

Doctrine of Visions

1. A vision refers to a divine revelation that reveals the will of God. Visions generally occurred while the prophet of God was awake or was in a semi state of consciousness.
2. At least twenty-two people in the Bible are said to have received a vision. Sixteen visions were given to the Old Testament saints while seven were given to New Testament believers.

Doctrine of Dreams and Visions

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell

Visions from God

- Abraham Genesis 15:1
- Jacob Genesis 46:2
- Balaam Numbers 24:4
- Samuel 1 Samuel 3:15
- Nathan 2 Samuel 7:17;
1 Chronicles
17:15
- Isaiah 2 Chronicles
32:32; Isaiah 1:1;
21:2; 22:1,5
- The Messiah Psalm 89:19
- Ezekiel Ezekiel 1:1; 7:13;
8:3-4; 11: 24
13:16; 40:2; 43:3
- Daniel Daniel 2:19; 7:2;
8:1-2
- Eliphaz Job 4:13 cf. 7:14
- Obadiah Obadiah 1:1
- Nahum Nahum 1:1
- Habakkuk Habakkuk 2:2
- Zechariah Zechariah 13:4 cf.
2 Chronicles 26:5
- Iddo 2 Chronicles 9:29
- Hosea Hosea 12:10
- Peter Matthew 17:1,10;
Acts 10:17; 11:5
- James Matthew 17:1,10
- John Matthew 17:1,10;
Revelation 9:17

- Ananias Acts 9:10
- Paul Acts 9:12;
 16:9,10; 26:19;
 2 Corinthians 2:11
- Cornelius Acts 10:3

resurrection was considered by them to have been a vision (Luke 24:23 cf. Acts 12:9) so that it is sometimes hard to separate a vision from "reality".

1. God promised to speak to His prophets in visions (Num. 12:6).
2. Long periods of time went by when there was not vision from God (1 Sam. 3:1; Lam. 2:9).
3. Where there is no vision the people perish (Prov. 29:18).
4. It was possible for men to err in their visions (Isa. 28:7 cf. Jer. 14:14).
5. God's people were called upon to seek visions from the prophets (Ezek. 7:26).
6. Angels were sometimes used to help explain a vision (Dan. 8:16-17; 9:21-27).
7. Visions can produce great emotional distress (Dan. 8:27; 10:16).
8. It is possible for one person only to have a vision even in the presence of others (Dan. 10:1,7,8).
9. The absence of visions was considered to be a form of divine judgment (Mic. 3:6).
10. The prophet Joel predicted that visions were to be found during the *New Testament* era (Joel 2:28 cf. Acts 2:17).
11. The appearance of the angels to the women on the morning of Christ's

12. Vision can come during the act of prayer (Acts 10:17; 11:5).

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Doctrine of Dreams

1. The purpose of dreams was to reveal God's will (Gen. 28:12; 31:24; 37:5-10; 1 Kings 3:5; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 2:13,19,20).
2. Even in the present era of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with a fuller revelation (2 Cor. 5:7) to guide the believer, the promise of dreams is given (Acts 2:17).
3. It is possible for dreams to be corrupted so that the will of a false god is conveyed. One ancient practice was to induce religious dreams by incubation or sleeping in some shrine where the patron god was believed to communicate secrets to the sleeper. Herodotus mentions this practice among the Egyptian sect known as the Hasamonians (Herod IV. p. 172, ed. A.D. Godley). The Lord warned against false dreamers (Jer. 23:25,27; 29:8; Zech. 10:2) and pointed out that normal desires such as hunger and thirst can produce dreams (Isa. 29:8).
4. God promised to speak to the prophets in dreams (Num. 12:6), but even they had to be tested (Deut. 13:1-5).

5. The absence of dreams was considered to be a form of divine discipline (1 Sam. 28:6,15).
6. As there a danger in the absence of dreams there is also a danger in the multitude of dreams (Eccles. 5:7) for it is possible that foolish whims will be insisted upon as requirement of worshippers.
7. Thirteen people in the Bible are credited with specific dreams. Eleven people are noted in the Old Testament while two are listed in the New Testament.

A Dreamer of Dreams

- Abimelech Genesis 20:3,6
- Jacob Genesis 28:12;
 31:10,11
- Laban Genesis 31:24
- Joseph Genesis 37:5-10
- Pharaoh's Butler Genesis 40:5
- Pharaoh's Baker Genesis 40:5
- Pharaoh Genesis 41:7-8,
 15-22
- A Man from Midian Judges 7:13
- Solomon 1 Kings 3:5,15
- Nebuchadnezzar Daniel 2:3; 4:5-9
- Daniel Daniel 7:1
- Joseph Matthew 1:20;
 2:12-22
- Pilate's Wife Matthew 27:19

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Seven Accomplishments of a Dream or Vision from God

1. Dreams can provide Divine answers to our questions though the answers may comfort or alarm.
 - Gideon was comforted by the revelation he discovered through a dream (Judges 7:9-11).

3. God can use dreams to warn about unseen dangers.
 - Saul was alarmed when discovered would happen in battle through a vision (1 Samuel 28:15).
 - The wise men were told to return to their country another way than the one in which they came (Matt. 2:12).
 - Joseph was warned to take Mary and Jesus into Egypt (Matt. 2:13).
4. Dreams can give instruction of the will of God as Joseph discovered (Matt. 1:20-21).
5. Dreams can provide guidance that will stop sinful actions.
 - King Abimelech did not harm Sarah because of a dream he had (Gen. 20:3-9).
 - Laban did not harm Jacob because of a dream (Gen. 31:24).
 - Pilate was warned not to hurt Jesus (Matt. 27:19) but he did anyway under duress.
6. God can use dreams to induce humility as He did with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:5,9,34,37).
7. Dreams can preserve our souls from the pit of depression and despair as Ezekiel's vision gave hope to the children of Israel (Ezek. 1:1 cf. Psa. 126:1-3; 127:2).

"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still."

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Corrie Ten Boom

How to Identify False Dreams and Visions

1. False dreams and visions do exist (2 Pet. 2:1-3; Deut. 13:1-3).
2. False dreamers and false prophets who share their visions are greedy. They want power, fame, wealth, attention, loyalty, and service and God HATES them (Jer. 23:16, 25-27; 28:8-9).
3. False dreams and visions have two things in common (Matt. 7:15-16).
 - **Deception.** The specific sign of deception is that what they see or dream leads others away from Christ. The classic examples of this are the visions of Joseph Smith (Gal. 1:6-9).
 - **Discord.** Because light cannot have fellowship with darkness and Satan cannot have fellowship with Christ there will be conflict.
4. Those who are exposed as false are to be dealt with severely (Deut. 13:1-3).

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Six Ways to Recognize False Dreams and Visions

1. False dreams and visions are seductive as they promise glory or produce terror (Jer. 23:16).
2. False dreams and visions encourage immorality (Lev. 19:31).
3. False dreams and visions are contradictory (Jer. 23:17).

4. False dreams and visions are discouraging (Zech. 10:2).
5. False dreams and visions are unproductive (Jer. 23:22).
6. False dreams and visions are destructive (Jer. 23:32).

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Six Important Questions

1. Do the dreams and visions lead me to Jesus Christ and fill me with love for His church?
2. Do these dreams and visions promote righteousness and purity in my life?
3. Do these dreams and visions align themselves with the clear and emphatic teachings of Scripture?
4. Do these dreams and visions strengthen my faith and fill me with the sense of a noble destiny and an honorable purpose in life?
5. Do these dreams and visions turn me from sin and selfishness to seek the Lord and serve Him in faithfulness and love?
6. Do these dreams and visions build up the body of Christ and equip believers to do the work of the ministry?

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Twelve Expectations in a Dream or Vision

1. A promise of God (Gen. 15:1).
2. A pronouncement of judgment (1 Sam. 3:15).
3. A preview of the future (2 Sam. 7:17).
4. A proclamation of grace (Psa. 89:19).
5. A prophetic word of warning (Isa. 1:1-3).
6. The knowledge of someone else's heart (Dan. 2:19).
7. A glimpse of glory (Matt. 17:9).
8. A word of guidance (Acts 9:10).
9. A word of exhortation (Acts 10:19).
10. A spiritual appeal (Acts 16:9).
11. The way of salvation explained (Acts 26:19).
12. Some of the mysteries of heaven unfolded (Rev. 9:17).

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Three Points of Caution

- Not everyone is promised a vision.
- All visions are to be subject to the Word of God.
- We must be open to receiving visions and dreams.

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Non-Biblical Reasons for Dreams

1. Diet. There is a definite relationship between the mental and physical health. deficiency can cause hallucinations and unpleasant dreams.
2. Activity. Physical exertion does not always mean more restful sleeping. It is possible to take work to bed.
3. Memory. Good memories and bad can be relieved through dreams.
4. Secret sins and private fantasies can emerge from the subconscious during sleep.
5. Satan has a way of disturbing our sleep with dreams of terror and fear.

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Categories of Dreams

- ❖ **Personal dreams** are those in which a word from God is received to comfort or instruct.
- ❖ **Prophetic dreams** are those through which the Lord works to speak a word to others.
- ❖ **Literal dreams** are those in which the Lord reveals something is real and will actually happen.
- ❖ **Symbolic dreams** are like a parable. They have a specific message but need interpretation.
- ❖ **Revealing dreams** provide an insight into a situation.

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Dreams and Visions of the Apostle Paul

1. When Stephen was being stoned, Saul heard the saint tell what he saw in his dying moments and that was the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:54-8:1).
2. On the road to Damascus, Paul had his own vision of Christ (Acts 9:1-9).
3. In some way the Holy Spirit communicated to the prophets and teachers at Antioch that Barnabas and Saul were to be set apart for service (Acts 13:1-3).
4. While at Antioch, Paul was stoned and left for dead. During the ordeal he had a vision of heaven (Acts 14:19-20 cf. 2 Cor. 11:25).
5. While he was at Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia appealing for help (Acts 16:9).
6. When he stayed at the house of a man named Justus in the city of Corinth, Paul had a vision that many souls would be saved (Acts 18:7-11).
7. While in the city of Jerusalem praying in the holy temple, Paul fell into a trance and received a message from God (Acts 22:18).
8. After being arrested in Damascus, Paul saw the Lord in a night vision (Acts 23:11).
9. During an ocean voyage that became life threatening, an appeared to Paul in a dream stating that no one would be hurt (Acts 27:12-26).
10. Writing to the church of Corinth, Paul stated plainly that he had many visions and revelations of the Lord (2 Cor. 12:1-10).
11. By revelation Paul was instructed to go and preach to the Galatians (Gal. 2:2).
12. Paul told Galatians and the Ephesians that he received his understanding of the gospel by means of revelation (Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:1-6).
13. When Paul appeared before Nero, he may have seen a vision of Jesus standing in the palace hall with him (2 Tim. 4:16-17).
14. As Paul had dreams and visions, so did others such as Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6; 12:16-11).

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Practical Suggestions in order to Obtain a Dream from God

1. Set the heart upon God (Psa. 25:14; Jer. 15:19).
2. Repent of wrong attitudes towards the gifts of God.
3. Saturate the heart with scripture (2 Tim. 2:15).
4. Have a close relationship with the church and pastor in order to be accountable and balanced (1 Cor. 2:16; 13:9).

5. Ask the Lord by faith to speak to the heart in order that HE might be glorified (Luke 11:9-13).
6. Be alert and sensitive to the dreams that do come (Song of Solomon 5:2).
7. Record important dreams (Dan. 7:1).
8. Seek wisdom (Prov. 8:4-6), which will produce many rewards.
 - By wisdom there is the understanding of proverbs, parables, and riddles (Prov. 1:5-6).
 - By wisdom a personal relationship with God will be enjoyed (Prov. 2:5).
 - By wisdom discretion will be exercised and deliverance from evil will come (Prov. 2:11).
 - By wisdom life is filled with happiness and peace (Prov. 3:16-17).
 - By wisdom there is public safety and private security (Prov. 3:23-24).
 - By wisdom comes counsel, strength, authority, and justice (Prov. 8:14-15).
 - By wisdom riches, honor, and righteousness is gained (Prov. 8:18-21).
 - By wisdom the favor of God is received (Prov. 8:34-36).

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