

# Dream and the Interpretations Thereof

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*Matthew*

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Let's pray together.

*Heavenly Father, tonight we relish and we cherish the fact that mercy called our name. Lord, it's a beautiful word to realize that that which we deserve you were willing to place upon Jesus Christ, that which rightfully was due as a consequence for our rebellion and sin, you were willing to take on your own self. And so, Lord, tonight as we think about the fact that you being the merciful one called our name, Lord, we can only state that that is a grace that is amazing. So Lord, guide us now as we turn to your scripture, Lord, as we see the details, the intricacies, as we put the pieces together, may we see that you are the author and the finisher not just of our faith but of the mercy and the love and the grace that we oftentimes regretfully take for such granted. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This evening, I want to encourage you to turn in your Bibles to Matthew 2. Now if you have not been with us as a part of our evening studies or maybe it's been a while since you've been with us, allow me to kind of, I guess, summarize not only what we're doing but really the why. We're walking through the gospel of Matthew and we've been doing so for some time and you may question, well, we're just in chapter 2, there's 28 chapters, this is going to be a long journey. You're absolutely correct. As far as chronology is concerned it will be a long journey but that's when the "why" comes into play. The "why" isn't just the gospel of Matthew, in fact, I am convinced more and more each and every day that the more you study Matthew, the more you learn the totality of scripture. In other words, this isn't just about one of the respective gospels, it is the gospel of Matthew as we will see in particular tonight, that takes the entirety of the Old Testament and sees Jesus Christ as the fulfillment thereof, and so really to understand the Old Testament we've got to grasp what Matthew is teaching us. Now that's important when we get to the end of the Bible because in the book of Revelation, one of those places in the Bible that so many people love to spend time in but more often than not create more confusion than clarity, there are over 250 references, allusions and quotations to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation.

So if you'll allow me to summarize, our study of the gospel of Matthew, though it may take some time, is a lot quicker journey than a study of the 39 books of the Old

Testament but we're going to gain the same knowledge, the same insight, and the same perspective by walking through Matthew. Tonight, we come to the end of chapter 2, verses 13 through 23, and to be quite honest with you, this is one of those sections not just in the gospel of Matthew but in the story of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection, that we're probably somewhat familiar with but we probably don't spend a whole lot of time there. Up to this point, you know, it's been somewhat exciting. We've had this genealogy with these 42 generations and 45 names. We've got the famous Christmas story with the angel of the Lord coming and visiting Mary and Joseph. You have the visit of the wise men, the three gifts, the angels being visited or the angels visiting the shepherds on the hillside. There's been a lot that's been happening. It's been pretty action-packed and then tonight there's the story of Mary and Joseph and Jesus going to Egypt, about two years later coming back. It's really just a connecting of the dots to chapter 3 because in chapter 3 all of a sudden we're going to be beside the river Jordan, there's going to be this guy show up who's wearing leather and eating locusts, his name is John the Baptist, and honestly almost 30 years will have passed. There is this chasm of time and that's important because if you'll remember at the Old Testament when Malachi ends, we've got about 430 years before the New Testament begins, and the Old Testament ends on all these prophetic statements that the New Testament will fulfill, and when we get to chapter 2 at the end, we have three very specific references to "it has been fulfilled," in other words, references to the Old Testament. Tonight, we're going to reach back into Hosea, we're going to reach back into Isaiah, we're going to reach back into Jeremiah which is important because when we end chapter 2 in the gospel of Matthew, there is going to be this lapse of time, there is going to be this "time of silence" in the gospel, but everything has been solidified by the fulfillment of prophecies of years ago.

As we begin to read tonight, I've entitled this "Dreams and their Interpretations." There's a twofold purpose. First of all, obviously in the context here we're going to have a lot of people having a lot of dreams and we've got to figure out what's happening in light of the Old Testament prophecies. 2. We live in a world today where oftentimes people will claim that they had a dream, they had a vision, they had some type of experience, and we're going to learn tonight how do we analyze those "dreams," how do we go to them and we study them, what is the proper manner, because if the Bible tells us how to interpret the dreams of these characters, should we not hold ourselves to the same standards?

Matthew 2, beginning in verse 13, it says,

13 And when they were departed [those were the wise men], behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and

slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy [or Jeremiah] the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. 19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Now we come to this passage and there's all kinds of dreams, all kind of characters, but on the surface we're kind of just connecting the dots, we're getting from the gifts of the wise men and their significance of Jesus as prophet, priest and king, the practicality of going into Egypt to the river Jordan, John the Baptist, "Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But much like the Old Testament that kind of gives us this foreshadowing of what is to come, I think it's important that we spend a little time in these verses because as they are written and as they state, it's going to set the stage for everything that's going to happen in the rest of the gospel of Matthew.

So as we're going to see tonight, we have two very specific dreams that take place in Joseph's life, and then we have a character whom I'm calling the "dreamer," and the reason I use that term for Herod is it was his dream to rule the world, and much like many of us, we have these aspirations, we have these dreams that are of our own flesh and ambition.

So let's begin with dream #1. Verse 13 of chapter 2 it says that Joseph receives a visit. Now this is interesting and I don't want to get sidetracked but if you'll notice in verse 13 it says "the angel of the Lord" arrived. When you get to verse 19 it says "an angel of the Lord." So irrespective of whom or what we may believe these specific angelic beings to be, I think we can conclude that there's a pretty good chance that whomever the Lord sent as his messenger to Joseph, he actually sent two different entities to visit. That's important. You say, "Why is that important?" Because if Joseph claimed to hear the same voice every time, we would have reason for suspect, but here the Lord is operating through messenger A and then a couple years later messenger B, yet both of them make the same statement in that they quote why he is to do what he is to do according to what the scripture says.

So there is an angel of the Lord and one of the things I want you to notice from the very beginning is that what we know as "dreams" particularly in the Old Testament is a very

prolific way by which the Lord spoke unto his people. Now in Genesis 20 and I've given you a couple of references on the screen tonight, Genesis 20 and 28 are really two opposing entities. In chapter 20, you have a man by the name of Abimelech. Abimelech is a man of which Abram or Abraham was making his way toward. You know the famous story, he tells his wife, "Hey, tell them you're my sister, not my wife." And there's all that kind of thing that goes sideways and the Lord spoke to Abimelech who was not of the Abrahamic covenant, he is by no reference at all someone who's walking in the paths of the Lord, but what did God do? He warned him not to go through a certain action lest he would violate the laws of God. Even to "the lost world," the Lord spoke in a dream directing them toward righteousness and not contrary to the other. In other words, whether you're in the book of Genesis or you're in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Lord will never speak to you in a dream causing you to seek unrighteousness or rebellious behavior. Then we get to chapter 28 and we have that famous scene of Jacob, that dreamer who sees the heavens open.

Now those are just two isolated incidents by two completely different perspectives because one of the things we need to understand is that you and I – and this is critical to our study tonight – you and I have a very distinct advantage on both Abimelech, Abraham, Jacob and fill in the blank. You say, "What is our advantage?" You and I do not have to go to bed at night wondering what God's thinking. I mean, we don't have to put our head on our pillow at night and go, "If God would only speak to me." Because he has and we have it recorded for us. You know, the Bible has given us the events of the past, it's given us the challenge of the present, and thanks to prophecy it's even given us insight on what's going to happen in the future. And so we are not dependent solely on God visiting us in the middle of our sleep, much like Joseph, to communicate. However I do want to reference for you the book of Numbers 12. The book of Numbers, by the way, we usually joke about how infrequently we go to the book of Numbers and we call it the book of Numbers because of these what appear to be endless genealogies, but I would daresay the book of Numbers is a fascinating study and read. The book of Numbers is really the story of the wilderness. It's the story of the Israelites as they make that journey, circular journey waiting for the Promised Land. There in Numbers 12:6, I want you to hear what God says to Moses. He says, "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision." Push pause. Isn't that what Abimelech experienced? Isn't that what Jacob experienced? Yes. He said, "If there be a prophet, I will speak unto him in a vision," notice this last statement, and what will he do, "and he will speak unto him in a dream." What did Moses or what was Moses commissioned by God to do? To write down that which God gave him so that the rest of humanity could have the same information that the Lord gave him. Is that not what the prophets do in the Old Testament? "Thus saith the Lord." And this is why tonight is critical, because every dream in Matthew 2 is going to be interpreted not based on what Joseph desired to do, wanted to do, hoped to do, but it is interpreted strictly on what the Bible said, and so it sets a precedent for us that not only in scripture but also in our own lives, if we have an opportunity in our opinion to "hear from the Lord," that hearing from the Lord will never be contrary to his word. That's why it's important that every one of these, it says "Thus saith the Lord."

In verse 15 of chapter 2 of Matthew it says, "And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." That's actually a statement from a prophecy of the book of Hosea 11. Now Hosea, interesting section of scripture, Hosea is the one whom we often refer to as the lifestyle prophet. You say, "The lifestyle prophet?" Well, you think of Jeremiah, you think of Isaiah, you even think of the minor prophets of Zephaniah and Habakkuk and Obadiah, generally speaking the majority of their message was "Thus saith the Lord. God gave me a dream, God gave me a vision, God spoke to me and now I'm going to speak to you." Hosea, much different. In fact, the Lord said, "I need you to go and do, and what I've called you to do is an illustration of, it's a testimony of my message to my people."

There in Hosea 11, it talks about the people of God being pulled out of Egypt and being pulled out of idolatry, and there's this allusion to whom we know as the Messiah Jesus Christ actually coming out of Egypt. The Israelites came out of Egypt. You and I as the people of God all throughout scripture are encouraged to "come out of Egypt" metaphorically, meaning that world system, that which is fleshly-based, that we are to "come out." In fact, you see all throughout scripture that Egypt as an entity is reference to or is synonymous with the world. Now again, I want you to know I have nothing personal against anybody of an Egyptian heritage but understand biblically speaking you would be hard-pressed to find anything in the Bible that is good about Egypt. Nothing. In fact, it's a place of bondage, it's a place of idolatry. In fact, you discover in the Bible it's generally the place where everything we probably shouldn't do originates from. And yet we discover that the Messiah, the one that was prophesied would actually come out of Egypt. Yes, just like Hosea 11 said. By the way, just for the sake of illustration, when you get to Revelation 11, in that book of the Bible that most of us are so intrigued by, there's all these things being mentioned, you've got these two witnesses, you've got all these judgments that are taking place, and there it says that Jerusalem has fallen into idolatry, this is in Revelation 11, and Jerusalem in Revelation 11 is referred to as spiritual Sodom, can we agree not good, and Egypt. Isn't that interesting. From the first book of the Bible to the last book of the Bible the place of Egypt is just metaphorical if nothing else and literal in some cases for a place of bondage, worldliness, and a celebration of the flesh. And yet if you'd been Joseph, by the way, you do realize that Joseph grew up going to the synagogue, Joseph grew up studying what we know as the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. There's a good chance he was pretty well-versed in scripture and all of a sudden he's being told to go to Egypt? You do remember that's the place they couldn't wait to get out of, right? That was the place that for 400 years.... somewhere in his mind he's got to be thinking, "This didn't turn out well for my forefathers. They went to Egypt and it took them 10 generations to come out. Why would I take my wife, why would I take the promised child, why would I do this?" The Lord sent a dream but it was a dream not of a frivolous concept or idea but one that was based on an Old Testament prophecy that more likely than not he had probably read and/or studied at some point in his upbringing.

By the time we get to verse 16, Herod shows his proverbial true colors. Again, much like Egypt being symbolic and emblematic of worldliness, fleshliness and bondage, Herod is

one of those characters that it is very difficult to find out anything good of him or about him and he, according to verse 16, is wroth. In verse 17 it says, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy," or Jeremiah, "the prophet, saying." There is this scene, that to be honest, is just hard to grasp. You've got the Christ child being born, you've got the angels declaring it, you've got the shepherds celebrating it, you've got the magi visiting and all of a sudden the Bible says that the "physical demise" and if you'll allow me to use the word, "the slaughtering of young children" is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy? How can that be? It just seems antithetical. How does that happen?

Well, that passage is referenced by Jeremy or Jeremiah the prophet is found in Jeremiah 31:15 alluding back to Genesis 35 but there's something I want to speak of when it addresses Herod here. I want to be very clear: in this passage and in this scenario, even though Jeremiah said hundreds of years before this was going to happen, according to James 1 and other passage, God is not the author of sin, okay? God does not initiate, propagate, encourage and/or tempt anybody to sin but God is able, willing and fully capable of handling every scenario in the realm of the creative order. What do I mean by that? I want you to think about the movie industry. That may seem like a stretch but just work with me for a moment. There's a lot of different roles into producing and making and directing and acting in a film. Now the ones who tend to be of a celebrity nature, they're the actors and the actresses, they're the ones that get all the publicity, they're the ones that supposedly, for lack of better terms, get the big paychecks, the notoriety, but you do understand that the one who is probably the most powerful entity in making a movie is the producer. You say, "The producer?" It's interesting, the producer doesn't make the film, the producer doesn't act in the film, and the producer doesn't even cut the checks for those who are going to be a part of the film, but what does the producer do? The producer is the one that makes sure that all the other positions are filled. The producer is the one that makes sure that he has the director, that he has the cinematographer, that they have the lighting technicians, that they have the actors and the actresses and such. The producer – listen – does not do any of the work on the film but makes sure that everybody who is going to is in the right place at the right time to do what they're supposed to do.

When I use that analogy, understand a very difficult theological pill to swallow is this: somebody had to betray Jesus. His name was Judas. Somebody had to "slaughter the children." His name was Herod. Somebody had to enslave the Egyptians and be subsequent to all of those famous travesties upon the land. His name was Pharaoh. Somebody had to play the part because the Lord as the producer of the story spoke clearly that these parts would be played in the way under redemption story. And so when I share that, understand this, that God did not author Herod's rebellion but he produced it. It had to be fulfilled. Somebody had to be the one to commit this atrocity and historically speaking there's probably no better candidate than Herod. He fit it awfully well.

Then in verse 19, we get to our last dream. It says that "when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into

the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Again as I mentioned, a little different than in verse 13 rather than "the angel of the Lord" it says "an angel of the Lord." Not to get too much in the weeds there but obviously same God, different messenger.

It says he was warned of God in a dream, but verse 23, again so critical, it says, why? "That it might be fulfilled." I want you to notice and I know it's overkill here, there's a theme here, there's a constant message that whether it's going into Egypt, coming out of Egypt, whether it's going to Galilee or going to Jerusalem, every location, every aspect of this is a fulfillment of what was spoken hundreds of years before. Now this is important on so many different levels. 1. It proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ was and is not a self-fulfilled prophet. You say, "What is a self-fulfilled prophet?" You write the past in the present because you're fulfilling what you wanted it to be from the beginning. In other words, you write your own headlines as if they took place in the past but they're being lived out in real time. Again, I realize that Jesus is God in flesh, at the same time recognize that by the time you get to the end of chapter 2, chronologically speaking he is no older than four years of age.

Now think about all that has happened since he was incarnated. He arrived in the city of Bethlehem. He departed into the land of Egypt and then he arrives in the area known as Nazareth. Those are three pretty significant things that the Messiah would fulfill and yet I can promise you he had no "say" in the process. Now this may seem overly simplistic but allow me to survey the crowd. How many here were a part of the decision of what city you would be born in? Raise your hand. That's right, that's nothing we have the availability to do. If you were under the age of four and your family relocated, do you honestly believe they asked your input? No. And so Jesus Christ, who by the time we get to chapter 3 will be performing miracles and speaking great messages of truth, those fulfillments are to be regarded as the same as these. In other words, not a self-fulfilled prophet but the author of the prophecies and the fulfillment therein that it might be fulfilled.

Now again, Hosea 11 earlier, Jeremiah 31, this one a little different, in the book of Isaiah 9 it speaks about the Messiah and it begins to list, you can go and look it up if you so desire, it lists a bunch of cities but basically it doesn't say "verbatim" from Nazareth but the cities of where we know as the upper Galilee region. So for example, if I came to you tonight and said, "Hey, I met a group of people, some of them were from Opelika, some of them were from Auburn, some of them were from Beauregard, some were from Phoenix City, you might say, "Oh, you were in east Alabama," because we know that those areas are east Alabama, kind of the same thing that is happening here.

Then toward the end, it says "he shall be called a Nazarene." Notice it does not say a Nazarite. It's a big difference. A Nazarite, book of Numbers again, chapter 6, think Samson. Remember Samson? Even though he was technically a judge of God, he had a

Nazarite vow on himself where he was not to eat anything of an alcoholic nature, he was not to touch anything of a dead entity, and he was never to cut his hair. A Nazarite vow, if you've never studied the Nazarites, a Nazarite vow is a temporary vow. You realize that because you couldn't touch anything that was dead, that if you were a Nazarite and you had a loved one who passed away, you could renounce your vow, go through the burial proceedings and when everything was done you could re-up your vow. By the way, a Nazarite could be a man or a woman. There was no gender specifics to it that a man or a woman desiring to be ardent for the things of the Lord could vow a Nazarite vow. When you get to the New Testament in the book of Acts there's even a question of whether or not the Apostle Paul for a temporary period had a Nazarite vow because he said after he had concluded vowing a vow. Jesus Christ was not a "Nazarite," it says he was a Nazarene which meant that his upbringing, his being raised in the flesh, those years of what we might call silence were in a little place known as Nazareth, just a little bit north of what we know as the Dead Sea in an area called Galilee.

This is important not just because it is a fulfillment of prophecy, i.e. Isaiah 9, but do you remember when Jesus shows up on the scene and he begins to call his disciples and in the process of doing so one of them looks and says, "How can any good thing come out of Galilee?" And his buddy has to remind him, well, according to Isaiah 9, the Messiah would come out of Galilee.

A couple of chapters later in chapter 11 of the book of Isaiah, there is a reference to Jesus Christ being a branch, and just for the sake of fun tonight in conclusion, we walked through these dreams, we see the actions of Herod, we see that all of it was thus it might be fulfilled, I wanted just to leave you with something tonight that I find absolutely fascinating and intriguing because these three aspects or these statements in Matthew 2 are not the only statements in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ fulfilled, okay? And when you go through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you see just a slew of them but in Isaiah 11 Jesus Christ is referred to as the branch, okay? The branch of Jesse. The one that would connect us from the Davidic and Abrahamic covenant unto the Messiah, the Redeemer, the one who would save and heal and forgive, and I want you to see and for the sake of time we don't have to actually go back and look them up, I'll just reference them for you. In Jeremiah 23, by the way, in every one of these passages the coming Messiah is referred to as a branch, okay? In Jeremiah 23 he's referred to as a branch that would be a king. Now in Matthew's gospel account, one of the things that we have and will continue to see is that Jesus Christ is presented as the king of Israel, the one day coming ruler. In fact, when we get to the end of the gospel of Matthew, in particular chapters 24, 25 and a little bit of 26, it's all about the day when he does literally reign over his people. In the book of Zechariah 3 it says that this branch will be a servant. In the gospel of Mark, we see in chapter 10 Jesus make this very definitive statement that he, the Messiah, did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Again in Zechariah 6:12 and 13, it says that this coming branch will be a branch of mankind or of man. The gospel of Luke, the lengthiest of the gospels, we discover that the phrase or the term used over and over for whom Jesus Christ would be is that he is the Son of man. And finally in Isaiah 4:2 it says that this branch will be



directly from God. And in the gospel of John Jesus Christ is referred to as the Son of God.

Why is that critical? Because these dreams that Joseph has, they have to be interpreted in light of what scripture said, and just like tonight or any other night, we should not take dreams, visions, and experiences of their own accord but we should bring them through confirmation of scripture, whatever or whomever they may come from. On the other side, please understand that all throughout scripture you don't have to have the phrase "and thus as it is fulfilled" to reference you back to an Old Testament prophecy. The Bible doesn't always say, "Oh, by the way, this was found in Jeremiah. Oh, by the way, this was found in Isaiah." And I think that's critical for us because a lot of times we read passages and we read sections of the Bible and we say, "Well, I don't really quite understand this but I think what it means is..." That can be a very dangerous proposition because it doesn't matter what you or I think it might be if it has a direct correlation to an Old Testament prophecy as the majority of the gospel of Matthew and almost all of the book of Revelation does.

So again, chapter 2 is going to close, when we open up next week, we're going to be at the Jordan River, John the Baptist is going to be on the scene. It's going to be quite a sight and guess what we're going to discover? That John the Baptist does not show up in mere isolation, John the Baptist isn't just some fringe guy who shows up on the scene for whatever reason. You do realize that the very last chapter of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi 4 says, "Before the day of the Lord I will send Elijah the prophet." Interesting that in the gospel of Matthew later on they will ask Jesus about John the Baptist and they say, "Is he the one that was spoken of in Malachi?" You may not remember what he said, "If you receive me, he is." If you receive me. Obviously we know the Jewish people as a whole rejected him, even John the Baptist is subjected to the fulfillment of prophecies. Again, whether it be a dream, a dreamer, or this strange character who shows up at the River Jordan, you and I have the privilege of seeing the Old Testament unfold, seeing the prophecies of old which, by the way, 1 Peter 1:20, it states that the prophets of old, I'm going to paraphrase it, didn't even realize what they were writing. They just spoke what the Lord told them to speak and they did.

You and I, thankfully unlike Abimelech, Jacob, and many other characters, we don't have to go to bed tonight going, "I wonder what God's thinking. I wonder what that meant. I wonder what's about to be." I want to conclude on this thought since Matthew utilizes the Old Testament so much, and I don't know who spoke this but it's worthy of repeating, if you want to know what to believe, read the New Testament. If you want to know what's about to happen, read the Old Testament. In other words, the majority of these Old Testament prophecies that we just alluded to three of them, haven't been fulfilled yet. In fact, for every Old Testament prophecy about the first coming of Jesus there are eight regarding the second coming. That's a pretty strong ratio. But whether they be for the first, whether they be for the second, whether they were fulfilled here in Matthew 2 or it will wait until what we know as the book of Revelation, there is one common thread in that all of these and all of this material is a part of God's great and grand plan where he was the author and the finisher of our redemption and our faith.

Matthew is about to go silent for about 30 years. God went silent for 400+ years in Malachi. But even though there are times of silence, he never changes his ways. There is the temptation that when he's silent in our life to maybe think there's a different way, but his way always stays the same, that it might be fulfilled.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. Tonight, as we study a portion of scripture that quite honestly is not the most exciting in the entirety of the Bible, it is necessary, it is important and maybe tonight you would be one of those individuals that says, "Man, God just seems silent." Or maybe tonight you'd be one of those folks on the other side of the spectrum that says, "You know, I just wish it was done this way or that way." Isn't it good to know that in between both of those the Bible makes it clear that it might be fulfilled thus it is written. The best news of tonight's message is that we don't have to worry or wonder what is on God's mind or what is coming next, he has spoken it so clearly. All we have is the opportunity and obligation of seeing it through his eyes and not ours. Maybe tonight you need to see your own life, your own soul, your own eternity through his eyes. The Bible makes it clear it's not by works of deeds or ambition that one is forgiven or saved but by trusting the Lord. The Bible makes it clear once we trust the Lord, once we believe upon him, once we're saved we follow in believer's baptism. The Bible is clear that whether you're in the city of Corinth or Thessalonica, Ephesus or the area of Galatia, that those believers assembled in local congregations. Maybe tonight it's not about some ecstatic dream or vision and such, maybe it's just about a very simple obedience maybe in a time period where God has been silent or vocal. Either one, he never strays from his word.

*Lord Jesus, thank you that we don't have to wonder, thank you, Lord, that because we don't have to wonder we don't have to wander, that you have spoken to us all that we need. And God, forgive us if we have desired more. You've shared with us in your word everything we need to know about salvation, everything we need to know about obedience and sanctification, and even everything that we need to know about how you're going to wrap up everything one day. Help us right now as we come to this time of decision just to make a very simple decision that we're going to step back and allow you to guide us whatever that may be this evening. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*