

Joseph Dreams

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[0 : 0 0] continue then our progress through this next section of the book of Genesis. We come out of the first part of Genesis 37, beginning then what we might call the story of Joseph and how the Lord unfolds his particular providence with him. But it begins, as we see, with Jacob saying that he dwells in the land where his father was a stranger in the land of Canaan.

Now notice the tense that's used here. The land where his father was a stranger, not had been a stranger. Isaac at this point is still alive and will live for another 12 years yet. Indeed, at chapter 41, at verse 46, where we see that Joseph is standing before Pharaoh.

We knew Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt, when Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh. Isaac has only died one year previously to that. Isaac dies when Joseph is 29, and he's 30 when he stands before Pharaoh. So it's while Joseph is in prison that his grandfather dies, and all of these things unfold. And his whole life is about to change at that point when he stands before Pharaoh, when Isaac had died only the previous year. Now listen, this is part of what has been called by some the concertina effect of biblical history. It's like if you think about a piece of fabric, and the way that the biblical narrative is often unfolded is it's not just like a flat piece of fabric, where it's a continuous story unbroken working along the fabric. It's almost like it's as if somebody has folded it into sort of looping folds, so that some bits of the folds, they look like they're coming immediately one after the other. And if there was a pattern at the end of each of those folds, it might look continuous. But then if you were to open out the piece of fabric, you'd see that there's actually quite a lot in between each individual fold, a sort of concertina effect. And this is a necessary way, if you like, of recounting the biblical narrative, like folds in a fabric, because sometimes a particular narrative has to run its length in order to conclude one particular branch of the narrative. And then, as it were, to double back, to pick up the thread of the next story. Thus, we have the anomaly, we might say, of the fact that at this point, and for all of the four chapters that succeed, 37, 38, 39, and 40, most of chapter 35 hasn't happened yet. Now, that's maybe difficult to get our head around. But from 37 to 40 chapters, most of chapter 35 hasn't happened yet. It has been placed there in the narrative, because it is bringing the story of Isaac, the life of Isaac, through to its natural conclusion. And it is recounting that thread of the narrative all the way through to where it finishes. And by the time the Isaac story finishes, Jacob and

Joseph's story has already begun in one of the sort of folds, if you like, of the fabric of the story. So certainly, if you take the closing three verses of chapter 35, Jacob came unto Isaac, his father, to Mamreth, to the city of Arba, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac's sojourned. And the days of Isaac were 104 score years, and Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, the old and full of days. And his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him. End of the story for Isaac. But the story for Joseph and for Jacob and so on, and the brothers, has already begun by that. These closing verses of chapter 35 are still 12 years of the future, at the point when we begin chapter 37 there. It definitely hasn't happened yet, because Isaac yet lives. And will do so for the further four chapters, and a further 12 years. So we go back again. Verse 1, Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger. Isaac is a stranger there, not just because it is Canaan, because that is after all the land into which he was to come, the land into which he was born, you could say, and where he has lived all of his life. But he is a stranger there because, not just it is Canaan, but it is part of the fallen world. And Isaac is one of the children of God. And this is not their home. We will never be at home, in that sense, until we come to heaven.

We look at, remember what it says in Hebrews 11, verse 13, These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

[5 : 02] And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country. That is, and heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city. And in chapter 13, verse 14, For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. So do all the Lord's people in every generation. So is the case in this current generation. So is the case in Isaac's generation. It will never be at home in this fallen world.

And whether it is Canaan, or whether it is Scotland, or whether it is Scalpy, the Lord's people are in a sense strangers in this land. Because it is not really our home. Home is not so much a physical place, if you think about it. It is the presence of the one, or ones we love most. If you ever have to move house as a child, then you might be moving from a familiar surrounding to a new place, or whatever. But you're moving with your mum and dad and your family and so on. And when you come back, the one is still a strange house, or a new place. You're comforted by the knowledge that they're there. And the familiar faces are there. The people you love are there. It's home. It's become home. It's the warmth and the love is there. Home is where the people you love most, the person you love most happens to be. It is where they are. Mere places do not feed the soul or warm the heart just by virtue of their geography. And indeed, when they are emptied of those whom we have most loved, they become in a sense just haunted shells of by-ground memories without the presence of those we loved most. For the children of God, heaven is home. His house is our house, our home, precisely because our Lord is there. Where he is, that is where we desire to be. Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business, Jesus said to his earthly parents, because he had to be in his father's house. He needs to be where his father is. The Lord is there. Think of the final verse of Ezekiel's prophecy. Chapter 48, verse 35. It was round about 18,000 measures and the name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there. That is what makes the city home for the Lord's people, the continuing city that we seek. The Lord is there. So as long as he is in Canaan, as long as he is in this earth, as long as any of us who belong to Christ are in this fallen world, we may be comfortably familiar with surroundings which we have become to love over many years, but it is not home. It is not home to those who are in Christ, because home is where the person we love most is. And when we get there, we will know it is home. We will know that we have come home because the Lord is there. So we go on then in verse 2. The generations. These are the generations of Jacob. Now contrast this with what we saw in the previous chapter. In chapter 36, verse 1. These are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau, the elder of the two. His generations are mentioned first, but here we have no near list of names. This is not just a dry genealogy in this chapter and the ones that unfold, whereby centuries of living and dying can be encompassed with an itemized list of successive offspring. The generations of the covenant life encompass the stories, the outworkings of

God's providence and protection. What a writer of secular fiction might describe as the adventures of Jacob and his descendants. This is not just a list of names like in the previous chapter. This is not just God saying so-and-so begat somebody else and then they had this, then they became dukes, then they became kings, and this is what they did, this is who they married, and this is what their children were. That's it.

No, this is the outworking of God's story and providence and grace with Jacob and his descendants. It is filled with colour and excitement and drama and heroes and villains and at least one femme fatale in the midst of it all. It is precisely because it is the story of God at work in the lives of his covenant people, shower of dross, though many of them were in fact. Joseph and his brothers may be the characters and players upon the stage, but the story itself is about God's work of deliverance. Think of how Joseph himself sums it up at the end of Genesis saying, you planned this for evil when you sold me into slavery, but God meant it unto good to save much people alive. The latter chapters of Genesis are about God's deliverance, God's saving of his people from certain death and famine. It is God's work, the story of God at work in the lives of his covenant people. As we say, Joseph and his brothers made players upon the stage, but the story itself is of God's work of deliverance. In salvation history, in the outworkings of God's providence, the ultimate goal, as with all of creation and providence, is to give all glory to God. Now that is what God is doing in all his works of creation and providence. That is what he is doing in making the world and the universe and the stars and the planets and all the tiny minutiae of creation and the microscopic creatures that he has made, and man in his own image, male and female, all of this is to give glory to his name. And the relationship into which he seeks to enter, this relationship of self-giving love, the giving of his only son,

Jesus Christ, all of this is to glorify the love and the beauty and the holiness and the majesty of God. It is all about him. It is all giving glory to him. Joseph may be a major player for a short time, but the hero of the story is always the Lord God Almighty. And that is the case whether it is Abraham or Isaac or Jacob or Joseph or David and Goliath or Saul or whoever it might be.

[12 : 00] The hero in the center of the story is always the Lord, the Lord, the Lord. Because he is the one who doesn't change. And he is the one, the thread of whose deliverance runs through the entire story of his dealings with his people from Genesis to Revelation and on into our lives. The purpose is to give glory to God. History is exactly that. It is literally his story. It is all about him.

So this verse, verse 2 here, identifying Joseph as being 17 years old, helps us to date the narrative at this point in relation to the ages of Isaac and Jacob. I won't bore you with the references just now, but you can find them if you wish and calculate the arithmetic. At this point, if Joseph is 17, we know from the arithmetic that Isaac is 168 and Jacob is 108. And for all that Joseph may be the favorite, he is not permitted to be idle. Here he is at work in verse 2 in the family trade feeding the extensive flocks and herds of the family's livestock along with the sons of Bilhah. Remember that was Rachel's handmaid that her father gave to her. And the children of Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali and the children of Zilpah, that was Leah's handmaid, and those were Gad and Asher.

So Dan and Naphtali and Gad and Asher are there with Joseph while he's feeding the flocks of his father with his brethren. And obviously it would seem that they are not quite as diligent in the doing of their father's business as perhaps they should have been. Hence the final section of the verse, Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. And some people take that to, you know, he's telling tales of his brothers. But he might on the other hand simply be concerned for his father's, you know, goods and for his business and for the success of his father's livestock. And if his brothers aren't paying attention to it, if they are just failing to feed the flock or just being idle, then the flock are going to suffer. And the flock isn't just a source of, oh, wealth and extensive property and so on. It's the means by which the family lives. If they don't have their flocks and herds, if they don't have their source of income, they starve. It isn't as simple as that. They have to look well to their flocks and herds. So whilst we could say, oh yes, the nasty big brat was just bringing a telltale story to his dad to get his brothers into trouble. Maybe, perhaps, but on the other hand, it may just be that he was giving a truthful account of their diligence or lack of it. We don't know for sure. We're simply told Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a coat of many colours. The famous Technicolor Dreamcoat, as it's been described elsewhere. Now, what would this actually consist of? Well, again, part of the trouble is we don't know exactly, but it's thought to have been a patchwork. Patches of brightly coloured garments cut into strips or patches and sewed independently onto an existing garment so that it would cover it completely. And the effect would be, apart from adding weight to its weight and thickness, would be to make it brightly attractive with all this multi-colours of so many different shades and colours, all part of the same garment, all coming from different materials and different colours sewn together in a garment to make it both attractive and distinctive, a mark of favour, of approval and significantly of long hours of loving toil to actually make it. Now this was part of the reason why, you know, coloured garments or fine garments were expensive in those days. We talked a wee bit this morning about the cost of clothes. If somebody's in fine clothes, wrought by fine needlework and good quality materials, then it would be expensive, not just because of the rarity of the fine materials, but because of the hours of labour that would have been put into the making of such a quality garment. In the days before, sewing machines or factories or anything like that, it was all by hand. It was all cut and sewn and stitched by hand.

And it would take hours, perhaps weeks of labour to make such a coat as this. But the fact of its labour and the fact of its quality is what would make it special. We've got a couple of references elsewhere in scripture to such multi-coloured garments. When Absalom's sister Tamar is brutally forced by her half-brother and none. We read in 2 Samuel chapter 13 and verse 18, she had a garment of diverse colours upon her.

[16 : 59] For with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled. In other words, it was a rare benefit, a rare mark of privilege. The king's daughters that were virgins, that were unmyed, were given these multi-coloured, brightly coloured garments of diverse colours upon her. Then his servant brought her out, bolted the door after, came off with ashes in her head and rent her garment of diverse colours that was on her and laid her hand on her head and went on crying. But a mark for the king's daughters, these brightly coloured garments. Again in Judges chapter 5 and verse 30 where we have the mother of the mother of Sisera looking out to see what has become of her son the successful general, who of course by this time was dead. And her ladies, wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, have they not sped, have they not divided the prey to every man a damsel or two to Sisera, a prey of diverse colours. In other words, a garment, a multi-coloured garment, finely wrought with diverse colours. A prey of diverse colours of needlework of diverse colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil. Something precious, something costly, something that marked out the wearer as a person of distinction. Remember that Sisera was the general of the king of the Canaanites army. If anybody was going to get the coat of many colours, it was going to be him. So here we have Joseph at 17, being given not quite as grand or sophisticated a coat as that, but almost certainly a homemade garment, patches of different coloured cloth, but still very distinctive, marking out his favouritism. He made him a coat of many colours. This way I love Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age. Some of course maintain that the youngest in any family is always going to be spoiled. As a youngest one myself, of course I don't agree with that, but of course it's something that older brothers or sisters will always say. Parents should naturally strive to maintain equality and impartiality in their affections. Now it may sometimes be that if one child is conspicuously the cleverest or the most amiable and of the nicest nature, then they might end up as the most favoured by their parents. And if that is the case, you can guarantee they will consequently be the most envied by the others. Whatever love or attention is lavished disproportionately upon one will be matched by envy or dislike by the others who feel thus undervalued. And it is encumbered upon parents to show equality of love amongst their children. Whilst that might be natural to show favouritism to one particular child, if they're very much the youngest or especially gifted, might even be understandable in a family as, shall we say, politically fragile as this one here. Remember that Jacob's family is a very fragile, almost explosive situation. Jacob is certainly guilty of what one commentator has called criminal indiscretion. Whatever may have been his personal affections, he has been extremely foolish to make it so obvious who his favourite is. It also says here, because he was the son of his old age. Now, okay, fair enough. Benjamin would be even more so. But if we look down to verse 10, you should run your eye down to verse 10. Now, Jacob says, what is this dream that thou hast dreamed?

Shall I and my mother and my brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to be on the earth? Now, you don't make a statement like that unless Joseph's mother is still alive. But we know from previous chapters, specifically chapter 35 and verses 16 to 20, when Rachel is giving birth to Benjamin, that she travails in birth, she struggles and she dies in childbirth. So if Rachel is still alive at this point, and Jacob refers to what is still alive, then Benjamin has not been born. Because when Benjamin is born, Rachel dies. In other words, we're back to this concertina effect, the folds in the fabric, the sort of loops and folds. Go back again to chapter 35 and you'll see from verse 16 onwards to verse 20. The birth of Benjamin, the death of Rachel, which just as the ending of that chapter with the death of Isaac has not happened yet, we must likewise take it that chapter 35 verses 16 to 20 with the birth of Benjamin, the death of Rachel, has not yet happened either. Benjamin is not yet born. So although he would be even more the son of Jacob's old age, he does not yet exist. Thus, Joseph is the only son of Jacob's favorite wife, born when Jacob is, if you do the arithmetic, 91, when Joseph is born. He is well and truly the son of his old age. But true as that may be, it is likely that something else is meant as well by this phrase.

The Old Testament, as we know, is written for the most part in Hebrew. And there is a sort of Hebrewism, a kind of Hebrew phrase which means something slightly different, in which the phrase, a son of old age, a son of old age, doesn't just mean a son born when you're old. It means a son wise beyond his years, an old head on young shoulders, a body even when he's a child, one who appears to have experience and knowledge way beyond what his own years of experience should give him. Old beyond his years, wise beyond his years, a wise son, a son of old age. And this perhaps, given what unfolds in the narrative concerning Joseph, may be a truer and a deeper application of this phrase. It's not that it's untrue that Joseph is the child of Jacob's old age, if he's born when he's 91, it well and truly is, but

I would suggest to you that the actual Hebrew phrase here means something deeper. If you look at how when Joseph begins to apply himself, not only we might say to the flocks and herds of his father, he brings up the evil report of his brothers. What does that imply? It would imply, at best, to be charitable, that Joseph is being diligent about his father's flocks and herds and his other half-brothers are not. When he is put in charge of Potiphar's house, everything prospers.

Now yes, you can say the Lord causes him to prosper, but the Lord doesn't tend to work through an absolute duffer to make everything work in Potiphar's house just as it were by magic.

[24 : 38] Joseph clearly has skills and abilities and capacity beyond his years and beyond somebody of his own age would naturally be expected to be gifted with. When he is in Potiphar's house, everything prospers.

When he is put in charge of the jail, everything under the jailer's hand is ordered and neat and tiny done. When he is put in charge of Egypt, all the food is gathered in and Egypt becomes the bread basket for a famine-stricken entire region of the Middle East. Everything under Joseph's hand prospers. Yes, because God makes it do so. Yes, because God blesses it. Without the Lord, it doesn't happen. But I would suggest to you that perhaps the Lord has paved the way beforehand by gifting Joseph with abilities and strength beyond his years and capacity for organisation and seeing of potential and things which those perhaps with a shorter vision or just an interest in the immediate days ahead would not have the capacity to see. And whilst it is not untrue that he's a son of old age in a physical sense, perhaps this Hebrewism also goes deeper to the heart of what is intended here. So we then have from verses five onwards to the end of our section, verse 11,

Joseph dreamed a dream and he told it to his brethren. Dreams. Dreams in biblical terms are always significant and in this dream, no less than any others, the symbolism in the dreams are unmistakable. We have, for example, verse seven, behold, we were binding sheaves in the fields.

And lo, my sheep arose and also stood upright. And behold, your sheep stood round about and made obeisance to my sheep. It is a dream about the fruitfulness of the earth, about corn, about abundance of wheat or grain or whatever the case may be, that Joseph's sheath is standing tall. It has nothing to be ashamed of.

All the others are bowing down to him. And of course, we see the fulfilment of that coming to pass in chapter 42, where we see at verse six of how this is exactly what happens. Joseph was the governor of the land.

[27 : 06] And it was, and it was, and it was, he it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the earth. We see the fulfilment of it. And it's all about corn. And it's all about the sheaves. The symbolism with hindsight is unmistakable. Even without the hindsight, it is clear that Joseph is the centre of the dream and all the others are bowing down to them.

And they would probably just think in terms of in the capacity of their work in the fields, or with the work that they do, or they're engaged in the fruits of the earth, food and abundance. Verse seven.

And then in verse nine, the next dream, you've got almost like the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, the stars bowing down again to Joseph. And it's not so much his star, but rather the sun, the moon, the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And we must take it at this stage, eleven stars, if Benjamin was not yet born, that it must symbolise Dinah, his sister. So he's got his ten brothers, and he's got Dinah, his sister, and he himself is then the twelfth child. And the eleven stars, the sun, and the moon are bowing down. And his father takes it to me. Then it refers to his father, his mother, and his brothers and sister. What is this dream that thou hast bring? Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed, bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth? Now it may be that Jacob is simply rebuking him in public, perhaps to take some of the sting out of how his brothers are going to feel. You know, you tell such a dream once, and you're just going to heap up the envy and the energy. You tell it twice, you're really asking for trouble.

But the doubling of the dream, with the same message, but different imagery, sheaves on the one hand, sun, moon, and stars on the other hand, earthly imagery on the one, heavenly imagery on the other. It makes the symbolism even more emphatic.

The dream is doubled. The pictures used may be different, but the message is the same. The message is doubled. And again, if we're to turn a couple of pages, we turn to chapter 41, we read in verse 32, when Joseph is interpreting Pharaoh's dreams about the kind that came out of the, the cows that came up out of the river. And the one, the lean ones ate up the fat ones, but they still weren't any fatter. And then the, the prurios of corn blasted the fat rich ones, and still they were none the better. And Joseph says in verse 32 of chapter 31, For that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh, twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. The dream is doubled. And so likewise for Joseph here, the dream is doubled. And the symbolism is therefore even more emphatic. Now, in that particular culture and time, great store was laid upon dreams. And the distinction between dreams and visions was sometimes a bit blurred. I suppose you could say a vision is when you're awake, a dream is when you're asleep. But even then, sometimes it would say so-and-so appeared in a vision to somebody as he slept or whatever.

[30 : 29] So it's slightly blurred lines. But great store was laid upon dreams in that time and culture. And in the East, that is still the case today. You think, oh, come on. Nobody, nobody does that nowadays. You know, many, not just some, not just the occasional, many, many a person from a different religion, perhaps principally in the likes of Islam and so on, without any means of outward contact or witness from believing Christians around them. But the Lord or angel from heaven would appear to them in a dream and instruct them in the dream to follow Christ and to believe in him and put their trust in him. And many, many, many, having been obedient to such dreams, have gone on to face persecution and in many cases martyrdom for Christ and have held fast to the faith that the Lord has put in their hearts on the strength of that dream that the Lord has given to them. He appeared to them in a dream and he still does it. But in different cultures, different places, he works in different ways. Now our cultural background finds that strange because we are sort of, we are, we are inured to the fact and to the way in which, no, no, that's not how it happens at all. You have your dream and then five minutes after you wake up, you try and remember it and you can't remember a thing. No, God doesn't work through dreams.

Of course he doesn't. God works through his word and you hear the word preached or you read something and he works in your mind and the intellect grasps it and then it unlocks it and the spirit of Christ works in you and it gives you the feet of the Lord and the consciousness of your sin and then the way of salvation is opened onto you. God works through his word and he works through people witnessing to you and that's how God does it. He doesn't do dreams. He certainly doesn't do it nowadays. Yes, he does. He does it in scripture.

He does it in the Old Testament. He does it in the New Testament. He doesn't tend to do it so much in our particular culture or our particular background because we have developed in a different direction.

God uses different means usually with us but his means are no less effective in their day and in their time but certainly he continues to work in this particular way. We find the idea of God speaking through dreams something archaic, something ancient, something sort of mysterious and yes it's fine for the story of Joseph and Jacob but it doesn't happen nowadays. We're not even convinced that it's relevant or appropriate in a New Testament context but it partly depends on the cultural lengths through which we read the scriptures. The opening chapters of the New Testament if you think you know of Matthew chapters one and two and so on we perceive as if you're saying well what are the opening chapters of Matthew about? Well you would say well it's the nativity or to use the more worldly phrase the Christmas story about Jesus's birth in Bethlehem and the wise men coming to him and so on.

It's a Christmas story, it's a nativity, yeah that's what I think it's about. I remember hearing a missionary to Asian converts, people who are converted to Christianity from other religions in the East, the English say that when they finally were given the Bible in their own language and they began to read the New Testament they became extremely excited reading these opening chapters of Matthew's account of the gospel. Not so much about the birth of the baby Jesus and so on but rather what they read as they began these opening chapters was that they saw four instances in the first two chapters of God speaking to people through dreams. That's what they saw and they thought yes this clicks with us this is exactly what it's like. God speaks to us through dreams and many of them had come to faith precisely because God had spoken to them through dreams.

[34 : 47] Chapter 1 in Matthew verse 20, While he Joseph thought in these things behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying Joseph thou son of David fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost and then he acted upon it. Verse 24, Then Joseph being raised and seeked did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him and took unto him as his wife and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son and he called his name Jesus.

Chapter 2 in verse 12, The wise men being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod they departed into their own country another way. Chapter 2 verse 13, And when they were departed behold the angel of the Lord appeared 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. And in verse 19 again, When Herod was dead behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying arise take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel for they are dead which sought the young child. Like four times in two chapters the Lord speaks to people by means of a dream in the New Testament. And this these converts saw and they latched onto and they were excited about the yes this is how God speaks this is how he works to us this is how we have experienced him to be. We would read exactly the same story and we wouldn't even cross our minds because our cultural lens is so completely different. In this Old Testament scenario here, Joseph's dreams then are not just who does he think he is imagine dreaming that what idiot but rather the fact that

Jacob is having these dreams so deep and rich in their symbolism however offensive that symbolism might be to his brothers or to his parents or whatever it is not something that can be ignored and his brothers envied him because of it and they were angry with him and they were hostile to him even his father rebukes him but at the same time cannot ignore it. Jacob is not pleased.

But whatever else Jacob may be and he is many things he is not a fool either. And when we see that he takes note of this we read that whilst his brethren envied him, verse 11, his father observed the same. We might say how like that is our Lord's mother in the New Testament where we read in Luke chapter 2 verse 19 Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And again at verse 51, he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them but his mother kept all these things in her heart. His father observed the same. Like it or loathe it, it had happened. God was speaking to Joseph by means of dreams. As he did then and as he still does, he still does. And that which he imparts to others. And that which he imparts to people by means of dreams is life changing often. Sometimes life changing to the point that they are ready to pay with their lives for their faithfulness to the Christ who has appeared to them by means of the dream.

His father observed the same. His father observed the same. He kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Whatever else God has chosen to do, we may like it, we may be made uncomfortable by it. But we cannot ignore it. And if we are wise, we will store it away and think of it and continue to ponder the workings of God whereby here we are always going to be strangers. Here this is not our home. Here this is not our home. God is outworking his purposes for the little time that we are here. Isaac lives 180 years and yet still, it's the blink of an eye. How much more for us who may not live half that time.

[39 : 00] We are a brief footprint on the world. Here we are. Here we have no continuing city. We are strangers and pilgrims in this land. But the Lord continues to outwork his providence and to use individual characters on the stage of his story.

But the hero is not us. The hero is always going to be God. And we have the opportunity to be part of his great outworking and to pledge our lives and give our faith, our heart to this Savior who is going somewhere, who is going places and who is inviting us to join with him and to be with him in that place which, when we get to it, we will be able to say, yes, I have come home because the name of the city is the Lord is there. Now here we have the Lord that we know for a time. We know a little.

Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known. But there we shall see him as he is.

And that is something to strive for. Something to aim for. Something to delight in the next chapter. The next phase of how the Lord will choose to unfold the providence he will work in our lives because he has a plan and a purpose for every single one.

And for those who choose to leave him behind and turn back to the world, well, they have their place. And each one is known and recorded. Just turn the page previously back there. You've got name after name after name.

[40 : 46] Screams of genealogies of Esau's descendants. That's the world. That's all it will ever amount to. The line of page. The unfolding drama.

The unfolding drama. And the unfolding plan of God's mercy and providence and greatness and glory that gives glory to him. But invites us to be part of it.

This is something that is too good to this. And whether it be by dreams. Or whether it be through Bibles. Or whether it be through the witness or words of others. This is something you've got to have.

This is something you've got to have if you're going to go anywhere. That is going to last the test of eternity. Let's go.

Let's go.