

The Sure Word of God, pt.2

by Chuck Smith

The Bible's claim to be the Word of God can be verified through the power of prophecy, which demonstrates God's ability to declare the end from the beginning.

Duration: 39:20

Scripture: Isaiah 41:21, Isaiah 46:9, Ezekiel 26:1, Matthew 16:23

Topics: "Word Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a meaningful relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He shares his personal experience of how God's Word has proven itself true in his life. The speaker also highlights the relevance of the prophet Ezekiel's words, stating that they are still coming to pass and even speak of future events. He emphasizes that it is a personal choice to believe and follow God or seek fulfillment through worldly desires. The sermon concludes with an invitation for individuals to surrender their lives to Jesus and receive God's love and abundant life.

Transcript

This morning we want to draw your attention to Ezekiel 26, verse 1, where the prophet declares, It came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came unto me. Ezekiel claims that God spoke to him. It was the eleventh month of the year of King Zedekiah, which would make it the year 587 B.C. It was the first of the month that God, Ezekiel claimed, spoke to him.

Now there are many people who claim that God has spoken to them. Many of these people that make such claims are mentally troubled. I had a man who was in my church in Tucson at the beginning of my ministry, and he had brought into the adult Sunday school class a false doctrine.

The teacher came to me and said that he had gotten in an argument in the class with the teacher, and that I should go to the class and correct the false doctrine that this man was espousing. So I did go to the adult Sunday school class, and I pointed out that this man was espousing a heresy, that it wasn't according to the scriptures. Well, the next day I received a call from this man.

He invited me to come over to his house, and he said that he had been in prayer, and that God spoke to him through a vision. And in his vision, he said he saw he was in a funeral service, and he saw the casket there in the front, and when he went by the casket and looked in the casket, I was the one that was lying in the casket. And that the Lord had told him that if I did not go back to that adult class and correct the things

that I had said, that within two weeks I would be dead.

Well, obviously he was wrong. I'm still here, and that was over 50 years ago. So there are people who are delusional.

It's an unfortunate thing for this particular man in that we did discover that he had a brain tumor, and in two weeks I had his funeral service, and I mentioned to someone he just saw the wrong face in the casket. But there are people who are delusional, who think that God speaks to them. I believe that there are people who are genuinely deceived into thinking that they heard the voice of God, when in reality it was just something in their own imagination or heart.

You remember when Jesus said to his disciples, who do people say that I am? And as they told Jesus the various thoughts, he said, but who do you say that I am? And they said, well, you're the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Jesus said, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say unto you that you're a little stone, but upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And from that time Jesus began to tell his disciples how that he would be turned over to the Gentiles. They would crucify him, but the third day, he said, he would rise again.

Peter began to rebuke Jesus and say, be that far from you, Lord. And Jesus said to Peter, get thee behind me, Satan. You offend me.

You can't tell the difference between what comes from God and what comes from man. And that quite often is a difficulty. Discerning whether or not God has really spoken to me, or is this something that has just been generated in my own mind, in my own imagination, or is God indeed speaking to me? Some who have made the claim that God was speaking to them are charlatans.

They go around and saying that God has spoken to me, that you're to give me a thousand dollars, you know. It's interesting that in the early church they did have problems with false prophets who were going around sort of taking advantage of the new believers, coming in with supposedly the gift of prophecy. And they would do that.

They would prophesy and say, thus saith the Lord, give this man a hundred dollars to help him on the way. And so the apostles wrote a letter to the churches and they warned them if some fellow comes in claiming to be the prophet, or a prophet, and he says in the name of the Lord that you're to support him and help him in all financially, he is not a true prophet of God. And so they had warnings in the early church against such people that would say that God showed them that you were to help them out financially and things of that nature.

My son Chuck Jr. when he was a assistant pastor here at Calvary actually finally left here because there were so many young girls that came to him and said the Lord had shown them that they were to be his wife. And so he panicked and moved out to 29 Palms. But people can be sincerely mistaken about God speaking to them or hearing the voice of God.

How can we really know that when a person claims that God has spoken to them, that it was really God who did indeed speak? We're told in the scriptures not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits and see if they really are of God. Paul warns in the first Corinthians 14 that when a person exercises the gift of prophecy that others were to judge, to judge to see if it really is in line with the scriptures. But the primary

test of a true prophet is that the details that he speaks about come to pass as he said they would.

And if a man comes and gives a prophecy of a future event, giving you a lot of details about that future event, if that indeed then does take place, it is good evidence that the man is a true prophet of God. In Deuteronomy the Lord said, when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, and if the thing follows not, nor comes to pass, the Lord did not speak that thing, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. God said that he was against such people who say, well the Lord told me when God said I didn't tell them.

The Lord said and God said I didn't say. Jeremiah 23 32, behold I'm against them that prophesy false dreams and say that the Lord told them and they cause my people that are, they cause them to err by their lies and by their lightness. I sent them not, nor did I command them, the Lord said.

Prophecy, I believe, is one of the strongest proofs that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. I believe that it is proof that there is a God who does exist and that he is transcendent of time and of space. In the Bible, God offered his ability to declare the end from the beginning as proof that he was indeed God and that he had spoken.

In Isaiah 46 9, he said I am God, there is no other. I am God and there is none like me who can declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure. In fact, God challenged the false prophets who were prophesying in the name of their false gods to offer evidence that their gods were true gods by doing what God did, telling of things in advance.

Isaiah 41 21, God said produce your cause, saith Jehovah. Produce your strong arguments, saith the King of Jacob. Let them show us what is going to happen.

Let them declare to us the things that will happen in the future that we may be confounded or astounded when we see it happen. His ability to tell the end from the beginning is proof that he does exist outside of our time continuum. Now, Ezekiel said the word of the Lord came to him.

What did the word of the Lord say to him? The word of the Lord came to him to prophesy concerning that great maritime city of Tyre, the base for the Phoenician army, one of the strongest cities in the ancient world. Tyre had conquered the Mediterranean Sea. They had set colonies around the Mediterranean, North Africa, along in Spain, and their ships went as far as England, bringing tin and so forth back to the city of Tyre.

It had become more or less the trade center of the early world, and the Phoenician navy ruled the early world. And so there were prophecies concerning this ancient city of Tyre. And in the prophecies here, the Lord declared that he would cause many nations to come against her, in verse 3. That is, the defeat of Tyre would not be by a single nation, but by a combination of many nations.

And it is interesting that two years after this prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar started his siege against the city of Tyre. The siege lasted for 13 years, but was successful as he destroyed the city of Tyre that was built on the mainland. 240 years later, Alexander came and he conquered the city of Tyre, the new city that was built on the island that was a half mile offshore of the mainland city of Tyre.

Tyre remained a city till the age of the Crusaders, but they were defeated in 1291 AD, and then Tyre and the site of Tyre became lost in the centuries that followed. So that at one time, the Bible skeptics even made fun of the Bible because it mentioned the city of Tyre and all, and they said it was just a myth that

such a city did not exist, because they could find no sight of the ancient city of Tyre. In verse 4, the Lord said concerning Tyre that they would destroy the walls, they would break down her towers, I also will scrape her dust from her, make her like the top of a rock, and it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.

Interesting prophecies. It gives you details. Breaking down her towers, scraping her dust from her, causing her to become like the top of a rock, a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, and this is a general summary of what would happen to Tyrus over a period of time.

But he goes into further detail. He then begins to tell of how that he would bring Nebuchadnezzar against Tyrus. Verse 7, the Lord then declared that he would bring Nebuchadnezzar against the city, and one year after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem in 586, he began his siege in 585 against the city of Tyrus.

As I said, it took 13 years, but he finally was able to destroy the walls and to conquer the city. However, in that 13 years, the people who were living in Tyrus got sort of tired of the siege, and because of their strong Navy, they actually built a secondary city on an island just a mile offshore. And in this 13-year period of time, they transferred all of the wealth and the treasure of Tyrus out to the island city, and most of the people also moved on out to the island city, so that by the time Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city, it was a very empty victory because the treasures had all been transferred, and the most of the people.

He in anger really slaughtered those that did remain, as is described in these verses here of his conquering of the city of Tyrus. Now in verse 12, you will notice something quite interesting. The siege and destruction of Tyrus by Nebuchadnezzar is described in verses 7 through 12, and it speaks of he, he, he, Nebuchadnezzar, he.

And suddenly in verse 12, there is a change of pronouns from he to they, and that is quite significant, because he, Nebuchadnezzar, did not do all of the things that were prophesied would be done to Tyrus. 240 years later, Alexander the Great, as he was making his way towards Persia to seek to conquer the great empire of Persia, he felt that just moving directly east could be dangerous because of the strong Phoenician Navy. He felt that his flanks would be open to attack if he were involved in war in Persia, so he felt that it was necessary to sort of support himself that he conquer Tyrus before moving on to Persia.

He came to the city of Tyrus, and he demanded that they surrender to him, but those in the city of Tyrus refused to surrender. They knew that there was a half mile of ocean or sea, the Mediterranean Sea, between the land and their island fortress. They had their strong Navy, and they felt that it was foolish to just surrender to Alexander the Great, and so he gathered together a fleet of ships from the surrounding area, and he attempted a naval invasion of Tyrus, which was repulsed because of the strong Phoenician Navy.

He then set up a different ploy. Because of the old city of Tyrus, the rocks, the timbers, the buildings were rumbled now, just big stones and timbers. He decided that he would build a causeway from the mainland out to the island, and so he had his troops begin to take the rocks, the stones that once made up the walls in the houses, the timbers, and to cast them in the midst of the sea to build this causeway out to the island.

It was a successful ploy in as much as he able then to move his weapons of war, the big machines of war in those days, to destroy the walls and to scale the walls. He was able to move them on this causeway out to the island, and he conquer the city of Tyrus. And of course, as I said, it is described in our text here as

they, they, they.

And as you read of how he conquered the city of Tyrus, it is very interesting then to look at the prophecy. Ezekiel said God spoke to him, and God showed him these things, and it happened just as Ezekiel said it would. He said, and I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, the sound of the harps shall be no more heard.

And he goes on to tell how that they would take the stones and the timbers and cast them in the midst of the sea, and they would scrape the dust or the dirt and cast it into the sea. Exactly what Alexander the Great did some 240 years later. And so, fascinating prophecies proving that indeed it was the word of God that had come to Ezekiel just like he said that God had spoken to him.

The details of the destruction of Tyrus have many interesting facets to them. And if you would take the chance factors of the seven distinct predictions of its destruction and using a conservative estimate of each one of them coming to pass, you have what is called the law of compound probabilities. Taking each one and the chance that each one would happen, multiplying those chances, the chance of all seven of the predictions that Ezekiel made concerning the destruction of the city of Tyrus, there would be only one chance in 75 million that his prophecies could have been fulfilled.

I could say that we could safely assume that when Ezekiel said the word of the Lord came to me, that he was correct, that it was God that was speaking to him of the judgment that would come against Tyrus. Now, the Bible claims to be the word of God. It purports to be God's revelation of himself to man.

Can you trust the Bible to be all that it claims to be? I find it very interesting that for almost 2,000 years since the completion of the canon of scriptures, that men and women, thousands of them, have searched carefully through the Bible looking for some error, some mistake, something that was said that did not happen, in order that they can discredit the Bible and show and prove that the Bible is not the word of God. After through 2,000 years of scrutiny, you think that someone could have come up with some kind of evidence to discredit our believing the Bible. Evidence so powerful that we say, well, it can't be God's word because it is so far off base.

Years ago, I took a science in the Bible class at Biola College that was taught by Dr. Harry Rimmer, and he had a standing offer at that time of \$10,000 to anybody who could prove one scientific error in the Bible. Now, the Bible is not a scientific textbook, but it does touch scientific subjects, and if it is God's word, it should be correct when it touches on scientific subjects. So he offered this \$10,000 reward to anyone who could prove that there was a scientific error in the Bible.

Interestingly enough, that reward was never collected. The Bible is an amazing book, purports to be God's revelation of himself to us. What has God revealed about himself in the Bible? Well, he declares that he is the eternal God, that he created this universe in which we live, and he created all of the life forms within the universe, and he created them for his own good pleasure, and he created man, that he might have a meaningful, loving relationship with man, that man might know him, that man might have a close relationship, a loving relationship with where he could lavish his love upon man, and they in turn would declare their love for him, a close, loving, intimate, loving relationship.

Now, for this intimate, loving relationship to take place, it would be necessary that God, when he created man, create him with self-determination, or that is, give to man the capacity of choice. You see, you can't force somebody to love you and know that they truly do. If you hold a 45 to the skull of this gal and say,

say you love me, or I'll blow your brains out.

She's, I love you. Are you sure? You can't force love, you see. Love has to be a free choice, and God wanted to know that you truly love him.

You can't have a meaningful, loving relationship with a robot. Again, it's mechanical. God doesn't want a mechanical relationship.

He wants a true, loving relationship, and so he created man with the capacity of choice, but having the capacity of choice would not be valid unless there was something to choose. So when God put Adam and Eve in the garden, he put in that garden a tree that had luscious-looking fruit, probably a fabulous aroma, very desirable. But God said, don't eat of the fruit of that tree.

All of the trees that are in the garden, you might freely eat of their fruit, but don't eat of the fruit of that tree. So now there is the capacity of choice and also something to choose, something that seems very attractive and desirable. Man has now to choose to obey God or to choose to obey the desires of his flesh.

To not eat of it and remain true in his relationship, proving his love to God, or following the lust of his flesh, sampling that fruit to see if it's as delicious as it smells and as it looks. We know the story. Adam ate of the fruit, broke his relationship with God.

He gave in to the desires of his flesh, and they became stronger than his desire to live in fellowship with God. And in so doing, his relationship with God was broken and he was alienated from God. God's experiment, you might say, failed with Adam's sin.

The problem is God still loved man. God wanted to restore man to fellowship. And so the Bible teaches us that God, because he so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son to take our sins and to die in our place so that whoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life.

And so God made the way whereby fallen man might be restored to the original divine intent for man. It is now, again, choice. I can choose to believe that the Bible is God's Word, and that what it says is true, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he died for my sins, and by my believing in him I've been forgiven my sins, and I have fellowship with God, and I have the promise of eternal life with God.

Or I can choose not to believe it. I can choose to continue to live after my flesh and try to find meaning in life and meaning for life apart from God, and try to find it in drugs, try to find it in sex, try to find it in success, or in the many things that people are pursuing after today in order to find some fulfillment. I saw this thing that Kabbalahism, maybe you saw it the other night on TV, I think was 2020 or one of the program dateline.

But anyhow, here is Madonna and all of these people, and they are searching for meaning. I mean, it was it was ridiculous to watch them. It was, you think, how could a sane, intelligent person get involved in something like that? Because, you know, it promises some mystical experience.

You know, if you do enough of the dances and all, you can get some kind of a mystical feeling of, you know. And it was sad, sad indeed, how people are trying to find a meaningful experience in life apart from God, and the quest and the search that they are on. I have discovered in my own personal life that indeed it is possible to have a meaningful relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

That God's Word has proven itself to be true in my own heart and life over and over and over again. And when the Prophet Ezekiel said, the Word of the Lord came to me, I believed that God was speaking to him because the things that he talked about came to pass completely. Now we're gonna move on in Ezekiel, and in a few weeks we're gonna find that Ezekiel is talking about things that are happening in your world today.

So God's Word is still coming to pass and is even speaking of things that are gonna happen in the next few years. Still yet future, but the world is shaping up for these things to happen. And as you look at the world, you realize how that it is shaping up and about to happen.

Choice. You choose to believe or choose not to believe. You choose to follow after God and to live in a loving relationship with God, or you choose to follow after your flesh and try to find fulfillment in and through the flesh.

It's your choice. I pray that God will help you to make the right choice. You see, the ball is in your court now.

It's up to you what you choose. Father, we thank you for the fact that you have revealed yourself in your Word, and that through that revelation we've come to know you and to love you and to serve you. We thank you, Lord, for the rich fulfillment that we have in loving you and experiencing your love for us.

We are so grateful, Lord, that we made that choice to believe in your Word and to believe upon your Son who you sent to die for our sins. Lord, there are those today that are here that today are making the choices whether to seek to live after your commandments or to live after the lust of their own flesh, to obey you or to obey their own lust. Help them, Lord, to see the emptiness and the folly of living after the flesh.

And may they come, Lord, into the life of the Spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are standing down here at the front to minister to you today who would like to make that choice to know God, to love God, to serve God.

Jesus said, if you would come after me, just deny yourself the old flesh life. Take up the cross and follow me. He said, if you seek to save your life, you'll lose it.

But if you'll lose your life for my sake, you'll find it. He said, what would it profit you if you would gain the whole world, but in so doing lose your own soul? Very thought-provoking. Think it over and make your choice.

These men are down here at the front to help you who have made the choice to surrender your life to Jesus Christ, to live for him, to discover the life that he has for you. He said, I've come that you might have life and that more abundantly, to know that more abundant life that you can experience in following Jesus Christ. They're here to minister to you and to pray for you.

I would encourage you as soon as we're dismissed, make your way forward, come on down and let them pray with you and receive today God's gift, God's love, and that relationship with God that you can know through Jesus. And again, fathers, God bless you. We pray that God will help you to be the godly father that he would have you to be an example to your family, that as they follow the example that you set with Joshua, you can say, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

And may God give to you a godly home, a godly family, and the joy that comes in a home that is united in its faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. God bless you.

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