

## Either I Am, or He Is

*Ps 109:21-31*

*21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*

*22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*

*23 I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.*

*24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.*

*25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.*

*26 **Help me**, O LORD my God: O **save me** according to thy mercy:*

*27 That they may know that **this is thy hand**; that thou, LORD, hast done it.*

*28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.*

*29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.*

*30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*

*31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.*

### I. Introduction

1. In this psalm, which was a prayer of David, we see David going through a very difficult time.
2. Here, he recounts a number of crises that he is facing, which we will look at later, but the point of this prayer is he knows where to take his troubles.
3. In a moment we will look at a passage in Isaiah 47 where some people cry out, "*I am, and none else beside me.*"
4. It was a statement made in arrogance and is a stark contrast to the humble attitude of David as he calls out to God in this psalm.
5. And it is those contrasting attitudes I want to talk about this morning: "Either I Am, or He Is."
6. Some trust in self to get them through, and others put their trust in God.
7. From July 1940-May 1941, Hitler engaged his Nazi fighters in the Battle of Britain.
8. Hermann Goring had convinced Hitler that since their troops had conquered Poland and France in an astoundingly short time, that the German Luftwaffe would be able to take out Great Britain just as quickly.
9. He convinced Hitler to put off a planned sea invasion because the strength of his flying fighters would bomb London into surrender in no time with little loss of German lives.
10. But Goring was not aware of Britain's use of a radical new technology in warfare, radar.
11. All along the coasts of England, radar towers were installed and there was no such thing as a surprise Luftwaffe attack.
12. Although many British lives were lost in the Battle of Britain, Goring's arrogant plan to bomb Britain into submission was subverted by a humble technology that saved Britain from destruction.

### II. Manmade Gods

- A. One God in whom we trust
1. In the prophesies of Isaiah, God makes a statement several times, “I am and there is none beside me.”
  2. Israel was the only nation who worshiped only one God. The nations all around them worshiped many gods, and you find in Isaiah and the other prophets, many references to the foolishness of worshiping something as god that is no god at all.
  3. The question Isaiah asks those who worship idols is, “Why put your trust in something that cannot help you?”
  4. In chapter 44 of Isaiah, the prophet gives an illustration of how useless and harmful it is to trust in something that cannot help.
- B. Story of the carpenter and his idol
1. Isaiah told the story of a carpenter he had observed. This carpenter was skilled in woodworking, and because woodwork is his trade, he is also handy at planting and growing trees that he can use in his trade.
  2. He observed how this carpenter planted and nourished a tree. And over time, the tree grew to a good size, and eventually the carpenter cut it down to use the wood for several purposes.
  3. Here he describes the carpenter’s actions:  
*Isa 44:16-17*  
*16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:*  
*17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.*
  4. So the man who planted and grew the tree, who cut down the tree, who used part of the tree as firewood to warm himself and make his meal, also took the leftover wood, and with his skill at carving, made himself a god.
  5. And although this carpenter had created the god, the carpenter fell down and worshiped the idol as his god, and then prayed to it asking it to deliver him.
  6. Then God makes the point He has been trying to communicate through the story:  
*Isa 44:20-21*  
*20 He feedeth on ashes: a **deceived heart** hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, **Is there not a lie in my right hand?***  
*21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*
  7. The carpenter could not admit to himself that he was trusting in a lie. He just continued to cry out and continued suffer in misery receiving no deliverance from his worthless god.
- C. Trusting in a lie
1. So what am I putting my trust in? Have I been deceived? This thing I have in my right hand, is it a lie? Have I been putting my trust in a lie?
  2. Well let me tell you, if what you have been putting your trust in is not the Lord, that thing will fail you.
  3. How much trust have we put in our jobs? Our savings accounts? Our investments?

4. The bottle? The needle? The pipe?
  5. Do these things we are leaning on deserve the kind of trust and honor only meant for God?
  6. Jobs can go by the wayside. A pandemic or an economic downturn can devastate a longstanding business in a short time.
  7. Many have lost savings and investments that represented their hope and salvation.
  8. The bottle, needle, and pipe may provide someone their next “fix,” but the fix never fixes anything.
  9. “Is there not a lie in my right hand?” was the question the deceived carpenter would not admit to, all the while he was feeding on ashes.  
*Isa 44:20 He feedeth on ashes: a **deceived heart** hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, **Is there not a lie in my right hand?***
  10. Trusting in lies. Trusting in ashes that will blow away with the wind.
- D. Babylon says “I AM”
1. A few chapters after Isaiah told the story of the carpenter and his experience trusting in his homemade idol, he prophesied about the future of Babylon and makes an important point about the danger of trusting in the wrong thing—self.  
*Isa 47:8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, **I am, and none else beside me**; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:*
  2. Carelessly living for pleasure, these people were saying, “I am and there is none beside me.”
- E. Who is the I Am?
1. But before we dig out the meaning of that phrase spoken by the Babylonians, you might remember that phrase spoken by another—God Himself.  
*Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*
  2. *Isa 44:8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.*
  3. *Isa 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:*
  4. So when we go back to the passage about Babylon, remember it was the Lord God Almighty who said “I Am” and there is none beside me.
- F. Babylon’s mockery
1. So in a mockery of the Almighty God, the Babylonians said,  
*Isa 47:8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, **I am, and none else beside me**; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:*
  2. These pleasure-crazy people felt they were the only ones who mattered. No one was as important as them—in their sight.

3. What vanity! The “I Am” and “None else beside me” can only apply to God.
  4. As proof, God said, when you get into trouble, go ahead and see if you can pick yourself up by your own bootstraps.
  5. If you think yourself so amazing, let’s see you get yourself out of trouble all by yourself.
  6. Isaiah makes a powerful point about trusting in self:  
*Isa 47:9-11:*  
*9 But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the **multitude of thy sorceries**, and for the great **abundance of thine enchantments**.*  
*10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and **thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me**.*  
*11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; **thou shalt not be able to put it off**: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.*
  7. God challenges them to see if their good luck charms will help them:  
*Is 47:12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.*
  8. He lists next the things they tried to trust in in the day of trouble:  
*Is 47:13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.*
  9. Are you sure you can count on everything you have put your trust in?
  10. No. They are no help. The things you trusted in will be no more:  
*14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.*  
*15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; **none shall save thee**.*
  11. When you put your trust in something other than God, in self, in the stars, in counselors, they will fail. None shall save thee.
- G. David’s cry of desperation
1. But getting back to Psalm 109 and David’s prayer to God from desperation, we see in balance, what, or Who we can put our trust in.
  2. There are so many things people put their trust in that ends up failing them.
  3. We mentioned jobs, savings and investments. While we must work for our living, and while it is wise to save money for the rainy day, and invest some for retirement, many have learned through bad economic times, that jobs end, that money fails, that investments go broke.
  4. We have heard many stories from our CIP students that the bottle, needle, and pipe provide a quick fix that end up giving enduring brokenness.

5. Some have told me, those who were their friends, were no longer their friends when the money and drugs ran out.
  6. In our arrogance we may have once said, “I am, and there is none beside me.”
  7. That is until we actually had to put our trust in “me and none else.” Then we see how incapable we are at saving ourselves.
  8. Read David’s prayer at a time when he was being pursued by enemies who wanted to take his life:  
*Ps 109:21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*
  9. Do you see the difference here? It is not for my sake, my name’s sake, my own good, that David prays. He prays for God’s name sake.
  10. When we entrust ourselves to God as one of His children, then it becomes God’s reputation that is at stake.
  11. Instead of worrying, “What will people think about me?” Our cry is, “Lord, what will people say about you, for I’m putting my trust in you?”
  12. David goes on to state his troubled situation, listing the things he is suffering through.
  13. But remember, he is not complaining just to complain. He is putting his trust in God not self.  
*Ps 109:22-25*  
*22 For I am poor and needy, and **my heart is wounded [pierced]** within me.*  
*23 I am gone like the **shadow** when it declineth: I am **tossed** up and down as the locust.*  
*24 My knees are **weak** through fasting; and my flesh **faileth** of fatness.*  
*25 I became also a **reproach** unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.*
  14. David expressed the groanings of his heart to God, but shows where he put his trust—in God and His mercy:  
*Ps 109:26-27*  
*26 **Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:***
  15. David was not as concerned about his enemy shaking their heads at David, as he was in being able to defend God’s reputation:  
*27 That they may know that **this is thy hand**; that thou, LORD, hast done it.*
  16. David concludes the psalm with a praise to the Lord:  
*30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*  
*31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.*
- III. Conclusion
1. For David, he realized it was not about him but about God.
  2. The Babylonians were the ones who said, “I AM and None Else.” But where are they today? Non-existent.
  3. David instead put His trust in God and found that God was enough.
  4. Either I AM or He Is.

5. This morning we need to repent of that “I can trust in me,” attitude.
6. We need to repent of all the other things we placed our trust in to save ourselves and realize that it is only God who can do that.
7. And although the carpenter refused to admit it was deception and a lie that he could trust in an image he had made himself:  
*Isa 44:20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*
8. We need to accept the truth of  
Ps 109:26-27  
*26 **Help me**, O LORD my God: O **save me** according to thy mercy:  
27 That they may know that **this is thy hand**; that thou, LORD, hast done it.*