***God's Triple Confirmation

RV193-02***

This new chapter, Revelation 15, that we began in the previous session, brings to John the apostle a third heavenly sign which reveals the future events of the tribulation period. We have already had the sign of the woman in Revelation 12:1-2, and then the sign of the red dragon in Revelation 12:3.

Now we come to a third sign, which was given to John, which is that of seven angels who are carrying seven bowls in which they have seven plagues. John observed that the sign of the seven angels is greater in scope and impact than the previous two. Thus it is marvelous to behold, beyond imagination. We are told that the seven plagues which the angels are going to pour out at command upon the tribulation world will be the last of all of God's divine judgments. These plagues are released against humanity near the very end of the seven-year tribulation era. God's longsuffering patients then will come to an end, so that He will give full vent to His pent-up anger toward the evil of mankind that has been treating Him with contempt, and which has come to a high point and a supreme degree in the tribulation era. These plagues will complete the righteous judgments of God against those who have worshiped the antichrist, and who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ during the tribulation period. So, it will indeed be a sign which, as John observes, is great and marvelous.

**God's Triple Confirmation**

I wanted to point out to you that, in the Word of God, we have regular evidence that God confirms what He says. God does confirm what He says. He used to do with people, before the Scriptures were written, in very direct, specific terms. Yes, you really could hear God speaking to you. Yes, you really could see signs. Yes, He really did give you a dream that gave you a direction. Yes, He really took your mind, and implanted information that you were to deliver. This was the experience of all the prophets of old. And the principle of God giving a triple-header impact of confirmation (a trilogy of signs), has been His pattern for centuries. The signs of Israel; of a new world empire here; and now, the seven plagues of mankind, are all going to serve a purpose. And that is that they're going to prove the truth of what God has been saying in His Scriptures. And they're going to confirm to John that what he has received has come from God.

You can put yourself in his place. It would be much harder for us to do, but it would be kind of unnerving to think that you had received a message from God. It would be unnerving to think that you had a special dream that gave a direct bit of information from God. Some people think they do receive that. Some are so arrogant, as Bob Tilton (as I've heard him say on TV), that when God speaks to him, he hears the voice of God just as we hear his voice on TV speaking to us. This is not true. This is not the way it works. However, the confirmation of God is true. I think this confirmation is something that He does today, in different forms.

You have not walked very close to God; you have not walked very long; and, you have not walked in great depth, if you have not had the experience of seeing that something that you have decided, because you believed that this was the will of God, received a confirmation. That is not, and should not, be an unusual experience in the life of the believer. A person who is on track with the principles of the Word of God, and who is in the inner circle, is going to repeatedly find that he makes decisions and he makes moves, and god gives evidence of confirmation: "That's right. You're on track. This is the way you should be going. You're on target. Stay on course."

**Joseph**

In the past, this has been done many times. We will look at some of those now. I hope you brought your Bibles, because we're going to do a lot of reading. Let's go back to the very front of the Bible, to Genesis, and take an example from the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob in Genesis 37:5-11. God has a message to give this boy. He's only 17 years old. He's a teenager, and God is going to give him a message that the average 17-year-old in our day, certainly, and even in Joseph's day, would find it very hard to believe. It was amazing. If God gave him this information, it was very difficult for him to believe that this was what God was really saying. Here's what happened.

**The First Confirmation**

Genesis 37:5: "Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more." The brothers were not very fond of Joseph, because the father, Jacob, found Joseph to be a particularly dear boy to him, and he had given him this very colored tunic. The brothers simply knew that this boy was special to his father, and the other brothers simply hated him: "And he said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had." Here's a 17-year-old boy just innocently talking to his older brothers that he would expect some cordiality from. He says, "'For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field. And lo, my sheaf rose up, and it stood erect. And behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.' Then the brothers said to him, 'Are you actually going to reign over us?'" They immediately saw the implication of the dream and the symbol. This is the way God communicated in those days: "'Or are you really going to rule over us?' So, they hated him even more for his dreams, and for his words."

He had still another dream, and he related that to them: "Lo, I have had still another dream. Behold, the sun, and the moon, and the 11 stars were bowing down to me." And he related this one to his father and to his brothers. And his father, Jacob, rebuked him, and said to him, "'What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?' And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind."

His father, Jacob, knew that this is how God does communicate. The father, Jacob, was wise enough to realize that God was saying something to this boy: "You are going to be put in such a position of authority. You're only 17 now, but you're going to be put in such a position of great authority that even your family will be in subjection to it." If God had said that to him very directly, and if that had unraveled the circumstances falling together, Joseph might have wondered whether this is really the way he should act. So, he put it in his mind, as father put it in his mind.

Turning to Genesis 40:8-22. The brothers have taken him and sold him to a bunch of traveling Midianites' caravan. They have taken him and sold him as a slave into the household of Potiphar, the captain of the army, the chief officer of Pharaoh's army. Potiphar's wife was a low-life type, without any orientation to spiritual things, and she propositioned Joseph to have an affair with her. He, as a man of integrity and a knowledge of God's moral law, recoiled with horror from that. This is a teenager we're talking about. He said simply, "How could I commit such a great sin against God? What about your husband? What about your children? What about you?"

Here is that strange realization again, that sin is, first of all, against God. So, don't go blubbering your mouth off to other people primarily, when you have stepped out of line. The sin is against God, whatever you may choose to do on the human level. And the confession is to God. David, on the occasion of his great sin, made that dramatic statement which he recorded in one of his songs in Psalms 51: "Against You, and You only, I have sinned." That's amazing. There were a lot of people involved that were hurt by that incident, and a lot of great tragedy came from it. But the sin is against God.

This is why sin is no small thing. It isn't just people mistreating each other. It is you treating the Creator God. It is you striking out against the God whose authority is supreme.

**The Second Confirmation**

So, Joseph ended up being put in prison. This was just as unfair as could be. Did he get bitter against God? No. He stuck with the Word of God that he'd been taught. He knew his doctrine, and he knew how to walk with God, and He knew that this was unfair, but he knew about the essence of God, and he knew that a sovereign God is in control. In Genesis 40:8-22, God gives him another confirmation that he has not abandoned him, and that he is on target (the second in the trilogy).

There is a baker and the wine server of the king who have displeased the king. They're both imprisoned with Joseph. Verse 8: "Then they said to him, 'We have had a dream. There is no one to interpret it.' Then Joseph said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please.'" You can see the integrity of this boy. He says, "Only God can tell you what a dream means when He gives it to you. But why don't you tell it to me? I have a line of communication with God. Perhaps He'll inform me." Do you think that Oral Roberts would have done it that way? Do you think that Tilton would have done it that way? Do you think that Copeland would have done it that way? Boy, if they had a dream they could interpret, and it was accurate, I guarantee you they would have taken credit for it as the great agent of God. But that's not what Joseph did.

**The Cup Bearer's Dream**

So, the chief cup bearer told his dream to Joseph: "And he said to him, 'In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me. And on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. Now, Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, so I took the grapes and squeezed them into the Pharaoh's cup, and I put the cup into the Pharaoh's hand.'"

This is very interesting. Juices are therapeutic, but there is one thing that is rather strange about fruit juices. Their maximum therapeutic value is within one minute of their being squeezed. That's why the so-called "fresh" juice has the biggest impact. That's just the way it is. If you want to get the maximum nutritional value from a juice, you squeeze it (you put it in a juicer), and you drink it within the first minute. That gives maximum impact. Isn't it interesting that the Pharaoh seemed to know something, and perhaps what he knew was medicinal, because the Egyptian culture had enormous technology and enormous medical knowledge, even to the kind of surgery they could perform, that we have found records of? And they may even have realized this – that the way to get the best out of the grape juice is to have a man who sits there and squeezes it, and you drink it immediately after being squeezed.

Verse 12: "Then Joseph said to him (this is the interpretation of it): 'The three branches are three days. Within three more days, Pharaoh will lift up your head, and will restore you to your office.'" "Lift up your head" was an expression for freeing someone – removing you from the prison: "And you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cup bearer." That is good news. What good news to hear! The cup bearer was delighted to hear that this dream that God had given him, and that Joseph was able to interpret, was going to be a restoration to his previous office.

For Joseph, there was the question: Is God in all of this that is happening to me?" There was only one kind of confirmation, and that is that what he told this man would really come to pass. God had to confirm by this sign. Then God gives the negative side of the sign: "Only keep me in mind," Joseph says, "when it goes well with you. And please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house." He said, "Now I've done you a service, and when you are released (and you are going to be), mention to Pharaoh that I'm here imprisoned unjustly, and I should not be here. Put in a word for me first."

Verse 15 says, "For I was, in fact, kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even there I've done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon." It's true that he was kidnapped by his brothers and sent off to Egypt, but he didn't even mention the fact that the immediate reason was because of his moral integrity, and turning down the proposition of Pharaoh's wife. That certainly was unfair.

In verse 16, there was another person in prison with him, the chief baker: "When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably, he said to Joseph, 'I also saw in my dream. And, behold, there were three baskets of white bread on my head. And in the top basket, there were some of all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh. And the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.' Then Joseph, after getting the interpretation from God, answered and said, 'This is the interpretation. The three baskets are three days. Within three more days, Pharaoh will lift up your head from you. Pharaoh is going to remove you from the prison, and you will hang on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh off of you.' Thus it came about, on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants, and he lifted up the head of the chief cup bearer, and the head of the chief baker among his servants (that is, he released both of them from prison), and he restored the chief cup bearer to his office (for whatever reason), and he put the cup into the Pharaoh's hand. And he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the cup bearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him."

So, here is the second confirmation to Joseph, giving him a sign that God is in this thing that is happening.

**The Third Confirmation**

Then there was a third confirmation. That is in Genesis 40:15. Pharaoh has a dream: "And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it.'" Finally, when this problem comes up, none of the wise men are able to interpret the dream. Then the cup bearer says, "You know, I was in prison for a while, and there was a man there who could interpret dreams," and Pharaoh says, "Bring him up." Now Joseph is before Pharaoh, finally. Pharaoh says, "I've had a dream, and no one can interpret it. And I've heard it said about you that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it." Aha, now Joseph is in a position to make a lot of money. Joseph is the dream interpreter. He can have his own little tent with his own sign outside: "Dreams Interpreted." How does he answer?

"Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, 'It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.'" I mean, this kid has integrity beyond anybody of his generation. God is confirming to him that the terrible things that have happened to him have happened within the will of God: "So, Pharaoh spoke to Joseph: 'I my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile. And, behold, seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. And, lo, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt. And the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows. Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke.'"

That was a terrible dream. Sleek fat cows are eating long the marsh grass of the Nile River. Here come these lean and ugly cows. They eat up the fat ones, and they're still lean and ugly.

Verse 22: "I saw also in my dream, and, behold, seven ears, full and good, came up on a single stock." Now the analogy is grain: "'And, lo, seven ears, withered and thin, and scorched by the east wind sprouted up after them. And the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me now.' Now Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same. Both of these dreams are telling you the same thing in a different way. God has told Pharaoh what he's about to do. The seven good cows are seven years. The seven good ears are seven years. The dreams are one and the same. And the seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years. And the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind shall be seven years of famine. It is, as I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do. Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt. And after them, seven years of famine will come. And all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. So, the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine, for it will be very severe. Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will bring it about quickly.'"

Pharaoh might be wondering: why does He convey the same information in two different ways? Joseph says, "That's because God wants to hammer the point home: This is going to happen. Don't have any questions. Don't have any doubt about it." Boy, is that putting yourself out on the limb. Now Joseph has no doubt. He has a third sign from God that God has confirmed to him that He is leading him along. Now Joseph does not know where this is going, but he knows that God is in it. The trilogy has made its impact.

Verse 33: "And now let look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land. Let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance. Then let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and let them guard it. And let the food become as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish during the famine."

Joseph, even by divine direction, gave the Pharaoh the advice of what to do. Use the seven years, and by government edict, take 20% of all the crops that are grown by everybody in this land. Put them into government granaries, and put a guard over them, so that they are secure and well-preserved, and the food is there when we need it for the seven lean years.

"Now, the proposals seemed good to the Pharaoh and all his servants. Then Pharaoh said to the servants, 'Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?' So, Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so deserving and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and according to your command, all my people shall do homage. Only in the throne will I be greater than you.'"

So, Pharaoh says, "That's a good plan. Where can we find such a man?" He looks over on one side, and he sees all these bearded magi that he has (his magicians). And he said, "Obviously you yo-yos can't do it." And he looks back at this guy who's just been clean-shaven, and they gave him a clean suit of clothes so that he could come in from the filth of the prison to stand before the king. He said, "Obviously, you're the man. The God who speaks to you is the God who has given you discernment. And I appoint you second-in-command." Isn't that something? Has God been confirming with signs, or what, to this Joseph? It's very clear now. Joseph is only subject to the king in matters to deal with the final decisions of the throne.

What Joseph did was, indeed, over those seven good years, collect the 20% of the crops. Then when the bad times came, he sold it to the people. They didn't give it to the people – they sold it. The result was that the treasury of Egypt was so expanded and so multiplied that there was no end to this great civilization for many years following that. The result was that the people were very much subject to the authority of the king.

**Moses**

Moses also had a trilogy from God. Exodus 3:2 is the first sign. Moses was reared, as you know, in the Pharaoh's household, as a foster son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was obviously a clever man, and was destined to become a ruler, perhaps even a Pharaoh himself. For 40 years, he did that. Then he was guilty of an act of murder in a moment of rage when he saw a guard beating a Jew. The result was that he had to flee. He fled into a wilderness area where they could not reach him. He married. His father-in-law was named Jethro, who was a shepherd. And for 40 years, Moses was a shepherd. He knew the ground (the territory) in which he was caring for his sheep. And one day he's out in the field, and an amazing thing happens.

**The Burning Bush**

Exodus 3:2: "And the Angel of the Lord." You should know by now that in the Old Testament, this is a technical phrase for the free incarnate Lord Jesus Christ: "The Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed." Now that'll catch anybody's attention. This Bush was burning away, and it kept burning away, and it never was consumed.

So, Moses goes up and takes a close look. Here is clearly a sign of confirmation of what is going to be said to Moses. And the point was that he was told that God had raised him up – now an 80-year-old man who is at the prime of life. In fact, he had solid eyesight and virility, and God says, "You're going to now be My agent for leading this people out of their slavery, because the 400 years that I had predicted to Abraham, that you would be in slavery, have now come to an end." On the precise date when the 400 years are completed, the Passover meal took place, and they left Egypt. God always goes to the day in these prophecies that He makes that have the time element.

The second confirmation is in Exodus 4:2-5. It's understandable that Moses must have had some question in his mind: "Is this really happening? Am I really being told this? Am I going to be able to bring down this mighty Egyptian empire? I know this Pharaoh. Am I going to be able to force him to knuckle under, and to release his slaves, as valuable as they are to him? This is a Pharaoh. There's no sympathy. There's no memory of what Joseph and the Jewish people did for Egypt. Pharaoh hates the Jews. He is an agent of Satan. He's not going to accept this kindly."

How is Moses going to be encouraged that this is going to happen? There is a second sign. Exodus 4:2: "And the Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' And he said, 'A staff.' Then He said, 'Throw it on the ground.' So, he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent. And Moses, (like a bunch of kids in summer camp) fled from it. But the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand, and grasp it by its tail.'" Boy, talk about a test of faith! Do you grab poisonous snakes by their tail?

One of our all-time great Berean Youth Club trip camps was to the Serpentarium in Florida. We watched a man milking the fangs of cobras. And it took a lot of courage, because there's only one place he could grab that cobra and not be bitten, and it wasn't by the tail. That snake can whip, and turn around very easily. He had to get him behind the neck. You have to pick a poisonous snake up behind the head, and then you have control over him. Down there, Mr. Haas would get the snake's attention by waving his hand in front, and gradually bringing that other hand around, and suddenly, he would grab that snake behind the neck, and he'd have him. Then he would hit those fangs into a vessel that was covered with a rubber membrane. And that snake would pump and pump. And, boy, you would see that horrible, deadly poison come out of those fangs, out of which they make serum for antibodies, to use on people who had been bitten, and for other medical purposes.

Well, Moses is no dummy, and he knows that this is a very strange command. But by this time, the confirmation of the signs is taking its effect. So, he stretches out his hand, and he catches this snake by the tail, and it becomes a stick once more in his hand: "That they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers: the God of Abraham; the God of Isaac; and, the God of Jacob has appeared to you." So, he had to convince the Jewish people too with these signs.

"And the Lord, furthermore, said to him, 'Now put your hand into your bosom.' So, he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow." You can imagine how Moses recoiled from this, because in the ancient world, there was nothing so deadly as leprosy. And that whiteness on the skin was evident on anybody who had leprosy, and it was highly contagious. You could not get near leprosy without, almost for a certainty, becoming infected yourself.

So, now he knew immediately what had happened to him: "Then He said, 'Put your hand into your bosom again.' So, he put his hand inside his robe once more, and he took it out, and, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh." It was healed. This is pretty convincing. That gives you a lot of encouragement. You can grab snakes by the tails, and you can heal a deadly, incurable disease like leprosy.

The third confirmation sign is in Exodus 4:6, which we have just read. The second was the snake, and third was the confirmation of the leprosy.

Joshua had the same kind of experience. Moses is gone. Joshua is put in charge of the people. He has some trepidation: "Is God really going to do through me now the great task of getting the land of Canaan back from the pagans who live there?" In Joshua 4:21, Joshua has taking up the leadership. God has now led them. Everybody who is 20 years old and older at the first approach to Kadeshbarnea has died in the wilderness. A new generation has risen. They have been born in freedom. They don't know what slavery is. They have a different attitude. Now the time comes that they come up to the bank of the Jordan River. The river is running high. It's raging. They have to get across. He has a million-and-a-half people trailing behind him. How is he going to cross this?

Here's a sign of confirmation number one, that God is still with this people, even though Moses is dead: "And he said to the sons of Israel, when your children ask their fathers in time to come saying, 'What are these stones?" What had happened was that God said, 'Line up the people. Put the priest first. Carry the ark of the covenant, and walk into the stream." And that's what they did. And the minute the priest's feet touch the water, they had a miniature cameo repeat of the dividing of the Red Sea. Suddenly the raging river stopped; it opened a dry path in the riverbed; and, they walked across safely with the water on both sides.

Then God said, "Take some rocks from that riverbed (these stones). You're going to build a memorial here, and we're going to place it where your children will see this memorial. And the time will come when they'll say, 'What is this memorial for?' Then you will inform your children, saying, 'Israel cross this Jordan on dry land, for the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the Lord your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed – that all of the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, so that you may fear the Lord your God forever.'"

This was a powerful confirmation that God is omnipotent. Is this the same God that you and I worship, and the same God who will lead you all this week? That's right. Nothing is so tragic, and I find one of the great shortcomings of believers among us and beyond us. People forget the essence of God. In their high times and in their low times, they forget what God is like. Here was a sign, and the point was: don't forget the power of the God who leads you. Take courage, Joshua.

**The Fall of the Walls of Jericho**

However, that wasn't enough. Here is a second confirmation in Joshua 6:20. So, the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpet. And it came about, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city." This is the fall of the walls of Jericho. For seven days, an armed guard, followed by the priest bearing the ark of the covenant, and a rear guard, had walked silently around the city, probably to the contempt and catcalls and hoots of the people on the wall watching this strange procedure. And on the seventh day, they went around seven times, and the party included a group of trumpeters. And on the seventh round, they stopped, and they blew the trumpets, and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

Once the breach was made, in went the soldiers of Israel. The city was conquered, and everything was burned, and everything was destroyed. The only part of the wall that didn't fall down was the part on which Rahab's house was standing. She had misdirected those who were pursuing the spies who had come to reconnoiter the city of Jericho, and then she hung the scarlet thread outside of her window. So, as the soldiers went through the city, when they saw that thread, everybody in that house was secured and preserved.

However, but there was a third confirmation to Joshua. In Joshua 10:10, there is another one of the great miracles (the examples). This is at the city of Gibeon: "And the Lord confounded them before Israel, and he slew them with a great slaughter at Gibson, and pursued them by way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah." They have put to route one of the inhabitants of Canaan.

"And it came about, as they fled before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, that the Lord through large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword." Here are these 100-pound hailstones knocking the soldiers of the enemy to death.

"Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the Sons of Israel. And he said in the sight of Israel, 'Oh, sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, at the valley of Aijalon.' So, the sun stood still, and the moon stopped until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies." Joshua was very faithful to obey God. These people who inhabited the land of Canaan were the vilest people. They had the most perverted lifestyles, shot-through with homosexuality and lesbianism; human sacrifices; and, burning of their children alive. These people were a moral cancer on the face of the earth. And God said, "These people will be a problem to your children. They will be an influence for evil. When you come into this land, you must destroy them. And you will give no quarter, and you'll give no mercy, and you will burn everything. And whatever of value is not burned (the silver and the gold), it belongs to God. You take no booty." And that's exactly what they did.

However, Joshua, on the field of battle, realizes that the day is running out on him. He cannot complete the job of complete extermination. The enemy is in full flight. He doesn't want to give them time to stop and regroup, so that the battle would be extended. So, he is led by God to ask God to cause the sun to stand still.

This is one of the supposed mistakes in the Bible, because all of us know that the sun does not move. It's the earth that moves around the sun. No, it's not a mistake. It's the same way that the scientists and the meteorologists will report to you on TV weather: sunrise and sunset. Aren't they ignorant? They think that the sun moves around the earth. Do they? Now, that's just speaking phenomenologically? That's how it looks to us, and that's how we speak. This is not a mistake in the Bible.

I only mention this to because there are liberals who like to take this and tell you just exactly that. This is the way he is speaking. However, the truth of the matter is that the earth's rotation slowed down. And we're told that: "The sun stood still till the nation avenged themselves. Is it not written in the book of Jashar: 'And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day?' And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of man. And the Lord fought for Israel."

What happened? Well, the earth went at half-speed. That's all. God shifted the earth's rotation to half-speed, so it took twice as long to go through the sequence of the day. That gave them the daylight that they needed to complete the battle. Of course, God did other things supernaturally, obviously. If you slow the world down to half-speed, things are going to go flying off the earth. It messes up the gravitational pull and everything. But again, this is no problem, except to a person does not understand the essence of God. If you don't understand that God is the three "omnis," among other things, and that one of those is that He is omnipotent, then, you've got a problem. Otherwise, this presents no difficulty at all. But boy, talk about a confirmation to Joshua that he was God's man doing God's work – this was it. That was his trilogy.

**Gideon**

There was our friend Gideon. In Judges 6:36-40, God gave him a triple sign: "Then Gideon said to God, 'If God will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken." Gideon has heard the voice of God. Gideon is told, "I'm going to free you from the people who now have enslaved the Jewish people. You are going to be the new judge. The people have called out to me. They've learned their lesson. I'm going to free them." Gideon said, "If You will deliver Israel through me as You have spoken, I want a sign. Behold, I'll put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me as You have spoken."

Please notice that Gideon was not doing this to find out the will of God. He was not doing this to find out what God had told him to do. So, don't talk about putting out your fleece to find out the will of God. He knew what the will of God was. How did he know it? He got it from the Word of God, as we get it from Scripture. He knew what God wanted him to do. The thing he wasn't sure about was: "Have I really heard god, or is this something up in my head, and I'm hallucinating?" He said, "I'd like to have an external evidence to confirm what you have told me to do. And that is that the dew is on the fleece in the morning, and all the floor around the ground on the threshing floor is dry." God did it.

Then Gideon thinks to himself, "You know, the ground might have dried up faster than the fleece." So, he still wasn't satisfied. So, in verse 38, it says, "And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. Then Gideon said to God, 'Do not let Your anger burn against me, that I may speak once more. Please let me make a test once more with the fleece. Let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on the ground.'" Aha, that's smart, because now the fleece isn't going to dry faster than the ground. This will remove all doubt that was in his mind. And God did so that night, for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground."

There are two confirmations, and then to clinch it, Gideon was given one more sign that he was on-track with the will of God. That is in Judges 7:13-15: "When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend." Midianites and the Amalekites are there encamped in the valley. Their tents are all over the place. They look like a flock of locusts that have come in and settled there. Their camels are everywhere. Talk about camel lot! They were all over the place, and in huge numbers. This was an expedition in great force. Gideon is making a reconnaissance. And he creeps up on some soldiers who are sitting around a campfire. And one soldier said, "You know, I had a funny dream." And Gideon is listening. "He said, 'Behold, I had a dream. A loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it, so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.' And his friend answered and said, 'This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand.' And it came about, when Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, that he bowed in worship. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, 'Arise, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hands."

That's exactly what happened. The barley bread, which was cheap bread, which characterized the poor people of Israel who were under the siege, and they were able to destroy this very luxurious camp. So, Gideon had his impact.

**King Saul**

Even King Saul, in 1 Samuel 10:1-7 (the man who went so bad) was a man who had been called by God, and God gave him three signs to say, "Yes, I'm with you:" "Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his head, kissed him, and said, 'Has not the Lord anointed you a ruler for His inheritance?'" Saul is formally anointed: "When you go for me today, then you will find two men close to Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. And they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found," because that's what Saul's father had sent him out to do – to find the missing donkeys that had strayed off.

"Now, behold, your father has ceased to be concerned about the donkeys, and he's anxious for you, saying, 'What shall I do about my son?' Then you will go on further from there, and you will come as far as the oak of Tabor, and there three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three kids, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a jug of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from their hand. Afterwards, you will come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is, and it shall be as soon as you have come there to the city that you'll meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flutes, and lyre before them, and they will be prophesying."

So, Samuel says, "I want to give you three signs from God to confirm that you are really the King of Israel, and that I have not acted on my own, and that this is a work of God. The first is: the donkeys have come home by themselves, and your father is no longer concerned for them. He is concern for you. Secondly, you're going to meet these people on the road. They're going to share their food with you. And then, when you come to the Philistine garrison, you're going to meet a group of prophets. They're going to be led by their concert band playing whatever is suitable on the occasion. They're marching along, and you'll know they're there, and you'll know who they are: "Then the spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them, and be changed into another man. At that point, Saul, God's Spirit is going to hit you, because in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God did not indwell people.

Every person who is a believer in this room tonight has the magnificent position of having God the Holy spirit live in you – your body; His temple. He never leaves you. He is always there. He came at the point of your salvation, and you are permanently attached to God the Holy Spirit. That's why you have power to do things spiritually, and in every way in your life, that the Jews never had.

In the Old Testament, when God had somebody that he wanted to perform a certain task, that's when the Spirit of God would come and indwell that person. For example, this was true of the people who built the tabernacle, and later the temple. Those craftsmen were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, which gave them great skill in what they were doing. When they finished the job, the Spirit of God left them.

That's the difference between being under the Law and being in the royal family of God (the church) in the age of grace.

But here, Saul's mission to be the king of Israel was now confirmed by the Spirit of God coming upon him. Verse 7: "And it shall be when these signs come to you, do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you." You couldn't put it any more clearly. The signs tell you that God is with you.

**Elijah**

Let's do one more. We have the signs to Elijah in1 Kings 19:9-13. I think that all of these are thrilling confirmations of God who cares, and God who confirms. Elijah is given a sign three times to confirm that God is with him: "Then he came there to a cave, and lodged there. And, behold, the Word of the Lord came to him and said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' Now the background of this event is that Elijah has had his great confrontation with the prophets of Baal, and he has shown that they were false prophets. Their altar never caught on fire. His caught on fire soaked with water. It was clear that that Elijah was God's man. The prophets of Jezebel (the prophets of Baal) were killed, and Jezebel is enraged by all this. The people of Israel have been convinced that the Baal gods are false gods. So, Jezebel goes out after Elijah to kill him with the sword. And she vows before her gods that, as of that confrontation the next day, Elijah will be dead. He's a goner.

So, he's afraid for his life. He gets up, and he runs. Finally, he is here in great despondency, hiding in a cave: God say, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the sons of Israel has forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left, and they seek my life to take it away." This guy is very blue. He has a lot of self-pity. He says, "I've been serving the people of that congregation, and now they treat me like a dog. The whole nation is opposed to me, and the leaders of this country are seeking to take my life, and I'm sick of it. That's why I'm in this cave."

So, God said, "'Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' And, behold, the Lord was passing by, and a great strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord." This was a terrible storm. And Elijah is seeing this, and he knows who's doing this: "But the Lord was not in the wind." The Lord was not speaking to him in this way: And after the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake (as fearsome as that was). And after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, a sound of a gentle blowing. And it came about, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and he went out and stood in the entrance of the cave."

God gives three confirmations of His power and His presence. But the message is not coming through. Suddenly, when these three signs have passed, Elijah hears the voice. It is a whispered, quiet voice following these stormy events. And immediately, he knows that that's where God is: "Now God is speaking to me."

So, he puts his mantle over his face in respect: "And, behold, a voice came to him and said (again now), ' Elijah, what are you doing here?' Then he said, 'I've been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword, and I alone am left, and they seek my life to take it away." He uses the same speech. He can't seem to get it together. So, the Lord tells him to move out. He is going to deal with Ahab and Jezebel. He has his man Jehu already on the way. Jehu was noted for fast chariot driving. He had a magnificent chariot – four-on-the-floor, and when they horses of his chariot came thundering across the countryside, the wind was followed, and the dust was blowing, and they knew there was Jehu out there on the road.

Then in verse 18, God says, "I have shown you My power, My signs, and My confirmation. And I want to tell you one thing more, Elijah. Not only am I taking care of the wicked rulers of Israel, but I want you to know that I have 7,000 in Israel – all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every one of their mouths has never kissed the statue. So, don't feel so sorry for yourself, Elijah. You're not the only one."

That's a good note for us to end up on, as we make tend to feel sorry for ourselves in God's service. When the going gets tough, we are not the only one. Our God brings confirmation to us in very subtle ways, but He does indeed confirm His presence.

Keep your eyes and ears open this week. You may have a very interesting experience, as these men of old had, such that God gives the sign that says, "You're on track, and what you're doing is what you should be doing."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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