

## **“But God”**

### **Special Presentation**

Acts 3:17-26

Mike Davis

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**Mike:** Lord, we do thank You so much for the opportunity we have to gather this morning. What a joy it is to be part of the family, and Lord, to have our family gathered around here this morning. Thank You, Lord, for the opportunity that is ours to be able to enter into the Holy of Holies through the blood of Christ our High Priest, Jesus. And Lord, what a joy it is to be able to speak with You, and that You hear us and that You respond. Father, we thank You so much for that. Thank You so much for Your word that You have given to us, that has been preserved over the millennia, over many, many years. And Lord, we thank You for how You have given to us Your Spirit to teach us, to lead us, to guide us. And Lord, as we come before You this morning we ask that Your Holy Spirit would be in charge here this morning—that whatever we talk about, wherever we go, that You would keep us on track, Holy Spirit, and that You would bring to us what we need to hear, each one of us this morning. And so, Father, we thank You for those things.

And so we lift up to You Jeff and his wife Tab. We thank You for both of them. And Lord, as Tab has gone through many difficult health issues, we pray, Lord, that Your hand would be upon her, that You would speak healing into her life. Lord, we ask for that. You spoke and all creation happened. And so Lord, I ask that You would speak healing for her life, that You would strengthen her and help to turn her around, that she would be brought back to Jeff healthy and strong. And we pray, Father, for Your hand upon Jeff, that You would give him wisdom as he is in the midst of having to do way more than he has done in the past with the physical difficulties that his wife is having. We ask, Lord, that You'd give him wisdom in knowing what it is that You've prepared in advance for him to do, and that he would be about those things and not anything extra, not anything different, but Lord that You would lead him and guide him in those things. We thank You for him.

We thank You for Bruce Bickel and lift him up to You, Lord for the strength that he needs for today, and that each and every day You would put the right people around him as he's struggling in his last days. We pray, Lord, that Your hand would be mighty upon him, that You would give him strength and purpose even till his last breath.

Lord, we pray for Your hand upon Sandy Kohn and Kevin's family. We pray, Lord, for Your hand upon them, and that You would give them comfort and peace yet in the midst of the loss of Kevin. And we give You thanks and praise for each man here today and each family represented, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Mike,** Well, good morning.

**Brave Men:** Good morning.

**Mike:** Since I'm sure that everybody has been studying the book of Zephaniah lately, I thought it would be good to talk about it. Since everybody is into that, I thought it would be good to talk about Zephaniah for just a moment. By the way that is one of the books of the Bible; I just wanted to tell you that. (*Laughter*) Once in a while I talk about Hezekiah which is not a book of the Bible, but it's fun talking about it.

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One of the things that came to my mind recently is that I was reading through the Minor Prophets. I actually started with Daniel. Sorry, he’s not a minor; he’s one of the majors. I started with Daniel and I read through Malachi, all the way through each one. And there were a couple of things that stuck out to me.

One of the big things that stuck out to me, that really popped in my mind as I was reading that, was Zephaniah 1:7. And Zephaniah 1:7 says, *“The LORD has prepared a sacrifice, and He has consecrated those He has invited.”* That kind of really jumped out at me as I was reading through it, and that’s something that has been sticking in my mind every day when I think of that. And of course the sacrifice he was talking about was Jesus, right? He has consecrated those whom He has invited into the family. And so think about that.

Later on I was reading through the book of Acts. I got into the book of Acts and I’m kind of reading through there. And in chapter 3 it really began to jump out at me, and I got to thinking about it. So before we start reading in chapter 3 and we start at verse 17, before we start reading there, think about the beginning of the book of Acts. I’m not going to read all of it, but here is a quick update on the book of Acts, a quick look at it.

We see the disciples coming together. We see them gathering together. We see Jesus rising back to the kingdom of heaven. We see them pick Matthias as another apostle. We see them going through Peter preaching a sermon, of course with the Holy Spirit’s power coming upon them. We see Peter preaching the sermon; three thousand were saved that day, that whole picture going on there.

We see signs and wonders going on. People are being saved; the church is growing. And as we look at the beginning of Acts the church is growing; we’re seeing fantastic things happen. We see in the beginning of chapter 3 that a lame man is healed. Everybody comes running when Peter says, *“Rise up and walk.”* He stands up and everybody comes running and they say, *“Wow, he’s walking!”*

This is the beginning of chapter 3. Peter says, *“Why are you surprised at this?”* And then he begins to preach to them. When he preached the first time in chapter 2 he was talking about the prophets. I talked about the Minor Prophets I was reading through. And here’s Peter; I notice that he was talking about the Prophets in his first sermon. Then he continues talking about the Prophets in Chapter 3.

And I began to look a little bit in the book of Acts, where the word “prophet” is used 31 times. And I was thinking, well, this was the beginning of the church. We call the book of Acts “The Acts of the Apostles,”—really the Acts of the Holy Spirit. You’ll find that the word “prophet” is used a whole lot in the book of Acts. And so I thought, I’m going to look into this a little bit, and then this passage in chapter 3 kind of jumped out at me. I’m going to start reading in chapter 3 verse 17. We’re going to kind of discuss some things down through here. I’m reading from the New King James if anybody wants to switch to that.

*“And now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.”* He’s talking about the killing of the Messiah. *“But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all of His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”*

So it talks about *“all the prophets.”* That caught my attention when I saw *“all the prophets,”* as I read it. Let’s go through that: every single prophet; let’s talk about this, okay? Anyway, that’s food for thought for later. But then what does he say? *“That He told*

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by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, and He has thus fulfilled that.” What the Prophets talked about was fulfilled. And so you see there that “you acted in ignorance. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of His prophets that this should happen” should be no surprise. The Scripture talked about it; it’s no surprise, right? The prophets talked about it; why are you surprised. He says this to the people, right? And so we see that going on there. “Now you acted in ignorance, but God foretold that the Christ would suffer.”

And so we think about the prophets. What part do they play? As we think about all of the Scripture from Genesis until Revelation, when we talk about the Prophets, what part do the prophets play in this whole picture of our relationship to God? The Bible is a big book about relationships man to man, but more importantly about man to God and God to man, right? Those are the relationships that we see there. So what part do prophets play in this big picture?

**Gary Craig:** They explain what God is doing.

**Mike:** Explaining what God is doing. Excellent. Does anybody want to add to that? Yes, Gary?

**Gary Dunbar:** They warned Israel, if you go back into the Old Testament, about the time that’s coming. (*unclear*)

**Mike:** Right.

**Gary:** What’s coming, both near and far. Sometimes it’s right around the corner; sometimes it’s about world history in the future.

**Mike:** Yeah; that’s good. Does anybody want to add to that? So why do you think God uses prophets instead of speaking directly to us, like a big voice from heaven? How come?

**David Miller:** I remember that back in Exodus, when God was speaking to the people that the people were terrified. They said, “We don’t want God to speak to us directly anymore.” So God said that from now on He would speak to them through His spokesmen.

**Mike:** Yes, that’s exactly right. Okay, so the people were terrified: I believe that’s Exodus 19, right before the Ten Commandments were given. The mountain is on fire, the earth quakes and the mountain is shaking with the voice of God. And everybody was terrified, right. And they said, “We don’t ever want to hear this again or we’ll die!”, right? So when you think about “Jesus is my buddy and God is my friend,” and all that stuff, what was Isaiah’s response when he had a vision? Man, he was like “I’m dead; I’m undone; I’m finished!”, okay? Of course we see that when God actually did speak to the people in a very direct way it was pretty scary, pretty fearful, terrifying.

And so He has given prophets to speak throughout the course of history. And He tells the prophets, “Say this to the people”; we see this throughout all the Prophets. “Say this; go tell them this,” you know. And so He does this. Yes?

**David:** Even the angels caused the people to be terrified.

**Mike:** Yes. When the angels came to the shepherds, “Oh no.” And they said, “Do not fear. Don’t be afraid. Listen to us; don’t run and hide.” And so yes, we see that whole picture.

Verse 18: *“But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”* Verse 19: *“Repent therefore and be*

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*converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”*

And so we see a challenge there. The Prophets foretold it and God foretold it. God spoke it; the Prophets spoke it; God fulfilled what happened there: that Christ must suffer; that all was fulfilled. And what’s the response that we see here?

When we think about the proper response, here’s a prophet speaking. And Peter is saying here that here are all the Prophets speaking. And what’s the proper response? What do you see written there?

**Gary Craig:** Repent.

**Mike:** Yes; repent. In everything I’ve read that the Prophets have said, they don’t say, “Hey, you’re doing a great job! Everything is good.” I haven’t seen that written anywhere, all right? “Good job; everything’s good! Don’t worry about it; you’re cool.” No, they don’t say that. We usually see quite a challenge straight from God, saying, “You’re not doing so good.”

And so the response as we think about God’s word being spoken, was repentance—turning back to God; we see that. What are the three promises we see in there directly after where it says, “*Repent?*” What three promises do you see there?

**David:** Be converted. Sins blotted out, times of refreshing will come, and He is going to send Jesus Christ.

**Mike:** Yes, the return of Christ. All right, we see three promises: repent that your sins will be forgiven. You will have times of refreshing from the Lord as you live your life. And Christ is going to come back. And we see in the passage there that He has to go to heaven for a little while. Verse 21: “*Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things,*” which God has spoken by all His holy prophets.

And so we see that the Prophets spoke of the time of Jesus’ coming the first time and what His life would be like. The Prophets spoke about a Second Coming, a restoration of all things. Here it says that He has to go back: “*whom heaven must receive*”; He’s going back until the restoration, when we see Him come again.

It’s very interesting when we talk about Christianity. A lot of people talk about the New Testament. “I just want to read the New Testament.” And yet where we find our foundation, that of everything we hold to, is through the Old Testament—through the Prophets, all the way through. We can study those and be saved. Do you understand that? We can look to the Old Testament and be saved; I’ve studied through that. As we look to Christ; don’t get me wrong. It’s through Christ, yes.

**David:** It should affect our lives as Christians. I think we’re in the same boat as the people the Prophets were speaking to. We think we’re okay and that we don’t need to repent. That’s just an observation.

**Mike:** Yeah. That reminds me of last night. We have a small group that meets in my house. Last night we were going through the Gospel of John, and how we see in the Gospel of John towards the end that John, talking about Jesus, says that even though He did an incredible amount of signs and wonders and miracles, the people refused to believe.

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What did Nicodemus say when he came to see Jesus in chapter 3 of John? He says, “We know the signs You’ve done. Nobody could do these if they weren’t from God.” Nicodemus said it: “We know that these signs are from God.” And yet they wanted to kill Him because they didn’t like what He was doing; it didn’t share with their viewpoint. But yes; we don’t want to believe even when the signs are in front of us. If Jesus were here doing all those things, would we believe it? Yes?

**David:** R. C. Sproul in *The Holiness of God* points out that the natural man hates God so much that he wants to get rid of God. He wants to take over the Kingdom. Even Christians have something inside of us that hates the holiness of God because it’s so burdensome to us.

**Mike:** Yeah.

**David:** It’s like a sledge hammer, pulverizing the flesh. We just want to take it out of God’s hand and throw it away.

**Mike:** So this brings me to a thought here that I’m going to incorporate into this. God could have said anything to people: “Do this, and you’re saved.” But what He said was, “You must believe.” He could have said, “If you hop on your right foot twenty times and hop on your left foot twenty times, you’re saved,” okay? He could have said anything. Why do you think He would say that we must believe? Why does He use that criterion?

So yes, here we have Jesus. But He could have done anything. That’s the way the world thinks, by the way: that you can do anything. Why do we have to believe? Yes?

**David:** Because he has to accept the holiness of God above our own holiness, and the word of God above our own opinions.

**Mike:** Yes, absolutely. Don, go ahead.

**Don Rimbey:** Because it’s not of our own efforts.

**Mike:** Yep. Everything else would have been our own effort. Does anybody want to add to it?

**Gary Craig:** It’s one thing just to be a follower of God and His disciple. I mean, that’s not easy to do.

**Mike:** To be a follower of God and to be a disciple, yep. So it takes humility for me to believe. It takes humility to say, “I’m a human; I’m in need. I can’t do it myself.” And boy, especially as Americans we want to do it ourselves. It’s probably everywhere—around the country, around the world. But as Americans we want to do it ourselves. But when I believe I have to humble myself and come under God’s authority to do that.

**John Gratner:** Believe what?

**Mike:** Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe that I’m a sinner, to believe that I have a need, to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

**John:** Why?

**Mike:** What do you mean, “why?”

**John:** Why?

**Mike:** Well, that’s what I just said. Why? Because that’s what God has established. We need forgiveness for our sins. We need a sacrifice for our sin. We need One that took the punishment because we’re not able to do it.

**John:** Well, there are lots of things to believe in.

**Mike:** Oh, yes. Well, that’s when you see the signs on somebody’s bumper sticker: “Just believe.” Believe what?

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**John:** They’ll ask the question.

**Mike:** Yeah.

**John:** But why is that the answer?

**Mike:** I’m not sure what you mean.

**John:** Well, why is believing in Jesus the answer?

**Mike:** Because He’s the One God provided. He’s the salvation for our sins; He’s the Savior of the world.

**John:** Right. And I’m not being antagonistic.

**Mike:** Yeah.

**John:** It’s because He’s truth.

**Mike:** Truth, yeah.

**John:** Pilate, right? What is truth?

**Mike:** Yeah. “*What is truth?*” And then Pilate turned around and walked away; he didn’t want to hear the answer.

**John:** Right. I’m not challenging your assertion here. It’s who’s side are you on, right?

**Mike:** Right.

**John:** It’s the humility to say, “I’m not God.” He said that He’s “*the way, the truth, and the life,*” and that’s the only way. So submission to that—belief in Him, that He is who He said He is—

**Mike:** Yes.

**John:** It becomes an all-or-nothing proposition. He either is the Source of truth, or He’s a liar.

**Mike:** Yes, that’s right.

**John:** And so therefore everything else has to be defined by His truth, which is why they put Him to death.

**Mike:** He is truth; that’s right. Very good; thank you. Very good. So as we think about continuing with the Scripture here, we’re looking at the three promises. And we’re looking at all the Prophets again. Verse 22: “*For Moses truly said to the fathers: ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet,’*” speaking about Jesus, “*shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.*” “*Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.*” That’s the third time that I’ve said, “All the prophets” in this short passage so far; the third time “all the prophets,” all right? Speaking of the First Coming, speaking of the Second Coming, he’s putting all the Prophets in that arena.

He says, “*You are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham: ‘And in your Seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’*”

So we see the Abramic—I can hardly say that word!—Abrahamic, Abramic covenant? (*Laughter*) We see the covenant brought into this as well. It all ties together with the way that the Lord has brought it to us. So this made me begin to think a little bit more about this. Okay, all the Prophets have spoken about this. And I was remembering Zephaniah and some of the other things that I saw as I read through. And I thought, well now it’s

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saying “from Samuel to all the Prophets.” And I’m thinking: well, is there anything before Samuel?

And of course he brought up Moses. Peter brings Moses in before Samuel. So flip your paper, your notes, over to the other side. And I was thinking about this a little bit more. And I thought: well, how is the Bible laid out? And so it says “Bible Organization” on the page.

And so our Bible is not listed in chronological order. Our Bible is organized in these groupings, as you look at the back page. It’s the books of the Law—books of history—books of poetry, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. That’s the way our Scriptures are put together in the Old Testament. It’s put together in that kind of a fashion, under those categories.

Now who did that exactly? I don’t know. That’s the way it’s categorized, all right? And so that’s the thought behind why it’s categorized and set up the way it is, because you want to put it in chronological order.

That’s the next section down here. Chronological order would be listed as it is here. And somebody might say, “Well, this one book down here should be over here.” Well, I’m not going to argue those points. I am not a guy who has deeply, deeply studied each book of the Bible and where they go chronologically, although I have looked at many.

But we see that if you put it in according to the age and time when it was written, as opposed to the groupings, it would look more like this bottom section. And so you’d see Genesis potentially concurrent with the book of Job. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges and Ruth.

1 and 2 Samuel. Samuel was born around 1100 B.C. And the books of Samuel were written around the mid-900s B.C., around 950 or something like that. And so we see concurrent with 1 and 2 Samuel would be woven 1 Chronicles and Psalms, as well as Amos and Hosea. They were all written in about a hundred years of each other, or maybe a little bit less during that time. Of course the Psalms were written over a long period of time by a variety of authors, David being the chief author. There were others as well who contributed to the Psalms.

And so we see those tied together, concurrent with 1 and 2 Chronicles: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and you can read on down through. But when you think about it, concurrent with 1 Kings are Joel, Micah and Isaiah.

Isaiah was written, give or take, around 700 B.C. Zephaniah was written, give or take, around 630 B.C. Jeremiah was written around 600 B.C. or before. And so we see those kind of tied together in groupings: some of them talking about the same things, the same people, the same groups, the same situations.

Go all the way down to the end there. Look at the next to the last one down: Nehemiah. He was about 430 B.C. Ezra was about 440 B.C. Zechariah and Malachi were about 430 B.C. Malachi is the last one in our Old Testament, but it was also probably the last one written. So in order probably Genesis is correct and Malachi is correct in chronological order, if we want to look at it that way.

I have a full Bible at home. And right on the front it says, *The Chronological Bible*. It’s a Bible that’s written in order. It’s the whole bible front to back. And when you get down to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they put those four together; the heading is “Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.” They put those four together. And they take all of the

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details from all four and they put them in chronological order as close as they can, so that each story lines up with the other ones. And they are put together in order to give all the details in order as you’re reading through it; it’s pretty full. It’s *The Chronological Bible*. Anyway, that’s just a little bit of historical background.

Samuel and all the prophets since then, (and he quotes Moses who was a prophet before Samuel), when you look at the Prophets here on this page, we see that Samuel is the first prophet. After Moses and Joshua and Judges and Ruth 1 and 2 Samuel are together. And so chronologically we see Moses before them, and we go down to the rest of the Prophets. So when I saw “all the prophets from Samuel,” I thought: well let me look at this; let’s look at this a little bit. It’s just a cool way of thinking about it and looking at it as we go through it.

What a powerful, rich history is laid out before us! As we think about that book that we’re studying called the Bible, what God has put together for us ties together in detail from the very beginning to the very end. We see the prophets speaking about all these things—the coming of Christ the first time, the coming of the Messiah. There are 300-some prophecies. Some people argue over little details in that number, but there are 300-some prophecies of the coming of Christ. And how He fulfilled every one of those is what we just read about here in this passage of Acts. In verses 17 and 18 it says: *“I know you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”* Everything about Him, all that Christ was doing, He has thus fulfilled. Don, go ahead.

**Don Maurer:** Mike, I realize that this is speculation on your part. The Old Testament is such a huge book. I forget the proportion in length of the Old Testament to the New, but it’s longer, quite bigger. Why do you think God decided to use 300-some prophecies over such a long period of time—thousands of years—and then Christ comes, and there’s such a short period of time in the New Testament? You would think that He would just send Christ right away. Why all these years of prophecy and all these events?

**Mike:** Why don’t we ask God when we get there? *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Okay.

**Mike:** You said it’s a lot of speculation. And if you’re asking me what God is thinking, what does Isaiah say? “As high as the heavens are from the earth, My ways are higher than your ways, says the LORD.”

**Don:** Right.

**Mike:** So I have no idea, Don. I just know that there’s a time line. As humans look at it, we have time, right? We have a certain amount of time. And there’s a timeline that starts way back in Genesis and goes till the final days of the great white throne judgment at the end. There’s a timeline of humanity on the earth the way it’s operational. And we know that Christ is somewhere in the middle of that timeline. Is He exactly at the halfway point?

I’m going to use easy numbers here. We have, give or take, six thousand years up till the time of Christ from the beginning. And then we have, give or take, six thousand more years. Is He exactly in the middle? I don’t know. Is He 2/3 of the way through the timeline or 4/5 through the timeline? I don’t know. We do know from the timeline that the people back in the day could look forward to Christ; we look back at Christ. And we’re all saved by the One and the same; it’s through Jesus Christ the Messiah.

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**Don Maurer:** I think it’s also interesting. I’ve got to turn back to it here. Peter says: *“Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”*

**Mike:** *“Since the world began.”*

**Don:** Other people here may disagree with me. That speaks to me of a young earth; it’s not millions and billions of years.

**Mike:** Yeah, you could take that. This is Peter speaking here. And if you go back to the book of 1 Peter or 2 Peter—I forget which one—but anyway it talks about people deliberately forgetting that long ago God created the heavens and the earth.

**Don:** Yes.

**Mike:** They deliberately forget that and concoct new ways of doing things. Yes, Michael?

**Michael Rush:** You know, it’s interesting. When Don asked that question it reminded me of a passage in Ephesians. *“Therefore, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh--called the Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands;--remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might make in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, therefore killing the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy dwelling in the Lord. In Him you are also being built together as a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”*

Now I was thinking about that because you have God in His foreknowledge. And I know Don said when he asked his question that the answer would be speculation. But I think that’s such a beautiful example of why He delayed. It was because of all these prophecies over these many years coming down, and the church coming out of that with the apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief Cornerstone.

**Mike:** That’s our foundation.

**Michael:** That’s a firm foundation on which the church is built; it’s no small thing. And to the question that was brought up here—to your question why do we believe?—that’s a great question. And we as believers ought to be able to answer those things, because that’s what the world is going to ask. You can’t just say, “You’ve just got to believe.” You need to have some meat.

**Mike:** Yeah. You have to have meat to what you believe. We don’t check our brains at the door. People say that we have nothing to hold onto. We don’t check our brains at the door. And there is a lot to hold onto.

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About two weeks ago I was at a gentleman’s house. He asked me to come and look at some electrical stuff. I very loosely know this guy; he’s not a close friend. I knew of him and he knew of me. He called me and asked me for some thoughts about his house and fixing some things.

And so I walked in and we were talking a little bit. We’re talking about the house, right? And all of a sudden, he blurts out, “Well I just want you to know before we go any further that I don’t believe that Jesus is the Son of God.” Out of the blue he said that to me. And I said, “Oh, okay. Where did that come from?” (*Laughter*)

So he said to me, “I’ve been studying these things. For a while I’ve been looking into this stuff.”

And so I said to him, “Okay. Did you ever believe that Jesus was the Son of God?”, because of the way he said it.

And he said, “Well I grew up in the church. At fifteen I went on a missions trip. I’ve done a lot of different things. I was in my early 20s when I realized that Jesus is not God.”

And I said, “Oh, okay.” So we went back and talked about the house. I didn’t respond, all right? We went back and talked about the house a little bit more. And the other thing he said when he said, “I don’t believe Jesus is the Son of God anymore,” was, “It was a rough day when I lost heaven, because I no longer believe that Jesus is God.”

Think about that. I mean, that impacted me so strongly that I couldn’t even respond at that moment. That’s why we just went back to talking about the house. (*Laughter*) And so just before I walked out the door I said, “You know, there’s something I have to bring back to you. You said you lost heaven and it was a rough day.” He said, “Yes.”

And I said, “You know, I’d love to sit down with you and have a discussion to see what you believe and to just ask you who Jesus is to you at this point. Can we do that sometime? I’m not going to jump on your forehead and say, ‘Repent, you sinner!’ I would just like to have a discussion where you talk about what you believe. And a discussion means that I get to talk too about what I believe. But it’s going to be a quiet discussion. Would you be up to that?” And he said, “Absolutely.”

And so we got together. I invited him to my house for breakfast and I cooked him breakfast. We had breakfast together and I said to him, “As I told you, I was going to ask you what you believe about Jesus. So what do you believe about Jesus?”

And he said, “Well, He was a good guy. He was a rebellious guy in the culture. He was trying to shape the culture back to where it needed to be because He could see that they weren’t doing what they needed to do.” He went into this thing about how he believed that Jesus was a good guy. He didn’t say “God”; he didn’t say “Messiah”; he didn’t say anything like that. Jesus was a good guy.

And so I let him go. I learned that you don’t argue with people at all; you have a discussion. And so after he was all done I said, “Can I tell you what I think about Jesus?”

He said, “Sure; go ahead.”

And I said, “Well, I believe that He was the Son of God. I believe that He is our Savior. He died on the cross for my sins. I needed a Savior who was a sacrifice big enough to cover my sin. And so I believe that He is definitely the Son of God. And I’ll back up why I think that.”

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And I said, “You know, He fulfilled 315 or more prophecies in the Old Testament proving that He was who He said He was.” And I went through it and I began to really talk about what He did to accomplish all of that. And so I went through it and it was completely air tight. Because I went through the Prophets, because I went through all of that, you can prove that Jesus is who He said He was. It’s not because He was this good guy who did great things, but what did He do? He accomplished exactly what Peter is talking about here.

And so I went through that. And he finally said, “Okay. The truth, actually, is that I’m really an atheist.” And I said, “So you don’t believe God exists.”

He said, “How can I believe in a God that has an ego trip going on? How can I believe in a God where all I hear is that God is love? Yet God has this ego thing. ‘You’ve got to obey Me or you’re going to hell.’”

I said, “Tell me what your church background is.”

So he said, “Pretty hard core Baptist and a little bit of Presbyterian.”

And I said, “All right.” I know that his family was broken. This guy is about 55, by the way. I know that his family was very broken growing up, a very broken situation. So anyway he tells me that he doesn’t want to serve this God who is an angry God who wants to crush everybody.

And here’s what I said to him. I said, “Oh, I agree with you. I don’t want to serve a God like that either.” And he looked at me and he said, “You agree with me?”

I said, “Yes, because that’s not the God I serve, not the one you’re talking about. You’re trying to describe God with one or two words. Imagine if I took you into a crowd of people and I introduced you with one word. ‘This is so-and-so, and he is love, or he has an ego trip.’ Would one word describe you? Is there any one word that I could use to describe you?” He said, “No.”

I said, “Scripturally, as far as we can tell, so far there are at least 28 attributes of God; 28 different words to describe Him. And you’re using one. You’re not serving the God I’m serving when you just describe Him by one word.” (*Unclear*) And I said, “Can we get together again and talk about God and who He actually is?” And he said, “Yes, I’d like that.” So I started with the Prophets, and the composition, and Jesus in order to seek him out. Yes, Don?

**Don Maurer:** I think it would be interesting sometime when you get together. When he said, “Look, I believe that Jesus was good,” well, if you believe that Jesus was good with the claims that He made if they’re not true, then He’s no longer good, is He?

**Mike:** He’s a lunatic and a liar.

**Don:** Yeah.

**Mike:** I didn’t go there, Don, because that wasn’t the real question in his heart.

**Don:** Right.

**Mike:** The real question in his heart was is there even a God? Does God exist? So anyway I’m just throwing that out there.

**Don Maurer:** Another thing.

**Mike:** Yeah?

**Don:** A couple of years ago I came across a website. Actually it was Paul Deffenbaugh who sent it to me. It was a website by an atheist. His testimony was very similar to the person that you were talking to. He was raised in a Christian home by very godly parents.

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He had a very good home and a very good family background, but he’s an atheist. And what he said was that it was depressing for him to lose heaven, with the realization that he doesn’t believe that he’ll see his family again, or whatever. But he said that it’s reality, and we just have to deal with it.

**Mike:** Yup; that’s right. So listen; we have five minutes left. What I want to do is to have us read a couple of these. Michael, do you want to do Isaiah 7:14?

**Michael:** Sure.

**Mike:** Let’s see. Don in the back there, do you want to do Isaiah 9:1-2? Okay, let’s see. Jim Britsch, do you want to do Daniel 7:13 and 14? And then Harvey, how about doing Malachi 3:1?

**Harvey Hinch:** Okay.

**Mike:** So go ahead and start, Michael, with Isaiah 7:14. Everybody just listen; you can join in on these if you want to with your Bibles. Read on.

**Michael:** Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14: *“Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*

**Mike:** Okay, Don; Isaiah 9:1-2.

**Don Rimbey:** *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past He humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future He will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by way of the sea, along the Jordan.”*

**Mike:** Where did Jesus come from? Out of Galilee. Okay, let’s see: Daniel 7:13-14. Jim?

**Jim:** *“in my vision of the night I looked. And there before me was one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given glory and sovereign power. All peoples and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”*

**Mike:** Okay, there you go. *“One like the Son of Man.”* And when Jesus called Himself *“The Son of Man,”* it was a direct connection to Daniel chapter 7. And one of the reasons the Pharisees hated Him was because He used that term, because He was making a direct connection to those prophecies. All right, let’s see: Malachi 3:1.

**Harvey:** Malachi 3:1: *“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the LORD whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. And the Messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts.”*

**Mike:** Okay. I just have a very short list here. We could go through hundreds of Scriptures pointing to our Messiah; it’s an amazing thing. It’s an anchor, guys; it’s an anchor to hold onto. I have one more. Everybody go to Luke chapter 24, verses 25-27. This is Jesus speaking. He is on the road to Emmaus. This is after He had risen from the dead. And the two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus. And He joins them and begins to talk to them. They don’t realize who He is right away.

And He says to them, “What’s going on?”, because they looked so sad. “What’s going on?”

And they say, “Oh, man! Haven’t You been around?” And these two guys tell Jesus all these things that have happened, and “we don’t know what to do!”, right? “The tomb was

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empty. The women went, but they didn't see Him.” Anyway, there's this big narrative going on.

And in verses 25, 26 and 27 Jesus says to them: *“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the Prophets have spoken!”* There we go again: *“all the Prophets have spoken.”* *“Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?”* *“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”*

All right; there we see it again. It's all over the place, guys. Like I said before, just in the book of Acts alone I think there were 31 places where the word “prophet” was used—just in the book of Acts, all right?

Sometimes we need an anchor to throw out and hold onto. When life gets tough, or when life is going too easy—either side of that coin—sometimes we really need something to grab onto and hold onto. We have not checked our brains at the door when we go in to worship God. We are worshiping God because of who He is, because of what He's done. Over thousands of years He gave us an incredible anchor to hold onto, with all of the prophets speaking, and all of those prophecies coming true in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And guess what, guys. He has prophesied to come again.

**Brave Man:** Amen.

**Mike:** He will come, all right? He will come. I'm not giving you a date and a time. *(Laughter)* Because then I'd be out there, right? And I don't have a date and a time.

**Michael:** You'd be a false prophet.

**Mike:** I'd be a false prophet, right. All I'm saying to you is that we have an incredible anchor to hold onto. What has already happened and what is yet to come will happen. Everything will be fulfilled. And we have an anchor that is amazing in Jesus Christ, in all the Prophets and in what God had to say. A quick one, Don; go ahead.

**Don Maurer:** How would you respond to the atheist who says, “Well, you need an anchor; you need a crutch. I don't.”

**Mike:** That's a whole other story. And I'm not even going to go there because we're out of time. *(Laughter)* But we can talk a long time on those things. But don't talk about that. Think about yourself, Don, and the anchor that you need.

**Don:** Amen.

**Mike:** All right. And think about it, guys; let's think about ourselves and the anchor that we need, and as we talk to others, how we have an incredible story to tell. And whether they believe it or not, it's not up to us. It's up to us simply to bring the truth out.

All right. And so as we wrap up here, we can talk for days about what's in here. But I want you to have confidence in who your God is, and confidence in who you are in Christ; not who you are by yourself but who you are in Christ. And once you have the confidence, as you go out of your home and go out of your doors—or even in your homes—that we can lead others towards this God that we serve, an amazing God.

All right, let's pray. So Lord, we thank You so much for Your word. Thank You for that anchor that we have that is truly amazing from the beginning of time, that every prophet who has spoken has spoken words from You, because Lord, frankly we can't handle it if You speak directly to us, showing Yourself as to who You are, with the mountain shaking, and with the smoke, the fire, a voice booming down. Lord, the people who were there at that time said, “Please, don't ever do that again.” And You were gracious, and You have

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spoken through prophets ever since. So Lord, help us to be quick to listen to the Prophets. Help us to be quick to listen to what Jesus said. Help us to be quick to believe, to believe in Your one and only Son, to believe that we are in need. And You have provided a Savior. Help us, Lord, not just to believe those things for ourselves, but that we would care enough about people around us that we would be diligent to pray for others, taking Your word to other people wherever we go. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)