

LET THE TRUE GOD BE YOUR GOD!

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Isaiah 44:6-8

It would have been something to have been there on Mt. Carmel 29 centuries ago—to watch Elijah confront 450 prophets of Baal! Imagine Elijah challenging the people to follow the one, true God. Think about the prophets of Baal building their altar, slaughtering the sacrificial animal, dancing around and cutting themselves with knives as they cried out to their false god - All in an attempt to secure fire from heaven. You can almost hear Elijah mocking them. Elijah then builds an altar to Yahweh, slaughters the animal, digs a trench around the altar, and orders four pots to be repeatedly filled with water and poured over the altar? Imagine the amazement of those onlookers when Elijah calls upon the LORD for fire and God responds immediately with fire from heaven! What a sight, what a victory for Elijah and for Yahweh!

With a victory like that, as decisive as it was, you would think it would end the conflicts between the true faith and misbelief—between the one, true God and all those false gods of this world. But we only need to look to the next day to see Elijah's running for his life, wicked Queen Jezebel issued a warrant for his death.

Jesus Christ has won the victory over sin, death and the devil for us, but the battles between truth and falsehood still go on, and will, until that great Last Day! There are the obvious battles raging within our society between those who claim to be atheists and those who believe in God. Consider, the ban on the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools, because of its reference to God; or the ongoing dispute regarding evolution and creation, and whether either or both should be taught in public schools. Consider also the confusing religious world in which we live today. Think about the various religious events that have been held ever since 9/11 ten years ago. Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Christians, and others all stood on the same platforms in the Yankee Stadium and within numerous religious institutions all invoking "God." But which "God" were they invoking? Some would say they were all invoking the same "God," while others would say they were all addressing different, but equal gods. Most people would claim you cannot call someone else's god is an idol—a false god. For that would be politically incorrect! Yet, the Bible is very clear when it reveals the name and nature of the one, true God! He is not Buddha, nor Allah, nor the Christ-less God of the new age Jews, nor any other false gods. They are just like the ancient god Baal who exists nowhere outside of the mind of misguided followers. My dear fellow redeemed, listen carefully, there is only one, one true God, and I would urge you today—LET THE TRUE GOD BE YOUR GOD!

I. WHO IS THE TRUE GOD?

Who is the true God? Isaiah tells us that He is the LORD, He is *“the First and the Last!”* Isaiah writes, *“Thus says the LORD... I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.”* Our God can be no clearer. He is the “LORD”—the God who knows us intimately, because He created us. And cares about us personally, for He promised to send His Son Jesus to save our individual souls! He is the “First”—whether we are talking about time, or prominence, or power, or place, or dignity! He is not the “First” of many, in the sense that there are many gods, among whom He is first. No, He is the “First” as well as being the “Last,” which means He is the only God. As a result of that, the LORD says, *“Beside Me there is no God!”*

Now this is completely contrary to our popular culture. One of the reasons why we oppose membership in the Masonic Lodge, for instance, is because the lodge describes God as *“the nameless God of one hundred names.”* This statement implies that God has not really revealed Himself, and, therefore, we are free to form our own conception, “our own beginnings” of God, which ultimately means that all gods, no matter what they are called, are really the one and the same. That would be like telling Elijah that the “LORD” and Baal were one in the same god!

Our God, the one true God, has revealed Himself clearly to us in the Bible. He is the **“LORD...the First and the Last!”** Interestingly enough, as stated on our bulletin covers, Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation says, **“I am coming quickly,... I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last”** (Revelation 22:12-13). In this way Jesus identifies Himself directly with the LORD God! You cannot have two "firsts" and two "lasts!" Therefore, our God reveals Himself to us as our Father, the Creator, but also as Son, our Redeemer, and as Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier. The Bible teaches the one true God is a Trinity, which means that all other gods in this world are false gods! They are counterfeits and false gods, leading people to eternal damnation!

“Now wait a minute,” this post-modern world says, “You can’t say that! You’re entitled to your opinion and beliefs, but you can’t say someone else’s beliefs are false!” But my dear friends don’t be deceived by such claims! Such assertions rest upon the premise that there is no absolute truth, and that the opinions of all people are equally valid, but such thinking is nonsense. Absolute truth does exist, especially with the spiritual and the moral, and all opinions are not equally valid. If I were to say that in my opinion there are no laws of nature, would you grant that my opinion is valid? If I were to insist, that the acting President of the United States is former Vice-President Dick Chaney, would you accept such nonsense, or would you correct me with the true facts of the situation? Even so, when it comes to the true identity of God, let us recognize that God could certainly reveal Himself to mankind, and this He has done so through the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ. The full intention of this is to bring blessing and salvation into our lives. Therefore, **LET THE TRUE GOD BE YOUR GOD!** He is the LORD, Who is **“the First and the Last!”**

II. SECONDLY, HE IS THE KING OF ISRAEL

Secondly, He is the "King of Israel," Who controls all things! Isaiah writes, “Thus says...the King of Israel: **“Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen”** (Isaiah 44:7). The true God is the “King of Israel.” A king rules and controls His kingdom and the subjects of His kingdom. Even so God rules in this world and over this world for the ultimate benefit of His children.

God asks, **“Who can proclaim as I do?”** Who could proclaim, as God did at the beginning of time, **“Let there be light”** or **“let dry land appear”** or **“let the earth bring forth all living creature according their kind”** and actually have it be so, and yet our God did! God says, **“I appointed the ancient people.”** Who could destroy the earth’s entire population, while maintaining human life by preserving one family? Yet God did at the time of Noah! Who could take one man and establish His family and preserve that family entirely in accordance with His promise? Yet our God did when He chose Abraham. Who could look into the future and predict in precise details the affairs of numerous future nations in the world’s history, yet that is exactly what we find in Daniel 11, when God through Daniel outlined the history of two ancient kingdoms in great detail four hundred years before it happened.

The true God—the “King of Israel” does control all things even today! Jesus tells us, **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”** (Matthew 28:18). Jesus is at the right hand of God to rule over us (Ephesians 1:20). That truth should bring us comfort and fill us with holy awe and fear. It means that we can walk in joy and confidence as we carry out our callings in this world. Jesus promises that He is with His believers, and that no one shall be able to **“snatch them out of His hands”** (John 10:28). He assures us that **“all things work together for good to those who love God, according to His purpose”** (Romans 8:28). He promises you, **“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”** (Revelation 2:10).

The fact that our Savior God is our King should fill us with holy awe and fear. Because He warns us not to be deceived into believing that we can continue in sin and not suffer His judgment. Our God is both a loving and a just God. He promises to forgive those who repent of their sins, but He also promises to punish those who refuse to repent. There are individuals who claim the name of Christ, but who live their lives in anything but a repentant Christian manner. They commit fornication and adultery, do drugs, get drunk, steal, gossip, cause dissensions and divisions, they use God’s name in vain, in general carry on as if God were unimportant and ignorant of their actions. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, do not mock God, but rather **LET THE TRUE**

GOD BE YOUR GOD! He is, after all, the "King of Israel," Who controls all things! Let us live the faith we confess; even as we serve the God who embraces us through His Son!

III. FINALLY, LET THE TRUE GOD BE YOUR GOD

Finally, LET THE TRUE GOD BE YOUR GOD, for "His Redeemer" is the "Rock" upon which we stand! Isaiah writes, “*Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! IS there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any*” (Isaiah 44:8). God, our blessed heavenly Father, sent His Son, Jesus, to be our “Redeemer!” God bought our souls back from sin and death, not with money nor with gold or silver, but with, as the Scriptures says, “*with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus came into this world to be the “*light of the world,*” but unfortunately, the world would rather walk in its own darkness than to walk in the light of Jesus Christ (John 8:10; 3:19). How sad, for only in Jesus do we find the light that leads to life everlasting!

God declares that “His Redeemer” is our “Rock!” We need a solid basis for our lives in this world, for we will all face all sorts of serious challenges both to our faith and our lives. To put our trust in men is foolishness, for all men are like “grass”—one breath away from death and the grave according to Isaiah 40:6. To put our trust in riches is anything but certain. Consider the huge losses being endured these days. Riches are but fleeting and fortunes can dissolve away. To place our faith in ourselves, our own good works and efforts is simply arrogance fueled by ignorance. For even our good works are but “filthy rags” in the eyes of an all-seeing and all-knowing God (Isaiah 64:4).

No, the true and solid foundation we need is found in our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the “Stone” rejected by builders of this world, but the Father has made Him the “Cornerstone” of the true faith leading to eternal life (1 Peter 2:7). Place your trust in Him, and you will never be ashamed (Psalm 31:1). Call upon Him, and He will deliver you in your distress (Psalm 50:15). Humble yourself before Him, and in due time you will be exalted (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). Build your faith and life upon His precious words, for they will ever remain ever true (John 10:35), and through the Word God’s Spirit will sanctify your heart and life (John 17:17). My dear friends, LET THE TRUE GOD BE YOUR GOD, for He the true God but let this be true for you as well! For in Christ Jesus only are you redeemed, you are made whole and you have eternal life. For only through His cross and by His blood are all your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for Jesus sake and in Jesus name your rock and redeemer, Amen and Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, AMEN!