

## Visions and Dreams from God

### Nine O'clock in the Morning

After Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he stood up with the eleven and lifted up his voice in the power of the Holy Spirit addressing thousands of astonished people from many nations.

*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

*'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,  
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your young men shall see visions,  
Your old men shall dream dreams.  
And on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;  
And they shall prophesy. Acts 2:14-18; Joel 2:28-29*

This all took place at 9:00 AM. God gets an early start! It's a clear sign that God means business. He's not messing around! The Bible declares we are currently living in the last days. In fact, it is the last hour according to God's word (1 John 2:18). Indeed, God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh in these last days. He began on the day of Pentecost with the 120 and has not stopped since. This indicates an obvious increase in visions and dreams from God.

Visions and dreams are a common means of divine communication. Typically, we think exclusively of the Old Testament prophets regarding this topic, but the outpouring of the Holy Spirit reveals a multiplication of this important means of divine communication and revelation in the last days. Visions and dreams are an already established means of God-ordained communication.

*I have also spoken by the prophets,  
And have multiplied visions;  
I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets. Hosea 12:10*

*Then He said,  
"Hear now My words:  
If there is a prophet among you,  
I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision;  
I speak to him in a dream. Numbers 12:6*

### Two Words of Caution

I must give you two words of caution before exploring this subject any further. The first is that God speaks to all through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4*

This is nonnegotiable. You must be exclusive on this point. No vision and no dream that's from God will ever even slightly diminish the Sonship and Lordship of Jesus Christ. I knew an elderly widow who was a strong and mature intercessor. She once told me she saw a vision of angels descending in bright apparel, but when she challenged them with the blood of Jesus Christ, these same angels suddenly turned ugly and swiftly departed (2 Cor. 11:14-15). The vision she saw was not from God. You got to be "sold out" to Jesus Christ to challenge visions and dreams. Everything goes through Him and His word. Don't ever forget this! The Son speaks the Word and the Son is the Word. This is why everything must be filtered through the Word of God. The Word! The Word! The Word!

The second word of caution is to avoid getting prideful over receiving visions and dreams from God. Do not boast in your visions and dreams and do not draw attention to yourself. The Apostle Paul required unexpected assistance in this matter.

*It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 2 Corinthians 12:1-7*

Remember, pride is the primary root of all strife in the church.

*He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife,  
But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered. Proverbs 28:25*

Believers must continually battle against their own pride. Don't ignore this word of caution! Why is it so important to keep all this in mind?

*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.  
Proverbs 29:18*

## Prophetic and Non-prophetic Visions and Dreams

The Old and New Testaments are filled with accounts of God speaking through visions and dreams. Almost all of these accounts are in the category of “prophetic visions and dreams.” A prophetic vision is a vision of divine revelation by which divine messages are communicated to fulfill His purposes. God’s people perish without such “prophetic vision.” For the sake of this study, we will classify ordinary dreams; those claimed by false prophets and teachers, and those ungodly dreams of a sensual nature as “non-prophetic visions and dreams.” With this in mind, we are now ready to examine the meaning of visions and dreams in the Bible.

1. Visions in the OT – *chazon* (2377) This is the primary Hebrew word for vision in the Old Testament. It is found mostly in the prophetic books. Almost always it refers to a divine message or revelation, particularly that which comes through sight.

Name	Nature of Vision	Reference
Abraham	Promise & Blessing	Genesis 15:1-6
Jacob	Direction	Genesis 46:1-7
Balaam	Blessing of Israel	Numbers 24:1-25
Samuel	Future Judgment	1 Samuel 3:1-21
Nathan	Future Kingdom	2 Samuel 7:1-17
Isaiah	Entire written message is called a vision	Isaiah 1:1
Ezekiel	Entire written message is called a vision	Ezekiel 1:1
Obadiah	Entire written message is called a vision	Obadiah 1:1
Nahum	Entire written message is called a vision	Nahum 1:1
Zechariah	8 visions of hope & restoration dated Feb. 15, 519 BC	Zechariah 1:14-17; 1:21; 2:3-5; 3:8-9; 4:6; 5:3; 5:8-9; 6:5-7
Daniel	Interpretation	Daniel 2:14-23
Daniel	Future events	Daniel 7:1-28
Daniel	End Times	Daniel 8:1-7
Daniel	End Times	Daniel 9:20-27
Daniel	End Times	Daniel 10:1-21

2. Visions in the NT – Three Greek words characterize visions in the New Testament. *Horama* (3705) refers to that which is seen or is visible. *Horasis* (3706) refers to the act of seeing a vision. *Optasis* (3701) means a coming into view. All point beyond ordinary physical sight to the capacity to see with supernatural sight what God reveals.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nature of Vision</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Peter, James, & John	The Manifest Glory of God	Matthew 17:1-13
Women	Angels	Luke 24:22-24
Young Men	Future blessing of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:17
Ananias & Saul	Future Plans	Acts 9:10-19
Cornelius	Direction, Plan & Purpose of God	Acts 10:1-8
Peter	Direction, Plan & Purpose of God	Acts 10:9-48
Paul	Direction for Ministry	Acts 16:6-10
Paul	Confidence	Acts 18:9-10
Paul	Calling & Purpose of Ministry	Acts 26:12-19
John	End Times	Revelation 9:17

3. Dreams in the OT – *Chalom* (2472) and *chalam* (2492) are the Hebrew words used primarily in the context of prophetic dreams. The dream, therefore, is a means of revelation.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nature of Vision</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Abimelech	Warning	Genesis 20:1-7
Jacob	Promise	Genesis 28:10-22
Jacob	Justice & Direction	Genesis 31:1-20
Laban	Warning	Genesis 31:24
Joseph	Future Plans	Genesis 37:1-11
Pharaoh's Butler & Baker	Restoration & Judgment	Genesis 40:1-23
Pharaoh	Future Warning	Genesis 41:1-36
Gideon	Confidence & Strength	Judges 7:9-18
Solomon	Wisdom & Prosperity	1 Kings 3:4-15
Nebuchadnezzar	Warning	Daniel 2:1-45
Daniel	Future	Daniel 7:1-28

4. Dreams in the NT – The Greek word *onar* (3677) defines a dream as a vision in sleep in distinction from a waking vision. *Enupnion* (1798) literally means what appears in sleep (en = in, *hupnos* = sleep).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nature of Vision</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Joseph	Direction	Matthew 1:18-25
Three Wisemen	Warning	Matthew 2:1-12
Joseph	Warning	Matthew 2:13-15
Joseph	Direction	Matthew 2:19-23
Pilate's Wife	Warning	Matthew 27:19
Old Men	Promise of seeing visions	Acts 2:17

### Understanding Visions and Dreams

The understanding of visions and dreams rests with God and God alone. This was true for both Joseph and for Daniel and it serves as the pattern for everyone.

The baker and the butler were both sad because there was seemingly no one to interpret their dreams.

*And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please." Genesis 40:8*

Of the four Hebrew teenagers taken into Babylonian captivity, the Scriptures reveal:

*As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Daniel 1:17*

Notice God alone gave the understanding. In addition, when Nebuchadnezzar ordered the execution of all the wise men, Daniel requested time to seek God.

*So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel 2:16-19*

Daniel praised the Lord and blessed His name (Dan. 2:20-23). The understanding came from the Lord. Even when Daniel was in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar he gave all glory to God. Daniel took no credit for himself in the matter of interpretation and understanding of dreams and visions.

*The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: Daniel 2:26-28*

You never have to force an understanding from your own heart or mind. If God sent Gabriel to make Daniel understand the visions of the end times (Dan. 9:20-23), then I'm certain He can make us understand.

Here are seven tips for receiving, understanding, and obeying visions and dreams that are from God.

- Stand your watch (Hab. 2:1)
- Purpose not to defile yourself with the world (Dan. 1:8)
- Write the vision (Hab. 2:2; Jer. 36:2)
- Seek God for interpretation and understanding (Dan. 2:18; 7:16; 8:15)
- Praise and thank the Lord for the interpretation and understanding (Dan. 2:19-23)
- Run with the vision (Hab. 2:3; Acts 26:19)
- Give all the glory to God (Dan. 2:28)

## Vision and Dreams to Renounce

Not all visions and dreams are from God. If they do not stand the litmus test of God's word, no matter how slight, then they are to be rejected. Don't attach yourself and don't hang on to visions and dreams that are not from God! There are those who claim visions from God "calling themselves out of the church to be prophets." These insubordinate men and women are led by their vision into grave error because the Scripture declares God sets every member in the body of Christ.

*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased...Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:18, 27-28*

Clearly God sets them in the church for the church. Don't be fooled by those with visions and dreams of isolation from the body of Christ. Stop following those who claim them. They're not from God!

A woman who started attending church services shared a vision she has seen during the week. She said she saw a bright light and a chariot from her kitchen window. Jesus was in it in bright white clothing and a two edged sword coming from His mouth. She wanted to know what I thought. I told her I did not believe the vision was from God because the description did not match the word of God. Jesus comes on a white horse and not on a chariot (Rev. 19:11). I counseled her to make sure details line up with God's word. I could sense she was not comfortable and not receiving what I told her. The reason was obvious when she told me her mother recognized she had "psychic powers" since she was a young child. I advised her to repent and renounce all dealings with "psychic power." She left and I never saw her again.

A growing number who are claiming to see Jesus in visions and dreams are in reality ensnared by the devil. Close may count in horseshoes and grenades, but not when testing a vision or a dream. The word of God confirms it or it does not! The following list reveals visions and dreams that are to be renounced according to the Bible:

- Those that diminish your love for God (Deut. 13:1-5)
- Those whose word does not come to pass (Deut. 18:20-22)
- False visions that extend the comfort zone (Jer. 14:11-18)
- False dreams of comfort for the wicked ((Jer. 23:16-40)
- Deceptive visions that are soft on sin (Lam. 2:14)
- Dreams that scare and bring horror (Job 7:14)
- Ordinary dreams (Job 4:13)
- Vain visions of pride and flattery (Ezek. 12:24)
- Sensual dreams of ungodly lust (Jude 1:8)

## The Fulfillment of Visions and Dreams

God is ready to fulfill visions and dreams that He has truly given. Their purpose is to communicate revelation into His plans and purposes, as well as to warn and guide us. The day and hour in which we live is not only a day of visitation, but a day of fulfillment. Delays and postponements are too common in the church. Some of these delays are nothing more than excuses for laziness and disobedience. These words from the Prophet Ezekiel clearly address the issue of God's timing:

*And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says, 'The days are prolonged, and every vision fails'? Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will lay this proverb to rest, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel." But say to them, "The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision. For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord GOD.'" Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.' Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "None of My words will be postponed any more, but the word which I speak will be done," says the Lord GOD.'" Ezekiel 12:21-28*

Many say they are concerned about getting ahead of the Spirit, but I believe it is often the church that is dragging behind. God reveals and speaks the word to fulfill it; not prolong it. This is not advocating impatience or presumption, but obedience to the timing of God's word. There is too much delay in the church. God will cause this proverb to cease in the church! We shall run with the vision (Hab. 2:4). No longer shall God's words be prolonged.

### Three Visions from God

A highly regarded prophet with a respected prophetic ministry prophesied on June 24, 1997 in Cleveland, Ohio that I would receive not one, but three visions from the Lord. There would be a word from each vision and the three visions would reveal three stages. Here are the three visions:

#### **Vision One:**

*I saw a solid wood stand or base of very precious wood. It stood about knee high. There were no marks for it was perfectly structured. It was like it was ancient and new at the same time. As I gazed at it, there was an explosion of light and glory at the top, but the stand or base was not consumed. Suddenly there were small pieces, perfect in size and fan-shaped in formation spreading and spiraling outward and upward in the midst of the light and glory and yet the stand or base*

*was not consumed. These individual pieces were like the stand or base in beauty, but small almost appearing in size like pegs. They were complete and perfect in symmetry. The light and glory propelled them forward at a rapid speed. The stand or base remained strong and solid. This was the vision I saw and immediately knew God was speaking regarding His church and His people (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:18-22).*

### **Vision Two:**

*Suddenly there was in the Spirit the face of a man. His face was round and he had a mustache. His skin was darker like someone from Pakistan, India, South America or Asia. He did not speak, but the Spirit made me to understand he was an “international man” and God was confirming an “international call” on me and the local church. The vision ended with me wondering whether I would meet the actual man in 1998. The roundness of his face was so distinct and unique that he appeared to represent the nations of the world. This was the second vision I saw and the Spirit was saying God has raised up the church for global vision. There will be many “Macedonian calls for help” (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 16:9-10).*

### **Vision Three:**

*I saw a face of stone looking directly at me. The face was expressionless, but stern with a stoic determination to prevail. He wore a helmet like that of a Roman centurion of an Egyptian Pharaoh. At first I could not tell whether his determination was for good or evil. Then like a camera zooming out for a wider angle, I saw a walled fortress of stone solid and strong. The face of stone turned slowly from me to the fortress. As it did, I noticed it wanted to war and prevail over the fortress for evil. I looked and saw the face of stone begin to crack and crumble as it sternly stared at the wall of the fortress. Then I saw three towers above the wall of the fortress, also being part of the wall. The face of stone crumbled into the dust, but the fortified wall with its towers stood as if unmovable and unconquerable from the outside. This was the third vision I saw and the Spirit was encouraging and directing me to continue to lead the church in prayer and spiritual warfare (Matt. 11:12; Eph. 3:10-11).*

The three stages are simple and forthright. There is the foundational stage. This is where Jesus builds His church. The second is the “going” and “sending” stage to the nations in fulfillment of the Great Commission. The third is the warfare stage where the army of God advances His kingdom against all odds. There is much more to what the Spirit is saying to the church in these three visions, but this will serve well as an introduction to the glorious purpose of God for the church.