



Dreams & Visions!

*God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.
In a dream, in a vision . . . he openeth the ears" (Job 33:14-15)*

God is continually speaking to us; but all too often we humans have difficulty hearing His voice. "God is a *Spirit*" (John 4:24); consequently, He speaks to us in the depths of our human spirit, "The *spirit of man is the candle of the LORD*" (Prov 20:27). That passage relays to us that God communicates into our core being. The Bible identifies the heart (*Which is a blend of our mind and human spirit.*) as the principal apparatus that hears the voice of God, "But *his word was in mine heart as a burning fire* shut up in my bones" (Jer 20:9).

The problem is that humans are familiar with hearing only our own personal "voice!" (*In the first person.*) We hear that "voice" (*which is made up of our thoughts*) whenever we think within ourselves. As the children of Israel crossed the Jordan and were getting ready to displace the people who lived in the promised land, God told them, "*Speak not thou in thine heart*" (Deut 9:4), that they were getting this marvelous land because of their own righteousness! The point in that passage relative to our study is that God's word teaches that we speak to ourselves in our heart. Because Christians are used to hearing only the "voice" of their own private thoughts, they commonly have a hard time distinguishing between their inner "voice" and the "voice of God."

It is not uncommon for Christians to experience the problem of not hearing from God, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, *yet man perceiveth it not*" (Job 33:14). That verse teaches that our problem of hearing from God is not the lack of His speaking; rather, it is that man has a problem perceiving God's voice. At different times and for various reasons, God has to penetrate through our human mind in order to speak directly into our hearts. In these instances, dreams and visions are the language of the Holy Spirit! Let's continue as that passage from the Book of Job details how God penetrates our hearts, "*In a dream, in a vision* of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; 16 Then *he openeth the ears of men*, and sealeth their instruction, 17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. 18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" (Job 33:14-18). Clearly, the point is that when God wants to penetrate into the human heart He certainly is able!

God intends that humans experience good sleep, "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and *thy sleep shall be sweet*" (Prov 3:24). The psalmist proclaimed that the heavens, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night *sheweth knowledge*" (Ps 19:2). In a spiritual sense, coming out from the heavens (*God's dwelling*



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God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision . . . he openeth the ears” (Job 33:14-15) place) “night unto night” He gives us knowledge. During the night season we experience dreams from God, “I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also ***instruct me in the night seasons***” (Ps 16:7).

God wants to reveal himself to His People; however, do not forget that God also speaks to sinners! We must realize that dreams and visions that originate from God are not just for the Godly; the ungodly hear from the LORD too, “the king (*Nebuchadnezzar*) said unto them, ***I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled*** to know the dream” (Dan 2:3). There are other ungodly individuals in the Biblical record who have experienced dreams from the Almighty, “God came to Abimelech ***in a dream by night***, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man” (Gen 20:3). In another instance, just before Jesus’ crucifixion, Pilate sat down in the judgment seat and, “his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for ***I have suffered many things this day in a dream*** because of him” (Matt 27:19). The point is that God speaks through dreams and visions to the ungodly as well as to those with whom He is in covenant!

Yes, the ungodly can receive dreams from God; however, it is only the righteous in spirit who have the ability interpret them, “This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all ***the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation***: but ***thou art able***; for ***the spirit of the holy gods is in thee***” (Dan 4:18). Here we observe that we who have the Holy Spirit can grow in the ability to interpret dreams.

In these last days we should be anticipating a great outpouring of the Spirit of God which will result in the explosion of dreams and visions, “it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit ***upon all flesh***; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream ***dreams***, your young men shall see ***visions***” (Joel 2:28). Notices that “***all flesh***” is included in this prophesy; it is not just Christians upon whom the latter day spirit is to be poured out.

The scripture teaches that a prophet named Daniel, “had understanding in all ***visions*** and ***dreams***” (Dan 1:17). These two separate items are closely related. Later Daniel wrote of the close relationship, “I saw a ***dream*** which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the ***visions*** of my head troubled me” (Dan 4:5). Daniel combined both of these into the general category of a dream, “Daniel had a ***dream*** and ***visions*** of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the ***dream***, and told the sum of the matters” (Dan 7:1). The point is that both dreams and visions are generally categorized under the overall category of a dream. However, visions have special characteristics, which we will cover later.

The Bible teaches of at least five specific categories of dreams and visions that God shares with humanity:

(1) Warning; (2)

Prophetic or

Futuristic; (3) Spirit Realm; and (4) Inspirational; and (5) Instructional or Directional.

Let’s focus some specific study these five different types of dreams & visions.





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#1 Warning Dreams and Visions:

Dreams can deliver a person out of problems; even more amazing, they can keep one from getting into problems in the first place! God warns people through dreams. Sometimes people are headed for sure trouble especially if they were to continue on with the imagination in their hearts. Often, in these instances God will not allow a person to get into these situations without a warning. We have earlier observed that God warned an ungodly man against taking Abraham’s wife to himself, “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, ***thou art but a dead man***, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife” (Gen 20:3). Trust me, “***thou art but a dead man***,” is not the first thing that anyone wants to hear from God!

It is rather plain to observe the “warning” element in dreams and visions as Job describes, “In a ***dream***, in a ***vision*** of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; 16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, 17 ***That he may withdraw man from his purpose***, and ***hide pride from man***. 18 He ***keepeth back his soul from the pit***, and his life ***from perishing by the sword***” (Job 33:15-18).

While he was dreaming about a latter that had angels going into and out of heaven, God promised Jacob that He would protect him. In the passage which follows we have an example of that supernatural protection over Jacob as God warned Jacob’s father-in-law, “And God came to Laban the Syrian ***in a dream by night***, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad” (Gen 31:24). God was so protective of Jacob that He did not even allow ill or threatening words to be spoken against him!

In another instance of God warning through a dream we find God restrains Pilate from judging Jesus, “When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have ***suffered many things this day in a dream because of him***” (Matt 27:19). The warning dream motif continues with a warning to the Magi, “And being ***warned of God in a dream*** that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way” (Matt 2:12).

Again, God warned Joseph, “The angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph ***in a dream***, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and ***flee into Egypt***, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for ***Herod will seek the young child to destroy him***” (Matt 2:13).

#2 Prophetic or Futuristic Dreams and Visions:

Foreshadowing of future prophetic events is certainly one of the major purposes of dreams, “there is a ***God in heaven that revealeth secrets***, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar ***what shall be in the latter days***. Thy ***dream***, and the ***visions*** of thy head upon thy bed, are these” (Dan 2:28). We need to realize that God is a revealer of secrets!

Joseph the husband of Mary was reassured through a dream that her pregnancy was from God, “But while he thought on 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***” (Matt 1:20).

Joseph the son of Israel was also given future prophetic information, “And ***Joseph dreamed a dream***, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 For, behold, we were



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binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, ***your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.*** 8 And his

brethren said to him, ***Shalt thou indeed reign over us?*** or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars ***made obeisance to me***" (Gen 37:5-9). Joseph's dream saved the entire nation of Israel during a severe famine.

Joseph experienced a dream that lifted him up above all of his family! Joseph realized through the dream as he looked into the spiritual realm that somehow he would end up reigning over his family. For this reason some believe that this dream should be categorized as one of the "Spirit Realm Dreams;" however, looking into the spirit is not the important issue; the fact that God prophesied the future through the dream and thereby saved many thousands possibly millions of people from starvation seems to be the issue of greatest importance. In any case we must realize that there are at least five different classifications of dreams and often one dream easily fit into several of the categories.

Joseph revealed futuristic dreams to both the butler and the baker. Yes, since one died and the other was restored one could argue that one dream was a warning and the other dream was for inspiration or direction. The exact precise categorization of any dream is not what is important. The importance is that we realize that at least five different types of dreams from God exist. Since the butler and baker dreams both came to pass as Joseph had interpreted, we can easily conclude that they were prophetic or futuristic dreams.

Twenty-four months elapsed after Joseph interpreted the butler and the baker's dream with the help of God. Many speculate as to the reason for the lengthy intervening period of time; for whatever the reason, Joseph was once again called upon for an interpretation, "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that ***Pharaoh dreamed:*** and, behold, he stood by the river" (Gen 41:1). What we must realize is that Pharaoh's dream ultimately was the vehicle used to save many people alive! His dream was powerful not only for himself and his nation but for Israel and most of the known world! God gives dreams so that people can be saved!

Gideon was reluctant to go to war so God placed him in a position where he could hear a prophetic dream of the Midianites; the enemy's interpretation of the dream gave Gideon the encouragement and power to ultimately defeat his enemies, "And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that ***told a dream unto his fellow,*** and said, Behold, ***I dreamed a dream,*** and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. 14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: ***for into his hand hath God delivered Midian,*** and all the host. 15 And it was so, ***when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel,*** and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian" (Judg 7:13-15).

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a prophetic futuristic dream about an image. The image was representative of all of the gentile kingdoms (*or governments*) that were destined to the world until the time of the Messiah, "This is ***the dream;*** and we will tell ***the interpretation***



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God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision . . . he openeth the ears” (Job 33:14-15) thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath **given thee a kingdom**, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the

children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and **hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.** 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And **in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever”** (Dan 2:36-44).

Even toward the end of his life, the apostle Paul would suffer many life-threatening experiences: an assassination attempt, a shipwreck, and a poisonous snakebite; however, God gave to Paul a prophetic vision that **“He must witness in Rome,”** “And the night following the Lord **stood by him, (in a vision)** and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, **so must thou bear witness also at Rome”** (Acts 23:11).

#3 Spirit Realm Dreams and Visions:

This type of a dream gives revelation of the plan and purposes of God. In order to understand this type of a dream the one who receives the vision or dream must enter into the spiritual realm in order to get understanding! Notice the patriarch Jacob as he, “went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And **he dreamed**, and behold **a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:** and behold the **angels of God ascending and descending on it.** 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, **I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest**, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not” (Gen 28:10-16). In this dream, angels go before him and behind him! In essence Jacob saw that God had sent angels to protect and prosper him while he was on his way. Jacob was actually seeing into the spirit realm! Jacob is here headed into the promised land; he saw into the spirit realm where Laban was behind him and Esau before him! He realized that God’s angels were both before and behind him giving God’s protection!



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Through a dream which included spiritual visions the prophet Daniel saw all of the future gentile governments.

The gentile governments appeared to him as beasts, which would rule over the earth until the coming of the Lord. However, observing the beasts through the spirit realm they clearly represented governments, “In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon **Daniel had a dream and visions** of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the **dream**, and told the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw **in my vision** by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. 9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, **they had their dominion taken away**: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. 13 I saw in the **night visions**, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And **there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom**, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: **his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away**, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:1-14).

The believer must be able to see into the spiritual realm in order to become truly conscious of the fact that “they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (2 Kings 6:16), “And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, **open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha**” (2 Kings 6:17). This entire incident was actually an opportunity that allowed for Elisha’s servant to see a vision from the spiritual realm. That vision was not for him; rather, it was recorded for us that we might understand that there is a great deal to learn from the spirit realm.



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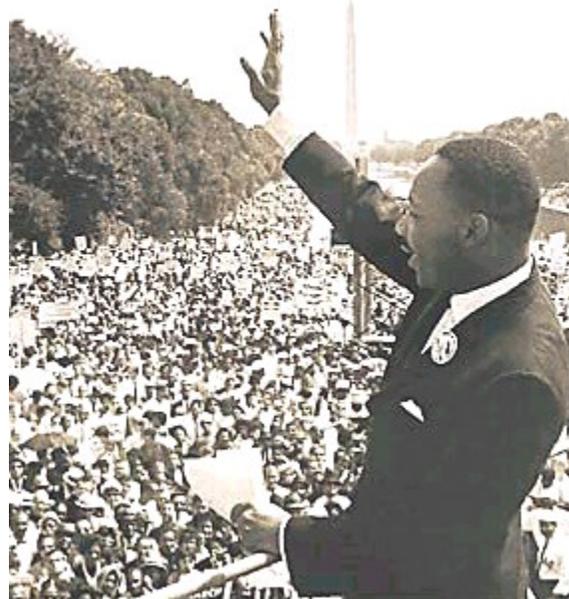
#4 Inspirational Dreams and Visions:

God gives inspirational dreams and visions to those in need of assurance, encouragement, or comfort. We can begin this section as God comforts and assures Abram, “After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram **in a vision**, saying, **Fear not, Abram:** I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Gen 15:1). However, we need to understand his need for the comfort. Abram (*Whose name means high father*) was getting to be quite old and he was beginning to wonder about the things that God had earlier promised to him, “And I will make **thy seed as the dust of the earth:** so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (Gen 13:16). Instead of obtaining seed “as the dust of the earth,” notice how Abram responded to God, “Lord GOD, **what wilt thou give me**, seeing **I go childless**, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, **to me thou hast given no seed:** and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir” (Gen 15:2-3). Abram, though faithful, was beginning to have some reservations about God’s promises. At this point Abram’s vision intensifies, “**Look now toward heaven**, (*Abram looked into the heavens in both a spiritual as well as a physical manner.*) and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, **So shall thy seed be.** 6 And **he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.** (*Now we come to Abram’s well-known “belief” in God. That belief made Abram righteous. That same night God would enter into a covenant with Abram and his name was changed to Abraham – Meaning the father of many nations.*)

God comforted Israel in his old age, “And God spake unto Israel **in the visions of the night**, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. 3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: **fear not to go down into Egypt;** for I will there make of thee a great nation: 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes” (Gen 46:2-4). By this inspirational vision Israel understood that his beloved but presumed-dead son Joseph would lay him to rest.

At one particular instance Paul needed assurance and comfort, “Then spake the Lord to Paul **in the night by a vision, Be not afraid**, but speak, and hold not thy peace” (Acts 18:9). God is, “the God of all comfort” (2 Cor 1:3), and he gives dreams and visions which inspire and bring comfort to his sons!

I HAVE A DREAM
Martin Luther King Jr





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#5 Instructional / Directional Dreams and Visions:

God sends dreams to those who need direction, instruction, or guidance. God does not allow His covenant people to languish; instead, he promotes and prospers those who trust in Him. Jacob and Laban had recently agreed that all the spotted, speckled, and grised cattle and sheep would belong to Jacob in payment for his many years of wages for watching over the livestock, "the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire" (Gen 30:32). However, Laban had broken all of his previous wage agreements with Jacob. Jacob told his wives, "your father ***hath deceived me***, and ***changed my wages ten times***; but God suffered him not to hurt me" (Gen 31:7). Now God steps into the situation, "And it came to pass ***at the time that the cattle conceived***, that I lifted up mine eyes, and ***saw in a dream***, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grised. 11 And the angel of God spake unto me ***in a dream***, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grised: for ***I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee***. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and ***return unto the land of thy kindred***" (Gen 31:10-13).

So what exactly was happening in Jacob's dream? Earlier. Everyone say, "Earlier!" During the period when the "cattle conceived." (*This obviously means that Jacob had to hang around until at least the birthing season.*) During the breeding season God showed Jacob in a dream, "the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grised: for ***I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee***:" God was certainly aware of how Laban had defrauded Jacob. However, in this situation God showed Jacob that the "ringstraked, speckled, and grised" rams would be the major breeders during that breeding season. Notice Jacob's reaction, "he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks ***in the gutters in the watering troughs*** when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink (*Essentially, these animals would conceive while they were drinking water and staring at the rods.*)" (Gen 30:38). And notice the result of the conception, "And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted" (Gen 30:39). You will recall from the Bible Study entitled, "*What is your life's Assignment* " that we studied the following three concepts:

- Never put in front of you what you don't want to become part of you;
- Never gaze at something that does not belong in your future;
- Only put in front of you that which belongs inside of you.

The point is that whatever is the object of one's focus (*whatsoever we gaze upon*) they naturally move towards that thing. In the vision God directed Jacob that the "ringstraked, speckled, and grised" rams would be the major breeders; therefore, Jacob set spotted items in front of the eyes of the animals. There is a set of Twin Mountains somewhere in Japan. These two mountains are the only visible objects that rise up above the horizon; strangely enough, the greatest number of per/capita twins is consistently born out of that community, which overlooks these Twin Mountains every year! Clearly God was giving Jacob instruction in his dream.

Some instructional and directional dreams are not necessarily for the dreamer; the instruction may be for the benefit of others, "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus,



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named Ananias; and to him said the Lord **in a vision**, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus” (Acts 9:10-11). We find another one of these directional dreams which is intended to help someone else later in the story of Paul, “And **a vision appeared to Paul in the night**; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And **after he had seen the vision**, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them” (Acts 16:9-10). Paul may never have decided out of his own spirit to cross over into Europe but God wanted the people there to hear the gospel preached by the apostle to the gentiles!

How dreams differ from visions?

There are clear distinctive factors regarding how visions are manifest in different ways than dreams. For example, visions can be revealed to just one person, others who are present may see nothing at all, “I Daniel **alone saw the vision**: for the **men that were with me saw not the vision**; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone” (Dan 10:7-8). Only Daniel saw the vision.



As opposed to dreams, visions often come or are received while the person is in prayer. We find Zechariah praying in the temple. “it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 According to the custom of the priest's office, **his lot was to burn incense** when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And **the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense**. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense” (Luke 1:8-11). In other places we learn that the offering of incense is definitely related to prayer!

Notice in the context of prayer that Peter is on the housetop in Joppa when he receives a vision, “Peter went up upon the housetop **to pray** about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, **he fell into a trance**, 11 **And saw heaven opened**, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth” (Acts 10:9-11). Notice how Peter relayed his own experience to others, “Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 **I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision**, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me” (Acts 11:4-5)

In another instance, we find Paul praying in the temple as a vision comes, “it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, **even while I prayed in the temple**, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me” (Acts 22:17-18).

This pattern continues in the Old Testament with the prophet Daniel, “**whiles I was speaking, and praying**, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and



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presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 Yea, **whiles I was speaking in prayer**, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen **in the vision** at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding” (Dan 9:20-22).

Visions (*not merely dreams*) can come during sleep. Please note that when this happens the experience is not a dream but a vision. We have many Biblical examples where God speaks to people through a vision while sleeping, “God spake unto Israel **in the visions of the night**, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. 3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation” (Gen 46:2-3). Usually when God speaks directly to the person they are experiencing a vision rather than a dream. An example of a vision through a dream is, “In Gibeon the LORD **appeared** (*Here is an appearance of the Lord this is a vision.*) to Solomon **in a dream by night**: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee” (1 Kings 3:5). Notice again that the LORD “appeared;” that is what made the experience a vision.

At other times the vision even though taking place during a dream is clearly identified in the text, “there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy **dream**, and the **visions** of thy head upon thy bed, are these” (Dan 2:28). Jesus’ physical father experienced this kind of a vision in a dream, “while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord **appeared** unto him in a **dream**” (Matt 1:20).

Here is another peculiar and interesting phenomenon regarding visions; it is not uncommon that a vision is so powerful that the recipient literally falls-out "under the power" of God as a result. Notice Ezekiel’s experience, “Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that **the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God**. 2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. 4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud . . . 28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And **when I saw it, I fell upon my face**, and I heard a voice of one that spake. 2:1 And **he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet**, and I will speak unto thee” (Ezek 1:1-2:1). The apostle John experienced much the same thing, “when I saw him, **I fell at his feet as dead**. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last” (Rev 1:17).

Other phenomenon expressed in Scripture is the experience of being carried away (*or transported*), “he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and **the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God** to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy” (Ezek 8:3).

We don’t have to be praying when a vision comes; Ezekiel and Daniel received some of their visions while they were simply sitting by a river, “Now it came to pass in the thirtieth

Dreams & Visions!

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year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as **I was among the captives by the river of Chebar**, that the heavens were opened, and **I saw visions** of God" (Ezek

1:1). Daniel's experience was much the same, "as **I was by the side of the great river**, which is Hiddekel; 5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I Daniel alone saw the **vision**: for the men that were with me saw not the **vision**; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves" (Dan 10:4-7).

You may recall where Pharaoh was during his dream, "Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river" (Gen 41:17). However, the river is not some special key; Ezekiel received a vision while he was sitting in his house, "as **I sat in mine house**, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me. 2 Then I beheld, **and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire**: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber. 3 And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem" (Ezek 8:1-3). From all appearances there is no special location or place in order to receive a vision. At another time Ezekiel was merely in the plain "And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee. 23 Then I arose, and went forth **into the plain**: and, behold, **the glory of the LORD stood there**, as the glory **which I saw by the river of Chebar**: and I fell on my face" (Ezek 3:22-23). Once again we observe Ezekiel "falling-out" in the spirit.

Visions often leave the human reacting with great fear or dread. It is not uncommon for the recipient of a vision to be left drained of all his physical strength. Notice some of these experiences, "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. 6 Then **the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another** . . . Then was **king Belshazzar greatly troubled**, and his countenance was changed in him, **and his lords were astonished**" (Dan 5:5-6 & 9). It is not just the unbelievers who experience a troubled spirit as a result of a vision; notice Daniel's experience, "**I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me**" (Dan 7:15). Daniel continues, "As for me





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Daniel, **my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me:** but I kept the matter in my heart” (Dan 7:28); “**I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain**

days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and **I was astonished at the vision,** but none understood it” (Dan 8:27). We also see Zecharias troubled and in fear, “there **appeared** unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was **troubled, and fear** fell upon him” (Luke 1:11-12)

What are some of God’s purposes in sharing visions?

God has specific reasons for giving visions to humans. Some of these reasons are:

1. Encourage Strengthen and Confirm God’s word;
2. Give direction;
3. Reveal God’s glory and power;
4. Men become humble, awed, cleansed, and prepared to yield to God’s call;
5. Give men burdens for the lost – Where there is no vision, people perish!

We need to test our dreams and visions. We are not supposed to just take everything that comes in a dream as if it were a message from God, “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1)! Concerning dreams we should always keep the following in mind:

6. Is the dream scriptural? We must always verify the dream/vision with God’s word;
7. Desire to dream/see/hear from God! Ask Him and He will open up to you;
8. Does my dream/vision draw me closer to God? If not, it is not from God;
9. Pray for confirmation of dream/vision! God will confirm when we ask Him;
10. Seek and heed the feelings in your spirit man. Cast down vain imaginations;
11. Be willing to be corrected;
12. Keep a record of dreams; it is good to keep pencil and paper next to bed;
13. Act in faith according to Godly dreams.

Beyond dreams, there are imaginations of the heart, “GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every **imagination** of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen 6:5-6). “Why do the heathen rage, and the people **imagine a vain thing?**” (Ps 2:1) “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became **vain in their imaginations,** and their foolish heart was darkened” (Rom 1:21).

Dreams and Visions can come out of our own heart; therefore, we must carefully guard our hearts, “**Keep thy heart with all diligence;** for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov 4:23). Evil imaginations will cause future problems, “these **filthy dreamers** defile the flesh” (Jude 8). Whatever you imagine you will eventually experience! Adultery and all other sins do not just come upon and overtake a person. Sinning people always imagine their sin over a long period of time before it comes to pass in their flesh!

Yet, God does send us dreams, “If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him **in a vision,** and will speak unto him **in a dream**” (Num 12:6).

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