

Visions of God - Part 3

by David Adams

David Adams explores the revelations of God through the lives of Abram, Sarai, and Hagar, emphasizing His promises and intimate care for humanity.

Duration: 39:13

Scripture: Genesis 15:4

Topics: "Vision"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of food and sustenance in our lives. He emphasizes that nothing and no one is self-sufficient or self-sustaining, and therefore, we all need to eat. The preacher then shifts his focus to the story of Abraham in the book of Genesis. He highlights how Abraham was resting in the heat of the day when he saw three men approaching him, which led to a revelation from God. The sermon also briefly mentions the story of Hagar and Ishmael, and how God gave Hagar a command regarding her son's name.

Transcript

Good morning. Isn't this a lovely, damp, dark, dismal, grisly, foggy morning? Now, you want to know why I said lovely, didn't you? Well, I'll tell you why I said lovely, because after saying it's dark, damp, grisly, and dismal, somebody's going to come up to me with an angelic smile. It'll have to be a sister.

Men don't have angelic smiles. And she'll say to me, Now, Brother Dave, don't you forget this is the day which the Lord has made. We'll be glad and rejoice in it.

They do this to me all the time. And I have a little difficulty with that, I don't mind telling you, because most of the people who quote me that verse and sing the chorus, you know, this is the day, this is the day, don't know where the verse is. They know it's a verse in the Bible, and they know it sounds good, and somebody complains about the weather.

So, when they come to me with that lovely smile and say, Now, don't forget, Brother, this is the day which the Lord has made, I say, By the way, do you know what that verse is? What's in the Bible? Do you know where what's in the Bible it is? Well, no, but I know it's in the Bible somewhere. Do you know what it has to do with? Well, no, but it sounds nice. Well, let me say this to you.

It has absolutely nothing to do with the weather. How do you know this is the day which the Lord has made? I expect when Job woke up in the morning and discovered that the Chaldeans had carried off the camels, and the Savidians had carried off the oxen, and the fire from God came out of heaven and destroyed all the sheep, I suppose there was somebody there to save him. Now, Job, remember, this is the day which the Lord has made.

It has nothing to do with the weather, absolutely nothing to do with the weather. Well, where is it? Well, it's in the Psalms. What Psalm is it? It's the 118th Psalm.

What's it all about? Well, if you read from verse 22 on, you discover that the passage says, the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it's marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made.

We'll be glad and rejoice in it. It concerns our Lord's return to Israel and the vindication of God when his son was rejected by the leaders of Israel as he set himself in Matthew 22, and the stone was rejected and set aside. The stone is going to be taken and made the head of the corner.

Then they will say, this is the day which the Lord has made. Please, it has nothing to do with the weather. I want you to turn with me, if you will, to the book of Genesis this morning, seeing that there's another class at 1030 in town.

I shan't keep you late. I want you to do a little leafing with me this morning. Go over to Genesis chapter 15, if you will.

I want to travel rather hurriedly. You're not going to like it, I know, but the hurrieder I get, the behinder I get. I want to do a little of that this morning, starting with chapter 15.

Chapter 15 starts off, the word of the Lord came on favor in a vision. Now, we're not going to look into the details here, but God is promising him that his seed, his descendants, his posterity will inherit the land. He complains, or rather he protests to the Lord, because this Eliezer of Damascus in verse 2 is his steward and he is his heir.

God says, no, thine own son will be thine heir. That's the promise he makes to him. Then you remember the covenant on the basis of the sacrifice and the horror of great darkness that happens at the close of chapter 15.

Now, God has promised Abram, he's not Abraham yet, he's promised Abram a son. Now, the word Abram means great or exalted father. He's not a father.

God has promised him to have a seed. Now, Sarai, for she's not Sarah yet, Sarai being a true wife, companion, and partner, has concern for her husband, and because he has no heir, and he's 85 years old, and he has no heir, she decides, determines, and decides how she can fulfill the ambition of her husband. I want to look at this from the woman's viewpoint, and that is, for I have no son who will do anything to please her husband, and that which comes first in his mind comes first in her mind.

So, because she knows Abram longs for a son, and he has no son, with a little bit of feminine strategy, a little bit later on, a little few grains of feminine psychology, she decides that she's going to please, she's going to do something very special for her husband, because, you see, she is Sarai, and Sarai is not Sarah, as we'll see in a minute. So, she decides that she's going to use this strategy, and that she wants

to find a son, an heir for her husband. Whatever pleases him is going to please her, whatever he wants, that's what she wants, and so she resorts to this strategy, as we have in chapter 16 now, of giving Hagar to her husband as his wife, and consequent upon this, as you know, Hagar conceives, and she's going to bear a son, and Abraham is going to have an heir.

Now, I certainly believe myself that Sarah, or Sarai rather, Sarai did this out of the very best of intentions, and with a true womanly heart, but it backfires. It wasn't the fulfillment of Genesis 15 as God had designed it. She was going to fulfill the promise, and I doubt not that Abraham had confided in her about the promise which God had made to him of an heir, and she has done this for his good, for his pleasure, and then you know what happens when Hagar perceives that she's conceived by Abraham, then she despises Sarai, and as a result, Sarai protests now, with a little twist of feminine psyche, she protests to Abraham, and says, my fault be on you.

Now, that's one of those undiscoverable, undefined, and baffling enigma of feminine psychology. It was her plan, she did it out of the best of intentions, she did it for his pleasure, she did it for his sake, she did it to fulfill the promise, and it's backfired on her, so she throws it back on him, and he says, Sarai? Now, Sarai means my princess. That e on the end makes it possessive, you see that letter e. So, he says, Sarai, my princess, she's in your hands.

What the result now, there's a dramatic twist to Sarai's attitude towards Hagar, and she turns on her with a venomous bitterness. The woman that's used is abused, and to such an extent that she flees home, goes out into the wilderness, a wanderer. Her honey is turned to gall, her pleasure is turned to bitterness, the reversal of her plans is a shocking discovery to her, and she goes out into the wilderness.

Four times in chapter 16, which we have turned to now from chapter 15, four times in chapter 16, we read the angel of the Lord in relation to Hagar. Now, we're coming to visions and revelations of God, and we're coming to consider the kind of persons to whom God is pleased, and was pleased to reveal himself. The angel of the Lord, it says, found her.

Verse 7 of chapter 16, the angel of the Lord found her. Isn't that a lovely touch? Now, I don't know that we may always be absolutely sure who this person called the angel of the Lord is. There are times when, unquestionably, it is one of the theophanies, and whether it is or whether it isn't in this occasion, I don't know, but the expression is significant at any rate, but the angel of the Lord found her.

God, is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Is he the God of the favored only? Is he not the God of the rejected as well? So, the angel of the Lord found her, and he did, and found her in the wilderness, and then three times after that, the expression is used, the angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar. What a marvelous thing it must have been. I do envy the people of the book of Genesis considerably for the intimacy, the nearness, the familiarity with which they had touch with God, and God has a very close contact with them personally, physically, and at times visibly.

There is a warmth about this revelation of God in the book of Genesis that you don't find but infrequently elsewhere, until he who is God himself came to walk and to wander amongst the sons of men. So, the angel of the Lord speaks to Hagar and asks her what's her problem. Why is she here so dejected, so despondent, so sad? And she tells him what has happened, and he says to her, go back and return, and put yourself under the hand of your mistress, and she does this in obedience to the voice of the angel of the Lord.

She doesn't know what she's going to do at any rate. How often do we find ourselves in a dilemma similar to this? We've come to the end of the road, we've come into great perplexity, things have not gone well with us, we had planned something, the strategy backfired, it didn't work out, and we wonder where we are and why we are where we are, and we try to flee from the circumstances, and yet it may be right in the circumstances that the Lord is pleased to meet us. How marvelous these revelations of God are to our hearts in times like this one.

So, he gives her a command, and obedient to the command, she goes back, and she subjects herself for some considerable time to the hold and the hand of Sarai. Then, from that point, we move on into chapter 17. Before we do that, let me notice just exactly what she said.

If you remember, the angel of the Lord told in verse 11 how she would call her son when he was born, Ishmael, that is, God was here. When you get that suffix El again on a word, you know that it has to do with God, and is one of the grand titles of God, his majesty, his glory, his uniqueness, his singularity. So, it's Ishmael, as it is Gabriel, and Michael, and so on, and these suffixes El always relate the individual to God.

So, she is going to call her son Ishmael, or Ishmael, God was here. He is marked from this moment on that the angel of the Lord found the mother-to-be. The son is marked as the object of God's interest and care, and of his provision, as we know later on.

So, she names the Lord that called unto her in verse 13, and she calls him, Thou God's seest me, and the well which he found was called Bir Lahairoi, or the well of him that lives and sees me. Now, that's Hagar, the Egyptian slave's experience with the god of Abram. It's marvelous that right from the beginning, even in chapter 12, as related by Stephen in Acts chapter 7, right from the beginning, God promised to bless anyone who is associated with his elect.

That brings us to 1 Corinthians chapter 7, doesn't it? The saved wife and the unsaved husband, or the saved husband and the unsaved wife, and consequently God's special interest in the children. And that leads to the very common question I'm not going to go into this morning about those who'll be included in the rapture, and so on, you know, of parents of that kind. But God looks with interest, as he says.

They are not common, to use his words, the children of one saved parent or of both saved parents. God has a special interest in them, and that's why he has a very special interest in Hagar, because she is associated with the one whom he has chosen and called to be his special friend. Now, moving out of chapter 16 into chapter 17, we have another appearance of God in the first verse, when Abram was 90 years old and nine.

Now, that's after Ishmael was born, because he was 86 years old when Ishmael was born. When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and he said unto him, I am the Almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

And then that's when Abram asks that God would consider Ishmael as his heir, and that's verse 18. But before I come to that, just look at some of the opening verses in verse 5, for example, neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham. Now, he is not to be the exalted father uniquely, he is to be the father of a multitude.

Abraham is the father of a great multitude, and this is in connection with the of course. And then when you come down further to verse 15, Sarai, God said unto Abraham, now he is Abraham, never more to be called Abram, but Abraham the father of a multitude. As for Sarai, thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, my princess.

He drops the I at the end, a possessive letter, and he says her name shall be called Sarah. And when he drops that possessive letter I, he takes the exclusive nature of Sarah being a princess to Abraham, and he makes her a princess to the multitude. He enlarges her scope, enlarges her field, he enlarges her influence.

Now, she is not going to be Abraham's princess, Sarai, my princess, she is going to be a princess to the great multitude as her husband now is Abraham, and not Abram. And that's the interesting part in particular, I think, of the early part of chapter 17. Later on, then God promises to Abraham in verse 18 and 19 that Sarah would have a son.

Now let's go over to chapter 18, but I want to hurry through up to chapter 22 if I may this morning, briefly. I'm just snatching excerpts, as you can see, from some of these chapters. Chapter 18 and verse 1, the Lord appeared unto him again, another appearance, another vision, another revelation of God to Abraham, and it was in the plains of Mamre, and you remember this word Mamre means from the vision, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.

Don't you like that? Isn't that a lovely little touch? And those of you who have lived in tropical countries, and I know some of you have, and don't necessarily have any connection with North Florida in February, who know what the heat of the day really is like, will know exactly why Abraham was sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day. This is siesta time, of course, but there's something very significant, I think, in this. When he looks up, he sees three men walking towards him.

What's he doing? He is resting in the heat of the day. Well, what has that got to do with the revelation of God, with a vision of the Lord which Abraham was to see? Well, in the heat of the day, nature is quiescent. There's no activity.

There's no expressed energy. He's sitting quietly in the heat of the day, and when nature is quiet, God reveals himself to us. Now, I know we're not all born with the same temperament.

Some of us were born high-strung, and some of us were born low-strung. Some of us were born very active, and some of us were born very passive, and as I said to you the other day, we can't help the way we're born, but we have to struggle with it, nevertheless. But, we are born, all of us, with an impatient, lawless nature, and it's difficult for us to do what Abraham is doing on this occasion, just to sit quietly at rest when nature subsides, and in the heat of the day, when Abraham is quietly at peace, the Lord appears to him.

I think that's instructive, don't you? Then he looks up, and he sees these three men this is the plural of the word ish, I think it is. He sees three men, and they were standing by him, and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, and this is the divine title of the sovereignty and the greatness of God. Abraham knew who they were.

He has had sufficient contact with God up until this point, that when he sees the Lord approaching him with the two angels that are mentioned later on, he knows who he is. He recognizes him. Now, some of us

entertain angels unawares, don't we, and don't know who they are, and some of us have had experiences when we thought afterwards it was an angel of the Lord, and Abraham sees these three men coming towards him, for they are actually called distinctly men.

He sees them coming towards him. By the way, perhaps some of you ladies could explain to me just why it is when angels appear in the scriptures visibly, with a palpable body, I'm not going to ask you about the body part, that's another subject, the angelic bodies, but will you tell me why it is that angels, when they appear like that visibly and tangible, why it is that they appear as men? I thought all the angels would have been feminine, wouldn't you? That's how I saw them when I went to Sunday school, in the drawings, but anyway, I mustn't labour here, I might get into difficulties. At any rate, they approach him, and they are three men.

He runs to meet them. He bows himself to the ground. Remember how old he is now, he's 99 years old.

He bows himself to the ground, and he invites them in the true oriental courtesy to come into his tent and to rest a while in the heat of the day, and he will prepare not only lodging for them, but he will make physical provision for them as well. So, they acquiesce to his invitation, and they come, and they sleep themselves there, and Abraham runs off into the herd, try it the next time you're 99, and catch a calf, and he delivers the calf to a young man, and he tells him, now you dress and prepare, and he goes to Sarah, and he tells her what to do, and he gives her instructions about what she is to bake, or what she is to prepare, and he himself waits until the meal is ready, and then he acts as the host, and he acts as the servant, and he brings the meal, and he sets it before them, and then the interesting expression is when we find this here, verse 8, he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and he set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. How much closer can God come to us than this? For this is Jehovah, this is the Lord himself, they did eat.

The three partook of the food that Abraham had prepared for them. It reminds me of the verse in Romans chapter 8, what the law could not do, and that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the likeness of sinful flesh. The word became flesh, but not only did he become flesh, he came in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Now, of course, we know it was not sinful, we know he did no sin, he knew no sin, in him was no sin, but he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and he partook of our nature, for that's what he got from Mary, by the way, was his inhuman nature. I know there are mysteries here, and I'm not going to go too far into it with you, but I strenuously refute the position that has been taken by some that Mary was a surrogate mother, that Mary contributed nothing to her son. He was her son, he is called her son, he brought forth her firstborn son.

Therefore, that thing which shall be born of the holy, Gabriel said, shall be called the son of God. He was her son, and he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and there he lived with them, and he toiled with them, and he slept, and he worked, and he ate with them, and he experienced all the vicissitudes and difficulties of life with them. Here, in this book, Jehovah comes to Abraham's tent with two angels, and he sits down and partakes of Abraham's food.

What a marvelous thing it is! Sometimes our concept of God is very abstract, and it's very remote, and we have relegated to him a distance which the scriptures deny, and we have felt that not only is heaven far away, but God is far away. He could come no closer, could he, than he has on an occasion like this. Remember the Lord says in resurrection, if you hear anything to eat, and they said, they gave him a piece

of broiled fish and a honeycomb, and he took it and did eat before them.

Marvelous, this body of glory, isn't it? What we're going to be like. Somebody asked me just the other day, the other day, were we going to be eating in the glory? I said, of course we are. No, I didn't say it would be great, you understand.

That's one of the things we had to learn when we came to the south of North Carolina a few years back. My wife just thinks they're marvelous. Grits in the pulled beans, cooked with bits of fat back in it.

Each to his own. El gusto de consumidor, we say in Spanish. You have your own taste, you're welcome to some.

Well, at any rate, of course we're going to eat, and why are we going to eat? Because there is no living creature that is self-sufficient or self-sustaining. Nothing, and no one. Everything that God and every person and every individual and every intelligence that God has created must be sustained outside of itself.

So, of course, we're going to need food. Sit down and eat bread. My table, he said, and my king, didn't he? All right, now don't ask me what they mean, but that's something else.

So, he comes very close to Abraham. Now, there are two main subjects on his heart, on his mind, as the Lord sits there, and after the meal is through, then they rise up to go on their way, and they're walking away from the tent, but before they do so, God brings up the first of the two subjects on his mind. The first subject is the son, and he speaks to Abraham about him having a son, and he's going to have it at a set time, he said, according to the time of life.

So, this is not a miraculous birth in the sense that we sometimes think of a miraculous birth. This is a birth from a miraculous rejuvenation of two dead bodies, but God said twice over, according to the time, at this time of the year. So, it's a nine-month gestation period, as you and I know today, and he's not going to move outside that framework.

He's going to give Abraham and Sarah a son, but he's going to give them a son in accordance with the laws of procreation that he himself has established. I think that's very important, and the reason why I suggest to you that's important, although I'm not going to interest a lot of you here today, I have often had the question thrown at me. In fact, I visited a little lady recently, she has four children, and she was feeling very badly as a thin little woman, very energetic, very energetic rather, very artistic, hard worker, tireless worker, but she didn't want to have any more children, and she said, well, my husband says that God is the creator of all life, and financially we can't afford another child, and he wants to have another child, and I don't think we should, and he says, well, he believes that God is the creator of all lives.

Reminds me of a little lady, a Spanish lady, I was having some meetings in Miami and Spanish one night, and this little lady came to me after, and she said to me, Andavid, I want to ask you a question. I said, what's the question? She said, will you explain to me that verse that says the meek shall inherit the earth? And I said, um, why were you thinking about that verse? She said, I'm 37 years old, I've had 17 children, and my husband is leaving me, and how am I going to raise them? And I think the poor soul was wondering. She was a meek kind of individual, and she was a poor kind of individual too, and how she ever was going to inherit the earth, the way things were going with her, I think was a big problem in her mind.

But at any rate, this little lady said to me, um, what can you tell me about this problem, this situation? I said, tell your husband that God doesn't contravene or interfere in the establishment of his own laws, unless it pleases him for a very specific purpose to do it. He established the laws of procreation. He made you too the creators of this new life, and you must accept the responsibility for it.

So we had a long little chat about that, and when I was all finished, she said to me, Would you please come back and talk to Mark? Because I can't get that through his head. Well, some husbands' heads, you know what they're made of, don't you? So God is telling Abraham that he's going to have a son. Sarah's going to have a son at the set time of the year.

And Sarah laughs, you remember. She's eavesdropping. She's listening, as your margin will tell you, she's listening at the tent door.

She's hearing him listen. She laughs, and of course the Lord heard the laugh, and he said, Why did Sarah laugh? And Sarah comes out and says, I didn't laugh. I didn't laugh.

No, no, I had nothing to do with Sager, you know. I mean, it was your fault, Abraham. And I didn't laugh, she says.

And the Lord says, But you did laugh. Well, and later on, you remember, when God comes to Abraham again and talks to him about his son, Abraham falls on his face, and he laughed, but he laughed in an altogether different way. It's not that you laugh, it's how you laugh, isn't it? Sarah's laugh was very cynical, and Abraham's laugh was a laugh of joy, of gladness.

It was a laugh of exuberance. He was exultant when he laughed. It all depends on how you do a thing, doesn't it? How you say something, because sometimes you will say something, and somebody will repeat the same thing you said to somebody else, but they repeat it with a different inflection, a different intonation, and the third party takes it up altogether differently than the way you said it in the first place.

Have you ever wondered how the Lord said in John chapter 20, Mary? How do you say that? Mary. Mary. Mary.

I don't know how he says it, but it all depends on how you say things, not necessarily what you say. So, Sarah laughs, and God says, Why did Sarah laugh? And then, finally, he rises up, and they go on their way, and it says, As they went on their way, now, I don't know whether this is a soliloquy, or I don't know whether the Lord is talking to the angels. I don't know, but the Lord says, it might have been a soliloquy, I don't know, he says, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I'm going to do? I really can't keep it from Abraham.

I must tell him. Isn't that marvelous? Why should the Lord of all creation, why should the ruler of the ends of the earth, why should the omnipotent, omniscient God confide in a man regarding the secrets of his works? Here's a man that was so near to him, and so dear to him, that he said, I must tell him what I'm going to do. So, he tells Abraham about Sodom, and he adds a very human touch to it, doesn't he? When he says, I've come down to see if the cry that I've heard up there, and down here, is really what I have been hearing.

Strange, the language that God uses at times, isn't it? How he accommodates himself to us in our frailty. It amazes me, and it humbles me to think that God would do this. So, he says, I've come down to see about Sodom, Abraham.

The city is wicked before the Lord, and I've come down to see if it is as I have heard it to be, and if so, I will destroy it. And then you begin that marvelous work of intercession. Abraham draws near to the Lord.

He draws near to the Lord, understanding the two of them together, because the angels have gone on towards Sodom, and Abraham's left before Jehovah, and he begins to speak to the Lord. You know how he starts at 50 and moves down by 10, and he moves down until he comes down to 10, and he's interceding for Sodom, and each time the Lord responds to him, I'll not spare the city, I won't spare the city. Am I muttering, by the way? I dropped my voice, pardon me.

And he says, if there's 50, and if there's 40, and if there's 30, and if there's 20, and if there are 10 in the city, I will not destroy it. And Abraham says, I have no more to say. He has reached that fascinating number 10.

You'll find it right from the earliest chapters of Genesis, right through to the closing chapters of the Revelation. It comes up a multiple of times, this number 10, this metric system that you good folks here don't have to fight about as we do in Canada. You know, minus two degrees, and plus three degrees, and so forth, and then there's so many kilometers from here to there, and you multiply it by six and add two in order to get into miles.

You don't have to worry about that down here, do you? Well, we folks, some of us, younger, older ones at any rate, don't like this metric system too well. So, he's coming down and he gets to that last number, the number of a complete measure always in the metric system, number 10, and he stops there, and if you stop and figure it out, if Lot had been the man he ought to have been, and if his wife had been the woman she ought to have been, there would have been 10 in the family of Lot, as I see it. So, Abraham stops there, well, I can't go any farther, there must be 10, and God says, if there's 10 in the city, I won't destroy it, and Abraham withdraws, and it says, the Lord went on his way.

There's a little touch in chapter 17, I never noticed with you, but after God is speaking to Abraham, and he's changed his name in chapter 17, then it says, the Lord went up from being with Abraham. He's come down, and now he's going up, and in this case, the Lord Jehovah goes on his way, and Abraham returns to his tent. Quite marvelous revelations these are of God.

Now, chapter 19, we'll pass right over that. Come to chapter 20, and I want to notice this briefly, I was going to stop right on the quarter hour, I have a good brother back there at the door and says, you are supposed to take 40 minutes, regardless of when that is. So, I can't obey everybody at once, but I shall try.

When we come to chapter 20, we have a Philistine king, Abimelech, and here is a man who falls into a trap regarding a woman, and Abraham and Sarah and all his retinue, they move into the land of the Philistines, and Abimelech, the king of Gerar, the king of the Philistines, he sees, well, they report to him that Abraham's wife, Sarah, is a beautiful woman. Didn't even know about oil of old age, and even at this advanced age in life, she's still a beautiful woman, and Abraham says, now, we'll keep by the bargain when we left the Chaldees, we left the Chaldees with this bargain that you would always say you're my sister, and I will always say I'm your brother, because if not, they're going to take you for your beauty, and they'll slay me. So, it goes on again, even at this stage, after chapters 15, 17, and 18, Abraham and Sarah are still working under this subterfuge, under this deceit.

Well, don't be too hard on them. How long have we known the Lord? How many years are behind us now? And aren't it time to resort to that which is questionable as Christians, and here they are, and they go into

the land of the Philistines, and they say, no, he's my brother, and Abraham says, she's my sister, so they take Sarah into the harem of the king of the Philistines, and God appears to Abimelech the king in the night, a vision of God to a Philistine king. Is he the God of the Jews only? No, he's not.

Is he not the God of the Gentiles? Yes, but what for? God appears to him in a dream. Watch the people to whom the Lord appears in a dream, and watch the people to whom an angel comes in person, and look at the circumstances. We had Hagar, and Hagar comes up again in the next chapter, 21, but at any rate, the Lord appears to Abimelech, and he says, you're a dead man.

You took another man's wife, and Abimelech uses a title of divine sovereignty, and he says, Lord, I don't, he said, I did it in innocence, and I haven't touched the woman. He said, she's my sister. She said, he's my brother.

God said, I know. God is talking to a Philistine king. We can't limit him, can we? We can't circumscribe or hedge in the grace of God, the magnificence of the grace of God that reaches out to anywhere, but what purpose? And I must, I must, I must stop.

God says, return to the man his wife. If not, you're a dead man. So Abimelech goes up in the morning, told all his men what had happened, the dream he'd had, the Lord had spoken to him, and what had happened, and he called Abraham, and he said, why did you do this? You put me into jeopardy of my life by saying that she was your sister.

What a tragedy, isn't it? And a man of this character, of this position, a man who's just walked with Jehovah, a man who's just been talking and pleading and interceding with God about others, that he should fall into this thing again. And yet, the angel of the Lord was pleased to intervene for this purpose, because of the sanctity of the marriage of his elect. That's the whole reason for it.

Do you know the days that we're living in, when the sanctity of marriage, not only in the world, but now, unfortunately, amongst God's people, is being cast aside? God intervenes in this miraculous way, in this angelic way, by a dream to this king, because he will have preserved the sanctity of the marriage of his own. God is interested in these affairs of marriage life. So there, we must leave it.

Let us pray. Our Father, we commend us to thee this morning. We thank thee for thy word.

We thank thee for thine inimitable grace. O Lord, how marvelous it is to us that thou shouldst accommodate thyself to us in our low status and stature. But we are here before thee this morning, and our hearts are cheered by the fact that we have read of thy ways of old, and we know that thou art the same yesterday, today, and forever.

May thy grace attend our activities this day, and the blessings of thy Spirit be upon thy people, as we commend this to thee, through the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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