousnesses, it says there in Isaiah, are but filthy rags, but it's by the one obedience in Romans 5, Christ's obedience, that God has justified sinners. But it took not only obeying the precept of the law, it took also fulfilling the penalty. The wages of sin is death and so it was not enough that Christ should come and just live in obedience to the precepts of the law, he had to lay down his life, shed his blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

So that's what he accomplished. But thirdly, who did he accomplish this for? There are some that preach, "Well, it was for everybody." Well, now wait a minute, if he actually offered up to God the Father perfect obedience for every single person in the world and he laid down his life and shed his blood for every single person in the world and yet not everyone is saved, do you see what that does to the person and work of Christ? It strips him completely of the power, the efficacy of saving sinners. No, the reason why there are sinners that God sends to hell is because that's their just dessert and the reason there are any that are saved and going to heaven is because of God's grace and God in his grace chose a great number of sinners from eternity and gave them to his Son and it is for them that his Son came into this world and laid down his life. That's his people. In Matthew

1:21, when the Lord told Joseph and Mary, "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins," it's an effectual salvation. His people, those that the Father had given him just as I quoted in John 17:2 a little while ago, that the Father has given him authority over all flesh. He's the Judge but it's to give eternal life unto as many as the Father has given him.

So this is the testimony. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word," you see, that's my text there in Isaiah 8:20, "it is because there is no light in them." Now, the Lord stated this clearly to those of his generation. "You search the Scriptures but you think in them you have eternal life." It's like people today that memorize the Scriptures, they think in them just memorizing the Scriptures, if I could just memorize Scripture. There is all kind of scriptural memorization programs. But it says here, "You think you have eternal life because of that? They are they which testify of me."

Now, look here in John 5:40. If you want an indication or an explanation of what it is to be without light, here it is in John 5:40. It says, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Light and life are equivalent. You can take all the light in the world and shine it in a blind man's eyes and they might perhaps if you get it close enough, feel the heat of that light but they'll see nothing unless the Lord gives them eyes to see. The same is true of life. I could go out to a cemetery right now and talk in a whisper or raise my voice to speak to the dead but unless there is life, none will hear. And this is what the Lord is saying of these religious Pharisees with all of their morality, supposed, with all of their supposed personal obedience unto God, all their zeal but it wasn't according to knowledge. It wasn't according to the truth. It wasn't according to the light.

It says here in John 5:40, "Ye will not come to me." You see, that's what it is to be left in darkness. All the light in the world unless God by his grace is pleased to reveal Christ in you, you will not come to him. You'll go to a man. Many do, they run to hear a man. They'll go to an organization. They'll come to a ceremony. If the preacher says, "You need to walk X number of feet on your knees until they start bleeding for penance," you'll find people doing that but they will not come to Christ. You see, the Christ of Scripture, they'll come to a Christ of their own imagination. There are many so-called Christs today that are being preached but they will not come to me is what Christ said. Come to him in truth. Come to see him as he is revealed here in Scripture.

So the Lord continues to explain this. When it says there is no light in them, it's a darkness. It means to be left to yourself. Dear friend, I pray that such is not your case or mine. Oh, that God would grant us his grace to see Christ, give us eyes to see him, to come to him. If he gives us eyes to see him, we'll come to him. All that the Father has given to Christ shall come to him, he says. You say, "How do I know I've been given to Christ?" Well, you'll come to him.

But he says, "I receive not honor from men," in John 5:41. That, again, is so different from what you hear preachers saying. "Please honor Christ. Please give him the glory. Please believe on him." It's men begging other sinners to do something for Christ. That's

not the Gospel. The Gospel is not what you do for Christ, it's what he must do for you. You see, modern religion has Christ in man's hands but the Gospel has man in Christ's hands to do with what he will.

"He receives not honor from men," but then he says, "I know you," and here it is, "that ye have not the love of God in you." So a person who has no light in them will not come to Christ, number 1. Number 2: they have not the love of God in them. Not only are they not objects of God's love but they don't know God even to love him. Again, the God they worship is a figment of their own imagination.

He said, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Think of some popular preacher's name today. If people hear that that one is going to be in town preaching, they'll run. They'll flock to him. They'll honor a man. But Christ said, "I have come in my Father's name and you receive me not." This message that I'm declaring unto you is not popular. It goes against all man-made works religion and for that, preachers such as myself will be isolated and ostracized but that's what they did with our Lord.

And he says, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another," so there is the third characteristic. Not only will they not come to Christ, not only do they not have the love of God in them, verse 42, but thirdly, they receive their honor one from another, "and seek not the honour that comes from God alone." Men like to scratch each other's backs, speak well of one another. They'll do that but when it comes to bowing to this sovereign Lord Jesus Christ who saves whom he will, they reject him whole-heartedly.

He says, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust." They say, "Well, we have Moses." He said, "Had ye believed Moses," verse 46, "ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" That's because Moses' writings were of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This whole book, the Bible, dear friends, is of him and about him and to him and to his honor and glory and may God grant you eyes to see and behold his Son. All of the testimony of God is bound up in him. The law has been sealed in him. As for all the authority, his, in him, the Lord Jesus Christ and we wait upon him.

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