

Daniel 05-10-09a

This is Sunday the 9th of October, 2005. We continue our worship this morning by taking a moment at this point before we address ourselves to the Word of God to clear our minds and prepare our hearts to individually exercise our priesthood. We understand the proper role of the Holy Spirit.

I was thinking about that this morning as I looked about the room, and I counted five Kleenex boxes, and I thought, you know, it reminds me of a Pentecostal church. They have a box of Kleenex on every aisle. I used to go into those with my dad to tune the piano.

This summer I worked for the organ company. We went to a Pentecostal church and repaired an Allen organ that was in there, and I was quite shocked because in addition to the drum kit up on the platform there and the guitars on their stands, there was just Kleenex at the end of every aisle. And I thought, you know, either these people are cold prone or they do a lot of crying.

And that's a misunderstanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, that He's going to induce holy laughter, holy weeping, or that there's going to be a lot of emotional outbursts in the course of trying to grow spiritually. Emotions can't think. This is something we must remind ourselves of.

If we get carried away by emotion, we cannot process, we cannot remember, and we cannot apply the Word of God because it just cannot happen in the absence of rational thought. And in the same way that we have to put on our new nature and abandon the old nature, we have to put on thinking and put off emoting. And this is something that the Holy Spirit helps us do.

He does not impel us by way of emotion. He instructs us by way of God's Word. So it's really important to recognize His actual ministry to us.

It is important, and it's a shame that in misconstruing His ministry, people have caused the rest of Christianity to somewhat run the other way from the Holy Spirit, and yet it is vital. So we pause at this point to spend a few moments in prayer. Father, how grateful we are for our nation, for Your daily provision for us, the security and the opportunity that we enjoy every day.

We look around the world and we see so many unstable and unpredictable environments in which people have to live. We recognize that You have given us this peace and this prosperity for a reason, and we do not want to fail or flag in our efforts to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for Him and for the example that He has left for us, walking in the flesh, sustained by the power of the Spirit, relying on Your Word, even more than the necessary food of our daily bread.

We thank You that He sits at Your right hand and intercedes on our behalf. We thank You that He is soon returning to take us to be with Himself, and we pray that our fellowship and our study of Your Word will prepare us for that day and for the age that will follow it. We pray for

those who are serving in the armed forces, in law enforcement, in government at all levels, especially for our President, our Senators, our Congressmen, and their staff who are believers and who are seeking to please You in the execution of their duties.

We pray that You will preserve their way and establish their steps, guide them so that they are able to accomplish their purpose in spite of all of the opposition that is thrown up against them. We ask Your blessing on us as a fellowship and individually that we will find and remember those things that You have for us in Your Word this morning, and that the application, the meaning, and the purpose of it will become clear to us as we meditate day and night on Your law. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our scripture reading this morning is our passage, Daniel chapter 2. There is quite a bit of content, and as we sometimes do in situations where there is a lot to cover, we just use our scripture reading time to address our passage, Daniel chapter 2. In chapter 1, we were introduced to the situation. We know that we are in Babylon in the first years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

In his first year, he brings Daniel and his three friends back, along with a host of other captives to the capital, installs them in the palace as students, and they undergo a rigorous training program. And after their training is complete toward the end of that chapter, we find that they, in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. Thus, Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

Now, you notice at the end of chapter 1 that there is sort of a lifting of the gaze up beyond the moment, and looking throughout the career of Daniel. This is a helpful observation to make, because a question is raised in our minds as we begin chapter 2. If Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are serving before the king, and in all matters of wisdom and understanding they are ten times better than anyone else, then why, in chapter 2, when Nebuchadnezzar has his dream, does he not immediately call Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in and say, OK, you fellows that are ten times better, this is a tough nut to crack, I need your help. Instead, Nebuchadnezzar, at the beginning of chapter 2 here, in the second year of his reign, he has dreams.

Now, this is a clue. When were the four Hebrew children, as they are sometimes called, when were they brought into the court of Nebuchadnezzar? It's in the first year of his reign, right? He just has come to power. He started out as the general and so on.

He went down there and attacked and tangled with Pharaoh, Necho, and one thing and another, and now he's back. So, how far into his time on the throne are we at the beginning of chapter 2? We're in the second year of his reign. So, this is early.

How long do you think the university education of Daniel and the three friends is going to take before they graduate and receive the recognition and the interview from the king that is found

at the end of chapter 1? I would suggest to you that the events of verses 18 through 21 actually occurred after chapter 2. Otherwise, why does Nebuchadnezzar not initially call for Daniel? A university education in all of the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans isn't going to be squeezed into a few months. Does that not make sense? In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, chapter 2, verse 1, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and besieged it in chapter 1, verse 1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. So, it's only been a year from the time he went down and took the captives until he has the dream.

It's been one year. But to be trained in all the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans, you can't do that in a year or less. Right? You would expect that it would have been near the end of Nebuchadnezzar's first year that he would have gotten everybody back.

Right? So, it's hardly feasible that the events of verses 18 through 21 would have taken place before the second year of Nebuchadnezzar in which he has this dream. I think this is the explanation of why Nebuchadnezzar calls all of the wise men and astrologers in chapter 2, verse 2, the sorcerers, the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. Now, who are the Chaldeans? People who live in Chaldea.

In Hebrew, this is the Kasdim, K-A-S-D-I-M, Kasdim. And yet here, it seems to specifically refer to a class of experts in some field. They are lumped in with magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers.

So, how can this be? How can the Chaldeans be inhabitants of Chaldea? We have other passages I could take you to where it says, for example, Belshazzar was the king of the Chaldeans. Well, he's not just the king of the wise men. He's the king of the entire realm of Chaldea.

Well, I was curious about this, and I did a little research, and Dr. Gleason Archer has a good answer. This is why I keep his Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties on my shelf. And Archer points out that the answer is to be found in the etymology of this word.

Now, this isn't particularly edifying, it's just interesting, so I'll go through it rather quickly. But in the ancient Sumerian language, these people were called the Galdu, G-A-L-D-U. And that was the name of the ancient wise men.

The ancient people were the Khazdim, or the Khazdu. And you see there's just the difference of an S and an L. Well, as language drifted in the later days, when you start speaking the language that was current in Babylonian days, when you start speaking Aramaic, this drifted. And what had been an L became an S. And so you had both the wise men and the people of the nation called the Khazdu.

Well, then in the Neo-Babylonian reforms, down in the days of Darius and so on, they said, oh, we want to go back and restore the old ways and the old pronunciations. And so anytime they found an S before a dental, you know, you have labials and dentals in terms of sounds you

make in language, and they said, you know, there's been a pattern here that when we had an L in front of a dental, Khazdu, people changed it to an S, and now everybody says Khazdu. Well, let's change it back to the old way and go back to Khazdu.

Well, they did this legitimately for the name of the wise men, and they did it legitimately for the name of the people, and illegitimately for the name of the wise men. Anyway, that's how the words got confused. It was in a changeover and then a retrovert back.

And two things that were different sounded the same, and then both got changed back to the same. And this is why the Greeks didn't fall for the S thing. The Khazdim and the Chaldioi, if you go to the Greeks, the Greeks got their name for the Chaldean people before the Neo-Babylonian reforms, and this helps us in kind of an obscure way establish the date of Daniel as being old.

We'll talk more about the date of the book of Daniel at another time. But, of course, liberal scholarship and atheists and everyone else who doesn't believe in the inspiration and the predictive power of prophecy have to try to get Daniel to be a late book. Why? It predicts the empires of the Medes and the Persians, followed by the Greeks, followed by the Romans, and it predicts the time of the Messiah in the prophecy of the 69 weeks and the 70th week, and predictive prophecy can't happen in the real world, so you have to move the date of Daniel down to the time of the Maccabees, or later if you possibly can, so that it can be looking back and pretending to be prophetic.

Well, there are innumerable difficulties with this, because the image that Nebuchadnezzar dreams about here that we're about to study clearly predicts the Roman Empire. There's no way around it. It's the Romans.

Well, the Roman Empire had not taken over Judea until like 63 BC. Pompey comes in and takes Judea, so any date before that, even in the days of the Maccabees, which is like 170 BC, 100 years before Pompey, even if you move Daniel down to that, he's still predicting the Roman Empire 100 years before it comes over and takes Judea. I mean, it is to laugh.

It just really gives them no end of difficulty. So then they said, well, let's just say that we can't make up our minds about that evidence. Let's look at the language of the book.

The language is full of language that could only be late. It couldn't be early. Well, that argument carried a lot of weight and was very popular all the way until about 1954.

And in the 1950s, one of the biggest episodes in the history of textual criticism took place when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. And the Dead Sea Scrolls contained things like the Genesis Apocryphon, which is from the time of the Maccabees. That's when it was written.

There's no doubt, there's unanimous scholarly consensus that these documents in the Dead Sea Caves were written down and in many cases composed in that century before Christ or second century before Christ. Well, so now you've got an exemplar of language from that time.

And when you compare it to Daniel, guess what? Daniel's Aramaic is manifestly older and his Aramaic is manifestly non-Palestinian.

In Daniel's Aramaic, the verb tends to occur near the end of the sentence. That's a Chaldean pattern. That's a Babylonish pattern.

It does not occur in the Dead Sea Scrolls Aramaic where the verb tends to go up toward the front. And there's dozens of other examples. In fact, Dr. Archer has written several scholarly articles on this that have been published in various journals and book collections of essays and so on where he documents this and basically ends up saying the theory of a late date for the composition of Daniel has been demolished.

No scholar can remain intellectually honest and hold that position. The language is against it. The vocabulary is against it.

The clear interpretation, the people who accept a late date have to try to say, oh no, the vision that we're about to look at in chapter 2 is Babylon, Medes, then Persians, and then Greece. And there's no Rome in it. They have to distort and they have to change the clear meaning of the text because they can't have the Romans showing up because it just blows the theory out of the water.

And regardless of what they do, they can't get around the 70 weeks prophecy and they have to ascribe that to sheer coincidence. So, it is to laugh. Daniel was written when Daniel was born.

All of the manuscript evidence, the text critical evidence points to a date of composition in the 5th to 6th century BC. This is precisely when Daniel lived. And it is predictive.

It proves that scripture is inspired, that God does see the future and foretell the future. He says over in Isaiah, what other God is there like me that tells you what's going to happen before it happens? Anyway, that's just a little introduction to chapter 2 here. In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Daniel and his classmates have not yet graduated.

This is the theory I would like to offer to you. I just don't think you can learn all the wisdom of the Chaldeans in less than a year. So, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

Have you ever had a dream like this? You startle awake in the middle of the night, you had a dream. It's an odd thing. I don't know if it was a result of studying this or not.

But as many of you know, I virtually never dream and remember. They say everybody dreams. But I wake up and I have no memory, no recollection of having dreamed at all.

Last night, I had a vivid, three-dimensional, full-color dream. I just remember bits and pieces of it. I'm sort of ashamed to tell you this.

It was a dream about boxing with Kelsey Grammer. I don't know why. I haven't seen Fraser in a

year.

I don't know why. But it was Kelsey Grammer and he was a boxer. And there were stuffed pictures of his face on the wall so that they were three-dimensional.

And they were padded. And I was warming up by punching these stuffed faces on the wall. I don't know why other than just illustration purposes for our study on dreams this morning.

But it was pretty bizarre. And I wasn't troubled enough by it that my sleep left me. But it is a little troubling.

I don't understand why. I don't know if it's his resemblance to Bozo the Clown or Scary Clowns as a theme. I'll have to psychoanalyze it later.

But Nebuchadnezzar had this dream and it really troubled him. It was deeply troubling. We comfort children when they wake up in the middle of the night and they've had a nightmare.

And they can't get back to sleep. They're afraid. Generally, the troubled nature of it is fear.

It's not like some detail of it is just an unsolvable puzzle. It engenders fear. It engenders an emotional response.

Well, let's talk a little bit about dreams in the Bible. If I was an old-style ICE pastor, I would say this is the doctrine of dreams. Dreams in the Bible actually are relatively rare.

The Bible does not assign a great deal of importance to dreams. When you look at the weight of Scripture, we remember some real outstanding occasions. But generally speaking, the use of dreams as a significant factor is somewhat rare.

You have many more appearances by angels or voices from heaven or other modes of communication. Visions in a daytime waking state such as Ezekiel experiences. A nighttime vision or dream is relatively unusual.

So when they do occur, what can we derive from it? Why would God choose, in other words, to communicate through a dream rather than sending an angel or a prophet or some other communication? Well, there are basically two categories of revelation-type dreams in Scripture. And that's the ones we're talking about. Now, dreams are mentioned in the Bible in other ways.

Dreams can be a metaphor for something that vanishes away quickly, like a vapor. You find this in the book of Job, chapter 20 and verse 8, where life is but a dream. Shaboom, shaboom, or whatever.

It's here, it's gone, it quickly passes. Same thing in Psalm 73 20, Psalm 90 verse 5, Isaiah 29 7. It's just used as an illustration of that which is temporary, ephemeral, insubstantial. It seemed real at the time, but it really wasn't.

But we're interested in dreams as revelation. There are two categories. If you look dreams up in your International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, the new edition, they affirm this distinction as well.

Two kinds of dreams that reveal. They are either a message-type of dream, sort of an auditory dream where somebody is speaking and saying the text of the message. Or it's a visual type of dream that communicates the message in images or symbols and it requires interpretation.

You can think of examples of this. The wise men in Matthew are warned in a dream to don't go back to Herod. Joseph is warned in a dream to flee.

These seem to have been the auditory type of dream. The visual kind, Joseph, the sheaves bowing, the sun, moon, and stars doing obeisance and so on, requires interpretation. But dreams are associated in Scripture with prophecy, both true and false prophecy.

Just because it's a dream and just because it seems to have symbolic significance doesn't mean that it's a valid prophecy. In fact, most of the references in the Old Testament to prophetic dreaming are of the false variety. The true variety you find in Numbers 12.

Hear now my words, if there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, I speak to him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses, he is faithful in all my house, I speak to him face to face. So God says there are prophets to whom I communicate by way of a dream.

Same thing in Joel 2.28, your old men will see visions, your young men will dream dreams, and so on. In the days when the Spirit is poured out on God's people. False communication in dreams is detailed in Deuteronomy chapter 13.

We have several references there, verse 1, verse 3, and verse 5. If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and if it comes to pass, saying let us go after other gods, let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. The Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart or not. You shall walk after the Lord your God, that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God.

So, it is not the means of delivery, it is the content that has to be judged. That's our first principle of application from this doctrine of dreams. Because dreams were a means of communication of the word of God.

But not all dreams communicate the word of God. And you cannot judge the accuracy of it by the fact that it came from a dream. It has to be, does the content align with what is already known from God's word? This is true today.

What is our modern analog to communication from God by dreams? Dreams were used in the

days when written revelation was virtually non-existent. God had to impart information that was not contained in the existing written revelation by some means. And he had a variety of channels of communication open to him, one of which is dreams.

But just because someone dreams a dream doesn't mean it's accurate. What is our method today? The word of God is complete. God hasn't seen fit to add to it in 2,000 years.

Everything we need to know can be found in the complete record of revelation that we find in the scriptures. There's a great study you can do on canonicity. How were the books chosen? I would amend that language and say, how were they recognized? Because there are clear marks of recognition for the books of the Bible.

Just as there were clear marks of recognition for a valid vision or a valid dream. Lots of people had dreams. Lots of people claimed their dreams were from God.

But the people were enjoined by God in Deuteronomy 13 to look at the dream and figure out if it was really from God or not. And the way to discern a false one was to find that it distracted people away from the worship of God instead of promoting it. This is true in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books that were excluded from the canon of scripture.

When you read those books, they are manifestly... Anyone with a lick of sense can tell that there are good and valid reasons why those books were not recognized. Were there disputed books in the early days of the church? People thought some books ought to be in, some books ought to be out. I was re-reading the book of the Wisdom of Solomon this past week.

I had read it back in seminary and had written a paper on the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books such as Enoch. Wisdom is one of the better candidates. Some of the early church fathers thought the book of Wisdom ought to be in there.

But the book of Wisdom... By the way, the Catholics, when they stuck it in their Bible, trimmed the title. Because the original title was the Wisdom of Solomon. They said, well, we'll chop Solomon off and just call it the Book of Wisdom.

It's the Wisdom of Solomon because the book claims Solomonic authorship. It says, I, Solomon, wrote this book. Well, that's a little tough because the book also quotes Isaiah.

It's written... You may remember that Solomon was several hundred years before Isaiah. It would be pretty tough for him to quote Isaiah. Not only quoting Isaiah, but quoting Isaiah from the Septuagintal Greek.

Because the author knows no Hebrew and knows only late Greek. Alexandrian Greek, to be precise. Anybody with a first or second year proficiency in Greek can look at the Greek of the book of Wisdom and see that it is Alexandrian.

It quotes the Septuagint. And therefore... And the word order and so forth. It's easy to tell when

Greek has been put there as a translation of Hebrew.

Because there are certain classic Hebrew phrases and things. You find them in the Septuagint, all over the place. The Septuagint is a Greek translation from the Hebrew.

And you can see Hebraisms that have been rendered literally into Greek because the translator didn't fully understand them. There's none of that in the book of Wisdom. Except where it's quoting Isaiah.

And it quotes it word for word. To make a long story short, the book has a manifest, egregious mistake in it. An error.

An impossibility. That would not be inspired scripture. It also has a polemic that you can't very well ascribe to Solomon.

Solomon was a wise man. Solomon said a lot of things. Read his Proverbs.

Read Ecclesiastes. What you don't find Solomon harping on endlessly is boo on idolatry. Why? Solomon himself was guilty as sin of idolatry.

He married a bunch of women and set up their little family gods for them. And their national gods. Solomon would have been remarkable for doing this and then turning around and spending half of a book condemning idolatry.

Which is what the book of Wisdom does. So anyway, it is to laugh. It's not inspired.

Similar criticisms can be brought against all of the other books that were excluded. The point here is, God expects his people to recognize the content of Revelation as from him. It will have a characteristic.

It will have an authenticity. It will have the fingerprints and the characteristics of God. God doesn't make mistakes.

God doesn't forget Hebrew, etc. So the same principle that we see here as we study dreams in Scripture applies as you and I look around for Revelation today. People say, well, how do you know that the Bible is God's word and it's not the Bhagavad Gita or the words of Confucius or the Koran isn't Allah and the God of Israel the same guy? Didn't Abraham link those two together? Look, God says if you're a child of God, you ought to know the difference.

That's what Deuteronomy 13 says. A prophet or dreamer of dreams gives you a sign or wonder, even if that sign or wonder comes true, if he's calling you to something other than worship of God, it's bogus. So, get rid of him.

Jeremiah 23.25 also talks about false dreaming. Jeremiah 23.25 I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, God says, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed, they are prophets

of the deceit of their own heart who try to make my people forget my name by their dreams, which everyone tells his neighbor, just as their fathers forgot my name for Baal.

The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream, and he who has my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, says the Lord? Is not my word like a fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? One of my favorite verses. Jeremiah 23.29 Remember in our Psalm 1 rehearsal this morning, the wicked are like the chaff.

Well, the dreams of the false prophets are chaff. They have no transforming power. So this is a means of recognition.

God's word has power. Now this is a subjective evaluation, isn't it? There are people who think Kabbalah has power. There are people who think the Koran has power.

There are people who think that various philosophical constructs have transforming power. I can hum to myself. I can repeat my mantra over and over, and that gives me power.

I can do yoga, and that gives me power. Well, the transformation of the human heart is impossible except by divine power. You can mask it.

You can redirect it. You can obfuscate it. You can suppress it.

But you can't change it except with the power of God. Now you know and I know when we look in our hearts when we have had a transformation and when we haven't. And it's between us and God.

If we're trying some human solution, it doesn't last. It's impermanent. It is like a dream that vanishes away.

Permanent change, permanent peace, peace that passes understanding, permanent shifting of values only takes place through the power of the word of God. There's no human equivalent. So these dreams that come have to be judged, have to be evaluated.

Now, we talked about the two different categories, the ones that are speaking dreams where the message is clearly laid out and ones where it's in symbolic language and needs interpretation. Isn't the word of God that we have today the very same way? When you look at the word of God, thou shalt not murder doesn't really require a lot of deep insight. It doesn't require a lot of extended thought.

Thou shalt not murder. It's not thou shalt not kill, it's thou shalt not murder. This means you don't, for self-centered motives, go take someone's life.

Killing in combat, capital punishment are not done for self-centered motives. They are done in obedience to the principles of the word of God. But we have clear statements of scripture.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart. Love your neighbor as yourself. Think on the things

that are true and lovely and noble and of good report.

Encourage one another unto love and good works. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. We have lots of declaratory communication in God's word, don't we? Well, there were dreams of this nature.

And it was recognized that God would communicate in this way. Clear back in the days of David and Saul. You go, for example, to 1 Samuel chapter 28 and verse 6. Saul saw the army of the Philistines.

Remember, this is before the battle of Mount Gilboa. So, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. When he inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

These were the expected channels of communication. He thought, well, surely God will give me an answer by one of these three standard means. Well, God didn't.

Why? Why didn't God answer Saul? The spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul because of his disobedience. God had rejected him from being king over Israel. And God told him so by one of these other channels.

By a prophet, the prophet Samuel. And he had cut himself off from divine revelation. And he was headed into disaster.

And the way ahead was clouded with thick mist and darkness because insight from God was not available to him. The same thing happens to us today. If we are apathetic, if we are indifferent, if we go our own way and do not acknowledge God's place in our life, we will find ourselves stumbling around in the dark.

Seeking and not finding. Asking and not receiving. Knocking and no door opens.

What a frustrating and unhappy life that is. Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him. And yet you have all these promises.

Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me. And yet Saul is not a recipient of the fulfillment of that promise.

Why? He has put himself out of the place of blessing and of provision from God. So it was expected that dreams would be a means of communication in Saul's day. You find the same thing down in verse 15 of that same chapter.

Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? Saul answered, I am deeply distressed. The Philistines make war against me. God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams.

Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do. Of course Samuel

answers and says, Why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? The Lord has done for himself as he spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor David.

Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. Well, the type of dream that we're talking about here, the auditory or message form where it's clear and the meaning is plain, is exemplified back in Genesis chapter 20. You remember when Abram goes to the south and dwells in Gerar.

Or Gerar, actually there's no J sound in Hebrew, but it's Gerar. He goes down to Gerar, Abraham says of Sarah his wife, she is my sister. And Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah.

Brought her in, he's lining her up to join the harem. God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, Genesis 20, verse 3. And said to him, indeed you are a dead man. I cannot think of a dream that would rob you of sleep more quickly than God coming to you and saying you're a dead man.

Because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near her, in parentheses, yet. And he said, Lord, will you slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, she is my sister? You've got to give Abimelech credit.

I mean, he speaks up. And he says, how was I supposed to know? She herself said, he is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands have I done this.

Isn't it amazing that a heathen can justify himself before God where Abram cannot. What a condemnation of the man of God that this heathen king can justify himself before the God of the universe and the man who has the greatest covenant promise of all time cannot stand before God because he's not trusting in Him. He's trying to invent his own deliverance.

I'll protect myself. I'll get by. I'll navigate this circumstance by telling this lie.

So, verse 6, God said to him in a dream. Sounds like this was almost a subsequent dream. Maybe one night Abimelech dreams this and God says, you're a dead man.

He says, I did this in the integrity of my heart. And then God said to him in a dream, Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against me.

Therefore, I did not let you touch her. Maybe he came down with stomach flu or something. That night he was supposed to rotate her through the harem duties.

Now, therefore, restore the man's wife for he is a prophet and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours. This is a classic text message dream.

Abimelech doesn't have to call the diviners, doesn't have to say, have you got somebody that

can figure this out for me? I don't know what it means. It's just clear as glass. And it condemns the man of God who doesn't know the truth that it contains.

And it vindicates the man who does. Scripture for us is the very same way. Well, we need to pause for our break at this point.

As I mentioned, our study of dreams here is a clear set of principles that apply equally to our understanding and application of the word of God. We get it from the pages of a book. We get it from the lips of a teacher or preacher or someone else who is a faithful communicator.

But we have the same responsibility to recognize that it is of God and the same responsibility to live in its light as people did in olden days when it came through the mechanism of dreams or prophets or Urim and Thummim. Well, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll continue our study of dreams in the Bible.