

# The More Sure Word

by Chuck Smith

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*The Bible is the more sure word of prophecy, which is a demonstration of God's transcendence, power, and sovereignty, and it gives us confidence in his word and promises.*

**Duration:** 33:05

**Scripture:** Isaiah 41:22-23, Isaiah 44:6-8, Isaiah 44:24, Isaiah 46:9-10, Ezekiel 36:35-37

**Topics:** "Word Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Skip leads a study on Isaiah 44 through 46. He highlights the richness and significance of these chapters and expresses his excitement to delve into them. The sermon focuses on Isaiah 44:6-8, where God declares Himself as the first and the last, the only God, and the one who declares and sets things in order. Pastor Skip emphasizes how God has fulfilled His promises in history, such as the transformation of barren lands in Israel into fertile fields. He also discusses the prophecy of Cyrus, a pagan king who would conquer Babylon and fulfill God's plans for Jerusalem's restoration.

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## Transcript

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for sending your son Jesus Christ to take our sin and to die in our place for our sin. We thank you for the wonderful promises that he has given to us, that he's gone to prepare a place for us that we might be with him in his kingdom.

We thank you, Lord, for the promise of the Holy Spirit and the help of the Holy Spirit in the understanding of your word. We thank you for the peace that you have left with us. We thank you, Lord, that you told us things in advance so that when they come to pass, it might be proved to us that you are God alone.

Beside you, there is no God. We pray, Father, that even this day, as we turn to the scriptures, that you would open now our hearts to understanding and to the receiving of your truth in Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated.

Tonight, Pastor Skip is going to lead us in a study from Isaiah 44 through 46. These are some really exciting chapters. I'm looking forward to tonight and hearing Pastor Skip as he expounds on these great chapters.

He's done an excellent job on difficult chapters. I'm anxious to see what he does with these because they are so rich and so full. So, looking forward to this evening and our continued study through the Bible

tonight, Isaiah 44 through 46.

This morning, we'd like to look at chapter 44, verses 6 through 8, as we read, Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first and the last. Beside me there is no God. And who as I shall call and shall declare it, and set it in order, since I appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming and shall come, and I let you see them, or I show them to you.

Fear not, neither be afraid. Have not I told thee from that time and have declared it? You are even my witnesses, that there is no God beside me. Yea, there is no God, I know not any.

One of the strongest proofs of the existence of God, and that he transcends time, and that the Bible is God's revelation of himself to us, is found in the 100% accuracy of Bible prophecy. Back in the 41st chapter of Isaiah, God challenged the false gods to prove their existence by bringing forth their strong evidence. God said, Show us what will happen.

Tell us what's going to happen in the future. Declare to us future events that we might know that you are really gods. Now here in our text, this is exactly what the Lord has said he is going to do, to show that he is the true God, the only God, beside him there is no God.

He said, Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, the Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first and the last, and beside me there is no God. Now in verse 24 of this chapter, he begins to speak of events that will take place in the future, so that when these events did come to pass, the people would know that God is truly God, transcends time, because he speaks of things in the future with perfect accuracy and in great detail. The Bible does declare that God is transcendent.

He transcends time and space. A very easy thing for God to show that he is eternal, that he transcends time. You see, time is related to our solar system.

It deals with the number of days it takes our earth to make a rotation around the sun. It deals with the number of hours it takes our earth to rotate on its axis. And so our days and months and years are related to the solar system in which we live, the revolving of the earth around the sun and revolving on its axis.

But God lives outside of space. He lives in what is known as the eternal domain. He transcends time so that with God there is no time.

Now he can prove that very easily. All he has to do is tell you with detail of events that will take place at a future date so that when these events do take place, that you will then know that he is a God who transcends time. That's what he's going to do as we begin reading in verse 24.

Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, he that formed you from the womb, I am the Lord that made all things, that stretched forth the heavens, that spread abroad the earth, that confirmed the word of his servant and performed the counsel of his messengers, that says to Jerusalem, you will be inhabited to the cities of Judah, you shall be built and I will raise up the ruined places. That says of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all of my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, you shall be built and to the temple your foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held to subdue the nations before him.

I will loose the loins of kings, I will open before him the two levied gates and the gates shall not be shut. And I will give to you the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of the secret places that you may

know that I, the Lord who has called you by your name, am the God of Israel for Jacob, my servant's sake and for Israel, my elect. I have even called you by your name.

I've surnamed you, though you did not know me." Now, the miraculous aspects of this particular prophecy is that they were made a hundred and seventy-six years before the event took place. They were made by Isaiah in the year of around 722. And it was not until the year 536 that these prophecies were fulfilled.

The amazing thing is the prophecy was made over a hundred years before Cyrus was even born. But the Lord calls him by his name and calls attention to the fact that I am calling you by your name, that you may know that I am God, the God of Israel. Now, the prophecy declares that Cyrus would be the one who would allow the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after its destruction by the Babylonian invasion.

At the time Isaiah made this prophecy, the temple was still standing. It was there in all of its beauty and glory as had been restored under Hezekiah's reign. But now the prophecy is that it's going to be rebuilt.

This is before it was destroyed. And we know that the destruction took place during the Babylonian invasion. But a hundred and seventy-six years later, the temple has been destroyed and has been lying in ruins.

Cyrus, the king of the Medes and the Persians, is now ruling. And we do read this historic account concerning Cyrus. Thus saith Cyrus, the king of Persia, Jehovah, the God of heaven, has given me all of the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

That's the decree. We read, also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and he had put them in the house of his gods. Even those did Cyrus, the king of Persia, bring forth by the hand of the treasurer, and he numbered them unto Shezhebazar, the prince of Judah.

And they gave money also to the masons and to the carpenters, and food and drink and oil unto those of Sidon and Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the Sea of Joppa according to the grant that they had received from Cyrus, the king of Persia. So the name, the mission, told in advance over a hundred years before Cyrus was born, God named him. So when this couple in Persia were pregnant and they were discussing what shall we call our son, you know, our child.

Well, if it's a boy, call him John. No, I don't like that name. Well, how about Cyrus? Oh, that's great.

Let's call him Cyrus, you know. Directed by God, named him in advance. The Lord said that he would loose the loins of the kings.

Again, reading from the record, Belshazzar the king, king of Babylon, made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. He drank wine before the thousand, and Belshazzar, while under the influence of the wine, commanded that they bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, which was in Jerusalem, and that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was in Jerusalem, and the king and his princes, his wives, his concubines, they drank from them.

They drank wine, and they praised the gods of gold and silver, brass and iron, wood and stone. And in the same hour, they came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the

plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king turned pale.

His thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. I will loose the loins of kings, God said to Cyrus. And thus it happened to Belshazzar.

And you think, well, that's just such a minor little thing. The guy's knees began to shake because he's so scared. And yet, minor details that the Lord gives us of what he will do for Cyrus in helping him to conquer the great Babylon.

The Lord said that he would open to him the two levied gates, and the gates will not be shut. Now, when Cyrus took Babylon, according to a historian, Herodotus, he wrote this of Cyrus's conquering of the city of Babylon. This is out of the historic records of Herodotus.

It so happened that in the scene of revelry, which prevailed in Babylon when Cyrus took the city, that the gates that were in the city that led from the streets to the river were left open. The city was not only a closed with walls, but there were walls within the city on each side of the river Euphrates with gates by which the inhabitants of the city had access to the water of the river. Had not these gates been left open on that occasion, contrary to the usual custom, the Persians would have been shut up in the bed of the river and could all have been destroyed.

It also happened in the revelry of that night that the gates of the palace were left open so that there was access to every part of the city. Herodotus goes on to say, if the besieged had been aware of the designs of Cyrus or had discovered the project before its accomplishment, they might have affected the total destruction of these troops. They only had to secure the little gates that led to the river to have manned the embankments on either side, and they might have enclosed the Persians in a net from which they could not have escaped.

And yet here it is, 176 years before it happens, God declares, I will open to you the levied gates so that when Cyrus came in, the soldiers who guarded the gates were so drunk, they didn't close them. And thus the gates were left open and Cyrus and the troops were able to move right in and take the city. The Lord also mentions up the drying up of the river in chapter 44 verse 27.

Now it is interesting how Cyrus conquered the city of Babylon. The city was considered unconquerable because the walls of Babylon were 300 feet high. They were 80 feet thick.

There was actually a double wall, but the main wall 300 feet high and 80 feet thick, towers along the wall. The wall was 60 miles long, sort of in a square 15 miles in each direction and towers along the walls. And the city was thought to be impregnable so much so that when the Persians had laid siege on Babylon, Belshazzar the king was so confident that they could not penetrate the walls that he ordered this big party, a big kind of a drunken orgy where they bring in the women, they bring in the booze and they just sort of in your face to the Persian troops that are outside trying to figure out how in the world they could ever conquer the city.

But what Cyrus did was that he had the river Euphrates diverted into a lake that was 40 miles square. And the level of the river dropped to the extent that the Persian, Medo-Persian troops were able to come on into the city and the river bed and then up in through the gates and conquered the city. As the Lord said, he would dry up the river and that's exactly how Cyrus conquered the city.

Having told these things over a hundred years in advance, God then declared in verse five that when these things had come to pass, transpired, Cyrus would know that he is the Lord. There's no other God beside me. God said, I girded you though you did not know me.

That all may know from the rising of the sun unto the west that there is no God beside me. I am Jehovah. There is no other.

So God declares that I've told you this in advance so that when it does happen, you will know that I am the transcendent God, that I do live outside of time and that I can speak of things with accuracy and with detail before they ever take place so that when you see them happen, you will know that I am God. So it's offered by God as the proof of his existence, a God who transcends time and space. It should be noted that there are thousands of examples in the Bible where predictions are made of things that would happen in the future.

Some of them were fulfilled within a matter of months. Some of them were fulfilled in matters of years. Some were fulfilled in the matters of centuries and some fulfilled in the matter of millenniums.

In other words, in the Bible, there are prophecies of things that are happening today, 2,500 years after they were written. God's word stands in the book of Ezekiel. The Lord spoke of these last days and he said that this land of Israel, which had been a barren wilderness, was going to be tilled and it's going to become like the Garden of Eden.

The wasted and desolate and ruined cities will become fenced and are inhabited. The heathen that are left roundabout will know that I am the Lord who builds the ruined places and plants that which was desolate. I, the Lord, have said it and I will do it.

And what can you say? He's done it. You go to Israel today and you see they're building fences around Israel to protect them from the terrorists. You go to Israel today and you look at the land around Beersheba that was so barren, desert wilderness.

You look at the Sharon Valley, which was just a wetlands, a marsh. You look at the Valley of Megiddo, which was a marsh. And you will see rich, verdant fields of wheat.

You will see orchards. You'll see a land that for 1500 years was nothing more than a barren wilderness. But you will see it today like the Garden of Eden for the verdants and the abundance that is there in that land.

Jesus said that he told his disciples things that would happen so that when they did happen, that they might believe. In other words, it was to give fodder for your faith. It was to give you a proof for your faith, a reason for your faith.

Fulfilled prophecy should bolster your faith that the Bible is the word of God, a revelation of himself and displaying and proving that he is the only God, a transcendent God above all other things that are worshipped by men. Peter speaks of seeing certain events. He said, I saw them.

But having declared that he was an eyewitness of these events, he then said, but we have the more sure word of prophecy. You may challenge what I am witnessing of what I saw, but there can't be a challenge to the prophecy when it has been written and then it comes to pass years or millenniums later. You can't deny the fact that it was written so long ago, and yet it is happening now before our eyes.

Solomon, when he was dedicating the temple, said not one word has failed of all that he has promised. Solomon was able to say that up until his day. Those prophecies that were made in the five books of the law, those prophecies that were made during the period of the judges, not one word at the time of Solomon had failed.

God had kept his word. Here we stand some 3000 years later, and we can make the same declaration of Solomon. Not one word has failed of all that God has promised to do.

You can rely upon his word. Not one word has failed. If you believe in God, that should be great assurance to you.

If you don't believe in God, hopefully that'll scare the hell out of you, because God's word is going to come to pass. Now, it is true that not all has yet come to pass. There are prophecies of things that are yet future.

We are catching up with some of the things that God declared. For instance, the rebirth of the nation of Israel, the development of the land. That has only come to pass, you know, in recent times.

For over close to 2000 years, the land just lay desolate, the city's waste. But now, it is being fulfilled before our very eyes as we're finally catching up with the word of God. It tells about how that the Muslim nations will invade Israel in these last days.

Now, we haven't gotten there yet. But would any of you be surprised if Iran attacked and Syria and Libya attacked Israel? Would that surprise you or shock you? Of course not. Because we realize that the Muslim nations have set themselves to the destruction of Israel.

The Bible says that they will come, but they won't destroy it. They will be themselves destroyed. But the Bible is such a fascinating book in that it tells of things that are yet future.

But if the Bible has been 100% accurate in the prophecies that we have already seen fulfilled, what chance do you suppose there would be that those things that are yet future will not be fulfilled? You can be certain. As God said, I said it and I will do it, that God will keep His word and keep the promises and the prophecies that He has inspired. In Hebrews 9.27, the Bible tells us it is appointed unto man once to die.

And after that, the judgment. In other words, the Bible tells us that death is not the end of your existence. That it is appointed that you should die.

But after that, there's going to be a judgment. In Revelation chapter 20, beginning with verse 11, John describes this judgment for us. He said, And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens have fled away.

And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God and the books were open. And another book was open, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. The sea gave up the dead which were in it. Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.

And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. This is a prophecy. It's a prediction.

It tells you of an event that is yet future. Event that is not yet taken place. But God has said it.

And because God has said it, you can be sure it will happen. You can be sure that one day we will be there, we will see the throne of God, and we will see the judgment of those who have rejected Jesus Christ. We'll be there.

We'll observe it. God's word is certain. God's word is going to be fulfilled.

That which has not yet been fulfilled, you can be sure of it. You can bet your life upon it. And you better bet your life on it.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the sure word of prophecy that you have given to us advance notice of things that you are going to do. Things that would transpire.

And Lord, what a thrill and what a joy it is to see these things, so many of them transpiring before our very eyes today. We know, Lord, that even as you told your disciples that if you went away, you would come again and receive them unto yourself, that they might be with you. Where you are.

And so, Lord, we know that you're coming again for your church, that we might be with you in your kingdom. We thank you, Lord, for the hope that this gives to us and the confidence and the assurance that your word is certain and that your word will come to pass and it shall be just as you have spoken. It will be fulfilled.

I pray, Father, for those today who are gambling with their eternal destiny, who are gambling with foolish interpretations of your word. We know that your word is clear and that you speak clearly, Lord, concerning life and how you would have us to live our lives. We pray, Father, that we might bend ourselves to your word rather than seeking to bend your word to ourselves.

Speak to us today, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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