

Daniel 05-10-09b

Let's continue our study now in the book of Daniel. We're taking a look at chapter 2 where Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. We've paused to familiarize ourselves with what the Bible has to say about dreams.

We've already seen that dreams can be used to simply represent something that's insubstantial and ephemeral. It goes without saying. We have the same concept coming down to us in English.

Row, row, row your boat. Life is but a dream. We also have the idea that sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between a dream and reality.

Sometimes things can seem too good to be true. Pinch me, I must be dreaming. And this is actually a concept found in the Bible.

You can go to Psalm 126, verse 1, where the people who have come back from captivity, come back from the Babylonian captivity that we're studying, are rejoicing and joyful. And they sing this song as they climb the hillside up to the rebuilt temple. And they say, When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue was singing. So sometimes it sort of blurs the line. Same thing in Isaiah chapter 29, in verse 8. It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams, and look, he eats.

But he awakes, and his soul is still empty. Or as when a thirsty man dreams, and look, he drinks. But he awakes, and indeed he is faint, and his soul still craves.

So the multitude of all the nations shall be who fight against Mount Zion. They're going to think that they have successfully attacked Zion. They're going to think that they have prevailed.

But they're going to wake up and find out that their desire was unfulfilled. They did not, in fact, snuff out the people of God. They did not, in fact, prevail.

It was just a dream. It was a delusion, so to speak. Finally, in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul isn't sure about the status of the person who observes things in the third heaven.

Whether he's talking about himself or the Lord Jesus. We've talked about it being either way. But he says, I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago, whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows, such in one was caught up to the third heaven.

Was it a dream? Was it real? Paul says, I can't say. But he was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. And we have several examples of things being revealed in the course of a dream or a vision that are prohibited from

being expressed to a later viewing audience.

Daniel is told to seal up certain things that he hears. John hears the seven thunders speak and he's told, don't write it down. And Paul is told not to utter these inexpressible words.

And he says he's not going to boast about it either. Solomon, of whom we spoke earlier, mentions a dream in Ecclesiastes chapter 5. He starts that chapter by saying, walk prudently when you go to the house of God. Draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools.

For they do not know that they do evil. I'm just giving you the New King James here. Do not be rash with your mouth.

Let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

For a dream comes through much activity and a fool's voice by his many words. And when we went through Ecclesiastes verse by verse, you remember that we talked about the fact that here is a man who is supposed to be going to the place of worship to receive ideas, to receive the content of thought and what should be focused upon, what ought to be the substance of values and goals and priorities. Instead, he's taking his dream.

I have a dream. I'm going to go down there and try to make my dream come true. This is the theme of a lot of literature and movies and so on.

The sound of music, climb every mountain, board every stream, wander around in every valley until you find your dream or however that goes. I don't remember the words, something like that. But do this, that and the other until you find your dream.

And innumerable pieces of entertainment are all about oh, you know, pursue your dream. Well, what if your dream is goofy? What if it's unachievable and unattainable? What if you're naturally hefty and you want to be a ballerina? I mean, it's just not going to happen for you. I mean, I would love to be a great runner.

I'm not built to be a great runner. I've never been fast. I wasn't fast when I was young, not fast when I'm old.

People run by me and it annoys me to no end. And I could dream, oh, I'm going to be a great runner. I'm going to run half marathons.

It's never going to happen for me. I am slow of foot. It's just the way I am.

And I could dream about tripping lightly down the path all I want. It's not going to happen. I cannot play linebacker.

I cannot play guard or tackle on a football team. I mean, look at me. I would be creamed in one play and be in the hospital the rest of my life.

I could dream about being a lineman all I want. It's not going to happen. So, you know, all of this idea about pursue your dream, well, that's fine.

But make sure your dream has some achievability, that it's realistic, and that it's not goofy. There are people who can't hold a tune, who can't hit a note, that dream about being singers. I mean, I've seen the commercials for American Idol.

I've never watched the program. But the commercials alone show you a five-second clip of somebody slaughtering some piece of music and everybody wincing. And these people have gone on the show ostensibly to get a recording contract.

Well, their dream is nonsense. It's not going to happen. Unless you can pull another Milli Vanilli and get somebody else to do the singing.

Natalie Wood thought she was a decent singer. But when she made her movie about West Side Story, somebody else had to do the singing because she just couldn't cut the mustard as a singer. So the whole idea of the man in Ecclesiastes 5 who has a big dream, I'm going to win the world for Christ by the year 2000.

I don't know if you remember or if you moved in the circles that I did back in the 80s and 90s. But there was a huge, huge movement afoot. We are going to evangelize the world.

We're going to have the Bible in every language by the year 2000. Missionary on every corner. They had a name, I forget, World Vision 2000 or some such thing.

Well, have you heard of it lately? Didn't happen. Is it World Vision 2010 now or World Vision 2020? You can see World Vision 2020. Now that would be a good name.

World Vision 2020. Give yourself plenty of time. Scroll off the scene before it ever gets fulfilled.

But a dream comes through much activity. A fool's voice is known by as many words. We straightened out the translation of this and talked about the fact that you don't take your dreams to God and tell Him to fulfill them.

You go to God and find out what you're supposed to be setting as a goal and a value and a priority. That's what the Word of God gives us. Now, it hurts our pride a little bit that we don't get to go tell God what we want.

God tells us what He wants. But there's this little thing called creator versus creation, of redeemer versus redeemed. And if you would like to assert your rights to God and say, you know, I have the right to certain things and I want you to make them happen, well, feel free to take that up with Him.

I'm not going to encourage you down that road. And if you do go down that road, let me know so that I can stand well away. Dreams are good when they come from God to the listener in the Old Testament, in the early New Testament.

God would communicate. And you don't have instances of someone, oh, you know, David is out there amongst the sheep. Oh, Lord, I had a dream where I was on the throne and all the people were in peace and all the enemies were vanquished round about.

And oh, Lord, please help this dream come true. No, David was out there tending the sheep, trusting in God, composing psalms, living his life before the Lord, thinking about what he heard when he would go down to Bethlehem and hear the Word of God taught by whoever was able to teach it at the time. And he meditated on it in the night watches.

He looked up in the heavens and considered God and what is man that they are mindful of him and so on. He meditated in the law of his God day and night. God brought him the mission.

God brought him the dream. God sent the prophet to him to anoint him, a man after his own heart, to be the deliverer and the king of Israel in that day. So we have to kind of get the flow of information straight.

It's from God to us. It's not, God, let me tell you what the plan is and here's how I expect you to fulfill it. I mean, it's a little bit of hubris there.

So, God takes no pleasure in fools. It goes on to say in Ecclesiastes chapter 5, and it is foolish and it is a rash thing to commit with our mouth to try to tell God his business. You know, this is one of the things that gets a parent's dander up when the parent says, okay, this is how the cow is going to eat the cabbage.

And the child comes back and says, oh, but, but, but. And you say, hey, wait a minute. Who's the child and who's the parent here? I'm the parent and this is what I'm saying.

So cease and desist from your protestations and carry out the plan or bad things will follow. Well, God rightfully has a similar attitude toward us. If he can hang the stars in space, if he can manage the angelic civilization, the angelic fall, human history for six or seven thousand years, I think he's got our place in his plan figured out and we need to be still and know that he is God.

So do not be rash with your mouth. Let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, Solomon says.

Therefore, let your words be few. You don't have to agonize with long wordy prayers. Jesus said the Pharisees do that and people watching them is their entire reward.

It doesn't get any higher than their turban. A dream is the effort of man. It's a lot of effort on man's part.

A fool's voice is manifest in many words. It doesn't take many words. Lord, I'm asking, I'm seeking, and I'm knocking.

I'm claiming your promise. Show me your way. And then we go look in his word and we cultivate the ministry of his spirit.

Well, dreams. They are primarily seen in three places. They tend to show up frequently three times in Scripture.

Kind of the beginning, the middle, and the end. The beginning is in Genesis. Last half of Genesis, basically chapters 20 through 40, you find a lot of dreaming going on.

Daniel, our passage, first half of this book, there's a lot of dreaming going on. And then the first chapter of Matthew. Wise men are having dreams.

Joseph is having dreams. Dreams all over the place. And these are all significant episodes in the history of the nation of Israel, aren't they? You have the nation of Israel being born in the last half of Genesis.

And there's guidance involved in that for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. You have the nation nearly extinct during the Babylonian captivity. If they don't come back from Babylon, there is no Israel.

There is no Jerusalem. There is no Judah. There is no future for the people of God if there's not a return from captivity.

Who is minding the store during the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity? Who's in Jerusalem? Who's in the land? Nobody to speak of. It's scattered. It's dissolved.

It's torn asunder. If there isn't some sort of coherent reestablishing of the kingdom of Judah, the people of Judah, after that captivity, it's basically over. This is as close as you ever find the extinction of the people of God in Scripture, is during the Babylonian captivity.

There is nobody left in the land that has any power or any cohesion. It's just scattered remnants. And so you have a lot of dreaming going on, particularly in the case of Ezekiel, particularly in the case of Daniel.

And then finally, at the culmination of Israel's history, the coming of the Messiah, you have a lot of dreams going on at his birth. We mentioned that there are two basic kinds, just as there are two basic classes of Scripture. You have the declaratory, the epistolary, the expository type of Scripture that basically tells us what it wants to say.

And you have the symbolic passages, which can either be prophetically symbolic or the narratives, in many cases, where there's not big teaching points being made. We just have the stories in Genesis. We have the stories in Exodus.

We have the stories in the book of Judges and Joshua. We have the stories in Samuel and Kings and Chronicles. There's not a lot of application.

There's not a lot of didactic, as they call it, teaching type of Scripture that sort of wags its finger at you and says, now see this? That's why you should do thus and so. You have to derive it. You have to glean it.

You have to discern it from what is in the story. And so that is more the symbolic, the imagery, the visual type of communication. You see the story of David and Goliath? It's a little kid who slings a rock and knocks a big guy down.

Okay, is that all there is in the story? You have to look beyond that and see the timeless principles. Well, the same thing with these visual kinds of dreams. We've talked about the fact that you have these two kinds of dreams.

It speaks in general terms of the two kinds of revelation that any people receive from God. Declaratory, didactic, messages straight out, no real interpretation required. And you have these that do require some thought, some meditation, some interpretation.

Sometimes you've got to get outside help to make sense of it. The auditory ones, we looked at Abimelech in Genesis chapter 20 where God comes to him on at least one occasion, looks more like two, and just tells him exactly what the situation is with Abram. Same thing with Laban.

You remember the whole interaction between Jacob and Laban? He goes up there and he works seven years for Rachel, but he gets Leah. He works seven more years and finally gets Rachel. Then he stays another period of time.

You've got the striped sticks and the cattle and all the rest of that. Then Jacob says, I'm bugging out. And he leaves and Rachel steals the teraphim, the symbols of authority, the markers of ownership and inheritance from the house of Laban.

And Laban, when he comes back and finds out that Jacob has skied out, he says, I'm going to go pursue him and bring the stuff back. Well, so he pursues him for a week. Genesis 31-32, Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled.

Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night and said to him, Be careful that you speak to Jacob, neither good nor bad. Auditory communication from God to Laban the Syrian.

Why is he called the Syrian? Why is Laban called the Syrian? He's not in the line of Jacob, is he? He's not under the covenant. All Israel is not Israel, and Isaac shall thy seed be called. Speak to Jacob, neither good nor bad.

You have another instance of this with King Solomon in 1 Kings 3-5. Solomon, of course, is trying in his early days to walk in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places. This is why I submit to you he did not write the book of wisdom that you find in the Catholic Bible, because that book excoriates, brutally condemns, idolatry in any form, and Solomon from the start burned incense on the high places.

So the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there. This is 1 Kings 3-4. For that was the great high place.

Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, Ask, what shall I give you? And he had that whole conversation. Solomon says, You've shown great mercy to my father.

He walked before you in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart. You've continued this great kindness for him. You've given him a son to sit on his throne.

Lord, you have made your servant king instead of my father David. I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.

Your servant is in the midst of your people whom you've chosen. Give to your servant an understanding heart to judge your people that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours? The speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

God said to him, Because you have asked this thing and have not asked long life or riches or for the life of your enemies, but you've asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words. I have done. It's a done deal.

It's already accomplished. See, I have given you a wise and understanding heart so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked, riches and honor, no one like you among the kings all your days.

If you walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days. So, auditory communication from God in this passage. You go on down to verse 15.

Solomon awoke and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, made a feast for all his servants. He was at the high place making a thousand offerings.

God comes and God does not rebuke him. God says, ask what it is you want me to do. Solomon says, give me a wise heart.

God gives him a wise heart. So, what does he do? He leaves the high place and goes back to Jerusalem and stands in front of the ark to offer his offerings, which is what anybody with a wise heart would do. So, you can see in his first official act after this dream that he has indeed received this wise judgment.

Immediately after that you have the dividing of the baby, the famous story of Solomon. If you, in that same book, go down to chapter 9 and verse 2, 1 Kings chapter 9, Solomon finishes building the temple. The Lord appeared to him the second time as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.

How did he appear to him at Gibeon? In a dream. The Lord said to him, I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before me. I have consecrated this house which you have built for my name, and so on.

You can read that whole chapter. Long conversation there between God and Solomon. But, once again, this is in a dream.

It is a communication dream. Solomon does not have to sit and use his wisdom to decipher or decode symbolic language. This corresponds, as I have pointed out now many times, to the clear passages of Scripture that we have in our Bible.

People are fond of saying, Oh, that Bible, it is hard to figure out. It is hard to understand. What is hard to understand about love the Lord your God? What is hard to understand about trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding? What is hard to understand about thou shalt have no other gods before me? What is hard to understand about dozens and dozens of clear passages that say that a believer ought to dedicate his life to pleasing God? That is why we are here.

There is no other reason to be breathing good air, if you are a believer, than to be striving to be pleasing in God's sight and to reflect the glory of Christ who died to save us. There is nothing obscure or difficult about that. But, of course, people don't want to accept the clear message, and so they want to constantly say, Well, but I see a contradiction over here where the big basin that Solomon made is said to be three times as far around as it is across, and that violates the value of pi.

So, there is an inaccuracy in the Bible. Oh, I see. And the whole weight of the message of the Bible is thrown out the window because the Bible seems to give a rounded off value for pi.

That's your excuse? You're going to stand before God on judgment day and say, Well, you know, it was the pi thing. I just couldn't handle three times as much around as it is across. I just couldn't get past that.

It just threw the whole thing into doubt for me. Clear communication in the Word of God. This is far more tangible for us than any dream where God spoke.

And yet, we seem to have even less ability to believe it sometimes than the people who were the recipients of these dreams. Joseph, the adoptive father, if you will, of the Lord Jesus. Matthew chapter 1. Mary was betrothed to Joseph.

She's found with child of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, being a just man, not wanting to make her a public example, this is Matthew 1, 19 and 20, was minded to put her away secretly, but while he thought about these things, notice he's a good man. He actually thinks before he acts.

He's thinking about these things. Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream,

saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bring forth a son.

You shall call his name Jesus. He will save his people from their sins. The next chapter, Matthew chapter 2 and verse 13.

The wise men come to the house, not the stable, not the cave. The wise men come to the house and see the young child with Mary, his mother, up in verse 11. They fall down to worship, present the gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Then verse 12, being divinely warned in a dream that they should return not to Herod, they departed from their own country another way. God says, don't go back to Herod. Then verse 13, when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, arise, take the young child, his mother, flee to Egypt.

Verse 19, when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. Arise, take the young child and his mother, go to the land of Israel. So he arose, took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside to the region of Galilee, came and dwelt in Nazareth. Fulfill the words spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene.

So extensive guidance of Joseph through dreams, God speaking to him in dreams, as well as the wise men. You wonder why the wise men come following the star, but they leave following the instructions of a dream. It seems like it would have been a lot easier.

Where is he born, king of the Jews? God could have given them a dream that said go to Bethlehem. They wouldn't have seen Herod. Herod wouldn't have killed all the children.

You say, why did God let the wise men wander around and bump into Herod? And Herod says, what time did the star appear? And then he issues the edict and all these innocent little babies die because God left them bumbling around following the star. Well, He gave them a dream afterward and said, don't go back to Herod. Why didn't He give them a dream beforehand and say, don't go to Herod? Looking for the king.

It gives us some insight and perspective into the way God views the human race. Things that we think are unutterably tragic, like the death, the voice heard in Ramah, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted. All of these children, two years old and under, that are put to the sword.

The edict that God gave to Joshua and the Israelites when they went into the land of Canaan. Men, kill them, kill them all. Men, women, children.

Kill them all. This is the Jefferson Bible. We want to cut that part out.

We don't want to attribute that kind of cruelty to God. How can God condemn the Canaanites for sacrificing their children to Molech when He turns around and tells the people of Israel to go in and kill those very same children? What kind of sense does that make? Well, to the unenlightened, unspiritual mind, it doesn't make any sense at all. To us, we recognize that with God, these deaths, the death of the two years old and under children, are a minor and temporary absence.

These children are all coming back. And they're going to live in a far better time than the stricken times under Roman rule in which they would have grown up. They're going to come back in the Millennial Kingdom.

It says in Isaiah that the Lord Jesus is going to return leading His sheep with the lambs in His arms. And there are going to be children who play around the snake nest and who are leading the lion and the lamb and so on. There will be no danger to them.

Where do these children come from? Well, they pick up right where they left off. They were snuffed out in their early life. They're going to pick right back up and they'll come to maturity in the Millennial Kingdom.

To God, it's just a taxi ride for them. It's just a relocation. It isn't tragic in God's eyes the way it is in the eyes of people.

And people who are of faith, certainly you grieve when you lose a loved one. Certainly you sorrow at the loss of a life that you had hoped to observe and you have a child. It's a grievous tragedy in our minds.

But we at least ought to take comfort in God's perspective that nothing is irreversible. Nothing is unable to be rectified by the power of God. And in many cases, when God rectifies it, it is going to be better than it was at the beginning.

Job loses all ten of his children, doesn't he? They're adults. They're young adults. They're in the prime of their life.

There doesn't appear to be any grandchildren on the scene at the point that calamity comes and wipes them all out. Seven sons, three daughters, snuffed out all on the same day in one massive calamity. And yet, God gives Job and Mrs. Job, amazingly, after her words, curse God and die, seven new sons and three new daughters.

Everything else Job gets back is doubled. But that is single. It's a replacement of the same number.

Why? Why doesn't he have fourteen sons and six daughters? Because he's still got the first seven sons and the first three daughters. They are still his. He's just got to wait a while to see

them again.

And when he gets into the resurrection, why, he'll have all fourteen sons and all six daughters. So, the warning that God gives to the wise men on the way out wasn't given in advance because God's ways are perfect. His ways are higher than our ways.

And when it is time for specific guidance, he warns them in a dream. When it is time to respond to what is already known, that a star will arise out of Jacob and smite the brow of Moab and so on, they discern that by looking at the stars and reading the prophecy of Daniel that is a part of their library. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? So, Jesus said a good teacher brings out of his storehouse things both old and new.

You rely on things that are already written down and in some cases you find something new. Well, what about the visual kind of dream where God doesn't speak and make everything plain? The example of this we have back in Genesis chapter 28 verse 12. You find Jacob on his way out of the land, he stops at Bethel or Luz and he dreams in 28 verse 12 of Genesis.

And behold, a ladder was set up on the earth and its top reached to heaven, and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. The Lord stood above it and said, and so now you have kind of a combination, I am the Lord God of Abraham your father, the land on which you lie, I will give to you and your descendants. But do you think the angels actually climb up and down a ladder or a stairway? Do you think that they are restricted to this mode of bipedal locomotion? How many steps do you think there would be in such a ladder or such a stairway? It's symbolic, isn't it? What does it mean? Requires some interpretation, doesn't it? What do angels represent? They carry the will of God from heaven down to earth.

They report actions and prayers and activities on the earth back up to heaven. And this represents God's oversight of human affairs and God's knowledge of what goes on in human affairs. And this is what is reinforced to Jacob by this dream.

Here are the angels of God and here is God at the top speaking. So you have sort of a combination of the auditory and the visual. You move a few pages forward in Genesis 2 chapter 31 verse 10 and Jacob having hooked up with Laban and said, I want no more recompense except let me have the spotted offspring.

Jacob calls Rachel and Leah to the field in 31 verse 4. He says, I see your father's countenance is not favorable toward me as before, but the God of my father has been with me. You know that with all my might I have served your father, yet he has deceived me and changed my wages ten times. God did not allow him to hurt me.

If he said thus, the speckled shall be your wages, then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said the streaked shall be your wages, all the flocks bore streaked. So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.

And it happened at the time when the flocks conceived that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream,

and behold the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. Then the angel of God spoke to me, saying, Jacob, I said, here I am. He said, lift your eyes now and see all the rams which leap on the flock are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.

I am the God of Bethel where you anointed the pillar. Once again, symbolic and auditory, both. The dreams that Joseph has in Genesis chapter 37 of the sheaves bowing down and the sun, moon, and stars are not of any auditory component.

It's strictly symbolic. But his brothers don't have any trouble figuring it out, do they? He says, hear this dream which I have dreamed. There we were, binding sheaves in the field.

Then behold, my sheave arose and stood upright, and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheave. Well, you know, in the early days of symbolic visual dreams, God sort of, this is dreams 101. It's not very difficult to interpret.

You don't have to have the gift of deep insight to figure out what that means. So his brothers immediately say, shall you indeed reign over us? They know exactly what that means. Shall you indeed have dominion over us? They hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

And evidently, there was more than one of these dreams, because it says dreams plural there. Verse 9, he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers and said, look, I've dreamed another dream. This time the sun, moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.

Told it to his father and brothers. His father rebuked him and said, what is this dream that you've dreamed? So your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you. Jacob didn't mind the one with the sheaves, but he's pretty upset about the sun and moon also bowing down.

And he says, look, when you start talking about your mom and I bowing down to you, you've gone too far. His brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind. The dreams of the butler and baker, a pharaoh in Genesis chapter 40, same type of thing.

You're familiar with that story. They can't figure those dreams out. And Joseph interprets them.

The dream of Pharaoh himself, the fat kind and the lean kind, or cattle, disturbs Pharaoh much as this dream disturbs Nebuchadnezzar. And he wants somebody to figure it out. There's a very close parallel, isn't there, between Pharaoh and Joseph's day in chapter 41 of Genesis.

In fact, take a look at Genesis 41. There are enough parallels here. We probably ought to take a look at this.

It came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream. Two full years. What year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign are we in? Second year.

So, suddenly there comes up out of the river these seven cows. And then in verse 5, he slept

and dreamed a second time and seized seven heads of grain that come up on one stalk, plump and good. Then seven thin heads blighted, devoured by the seven plump and full heads.

Or they are devoured. The fat ones are devoured by the thin ones. Pharaoh awoke and indeed it was a dream.

In the morning his spirit was troubled. He sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

The chief butler spoke to him and says, I remember my faults this day. Here's a guy that interpreted a dream for me a while back, two years ago. And he recounts this story from Genesis chapter 40.

So then in verse 14, Pharaoh sent and called Joseph and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon. He shaved, changed his clothing, came to Pharaoh. Why did he shave? Hebrew people let their hair grow out, beards and so on.

The Egyptians, as a matter of hygiene, shaved off their hair and wore wigs. They really kept down on the lice. The Egyptians were famous for their cleanliness.

They found combs and things in Egyptian burials attesting to their fanatical dedication to cleanliness. So Joseph shaves so he doesn't offend the Pharaoh when he goes in. Pharaoh said to Joseph, I've had a dream, there's no one who can interpret it.

I've heard it said of you that you can understand a dream to interpret it. Joseph says, it's not me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

So Pharaoh tells the dream in this case. Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dreams of Pharaoh are one. You've had two dreams but they mean one thing.

God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. And so forth. Well, that's clearly the symbolic type.

Another one given to a pagan. Notice that one is given to pagans. The Butler and Baker dreams are pagans.

Another heathen dream that has spiritual import is found in Judges chapter 7 in the story of Gideon. Gideon is supposed to lead the people to a mighty victory over the Midianites. But he's in need of some bolstering and some support for his confidence.

So God at night speaks to Gideon. Is this a night vision or a dream? It doesn't specifically label it a dream. But God speaks to him at night.

You assume this is a dream. And He says, By the 300 men who lap the water, I will save you and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let everybody else go, every man to his place.

So He sends everybody out. It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. If you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Pura, your servant, and you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.

So he went down with Pura, his servant, to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. Now the Midianites and the Amalekites, all the people of the east, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts. As numerous as locusts.

We were talking about locusts the other night in Revelation, weren't we? Locusts speak of swarms, a lot of something. If you see locusts, you don't typically see one. They come in big hordes.

Numerous as locusts, their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. When Gideon had come, look at verse 13 there, Judges 7, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, I have had a dream.

To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian. Now, what do we know about barley bread? What kind of people make barley bread? Po folks. Humble circumstance, poverty stricken.

You don't have enough money for flour, you have to make it out of barley. This is poor people's bread. So this is a piece of food that comes rolling into the camp from some homeless guy, some poor guy out there, barely got enough to eat, his barley bread goes blowing through the camp, comes to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned and the tent collapsed.

Who lives in tents? The well off, the wealthy, the well provisioned. So his companion answered and said, this is nothing else but the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, the man of Israel. It is a symbolic statement of the fact that into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.

It's a dream and it has an interpretation. One guy tells it, the other guy interprets it. Well, this is the role that we have in the more difficult and less clear sections of Scripture.

Somebody who is gifted by God, who is assigned by God to do the work of analysis and interpretation does so. This is why we have pastors and teachers. And this is why it's important for us to assemble ourselves together and to spend our time in meditation on God's word and the illumination that is provided on it by God's Holy Spirit in the light of study, in the light of interpretation.

We should all read our Bibles. There's manifest, clear information in the word of God like an auditory dream. And then there are those portions where we need someone that God has assigned to do the work of interpretation.

And that's why we assemble ourselves together. So it is critically important that we see that this

dream idea in Scripture has application for us today. And we want to heed it.

We don't want to have symbolic dreams with no interpretation. We don't want to have God speaking and not be listening. Eli told Samuel, you've got to pay attention when God speaks.

And we need to do the same. There's no more important information that we can get. Father, thank you for the truth of this.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.