

Our God Speaks

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 October 2012

[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Isaiah chapter number 44, just briefly with our time left. And I know you're wondering two things. If we've already had Brother Aaron share a message with us, and then now I'm going to. And no, Jared, we're not going to charge you double for the night service.

I know that's your first concern. And two, we will get out here at our normal time tonight. But wanting to hear from Brother Aaron tonight, I get to hear that update. And I just want to celebrate a truth with you in Isaiah chapter number 44 tonight, and that we have a God that speaks.

The Christian God, the one true God, the one that Uncle Sam prays about, that we have a God that's above all other gods. And I love to hear that beautiful prayer, is that we have a God that speaks and that communicates with us in this world.

And that's what was just said by Brother Aaron in the book of Acts, is that he has found that when he witnesses on the people, and that when he leads people to the Lord, that he often finds out that the story didn't start when he thought the story started.

[1 : 09] That they had heard a gospel witness, or they were studying. God was doing something in their heart. And we were reminded that the most important person in the equation is not us, but it is Jesus.

And not just his death on the cross, but what the Holy Spirit is doing in this world today. And so we just take a moment, we get to celebrate that. Seeing Aaron, it serves up very many emotions, no anger or bitterness, but it serves up a lot of excitement seeing him up here as my roommate in college.

He picked on me horribly. And, but I wanted to be just like him when I grew up. And not height-wise, but when I grew up in the ministry. And he has meant the world to me.

And so many of you in here, I could tell you some incriminating stories, but I won't. But I'll tell you just one real quick before you look at Isaiah chapter number 44. And I've shared it with some, and I don't know if I've shared it before, but one of the big things in my life when it came to get involved in missions, and then the ministry of the Lord, seeing churches started, and all of that was the summer after my father passed away, and I started to ask a lot of questions.

I got to go on a missions trip. And at the end of that missions trip, we were handing out these Bibles in the Republic of Georgia. And I know Aaron knows this story, and some other friends would. But I was giving Bibles out, and this one man followed me back, maybe a quarter of a mile or more to get this Bible.

[2 : 27] And a large crowd had gathered around, and I got separated from that man, and I was put on that bus. And the crowd, because the crowd gathered around, I was pushed to the back of that bus. And I was separated from that man.

And that man had the book of John. He had read through it so many times, he had a tattered copy of the book of John. And he wanted an entire Bible. He wanted it in Russian so that he could read it.

And as I was standing on the back of that bus, separated from that man, and all the crowd had left because all the crazy Americans were gone, and all the, they didn't, there was, people were giving out stuff, people didn't know what it was.

For whatever reason, the crowd was leaving, and I'm on the back of that bus, and I'm staring at that man, knowing that the Word of God that he wanted so bad was in my hands on the back of that bus.

And I didn't think about it in those terms exactly. But now as I think about it, God was letting me know, and through his words, he was reminding me of the fact that he speaks, that he wants to communicate with this world, and that he had a message for that man written in his Word, and that I had an opportunity to let him know that we serve a God that speaks.

[3 : 32] We serve a God that speaks. You don't, but he does, okay? Say that with me. We serve a God that, and that's a wonderful truth tonight. What Aaron does in North Africa, what any of our missionaries do, and what you do in this world would be futile.

It'd be worthless if we did not have a God that speaks. And that may not seem like a big deal to you, but apparently it is in the Scripture we find here in Isaiah chapter number 44. God takes all the idols of other nations, and he begins to put them at a judgment as in a court case, and one by one he takes them down, and he says, let me explain to you why it is that I am the greatest, why I am the creator God, and why I am above all other gods.

And we'll just look at this real briefly here tonight, and then we'll pray, and we'll celebrate, and thank God that he speaks here in our hearts and around the world. Isaiah chapter number 44, verse number 15.

Then shall it be for a man to burn, for he will take thereof and warm himself. Yea, he kindleth and baketh bread. Yea, he maketh a God, and he worshipeth it. And he maketh it a graven image, and he falleth down thereto, and he burneth part thereof in the fire.

With part thereof he eateth flesh, he roasteth roast, and is satisfied. Yea, he warmeth himself, and said, Aha, I am warm, and I have seen the fire. Verse 17.

[4 : 50] And on the residue thereof, he maketh a God, even his graven image. He falleth down unto it, and worshipeth it. And listen to this. It says, And he prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God.

They have not known nor understood, for they have shut their eyes, they cannot see, and their hearts they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding, to say, I have burned part of it in the fire.

Yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof. I have roasted flesh and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down the stalk of a tree? He feedeth on ashes, A deceived heart has turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Verse 17. He says, Deliver me, for thou art my God. Heavenly Father, I ask that you'll be with us now, Lord, as we celebrate the fact that you speak in this world, and that somebody from the word of God showed us a God that speaks, that wants to know us personally, that died upon a cross.

And Lord, in the story of the night, that we get to be the church that sends the missionary to the other side of the world, and that in the story, we're not those people that have never met a Christian. Part of that 99%.

[6 : 04] We thank you so much that you speak, and want to know us, and you have a message today for us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. So in that question, he says, why don't they understand it?

They take it, and with part of the wood, they build a God, and with the other part, they make a fire so that they can burn meat, or so they can roast something on it, and they can eat. And it only seems reasonable that they would understand that there's no reason to bow down and worship this tree, because the other part of the tree was warmed, and it was used for warmth.

Then it said here, he says, they take it, and they say, aha, he worshiped, and they pray with him, and he says, deliver me, for thou art my God. Can you imagine that picture after making that idol God, and they bow down and worshiped, and they say, you are my God, and you will now deliver me?

You know, all of us in here, we were born idol makers, that all of us in here, we were designed to worship someone, and that someone is answered in one person, and that's in Jesus Christ.

But if you had never come to know Jesus, you would be busy at making idols continually. We worship the idol of self. I know that we've mentioned North Africa tonight. It's a country that doesn't have outward idols, that Islam fights against that, a monotheistic religion, a false God, but not multiple gods, one God, but we would create a God, and we would create them in our own image.

[7 : 20] If God did not speak into your life, the God you would worship today would be the God that you created, like the rest of this world. And so because of that, I'm so thankful that God spoke, and he spoke to me.

The foolishness here, a craftsman, Isaiah 41, a craftsman compliments another man. He would make it in the wood, and then he would give it to his friend, and he would cover it in silver, and in metals, and they would talk about how beautiful their work was.

It was a tree for heat, and they would worship it. They're living in blindness. But we heard about that one man, he was taken up on, he was there learning about communism. It's almost comical that he's hearing it in Russian music, and Arabic, and communism there.

But creation, God speaks, and he says, I love you too much not to let you know. He was taken upon a mountain, and he looked down, and God spoke. And he says, God, I hear you, and I want to know who you are.

And he goes to the computer, and he Googles, and God continues to speak from his word. But he didn't go after looking for a God that he couldn't find. He went after looking at God that speaks, and the only God that speaks that has the answers for that.

[8 : 22] We are people in need of special revelation. In the book of Genesis, Adam, he falls and he sins, and he's sitting there. He's aware of creation. He knows that the garden is beautiful, because he's still in it, and he sees it.

But now he knows, because of his conscience, that he is a fallen man. He knows that there's a separation. He knows, as that man said, I don't know who you are, God, but I need to know you.

I want to know you. But then as he sits there, he has no ability to go and find God on himself. He cannot go looking for him. He cannot walk up and down the garden. He cannot go up to heaven and find God.

But our God came down and walked there, and our God spoke. How exciting is that? That's your story, and that's my story, that our God spoke. When we could not find him, and when we could not go to him, he comes to us, and he speaks.

And in the language here, it says that our mouth, that their mouth is full of ashes. That what happens, they get to the end of the day, they have spent all their money. In the next chapter, we won't look at it for time's sake, but it says, why do you spend money on anything but bread?

[9 : 23] Because this thing is not going to feed you. This God's not going to feed you. So they spend all their energy making the idol. They spend all their money on making the idol. And at the end of the day, they're so tired, it says that they eat upon the ashes, and their mouth is full of ashes here, because they eat upon it.

What a horrible imagery of people that are trying to make something to worship. It does not satisfy. It does not quench their thirst. It does not ease their hunger. But it's as ashes in their mouth.

And sometimes people recognize it, and sometimes they don't. You know, we were made to worship after our God, and if we do not let them know of a God that speaks, they will continue to make idols, and make God in his own image.

You know what Jesus tells the disciples when they say, you know, talking about paying taxes, and they say, what's upon that coin? And it says Caesar, and they said, render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar, that if you were to take us and look what's subscribed upon our hearts, you would know that we belong to him.

As that coin was rendered unto Caesar, if you look at our lives, that our God has planted something on us to know that we should worship him. If you look at the bird, you look at the fish, you can look at them, and if you never saw them in water, in the air, you could study them, and know that they're made to soar, and they're made to swim.

[10 : 34] And it said by my study partner, McLaren here, that you were meant by your very make to soar up to the heights of the glory of God, and to plunge deep into abysses of his infinite love and wisdom. Man is made for God.

How wonderful it is that that man that wanted to know after God, and God spoke to him through creation, he went online, and he heard about it, and now he's a believer, and he's moved to tears because he said, I've learned hate my whole life, and now I'm learning the love because that man recognized that he was made for God, that he was made to worship God.

As we sang, and as we worshiped and offering, as we're here tonight, do you not recognize that you're doing what we're made for? As you share the gospel out there, as you take your kids at night, and you teach them the Bible, as you talk about yourself as not the ultimate one, but as a servant of the ultimate one, do you not realize that you're living what you've been made to do?

And it's a wonderful privilege that most of the world will never get to enjoy. Their hearts have been deceived and have been turned aside. They've never, we should know from experience that love and silver will never satisfy us, and that we continue to look for something, and we will never find it in this world.

And it says there that they have a lie in their right hand. As they made their idol, and they have to carry it from place to place, God says, don't you recognize that you have a lie in your hands tonight?

[11 : 53] And an idol maker the people that are in bondage to Islam, they have no power to set themselves free. That they hunger, but their hunger is made because of the energy being spent to worship them in that, but we have a God that feeds the thousands, and we have a God that says in John 6, 35, and Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

What a horrific state we're left in if our God is like the idols made by man. No amount of sculpting or imagination can do what our God did when he spoke. Comparing the gods of this world to our God, there's many things that can be said, but he says, I am a God that speaks, and we should celebrate that tonight.

I mentioned in here, we'd be left to a God of our own imagination, but as many of you know, my wife watches children at the house, and she has this one girl, she watches named Mila, and Mila has an imaginary friend named Jake, and we only charge him half the rate because he's imaginary, but Jake's there, and she's always talking about her brother Jake who's imaginary, and she tells me that Jake is really tall, but Tinsley one day thought it would be funny, she crawled under the table, and she said, Mila, I have Jake in my hand, and she said, no, Jake is really tall, and Tinsley said, no he not, I have Jake in my hand, all right, and so they begin to argue about the imaginary friend, is Jake really tall, or is he in his hand, and he's left to the imagination of either one of those kids.

Tinsley has an imaginary friend named Jake that's really small, and Mila has a friend that is very tall, and can I tell you that you and I, unless God spoke into our lives, unless somebody shared the gospel to us, would be worshiping a God that would be made in our image.

The God that I want left to myself, the God that I want is a God who will give me what I want. He more likely, or it, would be a projection of my desires. At the grocery level, this would lead me to one of more obvious pagan gods or goddesses, one that offers me money, sex, and power.

[13 : 47] All idols started out life as a God that somebody wanted. At a more sophisticated level, the God I want will be a God who lives up to my intellectual expectation, a God whom I cannot approve rashly, judicially, after due consideration, weighing up theological probabilities.

I want this God because he or it will underwrite my intellectual arrogance. He will boost my sense of being a refined modern thinker. The net result is that I become God, and that this God I've made becomes my puppet.

Nobody falls down on their face before the God they wanted. Nobody trembles at the word of a homemade God. Nobody goes out with fire in their belly to heal the sick, to clothe the naked, to preach the gospel in northern Africa, or even in this community, to teach the ignorant or to feed the hungry because of the God they wanted.

They are more likely to stay at home with their feet up. People that make a homemade God will never risk their lives to share the gospel like the people that worship the God that speak. 54 monks have set themselves on fire mentioned the other night to save Tibet and they're motivated for something.

Can I tell you why the Christians many times are not motivated and we sit at home with our feet up? It's because we've stopped worshiping the God that speaks and we begin to worship a God that's created in our own image.

[15 : 01] And church after church in America will help you create that God. And place after place will help you. And bookstore after bookstore and one another we will help it. And how do we do it? We don't do it with chisel and hammer, but we just simply say I know the Bible is really strong in that area but I don't think that God is like that.

I know that I should be doing this but I just don't feel that God is all that uptight in this area. And we begin to just form and to mold. And when we hear the Bible say something we just take it through our filter and we make a God that is our puppet.

In America we have made God our puppet but He is a God that speaks and He roars, He's loud and He's in our heart telling us what is sin, what is right, what is righteousness. And God says to the idols tell us speak.

He tells them why don't you say something but He tells them we all know that they are liars. All through the Bible from creation we find a God that speaks. We find that He created this world from speaking.

Could have done it any way that He wanted but He speaks. All through the Bible we find Him. The story of the children of Israel starts out is that God spoke on the Abraham and we even find in the tabernacle there of all the things that could be held up they go in there and they didn't find an image.

[16 : 09] They find the Ten Commandments. We find evidence that our God communicates with us and so we ought to be people that celebrate the fact that He speaks and it's the necessity of God that speaks in this world that He is breathing life into it and He's doing something.

And Ezekiel where He takes and He goes and looks over the dry bones and all the things that happen and we get to see that God brings dead people and He makes them alive and He is teaching a lesson that we need to learn today that God when He speaks is an amazing thing.

We're in 2 Corinthians chapter number 5 and as ambassadors we get to peel unto men on God's behalf that we get to tell this world that our God speaks. Can I tell you in here since we have a God that speaks then I ask you tonight why is it that we are so silent?

They're looking for them and the world's listening for a God. It's built into them to worship a God and they're listening and they're looking and they're wanting to hear a God and until then they will continue the form of God in their own image.

You know that verse struck out to me Aaron as you know the story of my little brother and it says they make something they hold it in front of them they say aha you must be God you must meet my needs even though they made it. You know I've been with people I've been with family members and they would hold a bottle of pills and they would look at it and they would say I just need that I just have to have that I cannot be satisfied if I have that I've never had an idol in my house but I've seen that before I've seen people so strong in the addiction of that I've seen people so strong in the addiction of self that they thought I just must have this because they're forming a God in their own image and they're always having to work on him and it's wearing them out and we have a tired thirsty and a hungry world out there that is listening and they don't hear us tonight they don't hear me in this building anybody can proclaim the gospel to a group of people believers like I'm doing right now it's very easy to do but will we leave here the night knowing that God speaks will we leave here the night reminded that he wants to do something maybe God's challenged the idols in your heart and you realize that they're not satisfying you maybe you're realizing that you're worshipping a God that you've made in your own image and it doesn't motivate you that you don't tell anybody about him can I challenge you the night brother Aaron said that out there in this world he's gave personal testimony from the Bible and then his own life where God was working in the hearts of people speaking to them and then he had an opportunity to go and speak to them the words of life would you join me

[18 : 30] I thought the piano player is going to come in a moment and I'm going to say God I very much recognize that you speak in this world I recognize that you're speaking right now on behalf of yourself and through your word through radio through television through literature through creation through conscience you're speaking to this world and these people want to know about a God that speaks and they carry a lie in their right arm and today I carry the truth in my right arm that we have a God that speaks how many of you in here say you're glad that God did not leave you in a garden looking for him knowing that you're a sinner but he came and spoke how many of you would say that how many of you want that for other people here and around the world as a piano player plays let's pray Heavenly Father ask that you'll be with us tonight I pray that people will have a renewed desire Lord to see you speak in this world we thank you that we are not in this alone that you are speaking and that you're convicting the hearts of people and that we get to go out there and speak your words your living words that are powerful to take idol makers and gather them together Lord so that they can go out and share other people with other people this wonderful story this message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings thanks pretty much thanks