

# The Israel of God - Part 4

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The Israel of God refers to the spiritual Israel, the new birth, and the kingdom of God, which is different from the natural Israel and the kingdom of Israel on earth.*

**Duration:** 1:04:29

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 53:10-11, Matthew 6:33, John 3:3, John 3:16, Romans 9:6-7, Galatians 3:16

**Topics:** "Israel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the transition from the old method of God to the new method of God. The passage in John chapter three is explored, particularly the concept of being born again and God's love for the world. The speaker emphasizes the need to understand the background and context of these teachings. The sermon also highlights the contrast between the historic practices and the truth that Jesus brings, emphasizing the importance of worshiping God in spirit and truth.

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## Transcript

It is necessary both for the newcomers as well as for the rest of us to repeat the passages of scripture which are the foundation of our consideration in this conference. And so I will ask you again to turn to the prophecies of Isaiah chapter 53 in verses 10 and 11. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.

He shall see of the travail of his soul shall be satisfied. He shall see his seed, the travail of his soul. In the letter to the Romans chapter 9 verses 6 and 7, but it is not as though the word of God had come to naught.

For they are not all Israel that are of Israel, neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children. And in the letter to the Galatians chapter 3 and verse 16, now to Abraham were the promises spoken and to his seed. He saith not and to see as of many, but as of one and to thy seed which is Christ.

There will be other passages probably which I shall bring together as we go along. But as we come to this further phase of the whole matter of this divine seed, this fruit of Christ's travail, this new spiritual Israel, I want just to say one or two preliminary and general things. Although it is so well known, yet it is very necessary for us to be very clear on this matter that there are not two things or more in the Bible as represented by two testaments, the old and the new, or more in the subdivision of the old testament into eras.

There may be two or more methods of expressing the same thing, but throughout from the beginning of the Bible to its close, there is only one thing. We have become mechanically minded in this matter of handling the Bible by dispensations and the different characteristics of different times. It may have had an effect upon us, much as we believe in typology and symbolism.

But I want to just underline this to you this morning, that in the different and perhaps many forms of expression, God adheres to one thing and one thing alone from beginning to end. His Son governs everything throughout at all times. He governs everything in the realities of His person and of His redemptive and perfecting work.

It is one person and one work. From the first book to the last. The change from the old testament to the new is only and simply the change from the indirect to the direct.

From the symbolic to that which is symbolized. From the temporal representation to the spiritual reality. That is all.

It is not a change of purpose and object. Not a change of basis or foundation. It is not in any way a change of principle.

Well, perhaps you say we know all that. But there's more in it than we, any of us, have yet realized. To carry that further, the patriarchs were in principle as much upon the basis of God's Son as you and I are.

That is true also of Israel. Israel, in the old testament, was as much upon the basis of God's Son as we are in this dispensary. God has never at any time by any means worked on any other ground than that of His Son.

His creative activities were on the ground of His Son. In Him, through Him, by Him, all things were to Him. And everything from then proceeds on that same basis and will be consummated in Christ by whatever means.

However, God has worked, His ground has always been the same. And unto the ages to come, that ground will be unchanging. It's the ground of Christ.

That's a general statement that is very important for us to recall and be quite sure about. Having said it, I'm now bringing you back to the point where we broke off on Saturday night. You remember that we were then referring to the gospel by John.

And especially at the point in that narrative marked by our arrangement in chapter 3 and perhaps chapter 4, I was saying that we think we know something about John chapter 3. Isn't it the great chapter of you must be born again? The great chapter of God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Don't we know it? Haven't we heard it a hundred times, a thousand times? And yet, and yet, what do we know? I said on Saturday night that this part, this part of that narrative marked by chapters 3 and 4 embraces all that could be said about this whole matter of the transition from the indirect to the direct. The transition from the old method of God to the new method of God.

It brings right into view this whole matter of the heavenly seat, its nature, its principles, and much more. Let us look then at John chapter 3. And is it necessary for me to re-emphasize the background of this? Lord Jesus, we will admit, knew it all. The Spirit of God who led John to write knew it all.

Knew far more than perhaps even John knew. Not more than Jesus knew. But there is utter fullness here that does represent a tremendously comprehensive spiritual knowledge.

Perhaps something of that will break upon us as we go on. Chapter as we have it, which I think is an unfortunate division from the words immediately preceding. Nevertheless, we take it.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Verse 10, Jesus said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel? Man of the Pharisees, of the Jews, the teacher of Israel. Here you have in a person, an individual, full embodiment of Israel after the flesh.

A full development. The essential and intrinsic meaning of Israel, the Pharisees. I have to just continually push back the temptation to dwell upon details where half an hour could easily be spent on the history of the Pharisees.

And that's a great profit. Nevertheless, let us simply note that the faith of the Pharisees were the very essence, the intrinsic meaning of Israel after the flesh. They gathered into themselves all that Israel claimed to be, was supposed to be.

The net of Pharisees you would meet. The last work in Israelism and Judaism. So you have here a full embodiment of Israel after the flesh.

A ruler of the Jews and then the teacher of Israel. Note the form and literally the article is there in the text. Jesus did not say, Art thou a teacher of Israel? He said, Art thou the teacher of Israel? This man evidently stood out.

Perhaps above all others recognized as the teacher of that time, Israel. I indicate these things to point out that here we have Israel present after the flesh in a very full way. In every way.

It is a natural seed of Abraham. A full grown son of Abraham after the flesh. All the natural features and factors of a son of Abraham in the natural sense.

He was born of the flesh of Abraham. He was circumcised in the flesh according to the covenant made with Abraham. His concern pre-eminently was with the kingdom which the seed of Abraham was to have.

Those three things are main factors here. I repeat them. He was born after the flesh as a son of Abraham.

He was circumcised in the flesh as the seal of the covenant made with Abraham. And his all absorbing and consuming interest as a true Israelite was with the kingdom that was covenanted to the seed of Abraham. Well, here is Abraham with all his natural seeds gathered right into this chapel.

And all his marks and features gathered right here. It is not just Nicodemus. Israel is present from the time of Abraham on to this very hour.

All the children of Abraham are present with this man in representation. It is a tremendous figure this man really. A lot more of course could be said about him.

But that is where the matter is introduced. You know, Jesus with a wave of the hand repudiates the whole thing. He is not listening to it.

Not opening the door to it. Not giving it a moment's consideration or attention. Early, early I say unto you, you must be born again.

To really be the seed of Abraham. You must be born from above. That literally is the statement.

You must be born from above. The seed of Abraham. With all the covenant and the promises and the prospect and the kingdom is that which is born from above.

Not this. The Lord Jesus here either by direct statement or by clear implication makes some fundamental contrasts. Firstly between two births.

That which is born of the flesh. That which is born of the spirit. That which is born of the earth and that which is born out from heaven.

Those belong to two births. Two regimes. And there is no passage between.

From one to the other. Door is closed. And he is not discussing this matter at all.

He is simply saying, so different. So other. Belongs to such a different realm that there is no getting into that.

Only by way of an utterly new beginning out from heaven. Now the rest of the New Testament is built upon that fundamental truth. All Paul's ministry is built upon that.

We said earlier that was the cause of all the troubles where Paul was concerned. See how drastic. See how tremendous this thing is.

To confront Israel with a statement like that. You are not Israel after all. You are not Israel after all.

You haven't begun to see the real meaning of the Israel of God. Except a man be born. And he cannot see.

Except a man be born of water and of the spirit. He cannot enter the kingdom of God. Here is not only the natural birth contrasted with the spiritual birth.

Here is a fundamental difference between the Red Sea and the pillar of cloud and fire. And symbolic representations and the spiritual reality. Born of water? Yes.

Symbolically in the Red Sea. Born of the spirit? Yes. Symbolically in the cloud.

They were all baptized into Moses in the sea and in the cloud. Ah. Nicodemus you know all about that.

Or you think you do. You haven't begun to see the meaning of that. There is a difference between the symbolic and the spiritual.

The typical and the real. Being born of water and of the spirit has a far far deeper meaning than ever you have seen or can see Nicodemus. And then as to the kingdom.

As to the kingdom of course Nicodemus hadn't mentioned the word. But the Lord Jesus who according to the words immediately preceding. And that's why I think it's such an unfortunate division of the narrative.

Jesus did not trust himself unto them for he knew all men because he needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man. He himself knew what was in man and there was a man. And he knew him.

And what was in him. A man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. And he knew that this man's one interest in life without an honest, sincere interest, a passionate interest was the kingdom.

That was the great hope of his life. That was the great thing about his rather kingdom. And the Lord Jesus knowing the man's absorption in that kingdom interest made it perfectly clear that the kingdom about which Nicodemus was thinking was one kingdom.

But the kingdom itself was quite another thing. Kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven is quite another thing from the kingdom of Israel on the earth. These are very strong contrasts that are here.

And you can see how by this the whole bible is focused into this very chapter. The inclusive conclusion of all this is just that all this that was historic was not the real. It did not conform to the Lord's meaning when he used the word truth.

I said earlier chapter 4 is a part of chapter 3. You know that it is with a contrast that the Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria later. And now is, here's your change, here's your transition, here's your passing over, and now is when the true worship, worship God not in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, in spirit and in truth. And that statement just rules out a whole order and system of things and brings in an entirely other.

All that which was historic was not the real. Or to use his word, not the truth, not the truth. This mountain, Jerusalem, yes it's not the truth.

This birth after Abraham, yes but it's not the truth. This hope of the kingdom, yes but it's not the truth. It's very, very searching.

The fact is that everything, everything had to be put onto the ground of Christ. Onto the ground of Christ. And that could only be and can only be at any time through death and resurrection or new birth.

On the basis of Christ in death and resurrection. In Isaac shall thy seed be called. And again there's a symbolic statement.

Isaac shall thy seed be called. Why? Because Isaac is the symbolic embodiment of the principle of death and resurrection. Everything had to be put onto the ground of Christ in death and resurrection.

And that was equally true in the Old Testament as in the New. In thinking about this and reading, I'm reading again that fascinating story of Joseph, the famine in the land, the coming of his brethren, and the subsequent removing of the whole family, Jacob and all his sons, 70 souls, from the land into Egypt. It's a fascinating story.

The first story of Joseph in itself I think is one of those things that holds you to the end when you start reading it. The whole of that episode is full of mastering interest. But I have myself brought up short with a question.

Hmm. Now the Lord had brought Abraham into the land and given the land to him by covenant and to his seed. An everlasting possession.

What's this? A whole seed evacuating the land and going to Egypt. The whole of them, every soul coming out of the land of covenant and going into Egypt according to what the Lord had told Abraham that his seed should be in the land of Egypt in bondage for 400 years and should be ill-treated and so on. The Lord told Abraham that it would be, but here it is.

Leave the prophecy and its fulfillment for the moment aside. Here's a strange thing. Uprooted and evacuated to the last soul from the very place of covenant and into Egypt.

Into Egypt. What's the meaning of this? Why? I thought long about this and then I think I saw the answer. Yes.

Look at the seed of Abraham in the land. Just look at those sons of Jacob. What sort of people are these? Yes.

The seed of Abraham after the flesh. The inheritors of the covenant after the flesh. The historic line.

But look at them. Well, the incident with Joseph only is enough to betray what sort of people they were. And the story is not a very, very nice story.

It is throughout of those men, their behavior, their disposition. It's a poor showing up of the seed of Abraham. Do you think that God is going to allow that kind of person to follow through to his end? Not at all.

Bring them into Egypt and put them first of all upon the basis of the travail of Christ. The cross. And watch when they're there, the principle of the cross, dealing with the life, the flesh.

Until they grow, grow. And then see the mighty energies of God in that travail bringing out that seed from Egypt. In principle, you see, in principle it is all this tremendous thing travel unto a new birth through death and resurrection.

God is putting them off the ground of nature onto the ground of Christ. And that is death and resurrection. It's got to be.

It's got to be. God is true to his principle. God is true to his son.

God is not play acting. He's not just making history. God is writing deep in history the laws, the eternal laws of his son in person and redemption.

So they cannot inherit. They cannot inherit. They must go through this ordeal, this terrible ordeal.

They must, to repeat, be put on the ground, on the basis of Christ in death and resurrection before they can come through to possess again the land. When you see God taking things up anew with the seed of Abraham, with the 12 tribes from Egypt, the Exodus, through the wilderness into the land, it's all on the basis of Christ. Every bit of it, every fragment of it is on the basis of Christ.

In principle, I think I must here put in a tremendous parenthesis. This matter of circumcision, delicate matter, has got fraught with tremendous significance. Here we'll read a few passages.

We'll first of all begin the book of the Acts, chapter 7 in Stephen's great, great discourse. Chapter 7 of the book of the Acts and verse 8. And he gave him, that is Abraham, the covenant of circumcision. Here we'll

read a few passages.

We'll first of all begin the book of the Acts, chapter 7 in Stephen's great, great discourse. Chapter 7 of the book of the Acts and verse 8. And he gave him, that is Abraham, the covenant of circumcision. Into the next book, the letter to the Romans, chapter 2, verse 28.

For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Chapter 4, verse 9. Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say, to Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness.

How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had while he was in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision. How profound.

Go over to the next, from the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 19. Almost hold your breath as you read it. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing.

Can't be a Jew saying that. We'll come to that in a minute. On to the letter to the Galatians, chapter 5, verse 6. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availed anything, nor answer, but faith, walking through love.

Chapter 6, verse 16. For neither is circumcision anything, nor answer, but a new creation. Now, tremendous statement and exposition in the letters of the Colossians.

Chapter 2, verse 11. In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the walking of God, who raised him from the dead. Now, that's enough of the word.

Let us hold to mind the tremendous importance attached to circumcision by the Jews. That could hold us for quite a time, and it would do well if we did get the full force of that. Tremendous importance attached to this matter by the Jews.

It was the very sign of their national oneness, of their national existence, of their belonging to that nation. And anybody without that sign was outside of it altogether, outside of the veil of promise and hope and covenant and amity. Everything for them rested upon that.

No one would ever be allowed to partake of the feast of the Passover who did not bear that sign. It was the door into everything. And you can realize a little of what they placed upon it when you come even into the New Testament and after the day of Pentecost.

On the one side, what a tremendous thing it was for the apostles themselves to have to handle that thing and weaken their position regarding it. Peter, James, John, the others. It was a real battle.

It was a real battle to have to weaken their position over this matter of literal circumcision, cropping up all the time, like rooting something out of their very being. And then what about these Judaizers? Pursuing

Paul over the face of the earth into every town, city, and city. Tracking him down on this one issue.

They followed up and they said to those to whom he ministered, except you be circumcised, you cannot be saved. That was the thing. This was the cause of all the trouble.

And both in the Scriptures and outside of the Scriptures, we could give you so much that shows what a thing, what a thing this was. Even today, the celebration of this the night before in a Jewish home, which is marked by sanctity, sacred, right, and what not. Yet, something big, great, tremendous, deep in their very being has a most sacred thing on which everything for them hung.

And here is this man who comes along and says circumcision isn't anything, isn't anything. It's nothing. It's nothing.

What has Paul seen? A Jew of the Jews, of the stock of Israel, circumcised the eighth day. That is nothing. What does he see? Well, of course, he's seen the spiritual significance.

And when you see that, the other is nothing. He's seen the spiritual significance. And he here, in this letter to the Galatians, for one place, laid it down precisely and concisely what that significance is.

Here it is. In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, the putting off of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God to raise him from the dead. Now, there are two things here.

The relationship of circumcision and baptism. Here is God's full thought both about circumcision and about baptism. We're going to dig right into that if we can before we go this morning.

And the other thing is what it really does mean in the life of the child of God. The relationship between circumcision and baptism, as here stated by Paul. We are brought by both these words, having been circumcised, having been baptized, brought by both of these words right to the cross of the Lord Jesus.

They are combined as one in principle and meaning as to the cross of the Lord Jesus. Buried with him and raised together with him. The whole thing is put on the basis of Christ crucified and risen.

Well, we know that, of course, about baptism. We Christians know that to be the meaning of baptism. On the other hand, did this sign signify the cross here is brought in, shall we say, as the instrument of circumcision.

It does the job. It effects that thing. And it's God.

Oh, if Israel had only seen it. They'd only seen it. Nothing would have been given away.

They wouldn't have had to lower their idea or lessen their estimate. They would not have made less of circumcision. Yes, it is a big thing.

It is a great thing. After all, national existence does rest upon it. But it's not this nation, the heavenly one, coming into all the blessings of the covenant, the eternal covenant in his blood, rests upon the principle that is here.

Yes, it's a big thing. All the kingdom as covenant is, is entered into and inherited by this door. It's a tremendous thing.

Nothing has been exaggerated as to its importance. But if only they had seen Christ crucified and risen. And you see, it was simply because they did not see the real meaning of this predominant, this preeminent right in their own life and history, that they lost everything.

They lost the kingdom. They lost their nationhood in the counsels of God for the time being, at least. They lost everything because they separated between a thing and its meaning.

John 3 is taking up the meaning of things for Nicodemus. Of course, he's blind. And all that is there.

Nicodemus is of the circumcision. That's the point. He's a Jew indeed.

He's of the circumcision. He's a representative in a very full way of this trial after the flesh in circumcision. But look how he, as such, is ruled out.

Now, because our time is practically gone, let's come to this. What is the meaning of this? What does it mean in the life of the true seed of Abraham, which is Christ's seed? What does it mean? It means simply this, that it is not of the flesh, but of the heart, as Paul says. It is a severance that has to take place deep down in the innermost being of the person.

Something down inside there, in the inner man, that is a cutting in between and putting two things apart. I'm handicapped. I can't carry this thing as far as it perhaps should be carried.

You'll have to follow through. But here it is. There is here an encircling of the blood which comes right in between and put two things apart.

And forever since that severance has taken place, that difference has been made. Those two things are no longer together. God has put them apart.

And what a lot in the New Testament comes in when you say that. That is the meaning, the spiritual meaning of baptism. You can't say, oh, this, all this, to everybody who's going to be baptized.

They'll be frightened and run away. But God means all this. And you see, God doesn't let us off.

If we really mean business, He doesn't let us off any of His meaning. Though at the beginning we may not see it all, and thank God we don't. However, even in saying that, it might be well if we did know a little more.

What is it that is severed in the cross of the Lord Jesus and by the cross of the Lord Jesus? What severance is it that you and I accept, come to, when we come to the cross of the Lord Jesus and take our position there by the symbolic act of baptism? There are various terms in the New Testament for that, sometimes called by the symbolic term, the flesh. Here Paul uses it, the whole body of the flesh. He's not talking about our physical body, the body of the flesh.

He uses that word very often, doesn't he, in a symbolic way. A definition that he gives to that Corinthian letter is the natural man. Another word for the same thing, the natural man.

What is it really? Flesh. That's a difficult, difficult word. Natural man.

Perhaps that's still more difficult, it's much more technical. What is it? What do you mean? Well, dear friends, this is what it means, purely and simply, the self-principle in the creation. A self-principle.

That's the root of everything. That's at the bottom of everything. That is where all the trouble began with Adam.

And it is there that all the trouble has gone on. And that's where the trouble is with you and with me. There has awoken and risen up and stretched itself and taken hold of a self-principle that is in our heart.

It will assert itself, make itself known and felt in any conceivable way. You will never be able to conceive of the ways in which this principle will show itself. Oh, as though you're trying to track it down.

I could spend a lot of time going round the clock and showing it every second, some form in which this thing, this many, many-membered thing, the self-principle, asserts itself. It's not a very happy or healthy kind of consideration, but there it is, there it is. It's in the mind.

We use our intellect and our reason by our self-principle to overpower and bring things our way, to argue and substantiate our position. And before you and I can ever get into the true realm of heavenly things, we've got to have a circumcised intellect, a circumcised reason, a circumcised mind. It's not exactly what the Lord was saying to Nicodemus.

He was keeping in John 3. Here is this teacher of Israel coming to argue, to discuss. The Lord says, no use, no use. You've been circumcised in the flesh as a good Jew, but what you need is to have your intellect circumcised.

A man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot see. You've got it all in the mind. All an intellectual apprehension, but if I've spoken earthly things to you and you don't understand it, where will you be if I begin to talk to you about heavenly things? Out of court or together.

You need a cutting in between your natural mind, even as a most devout son of Abraham and the things of heaven. The trouble with a lot of people, you see, it's their own heads that are in their way all the time. Just the one thing, holding them back is their own head.

Their stubborn mindedness or their clever mindedness or their intellectual superiority or something. Their argumentative disposition. It's all in that realm.

You meet it every time. No way through, no way through. And if you try to take them on that line, you are simply beating yourself against a wall.

Lord Jesus didn't do that in trying to win souls at all. He said, you must be born from above. In other cases, the circumcision has to take place in the realm of the feeling, the emotion, the desire.

That is the part of the being that gets in the way of so many people. They just are governed by their desire or their feelings, their emotions. Controlled entirely by their bondage to that part of their being.

Whenever you meet them, that's the realm in which you meet them. The feeling life, the emotion life, the desire life, the affection life. Very difficult people to handle.

But you see, a true child of heaven, the seed of his travail is that in which circumcision has taken place right in that realm of the feeling, the desire, the emotion. And what is true in those two is true in the realm

of the will. Oh, how true this is that with many people it's their will that's in the way.

They just cannot let go. They've got a grip. They've got a position.

And they heard it. And they support it. They even support their position with Scripture.

Or they support their position with a regulation superior to Scripture. They'll hold it to nature and not let go. Their will is the cause of all the arrest and the limitation and the defeat and the frustration and the setting back of all God's purposes.

It's just their will. Their choices, their decisions, their positions, their ways, their natural self-strength is never broken. And it's just there that circumcision must take place.

And in so many other ways, you see, it comes down to this inner life of ours. It comes right down there. Cross, the instrument of spiritual circumcision has to be applied deeper and ever more deeply to this self-life because there seems to be no end of it, no end of it.

What is happening on the other side? Well, that is the painful side and that is the dark side. But it's making room for Christ, isn't it? That's what it is, you see. The real seed, seed of Christ growing, becoming manifest, making room for Christ.

Meekness is just the opposite to what I have been saying about the strength of self-will and position, whether it be in emotion or in intellect or in will. Meekness is exactly the opposite. And he said, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

What a circumcised heart was he. Pursued it right through. Oh yes, something had been done right down in the depth of his being.

Dear friends, I have said we cannot, we cannot calculate this whole range of this self-principle and introspection and self-occupation and self-attention and self-pity and self-consciousness even in our Christian life, our devotion to the Lord. We are no less happy that other people see how devoted we are and how humble we are. And it's the self, the wretched, may I use the word, stinking self coming up all the time.

For a true kind of God is oblivious to himself or herself, lost consciousness of himself or herself in every way. Other people point out things that they didn't realize good things about them. They were not aware of it.

They're surprised that anybody could say anything good about them. They were conscious of that. And if it should be on the other side that people say bad things, oh they only say, well you can't tell me more than I know.

I have that out with the Lord. I've got that before the Lord. I'm not, not deceiving myself about that.

You see, this is a true child of heaven. So we could go on. That is the meaning of certainty.

How different from that in the flesh. Never worked out that way. Think in the light of that, in the light of that, the true principle, the true meaning.

Think of a tongue of Abraham, a Pharisee, saying I'm better than anyone else and making long prayers for everybody to see and hear. You know all that the Lord said about them and all of it. A child of Abraham.

Well, they've missed the point. Ah, but don't let us criticize and judge and blame. Very searching thing for us, isn't it? Very searching thing.

Paul says, so far as that is concerned, circumcision is nothing and uncertain, but a new creation. Circumcision is not of the flesh. Circumcision is of the heart.

There I must stop for the present. The Lord give us circumcised hearts and give us grace to have this severance pursued to finality.

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