

Foundations of Our Faith 1 of 4

#0093

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 14, 1973

As I have thought of the many new students who are beginning their work here this quarter, there's come in my heart a great longing that a strong foundation shall be built in the experience of each one. And then I thought of more than just our new students. We all, old and young, are destined to meet the great crisis of the ages very soon. And we're told that everything that can be shaken will be shaken so that those things that cannot be shaken will what? Remain. That's the remnant—those that remain.

Jesus told about two men. One built his house on the rock, and when the storm came, what happened to that house? It stood. Why? It was founded on the rock. But the other man built his house on the sand. And when the storm came, what happened? It fell.

It is not only at the great crisis of the future that we must face problems of this kind. Each soul has problems that come individually in his life when if there is any way to shake him, he will be shaken.

I was talking with someone not long ago, a church member in good and regular standing. But as they put forth their questions and expressed their doubts, it was evident that they were lacking in foundation. And I long that everyone here tonight shall have a strong foundation, and know that you have it. Now, this doesn't mean to know everything—far from it. A million years from now we'll be learning some new things. The things we shall be dealing with, tonight and tomorrow night and Monday and Wednesday, are the great fundamentals, the great foundation principles.

Someone was talking with me about a problem. And I said to them after they had expressed it, "Well, now, let us see. When we are dealing with a problem, we work from the known to the unknown, don't we?" If there is no unknown, there's no problem. And if there are no known factors there's no solution. Are you agreed?

So we began with this student that had presented this problem to find out what were the settled things and what were the unsettled things. We soon got to the unsettled things, which was part of the foundation. The first question that I asked this student,—and their answer was "yes," and I presume the answer of all of you would be yes—my first question is: "Do you know that there is a God?"

Are there some people that don't know that? Oh yes, multitudes of people today are not assured of that. They either are quite sure there is no God or else more likely they're just uncertain. They don't know.

Let me tell you folks, unless you know that there is a God you haven't much foundation to build anything on, have you? How do you know there is a God? And it isn't enough to say, "Well, I believe there's a God because I was taught that," or "I believe that there is a God because the Bible says there is," or "I believe there is a God because I feel it." I wouldn't say that any of those are wrong answers. I'll just say that, of themselves, they're not sufficient to stand the storm. How can you know there is a God?

Just a few days ago in talking with someone, I said, "Listen, I know that there is evidence that you can be absolutely certain, not only that there is a God, but He's a personal God; that the Bible is His Word; that the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy are His testimony. All of these things you can be just as certain of as anything in this world. You can be absolutely positive about it. But in order to be certain, you must examine the evidence."

And it is some of that evidence I want to study with you tonight and tomorrow night and next Monday and Wednesday. I want you to look at the evidence.

You see, the government of God, the religion of Christ, is not based just on an appeal of the emotions. God says through the prophet Isaiah:

"Come now, and let us reason together..." Isaiah 1:18.

And so this evening, I want to give three great evidences, three great lines of evidence that show that there is a God and shows what kind of God He is—a personal God, a wise God, a powerful God, a loving God, a God that is interested in you and me.

Where shall we begin? Let's begin, my friends, where millions of people in this world have to begin if they begin at all. Let's begin just with the world around us, the world of nature. You know there are people who have no Bible. We get so used to having the Bible, and thank God we do. But are there millions in this world without any Bible, without any access to the Bible?

But do you know what the Lord tells us? He tells us that He has given us in His created works evidence that leaves people without excuse. He tells us that people who will look and listen and who'll observe and think will find that the Spirit of God is bringing to them messages from the book of nature that help them to get acquainted with the Creator.

Perhaps we might read a verse on that. Romans 1:19–20. Paul is speaking of the heathen here:

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest to them for God hath showed it unto them" Romans 1:19 (margin).

Now, that 20th verse, I want to read from the New English Bible:

“His invisible attributes, that is to say His everlasting power and Deity, have been visible ever since the world began, to the eye of reason in the things He has made”
Romans 1:20 (*New English Version*).

Isn't that nice? In the things that God has made He has given us evidence of His eternal power and Godhead, His everlasting power and Deity. And so the verse says: They are without what? Without excuse!

So, as I say, let's begin even without the Bible, apart from the Bible. We come into this world, we grow up and we begin to see the things around us—our parents, brothers and sisters, the dog, the cat, the tree, the flowers, the stars, the clouds, the mountains, the valleys, the rivers, the rain, the sunshine, the wind we see blowing the trees, and so on.

All of us are inevitably brought into contact with many, many things. Also, we become conscious of the fact that we have a mind that makes us conscious. We have a brain that thinks as well as a heart that beats and a stomach that digests food. And the thinking mind somewhere, comes to this question, “Why all this? How did it begin? Where is it going? What's responsible for it? Is there a plan? If so, what is it and what's it all about?” In its varied forms, that question comes to every human being.

Let me ask you this question: Suppose that you and I are going out into the mountains miles from any place where people live. We're exploring a hitherto unexplored part of the country—not much left in this world, but there are a few places. So in our imagination, let's visit such a place tonight. And as we cut our way through the forest, ford the rivers we say to each other, “Surely nobody has ever walked through this country before. We're the first human beings to see this particular place.” But soon we come to a little clearing and we notice three posts set in a row twelve feet apart. There they are in a line: This post, 12 feet another post, 12 feet another post. What do we say? “Somebody has been here.” Is that right?

And if you were to say it, would I say, “Well, maybe so, I don't know, could be.” Do I? No. If I did, you'd look at me and wonder what had happened to my reasoning process, wouldn't you?

What have we seen? We have seen evidence of design. That's what we have seen. We have seen evidence of a plan, for it took a plan to put a post in the ground and put another one twelve feet from there and another one in the same line, the same distance, twelve feet. That took a plan. And we know that elephants with all their strength don't put posts in the ground twelve feet apart in a line. We know that the only being on this planet that is capable of doing that particular thing is what? A man, a member of the human family. And so we say, “Somebody has been here.” And we mean somebody that thinks as we do and reasons as we do and plans as we do.

Now friends, the observing eye, the thinking mind, will find in nature around us

ten thousand examples of plans far more intricate than those 3 posts set in the earth. Whether we take the microscope and look at the little flower or at the white blood cell, or whether we take the telescope and look at the stars in the heavens, or whether without microscope or telescope, we simply open our eyes and look around us and begin to examine things, in a thousand ways the Creator is inviting us to look at what He has made in order to get acquainted with the Maker.

Sometimes I think of it this way. I have a watch here. A friend of mine gave it to me. I never met the man that made it, but I know a man made it.

And you say, "Well, are you sure? Are you sure somebody made it?"

Oh, yes. I'm not only sure somebody made it, I know something about him. I know he can count. Do you agree with me? Another thing I know about him, he's very accurate. Why? Because what he made is accurate. I know he's very skillful because those little parts were put together with wisdom and skill beyond what I know how to do. I couldn't make a watch. Maybe if the man that made it would teach me long enough, maybe I could too. I don't know. But I know I can't do it now, but I can at least appreciate what he made. It keeps time, and that helps me out. That's why I have got it on here tonight for this meeting, you see.

Most of you here tonight have watches. And every one of you is wearing a watch or carrying a watch, the maker of which you probably never saw. How many of you here tonight have a watch? May I see your hands? Now let us see how many hands we get on the next. How many of you saw the man or men that made your watch? May I see your hands? Well, how do you know there is anybody that made the watch? The human mind is incapable of even considering the idea that the watch came without a watchmaker. And yet in the starry heavens, we have a celestial timepiece infinitely more complex, infinitely more wonderful and more accurate than any watch ever made. Am I right? And God says:

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their host by number: He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one fails" Isaiah 40:26.

Now, my purpose tonight is not to introduce one example after the other in nature. We could be here tonight as long as Paul was at Troas with just examples in nature of God's wisdom and His power and His love. In other words, what Paul wrote in Romans 1:20 is so that God's attributes are revealed in nature in the things He has made so that even those that do not have the Bible are without excuse. They can get acquainted with the fact that there is a Maker behind the things made. They can become acquainted with the fact that He has a plan. They can be amazed by His wisdom and power, and they can be impressed with His love.

Oh friends, has that witness come to your heart?

One of the things that will be emphasized in your classes here at Wildwood,

you new students (but it's available for everybody whether you live here or 100 miles away) is to sharpen your powers of observation, looking for the things in nature that show the evidence of the Creator: watching as you walk along the trails, as you go from your home to your classes or to your work, as you go out in missionary endeavor; watching in the sky and on the earth, amid the trees and flowers, amid the rocks; watching for things that show *you* that there is a God, that there is a Creator and what kind of person He is.

You need to know that and to know it for yourself, not because somebody told it to you, or because you read it in a book. Go to the ant. Consider the lilies. Behold the birds. This is the way. For yourself, you must examine the evidence. For yourself, you must become acquainted with what nature has to testify concerning its Creator. Thus you build the foundations of your faith. You have something solid. And when somebody comes along with some so-called scientific theory that this world is billions of years old and that it simply evolved from this, to this, to this, to this; your simple faith will be impregnable to all those assaults. This is your privilege. Ask God to give you that kind of foundation.

Now, the second great line of evidence that the Lord offers us is the evidence of prophecy. In creation, God shows us what He can do in making things. In prophecy, God shows us what He can tell in predicting things. In prophecy, God offers to prove to us that the future is just as open to Him as the past that nothing is hidden from His sight. This would be necessary in order for God to do what you and I need to have done.

Isn't it true that often we do something and then days or weeks or months later, we say, "Oh, if I had known what was going to happen, I wouldn't have done this." Isn't that right? Well friends, I'm thankful that the God who manages my life is not caught that way.

Now turn with me, please, to Isaiah 41 and notice how God flings out the challenge to all men and to all so-called gods over this question of foretelling the future:

"Produce your cause, says the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, says the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen..." Isaiah 41:21–22.

What challenge does God issue? Can you tell the future? Show us what will happen.

"Show the things that are to come here after, that we may know that ye are gods..." Isaiah 41:23.

But in the 24th verse, He says you are of nothing and your work is a work of naught. Now in the 25th verse, with this introduction, God proposes to bring in a special exhibit of His power to foretell the future. Notice this:

“I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come:
from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name:
and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as
the potter treads clay” Isaiah 41:25.

This prophecy relates to Cyrus, as we shall see presently. He’s mentioned by name here in Isaiah 44 and 45. We will come to that. But don’t leave this in Isaiah 41. I want to read this passage as Moffatt translates it:

“Now the Eternal cries, bring your case forward. Now Jacob’s King cries, state your proofs. Let us hear what happened in the past that we may ponder it, or show me what is yet to be that we may watch how it turns out. Yes, let us hear what is coming that we may be sure you are gods. Do something or other that we may marvel at the sight. Why, you are things of naught. You can do nothing at all. Here is one I have raised from the North. I have called him by name from the East. He shall trample rulers down like mortar, like a potter treading clay” Isaiah 41:21–25 (*Moffatt’s Translation*).

This is a picture of Cyrus and his triumphal march on Babylon. Now notice how God uses this as evidence in the 26th verse:

“Now who predicted this beforehand? Who foretold it that we might hail it true? No one predicted it. No one announced it. Not a word ever fell from you. It was I who first sent word of it to Zion. Twas I who sent the good news to Jerusalem” Isaiah 41:26–27 (*Moffatt’s Translation*).

This was written over 100 years before Cyrus was born. In fact, this was written long before Babylon conquered Judea and became the dominant nation that it did in the days of Daniel.

But notice before God ever allowed Babylon to seize the scepter of world dominion, God had His prophet there in Jerusalem write down the name of the man who would eventually deliver His people from Babylon, who would overthrow that golden empire and bring in the silver kingdom. God put His finger on that man over 100 years before he was born, called him by name, and not only that, said he would be the man who would send the Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple. And He issues this as evidence that He is the God, the only One who can foretell the future.

Turn over now to Isaiah 44, beginning with the 24th verse:

“Thus says the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that makes all things...” Isaiah 44:24.

What do we call the one that does that? The Creator. That's the first great line of evidence.

"...that stretches forth the heavens alone..." Isaiah 44:24.

That is: "Nobody helped Me do it." I remember hearing dear old Elder Gilbert years ago say, "When God made this world He made man last so that man would understand that God could do it all without him."

"...I am the LORD that makes all things; that stretches forth the heavens alone; that spreads abroad the earth by myself" Isaiah 44:24.

Then He goes on and tells other things that He does. Coming down to the 27th verse:

"That says to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That says of Cyrus..." Isaiah 44:24.

C-Y-R-U-S, it names him by name.

"that says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" Isaiah 44:27-28.

This is years before the temple was even destroyed. And there that prophecy lay in the scrolls written by Isaiah year after year, decade after decade, and finally, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, comes and conquers Judea and other parts of the world, carries captives to Babylon, and finally destroys Jerusalem, destroys the temple, and brings thousands upon thousands of the Jews away from their land. Through Jeremiah, God said it would be 70 years. But through Isaiah, He tells the very man that will overthrow Babylon and bring His people back.

So notice the 45th chapter reading right on:

"Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut" Isaiah 45:1.

Those of you who are familiar with the history know that the night that Babylon was taken, Cyrus marched his armies under the wall of Babylon where the Euphrates River flowed through. He diverted the water into an artificial lake above the city; the soldiers marched in. But they could have marched in one end and marched out the other, and the city would have been as safe as ever, except for the fact that many of the soldiers were drunk that night. The city of Babylon was celebrating, and the gates were left open. Long, long, long before any of the men

that were there that night were ever born, God said, "And the gates will not be shut."

"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places [Why?] that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me" Isaiah 45:2-5.

Isn't that wonderful, friends? And do you know how all that came to pass? After the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus came in there. He became acquainted with Daniel. During the two years between the overthrow of Babylon and the end of the 70 years, Darius was ruling. During that time, Daniel was put in the Lion's den. Cyrus heard about that. And when Cyrus assumed the sole rulership of the Medo-Persian Empire, Daniel went to him and showed him this prophecy of Isaiah that you and I are reading tonight.

Can't you just hear Daniel saying? "Cyrus, do you know how you happened to be here? Did you know that your name was written down in an ancient book over 100 years before you were born? Did you know that the prophet that wrote that book claimed that God, the God of Heaven, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, gave him a vision and told him that the man that would conquer Babylon would be named Cyrus? And did you know that, that same God says that the reason He is doing it is so that you can issue the decree to send God's people back to Jerusalem to build the temple."

And as Cyrus looked at those ancient writings, the Spirit of God spoke to his heart, and he said, "If God has called me by name and told me to do this work, I'll do it." Read over in Ezra 1, just read what Cyrus wrote. We have the decree right here.

Oh, I think prophecy is wonderful, friends. Don't you? No, guesswork, no crystal balls, no looking at the intestines of animals or tea leaves, or the signs of the zodiac or anything else like that. When God speaks to His prophet in vision, friends, there is a surety about it, a wisdom, a certainty that builds confidence. And here is one of the greatest kings of antiquity and notice how he responds to God's predictive statement:

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath

given me all the kingdoms of the earth..." Ezra 1:1–2.

How did he find that out? Daniel showed it to him in the book of Isaiah, just what you and I have read tonight. But now notice the next part:

"...and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" Ezra 1:2.

How did Cyrus find that out? Why Daniel showed it to him, you see, right here in this prophecy of Isaiah:

"That says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" Isaiah 44:28.

And so, Cyrus said, "Why listen, the One that made the heavens and the earth put my name down in that prophecy over 100 years before I was born. He gave me all this authority and power and opportunity, and He told me that I was to see that, that temple got built, and I'm going to do it."

Isn't that wonderful friends? Oh, what a God. And my point is (And don't miss it!), God in the book of Isaiah, when that prophecy was given said, "I am going to put this down so when it happens not only Cyrus, but everybody that is watching can see that there is no God like Me. There is nobody else who can tell the future like this." This is to build confidence in His wisdom, my friends.

Now, most of you know that there are several other prophecies in the Bible besides this one. But tonight, my mind was impressed with this marvelous prophecy in the setting of God's challenge to all the world: "Who can foretell the future? I am the only One. Who can create? I am the only One." Who can foretell? I am the only one.

When you study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, (some of you've already studied these, some of you'll be studying them this quarter, and I hope everybody will just be studying day by day, in your homes, more and more of this wonderful revelation—God's Holy Word) and see how again and again the prophecies come true, what is it to do for you? It's to help you build in your own mind a solid faith, a certainty, an assurance that nothing can change.

So when somebody comes along with some little quibble about the Bible and says, "What does this mean? Are you sure this happened and that happened?" You can say, "Well, I'll tell you friend, I may not be able to explain all that, but I know this: I know that the One who wrote this Book can foretell the future because He has proved it by writing down in this Book dozens and scores and hundreds of prophecies thousands of years ago that have already been fulfilled. History is the unrolled scroll of prophecy, and I know that the One that can write with wisdom like and foretell the future is worthy of my confidence. And if He said some things that I

can't understand, He'll explain them when He gets ready." Do you see friends? This is the way you build solid foundations.

There's a third line of evidence. Let's turn to Isaiah 43. Don't you love this book of Isaiah? 700 years before Christ.

"I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, says the LORD, that I am God" Isaiah 43:11–12.

God is the Creator. Nobody else can create. God is the revealer. Nobody else can foretell the future, and God is the Savior. Nobody else can lift you and me from our sins into the experience of deliverance and victory.

Now, let me show the difference in this third line of evidence. The world of nature is all around us. And it speaks its message to all who will open their eyes and their ears. The evidence of prophecy has been here on the pages of the sacred Book for centuries and millenniums. It's open to all who will read and study and examine. But this evidence of God's saving power in your own life is something that you must experience for yourself. Nobody else can do this for you.

Perhaps I can illustrate it this way. Suppose we have a loaf of whole wheat bread here. A chemist can tell us about the protein in it and the amino acids that make up the protein. He can tell us about the iron and the lime and the phosphorous, and the different vitamins of the B complex that are there and the other vitamins. He can tell us about the carbohydrate and the fat. The man who is trained in physiology can tell us what those different things will do in the human body.

But I want to tell you something, friends. A person that has never been to school and that can't even read and write can get the same nutrition out of that loaf of bread that the chemist and physiologist can. Am I correct? provided he will eat it. And wouldn't it be a pity to substitute a class in chemistry or physiology for the eating of the bread? It might make one a little puny, might it not?

The third great line of evidence that God offers to everybody is the evidence of personal experience.

When you get those three things together, friends: when you hear in your heart the same voice that is speaking in nature and the voice that is speaking through these predictions in the Bible, when that same voice you know is speaking in your heart and those three lines of evidence are converging in one united conclusion that reveals to you the character of God, you have a foundation that is impregnable.

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