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Let's resume our study now in the book of Genesis. I will tell you that for me personally, this book has really been a wonderful source of spiritual nourishment. I've learned many things.

You get the chance to go through all of the books of the Bible. If you go through the curriculum at Dallas Seminary, and some of them you study in greater detail, and others in less detail. I have studied under pastors and teachers who have gone through this, but to go through it at first hand, verse by verse, and to see all of the great treasures and the great truths that God has put in here, and actually not having seen them all, but just having seen a few, I suspect that there, and I have seen glimpses of others that I'm probably not qualified or equipped to glean.

But the things that we have seen and learned are so enlightening and enriching. And I myself have certainly enjoyed this. And I say that because we're on the home stretch here.

We just have nine chapters left in the book. As you know, the career of Joseph is what's going to bring this to a conclusion. And we're going to, the very last verse of the book is going to make mention of the location of Joseph's bones.

But we find here in chapter 41 with Pharaoh's double dream, the portent or the foreboding prophetic message is inscrutable to Pharaoh. He knows it's bad, but he doesn't know exactly what it means. They can't figure out what the symbols represent.

And nor can the magicians and servants of Pharaoh. So they bring Joseph in. He is shaved.

He's given a garment. And the first thing out of his mouth is, it is not in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

And the answer of peace, this is a pregnant term, if you will, because Pharaoh has not gotten peace of mind from any of the offered interpretations that he's received from his magicians. But not only is it an answer of peace in the sense that it will settle his mind about what the meaning of the dream is, but it is an answer of peace in the sense that there is going to be some hope out of this disastrous picture that has been presented. So Joseph said to Pharaoh in verse 25 of chapter 41 of Genesis, the dreams of Pharaoh are one.

God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. I find this to be a fascinating statement that Joseph makes. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.

God has shown it to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh can't see it. He is someone who sees and does not perceive. He hears and does not understand.

God has shown it to him, but he is unable to process the information. And that, of course, is the picture of us in the flesh, of us even as believers seeking to operate outside the power of God the Holy Spirit, because the things of God are spiritually discerned and require the power of God's Spirit ministering to our spirit and to our souls in order to process it. You have Pharaoh who very obviously is a pagan.

God speaks to him and he cannot process it. He can't understand it. We look at the dream and we think, you know, in retrospect, it's not all that hard to figure out, but we have the benefit of hindsight and of Joseph's interpretation and the subsequent history to inform us.

The dreams of Pharaoh are one. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. And I mentioned last time that in using the term Elohim, this was a generic term that could be understood as either singular or plural.

It could be the gods with a small G or it could be God with a capital G. And there was nothing in particular to distinguish your usage except the number that you would use with the verb. Because if you're talking about God with a capital G in the singular, then your verb is going to be singular. If you're talking about the gods, then you would use the they forms of the verb.

The gods will reveal that kind of thing. So they were accustomed to talking about the divinities and the Elohim, as it were, in Egypt. But this probably struck them a little strange because Joseph was using a singular verb with this normally plural word because they had many gods in Egypt.

They had a God for everything, as many of the other pagan cultures did. But Joseph uses the singular verb here, both in verse 16 and again in verse 25. And so this would have caught their ear.

The seven good cows in verse 26 are seven years and the seven good heads are seven years. The dreams are one. The seven thin and ugly cows, which came up after them, are seven years.

And the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.

You get the idea that there's some emphasis going on here, isn't there? There's some repetition. The dreams are one. The dreams are repeated.

This is a truth that is being hammered home. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.

Indeed, seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt. But after

them, seven years of famine will arise and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe.

And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God and God will shortly bring it to pass. This is the fifth time now that Joseph has mentioned that God is behind this. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select.

And here we start going beyond interpretation into recommendation. But what I want to pause and look at here is what hope is there in this dream? You see the lean cows come up and swallow the fat cows. Do you see anybody coming up with a stick and herding part of the fat cows away? Or do you see somebody picking some of the heads of fat grain off and saving them for a later time? The point here is when you look at the dream, there is nothing but destruction in it.

Pharaoh awakens in a cold sweat after each of these dreams because it is an abysmal, dismal, disastrous portent. There's nothing but bad being presented. There's no survival involved.

Yet, when Joseph interprets the dream, he goes beyond the dream because the dream, what are you going to do? Well, eat, drink, and be merry for the next seven years because the seven years after that are going to be bad. And it's fate. It's kismet.

It's the... Oh, I saw Oprah Winfrey on TV. She has a recurring guest that she really likes, a psychology guy. And he was talking about the definition of karma and what karma is and how we make our own karma.

As an aside, I will tell you that it is fascinating to hear how often spiritual truth will be echoed or paralleled or imitated in the secular world because a lot of these statements are things that we could affirm. You make your karma by your choices. It's what you choose that determines how your life turns out.

And it isn't so much that there is a fate that has been imposed on you like predestination. It is that you, by your actions and by your priorities and by your decisions, you create the future for yourself with those. Well, that's all true if you understand the divine rules and power that is at work in human life.

To put that forward and not be able to explain the causative influences behind it or that there is a point to it all just gives you the hollow shell. You have something that looks like the truth. It has the shell of the truth.

And if you glance at it quickly, you say, well, yeah, that's really right. If I treat other people well, they're going to treat me well and do unto others. People echo and imitate a lot of the truth of the Word of God, but there are a lot of things missing.

It's appealing because it's convenient, because it has the ring of truth. It has the appearance of truth, but it doesn't involve penalty for sin, responsibility for sin, judgment from God, a higher calling that goes beyond one's own health and well-being and desires and so forth. And these things are twisted and perverted to serve the plan of man instead of the plan of God.

Anyway, I watched a few minutes of it and then I reached my limit. Like I always think of G. Gordon Liddy after the Watergate thing, and he wrote his book called Will and he was in prison, had nothing else to do, but he talked about what a strange individual he was and how sometimes he would take a lighter and just hold his hand over it and see how long he could keep his hand over the flame before he had to take it away. And that's what I do with some of these programs.

I endure it until I just can't take it anymore and I start to blister over and then I quit. But this idea that there is a fate fixed is a part of some religions. And even the Christian faith has been perverted in some ways by the idea that there is a predestinated outcome in areas of life that there is no changing.

The interesting thing to me here is the dream says specifically that the seven years of famine will swallow up and make invisible the seven years of plenty and it will be as though there never was any plenty in the land. Now, let me ask you from your knowledge of what happens after this, is that true? Does that come to pass? It does not. It is because of the seven years of plenty that the seven lean years are endurable and the people survive and everyone comes to Egypt and they have what they need.

They exchange their land, they exchange their goods, they mortgage and so forth and they get through it okay. So this dream doesn't actually come true because at the end of Pharaoh's dream, the ugly cows and the ugly grains of wheat have triumphed and it is as though the plenty never was. That's not the way history turns out.

So what changed? Why did the dream not come true? Because Joseph says four times God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do and yet God does not do it. Well, this brings us to one of the most central and awe-inspiring truths of the Bible and that is the repentance of God. God's changing His mind because God changes His mind.

And you say, well, now wait a minute. I remember over there in 1 Samuel where it says something about God is not a man that He should change His mind, but in that very same chapter it says God has changed His mind about Saul keeping him as king over Israel. And Saul says, oh, I'll be good in the future, and Samuel says God is not a man that He should change His mind.

So which is it? Does God change His mind or not? Well, the answer is yes. Yes, He does and no, He doesn't. It depends.

It depends on what the situation is. Patty sat in on a couple of my seminary classes with one of my professors down there and one of his favorite things to do was to put before us a choice like this. Does God change His mind or does He not? And his answer would be yes, both.

Both things are true. You remember Dr. Berns, Lanier Berns, chairman of the systematic theology department. I was a systematic theology major, so I had quite a lot of contact with Dr. Berns.

But is it this or is it that? Yes, both are true. And it isn't so simple as to just make a hard and fast rule and say God always is able to change His mind. God never changes His mind.

There are things about which God will change His mind. And judgment is one of them. Judgment from God when it is foretold is foretold for the purpose of changing our minds.

This was our scripture reading over in Joel chapter 2 this morning. Here come the locusts, therefore repent. And we want to examine this a little bit because that's what we have pictured in this dream of Pharaoh.

The dream is all about judgment, nothing about deliverance. But yet there is deliverance. How does that come into the picture? Well, first of all, we want to understand this principle and what it is based on.

When are the times when God can and does change His mind? Turn with me to Leviticus chapter 26. We're going to be turning to quite a few pages here and quite a few passages in the next few minutes. You're welcome to try to keep up with me.

I'm going to go quickly and I will read them to you as fast as I can get to them. So you can either listen to me or turn to them yourself. Leviticus 26, 40 through 42.

But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to me and that they have also walked contrary to me and that I have also walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies. If their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they accept their guilt, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham. I will remember.

I will remember the land. The land shall be left empty by them and will joy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will accept their guilt because they despise my judgments and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away nor shall I abhor them to utterly destroy them and break my covenant with them. For I am the Lord their God. But for their sake, I will remember the covenant of their ancestors

whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God." So, the relenting of judgment is based on confessing their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers.

Isn't this interesting that you can... And you have examples of this with Ezra and Nehemiah and others who not only confess their own iniquity, but the iniquity of the land, the iniquity of the nation. And it is not amiss for us when we go to God to acknowledge to Him the iniquity in which we find ourselves immersed and that we're exposed to. It's as though we walk down a dusty road and our feet are soiled.

Even when we don't personally choose to sin, we are exposed to evil. We are exposed to sin. When you watch the evening news, when you watch television programming and they unexpectedly spring language or situations or people taking their clothes off, and in the most harmless situations, the girls were watching on Saturday morning TV.

They were watching a cartoon show and then a commercial came on and this horrible stuff came on. And it really stuck in Elizabeth's mind. And you don't know when and where these things are going to crop up.

We have to live in the world, but we don't have to be of the world. And when we travel through it, we pick up this road dust. And it is not a bad thing to not only seek and confess the sin that we're aware of in our own lives, but also the sin and evil that is around us to bring it before the Lord and to weep over it before the Lord.

This is an example in scripture. And he says here, if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, now, people have perverted this and said, well, your psychological problems, it's the sins of the fathers being visited. You've got to go back and figure out, go investigate your parents' lives and find out that they did this or did that or did the other.

These were confessed. That's not what's being said here. This is acknowledging the state of the nation, the state of the culture.

This is not looking at your individual parents and trying to ferret out their sins and bring those to light and confess them before God. That's a terrible perversion of what's being communicated here. Their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to God.

They have walked contrary to me and I have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies. You not only acknowledge the iniquity, but also the results of that iniquity and the divine discipline that has come. This is one of the important principles of child training that I am privileged to have understand and implement is if you have to discipline a child to be sure that they know that they are not being disciplined because you are angry.

Well, dad got mad at me and that's why I got a spanking or mom was mad at me and

that's why I lost this privilege or why I didn't get to do this thing or I had to go do this other. To be sure that they are clear in their mind that the consequences, the bad things that happen are a result of their decision, their choice, their failure in some area. And to acknowledge that.

And this is what's being spoken of here, to acknowledge that God has walked contrary to them and that he was justified. God is vindicated. God is justified in our discipline because it is his righteousness that brings it about and it's our fault literally.

People use words in English so much that we forget what their original meaning was. But when you say, oh, that's my fault, it's a fault. It's a failure.

That's my failure. That's my responsibility. I brought this on.

If their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, here's all the circumcised men in Israel having to come and acknowledge that they have an uncircumcised heart and they accept their guilt, then I will remember my covenant and that judgment and discipline is lifted. Deuteronomy 4, verse 29. After detailing the consequences of forgetting God, in fact, we might start up in 425.

When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything and do evil in the sight of the Lord your God to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess. You will not prolong your days in it but will be utterly destroyed and the Lord will scatter you among the peoples and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord God will drive you. There you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." Not a casual seeking, not an impulsive seeking, not a momentary turning to try out yet one more solution. Well, I've tried everything else. Let me try God and see if that will work.

People do this today and Christians encourage it by presenting God as the big aspirin, the great Excedrin pill. Do you have problems in your life? Come to God. He'll solve your problems.

Do you have marriage problems? Come to God. He'll help you with your marriage. Are those things true? Does God help? Will God assist? Yes, but the motivation for people to come to God is not, oh, He's the way to solve my problems.

That is the seed that will blossom in the shallow soil and wilt under pressure because the motivation for coming to God has to be accepting our guilt, acknowledging our need, recognizing that God is the issue, not He is a convenient resource for me to get over my

current difficulty. If from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice, not just turn to Him to get out of a scrape, but turn to Him and obey His voice.

Turn to Him and stay with Him. Turn to Him and like we saw in Leviticus 26, turn to Him and recognize that the reason these problems came upon us is because God is against us and that it's a spiritual issue. This goes beyond this momentary panacea type of thinking where, well, I'm having this trouble, let me turn to God.

And then as soon as everything's fine, well, I don't need God now. I've got my problem solved. Turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice, for the Lord your God is a merciful God.

He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them. And of course, the rest of this chapter is great to read. But we want to move forward to chapter 30 of Deuteronomy, verses 1-3.

Deuteronomy 30, 1-3, It shall come to pass when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. The Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed and you shall possess it.

He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, so that you may live. But what is it conditioned on? You've got to turn.

How much better to turn before the discipline comes rather than having to endure it and then turn. Look at verse 8. If you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, the produce of your land, for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers.

If you obey the voice of the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law. And if you turn to the Lord your God with all

your heart and with all your soul. The generations in Israel had no excuse.

This was written in the law. It was read to them by the scribes, by the priests. Look at 1 Kings.

There's many other passages. I'm just giving you a few representative ones here. 1 Kings 8, verse 33.

You'll remember in 1 Kings, the first part of that book is Solomon getting the temple ready. And then when you get to chapter 8, you have the dedication of the temple. And when you get to 1 Kings 8, verse 33, Solomon is praying to God in this dedicatory prayer.

When your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against you and when they turn back to you and confess your name and pray and make supplication to you in this temple, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land which you gave to their fathers. When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain. How do you create a famine in the Middle East? Shut up the heavens, cut off the rain.

When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, when they pray toward this place and confess your name and turn from their sin because you afflict them, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, that you may teach them, here's the purpose, that you may teach them the good way in which they should walk and send rain on your land which you have given to your people as an inheritance. When there is a famine in the land, pestilence, blight, mildew, locusts, grasshoppers, when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities, whatever plague or whatever sickness there is, whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone or by all your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart and spreads out his hands toward this temple, then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and give to everyone according to all his ways whose heart you know, for you alone know the hearts of all of the sons of men, that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land which you gave to our fathers. You don't think Solomon had that wisdom from God.

Read the rest of this chapter and the rest of that prayer. It's really terrific. But turn over to 2 Chronicles 7. 2 Chronicles 7.14 This is the Lord appearing to Solomon.

I have heard your prayer. I have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain or command the locusts to devour the land or send pestilence among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to prayer made in this place. You can

turn to chapter 30 of 2 Chronicles verses 6 through 9. 2 Chronicles 30 verse 6. All the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders and spoke according to the command of the king. Children of Israel, return to the Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Then he will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. And do not be like your fathers and your brethren who trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers so that he gave them up to desolation, as you see. Now do not be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the Lord and enter his sanctuary, which he has sanctified forever, and serve the Lord your God that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

For if you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who leave them captive so that they may come back to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn his face from you if you return to him. Job chapter 33 verse 26 through 28.

Job 33, 26. He shall pray to God and he will delight in him. He shall seek his face with joy, for he restores to man his righteousness.

Then he looks at men and says, I have sinned and perverted what was right and it did not profit me. He will redeem his soul from going down to the pit and his life shall see the light. So he prays to God and is restored in righteousness.

And then the righteous man looks, the penitent man looks and says, I have sinned and perverted what was right when he looks at men. He looks at his relationship with God and acknowledges and confesses. He looks at what he has done among men and he acknowledges and confesses.

He will redeem his soul from going down to the pit and his life shall see the light. It is the attitude of soul. It is a change of mind.

It is looking to the Lord that turns cursing to blessing, that turns judgment to blessing. Many, many passages. Job 34, 31 and 32, the same idea.

Has anyone said to God, I have borne chastening, I will offend no more? Teach me what I do not see. What a great prayer. Teach me what I do not see.

If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more. Should He repay it according to your terms just because you disavow it? You must choose and not I. Therefore, speak what you know. It reminds us of 1 John 1.9 When we confess what we know, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, even the things that we don't know.

We pray to God, teach me what I do not see. Isaiah 55, 6 and 7. You get the idea that

this is one of the major themes of the Bible and it is. I am skipping about 12 passages for every one that I'm giving you that would be equally applicable.

Isaiah 55, 6 and 7. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Jeremiah chapter 4 verses 1 through 4. If you will return, O Israel, says the Lord, return to me. And if you will put away your abominations out of my sight, then you shall not be moved and you shall swear the Lord lives in truth, in judgment and in righteousness.

The nations shall bless themselves in him and in him they shall glory. For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground and do not sow among thorns. If you think we're going to see this in our Luke study, you're right.

The parable of the sower. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Lest my fury come forth like fire and burn so that no one can quench it because of the evil of your doings.

Look at verse 14 of this same chapter. O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you? Chapter 6 verse 8 of Jeremiah.

Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from you. This is one of those cases where lest should be translated otherwise. Be instructed, O Jerusalem, otherwise my soul will depart from you.

Otherwise, I will make you desolate, a land not inhabited. Same thing in verse 16 of chapter 6. Thus says the Lord, stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths where the good way is and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls.

But they said we will not walk in it. You can find the same idea again in chapter 13 verses 15 and 16 of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 13, 15.

Hear and give ear. Do not be proud for the Lord has spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before He causes darkness and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains.

And while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death and makes it dense darkness. But if you will not hear it, my soul will weep in secret for your pride. My eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.

Jeremiah 18, 8 and 11. If the nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. Here's a direct application to Egypt.

If the nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. At the instant I speak, concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant it, if it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Jeremiah 26, 3 and 13.

Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way so that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purposed to bring on them because of the evil of their doings. Same thing down in verse 13. Now, therefore, amend your ways and your doings and obey the voice of the Lord your God.

Then the Lord will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. So, this foretelling of judgment creates the opportunity to lay hold of God's grace, to seize and lay hold of grace. That's the purpose.

Why else would God foretell it? Why wouldn't He just bring the destruction on swiftly and say, looky there, see what I did? Let that be an example to you. He tells them ahead of time to give them the chance to relent, to give us the chance to turn and repent. So many other passages.

You can probably think of some of them yourself. But in Jeremiah 36, 3 and 7, you have the same idea. When God tells Jeremiah, take a scroll of the book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah and against all the nations from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, even to this day.

It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them that everyone may turn from his evil way. He says, write it down in a book. Somebody wrote this down and we have it in a book, don't we? It's the same idea.

It's written down in a book. And this is for us. It may be that we will hear the adversities which God purposes to bring on those who depart, who don't take advantage of the offer of grace in daily life to turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

And of course, he echoes this again down in verse 7. It may be that they will present their supplication before the Lord and everyone will turn from his evil way. For great is the anger and the fury that the Lord has pronounced against this people. Many others I could give you.

Daniel chapter 4 and verse 27 is a great one in this regard. Therefore, O King, let my advice be acceptable to you. Remember the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had about the stump, the tree that was cut off and he put a band on the stump.

And Daniel interprets it for him and tells him that he is going to act like a beast and eat grass and his dwelling will be with the beasts of the field and they will wet you with the

dew of heaven and seven times shall pass over you. Seven years. Inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you after you come to know that heaven rules.

He says in 26, Therefore, O King, and here's another case where there is a dream and then there is advice given by the interpreter. When Daniel advises Nebuchadnezzar, he says, O King, let my advice be acceptable to you. Break off your sins by being righteous and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.

Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity. Maybe this can be averted. You can change your mind and your prosperity can be lengthened.

But he was walking around the palace, is not this great Babylon which I have built? Didn't heed the advice and you know the result. We have New Testament passages on this as well. I'll just give you two.

Luke 13, one through five. We will be there before long in our study of Luke. This is the Lord Jesus speaking.

People told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Jesus answered and said to them, Do you suppose these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you also will likewise perish.

And he goes on to give several other examples of people that suffered a disaster. He says, were they worse sinners than you? No. But unless you change your mind, something equally disastrous will take place for you.

And it's just one form of disaster that these people suffer, but all of us suffer disaster unless we turn to the Lord and acknowledge. Keep in mind, who is Jesus talking to? Unbelievers or believers? Believers. The nation of Israel is the people of God and these exhortations are to believers.

And of course, Revelation in chapter two and chapter three, you remember the exhortation that Jesus Himself gives to the church. I always pay especially close attention as though any portion of Scripture were not to be paid attention to, but it's so fascinating to me that these words in Revelation two and three are the only words that Jesus speaks directly to the church. What He teaches and preaches in the Gospels is to Israel.

He has the upper room discourse to the disciples. He has the quote-unquote great commission that is given to the disciples. But here in Revelation two and three, Jesus speaks to the church.

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. But in Revelation

chapter two, verse five, remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent. Same thing in verse 16, repent or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Chapter three and verse two, be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard, hold fast and repent. Therefore, if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

Verse 19 of that chapter, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich and white garments that you may be clothed that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed and anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see. Isn't it interesting, those who fail to heed this admonition to repent will have their nakedness revealed because they're not going to have that covering robe. They're not going to have their poverty and blindness and nakedness covered unless they repent.

And this is to the church. It's a profound warning. So, back in Genesis 41, the dream of Pharaoh is a dream foretelling impending judgment.

Now, we don't have the recollection of a big wave of evangelistic fervor sweeping through Egypt and everybody coming to faith in God, do we? What do we have? What happens when Joseph interprets this dream for the Pharaoh? In verse 33, Joseph gives some advice. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this and let him appoint officers over the land to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years.

Let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt that the land may not perish during the famine. And here's the key in verse 37.

The advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God? Pharaoh said to Joseph, Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, by the way, Pharaoh uses the singular here also, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word.

Only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. Echoes of the prison official. Echoes of Potiphar.

Pharaoh places everything in Joseph's hand. And isn't it interesting? Because when you think about this in its long-term symbolic value, its teaching value for Israel and for every generation since, here's the Pharaoh in the pagan land of Egypt. Egypt is the symbol of

everything that's despicable and evil and bondage and so forth in the Israelite mind.

But Pharaoh hears the word of God and not only honors the word, but honors the one who brings it. We've seen and we're going to see, I'm going to give you a detailed picture of Joseph in terms of Christology and in terms of foreshadowing the work of Christ. But Joseph speaks and Pharaoh believes.

Pharaoh heeds and Pharaoh honors Joseph. Because of that, the land is going to be delivered through this time of famine. They're going to obey everything that Joseph says.

They're going to obey. They are going to heed. They are going to do what Joseph says.

That principle that we've seen throughout the Scriptures heeding the word of God, turning and paying attention to the word of God brings deliverance, whether it's out of judgment or through judgment. And that's what's being pictured here. If the pagans can do it, how much more ought the people of God who have a relationship with the Heavenly Father, who know, have tasted of the heavenly powers and the good things of the age to come, how much more ought we to heed and pay attention and not let things lay fallow in our soul, not let areas of our life go unaddressed if we have a problem in the area of sins of the tongue, if we have a problem in the area of mental attitude sins, if there are certain places.

We can always look at parts of our life that we think are working well and sort of comfort ourselves with that. But are we looking for the iniquity in our souls, in our lives that needs to be addressed? Are there areas where we are proud? Are there areas where we let our tongue run away with us? Are there areas where we let our thinking get away from us and we still operate in fear or we still operate in human viewpoint? We still operate out of guilt and shame and don't acknowledge the work of God. What are the areas in our life that still need to be addressed? It is an all or nothing proposition to turn to the Lord, to place ourselves fully on that altar of Romans chapter 12, requires us to find these things.

It's our responsibility. And if we don't, God is going to bring it to our attention in another way through judgment. And the judgment will escalate as we've seen the cycles of discipline that God gave to Israel.

That escalating discipline is to wake them up. It isn't because God is increasingly angry and wants to do more and more hurt. It's He's using a bigger and bigger hammer to get their attention.

Do we really want God to have to get out the big hammer to get our attention? Or do we want to heed these things that have been written for our instruction to examine ourselves and see if we're in the faith? There is grace before judgment. God is a God of mercy. His desire is to bless, not to curse.

His desire is to reward and to build us up and to reflect His glory in us, not to discipline and rebuke and instruct for judgment. So this picture is what we're going to see take place because the Pharaoh of Egypt has the wisdom to take advantage of the warning, unlike Nebuchadnezzar.