

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING
GOD'S MESSAGES TO YOU

dreams &
visions

Revised and Updated

JANE HAMON

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING
GOD'S MESSAGES TO YOU

dreams &
visions

Revised and Updated

JANE HAMON

REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION

dreams and visions

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING
GOD'S MESSAGES TO YOU

JANE HAMON


Chosen
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2000, 2016 by Jane Hamon

Previous edition published by Regal Books, 2000

Published by Chosen Books
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan
www.bakerpublishinggroup.com

Ebook edition created 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016930722

ISBN 978-1-4412-3031-7

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations identified NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Scripture quotations identified KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Cover design by LOOK Design Studio

“God is releasing to us prophetic revelation in these last days, and Jane Hamon offers clear, biblical, practical teaching on how to understand and interpret our dreams. This book is a great tool for encouraging, equipping and releasing an army of Daniels and Josephs who can encourage leaders and change nations!”

Ché Ahn, founding pastor, HRock Church (Pasadena, California); president, Harvest International Ministries

“This is a fascinating book! If you dream, you need to read *Dreams and Visions*.”

Cindy Jacobs, co-founder, Generals International

“In our busy world, many times we fail to slow down and communicate with a holy God. So in the quiet of the night, He communicates to us. *Dreams and Visions* is a key book for this time. God is communicating to His people, and we must learn to interpret what He is saying!”

Chuck D. Pierce, president, Global Spheres; president, Glory of Zion International

“I frequently find myself a bit edgy when people begin telling me about their dreams and visions, partly because I have observed more than enough naïveté and superficiality when the subject comes up. Jane Hamon skillfully and sensitively dispels the fog surrounding the issue of our dreams with insightful biblical information combined with personal experience. Do not miss this book!”

C. Peter Wagner, founding chancellor, Wagner Leadership Institute

“Over the years I have read and taught a great deal on the biblical subject of dreams and visions. In all my research, I have found Jane Hamon’s book *Dreams and Visions* to be one of the best written, of great depth yet easy to understand and apply. It is my joy to commend to you the writing, life and ministry of this excellent woman of God.”

James W. Goll, founder, Encounters Network, Prayer Storm and GET eSchool; international bestselling author, *The Seer*, *The Lifestyle of a Prophet* and many more

“Jane Hamon releases not only information and revelation, but impartation and activation that will totally shift your life, as it did mine. There is no one with greater understanding of this topic than she in the body of Christ today. *Dreams and Visions*—a manual for meditators and soul food for seers.”

Eddie James, director, Eddie James Ministries

“Jane Hamon is an outstanding Christian leader and excellent communicator. We are living in days pregnant with supernatural communication. What are dreams? Visions? What is the real meaning? Where are they coming from? How do we interpret and judge them? This book is practical, thorough and relevant. I love this book, and I love Jane Hamon.”

Barbara J. Yoder, lead apostle, Shekinah Regional Apostolic Center

“One of my favorite things is attending a session by Jane Hamon on all things supernatural. Dreams are some of the most supernatural things God does with His people, and He does it every day with each of us. Yet the Body of Christ knows very little about interpreting and understanding our dreams. Jane ‘fixes’ that with this amazing book. Run, don’t walk, to get your copy and an extra copy for a friend! It’s time you finally learn about your own dreams!”

Steve Shultz, founder, The Elijah List

“This book inspires us to be sharp and to seize our destiny in God. Jane Hamon gives us a road map for hearing from God. This step-by-step approach to understanding deep spiritual truths and the moods of the Holy Spirit is a must-read! You will rediscover the lost art of walking with God.”

Harry R. Jackson, senior pastor, Hope Christian Church, Washington, D.C.; presiding bishop, International Communion of Evangelical Churches

“There is no finer voice to navigate and instruct us in this special realm of visions, dreams and prophetic guidance than Dr. Jane Hamon. Over the years she has given our ministry and church strategic and living confirmations of what God is saying for us. I highly recommend *Dreams and Visions* for all who wish to properly interpret God’s voice and direction.”

Dr. Mahesh Chavda, Chavda Ministries International

This book is dedicated to my family, especially my husband, Tom—the man of my dreams!

Tom, your constant love and continuous support have encouraged me to be everything God has called me to be. I love doing life with you and serving the Lord together as a team in ministry. Thank you for all the hours you have spent listening to my dreams and sharing yours with me. Life with you has truly been a dream come true.

To my daughter Crystal, you are a dreamer! You not only dream at night with lots of great revelation, but you live your life dreaming big dreams. I am so proud of you!

To my daughter Tiffany and her husband, Jason, and their three children, Madisyn, Brielle and JJ: God has incredible dreams for each of you! I can hardly wait to see all He will do in and through your lives.

To my son, Jason, and his wife, Valerie, and their three boys, Riley, Aiden and Lucas: The first thing you have to do in order to dream is to actually sleep! I know with those three young, rambunctious boys you get very little of that. Just know that as you dream the impossible dream, the God of the impossible will make your dreams come true.

I would also like to express my love and appreciation for my mom and dad, Frank and Leona Makosky. Thanks for teaching me to be persistent in the face of difficulty and for imparting to me a sense of confidence that has helped me believe I can succeed as I follow my dreams. I love you both dearly.

Finally, I want to express my deep, heartfelt love and appreciation for my spiritual father and mentor, Bishop Bill Hamon, and for my spiritual mother and mentor, Evelyn Hamon, who rejoices in heaven now. Your vision, insight, wisdom, love and encouragement have meant the world to me. Thank you for inspiring me to be all that I am called to be and for continually helping me press toward that mark. Thank you for the example that you set for me and so many others, and for every trail you blazed that makes my path easier to walk.

Contents

Cover	1
Title Page	3
Copyright Page	4
Endorsements	5
Dedication	7
Foreword by Dutch Sheets	11
Introduction	15
1. God's Purpose for Dreams and Visions	21
2. Dreams, Visions and Prophecy	32
3. Spiritual Dreams and Visions	40
4. Natural Dreams and Visions	49
5. False Dreams and Visions	55
6. Knowing the Source of Your Dreams	64
7. Dreams Reveal the Heart	71
8. Dreams of Encouragement	87
9. Warning and Direction from Dreams and Visions	99
10. Dreams and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit	107
11. Dreams, Visions and Spiritual Warfare	120
12. The Language of Symbolism	129
13. Basic Symbols	140

- 14. Interpreting Your Dreams and Visions [156](#)
- 15. Responding to Your Dreams and Visions [171](#)
- 16. A Charge to Dreamers [181](#)

Index [185](#)

About the Author [191](#)

Back Cover [192](#)

Foreword

“Do you believe God speaks to people today?”

This was the first question—almost the first words—spoken to me by a national political leader I met with recently. I was a bit taken aback. “Well, yes, I do,” I replied. He wanted to know why I believe this, how one could be sure, and the answers to a few other well-thought-out questions. It seems he had recently experienced some very detailed and interesting dreams about our nation. Needless to say, it was an enlightening meeting.

This leader’s questions are not unusual. The proliferation of interest today in psychic readings, horoscopes, Eastern religions and other methods of contacting the realm of the supernatural attests to people’s innate desire to communicate with God. We humans are wired to want communication with our Creator!

I was delighted to inform the member of Congress that he was not crazy—God does indeed speak to people today. The prophet Joel prophesied:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:17–18 KJV

In fulfillment of this, we believers should anticipate God speaking to us through prophetic dreams and visions. He is ready, by His Spirit, to satisfy the yearnings of the human race for relationship with and direction from Him.

In the Scriptures, God often spoke to people through dreams and visions. Jacob’s life was radically impacted by a series of dreams. God revealed the destiny of Joseph through dreams. Another Joseph, Christ’s earthly father, was instructed through dreams—at least four times—concerning issues surrounding the birth of our Lord. An unrighteous king, Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed dreams from the Almighty. Pilate’s wife—also probably not a

follower of Jehovah—was warned in a dream about her husband’s dealings with Christ. The apostles Peter, Paul and John were given visions by the Holy Spirit.

I personally have been greatly impacted by visions and dreams. My most recent book, in fact, regarding what I believe God is currently saying to America, was in large part the result of God-given dreams.

The Scriptures contain more than fifty references to God sending messages to people through dreams or visions! And He assures us that in the last days this will continue. As we prepare ourselves to benefit from this communication from heaven, obvious and appropriate questions arise:

- How do we know when a dream or vision is from God, rather than from our own imagination?
- Can dreams and visions originate from demons?
- How can we correctly interpret our dreams?
- What should be our response when a dream contains a warning?
- How do we safely act on and steward dreams and visions?

These are important questions. Not knowing the appropriate answers causes many sincere Christians, including leaders, to disregard their dreams. How sad and costly! We must not allow fear of the supernatural, ignorance, the imbalance of others or any other human frailty to frighten us away from spiritual truths.

Our inability to hear from the Lord today has weakened the Church. Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) tells us, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The word *vision* in this verse (*chazown*) means much more than simply a plan or goal for the future. The word actually means prophetic revelation from the Lord, regardless of the method through which it is delivered—Scripture, prophecy, dreams, visions and any other form of revelation. In other words, where communication from the Lord is not present, people perish. How tragic! Satan, of course, knows this and uses every available means to keep us from receiving revelation from God, the greatest of which are probably fear and ignorance.

This is why books on hearing the voice of God are so vital. And you are holding the best book I know of on the subject of dreams and visions. Jane Hamon has given us a *masterful* work to help us hear from the Holy Spirit

more clearly. In fact, in my forty years of study and training, I have found no book on this subject as biblical, thorough, practical and scholarly as *Dreams and Visions*. You don't have to miss the benefit of your next God-given dream!

Dutch Sheets
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Introduction

Years ago, while at Bible college in Dallas, Texas, I dreamed a very disturbing dream. In my dream I saw my younger brother become sick and die. I woke up with tears flowing down my face trying to comfort myself with the words we teach our children when they have a bad dream. “It’s only a dream . . . it’s only a dream,” I told myself over and over. Suddenly I heard the voice of the Lord say, *It’s not only a dream! You need to get up and pray!* So I got out of bed and began to walk the floor and pray for him. Eventually I felt peace and went back to bed.

The next day my mother called from her home in another state to say that, the night before, my brother’s appendix had ruptured while he was on a deep woods camping trip. By the time they rushed him to the hospital he had become extremely ill and could very well have died! It suddenly occurred to me that God had spoken to me through my dream.

Dreams and visions have long fascinated people because of their mysterious nature. Kings have regarded them, philosophers have theorized about them, prophets have expounded upon them and scientists have studied them.

The Scriptures show us that God often used dreams and visions to communicate His divine messages. On numerous occasions these secret, hidden mysteries contained revelations that had an impact on the very course of history.

I have long been intrigued by dreams, especially as I often dream in great detail and with intricate and exciting plots. Early in my adult life, however, I began to have dreams that came to pass shortly thereafter. I was also seeing things in dreams of which I had no natural knowledge, things that I would later find to be true. It was then that I embarked upon a journey of understanding how God was speaking to me personally concerning my life and the lives of others through dreams and visions.

God desires to communicate with us through dreams and visions, but it is only as we gain understanding of how to unlock the secret, hidden mysteries that we will be able to take full advantage of what He is saying.

We are living in a time when believers have become convinced that God wants to speak to them and bring revelation to them through dreams and visions. Acts 2:17–18 declares:

“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.”

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent manifestations of prophecy, dreams and visions are actually the fulfillment of biblical promises. Jesus promised His followers that He would send a comforter, a *paraklete*, one who would walk beside them. On the day of His ascension into heaven He told His disciples to go wait for the promise of the Father. Dreams, visions and prophecy are part of that wonderful promise.

We are now living in an exciting time in which God is pouring out His Spirit upon men and women of all nations in new measure. As a matter of fact, in many Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu nations when an evangelist begins to share the message of the Gospel, it has become common for the unbeliever to respond, “I know this man Jesus; I have seen Him in my dreams!” In these cultures Jesus is referred to as “the man in white” and millions have experienced His love through a dream before even hearing the Gospel message. Dreams are clearly playing an important role in winning souls and changing nations.

In the book of Daniel we see that God began to unfold His purpose in the land during the time of Babylonian captivity. As a matter of fact, the first person the Bible mentions as having a dream from God was not the saintly prophet Daniel but rather Babylon’s violent king, Nebuchadnezzar. God positioned Daniel to interpret the dream of this pagan king. After two dreams and God’s dealings in the king’s life, even this wicked king began to proclaim Daniel’s God as the one true God.

Hear the words of this man—who had destroyed Jerusalem and taken the Jewish people captive—after God dealt with him through his dreams: “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down” (Daniel 4:37).

Because God is, in fact, pouring out His Spirit on “all flesh,” not just on Christians, it is imperative that believers not only learn how to hear God’s voice through dreams and visions for themselves, but also allow God to position us as Daniels and Josephs to interpret the dreams of unbelievers and win them to Christ. If a believer has been praying for an unsaved family member or co-worker, perhaps that believer should pray that God would speak to those individuals in dreams and then be ready to help interpret and apply God’s message.

During the last several decades, psychologists have studied dreams and revealed many interesting secrets regarding the working of the subconscious mind. Though their research has given much understanding of the technical aspect of dreams, this book is not written from a psychological perspective; rather, we will investigate how God speaks to us through our dreams.

I have personally experienced many dreams and visions, and have gained an understanding of how to interpret these revelations through careful study of the Scriptures, through reading Christian materials on the subject and through recording and interpreting many of my own dreams. While I have interpreted countless dreams from others, I believe that believers have the responsibility to examine their own dreams and to listen to the Holy Spirit through this God-ordained method of communication. My heart for you, the reader, is that you will not only be activated to receive from the Lord through dreams and visions but will also become skilled in accurately interpreting and properly applying what He speaks.

As we begin to learn to discern the voice of God in dreams and visions, we will reap the benefits of a closer, more intimate walk with our Lord (see Hebrews 5:14). “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

This book is directed primarily to those who are in relationship with God through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If, therefore, you have not yet made a commitment of your life to Jesus Christ, I want to invite you to pray the following prayer and receive His gift of eternal life:

Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your great love that You have for me. I recognize that I am a sinner and that I need You to come into my life and make me new. Forgive me for living my life according to my own way instead of how You desire me to live. I repent of my sin, and I

receive the gift of eternal life that You have made available through Jesus Christ. I believe Jesus came to earth, lived a sinless life, was crucified and shed His blood for my sins, and that He rose again, triumphing over death, hell and the grave. Thank You for making me a part of Your family. I now receive You into my life as my personal Savior, Lord and King, and I receive Your Holy Spirit, who will lead me and guide me into all truth. In Jesus' name, Amen!

1

God's Purpose for Dreams and Visions

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

I dreamed of four angels who presented themselves to me as “The Four Horsemen of Awakening.” Each angel identified the move of God’s Spirit he represented, and their arms were linked together indicating they were a solid, unified force to be reckoned with—the necessary team to bring nations into revival and awakening. Strangely, we were on a golf course and they hit a ball down the fairway. The ball landed about ten feet away from a large crocodile, which prevented them from continuing to play. I could see that at the end of the course a large party was waiting for them to finish. But instead they were waiting for something. Then in the dream I realized they were waiting for the Church to pray so they could deal with the crocodile and finish the course.

I had this dream during my first night of ministry in Australia and New Zealand. I was there to speak at some conferences in which I was to help them understand what God was saying to their nations, to the Church and to each one individually. I was there to release God’s prophetic voice.

Was this a dream from the Lord? Or was it the pizza I ate the night before? Or was it merely a story line produced from my overactive imagination? Could it be that God was giving me a message to share with those I would be speaking to at the conferences? I got up and wrote this

dream down and began to pray God would bring the clarity and wisdom needed to understand what He was saying.

God has always desired to communicate with His people. Yet for centuries God was thought of as a silent, distant, almost indifferent Creator who ruled the affairs of the universe and, though omnipotent, took little interest in the day-to-day lives of His children.

The Church has become increasingly aware not only that God *wants* to speak to His people, but also that He is, in fact, concerned with even the smallest details of our lives: “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6–7).

Throughout Scripture we see a God who cares and who communicates His concerns, His direction, His judgments and His blessings to the people of this world. At times He spoke directly to His servants; other times His mouthpieces, the prophets, delivered His messages. Judges, kings, priests and even musicians carried God’s instructions to the people. And in numerous instances in Scripture, God directed, corrected and instructed individuals through dreams and visions.

Dreams and visions are perhaps some of the most common ways God has communicated with humankind. The Bible contains more than fifty references to dreams and visions in which God delivered messages. Abraham learned of his promised lineage through dreams and visions. Jacob’s life was drastically changed through a series of dreams in which he received God’s promises regarding his heritage. God revealed Joseph’s destiny through his dreams. Daniel, Obadiah, Nahum and Zechariah were among the prophets often visited with revelations from God through visions and dreams.

Great protection was given to the Christ child as God’s messengers spoke to Joseph and the Magi in dreams. The apostles Peter, Paul and John were later visited by the Spirit of God in visions.

What Are Dreams and Visions?

Webster's dictionary defines a *dream* as “a succession of images or ideas present in the mind during sleep.” Dreams are formed in the subconscious mind based on images and symbols that are unique to the individual, depending on his or her background, experience and current life circumstances.

Dreams can communicate truth about ourselves—or others—that our conscious minds might have failed to acknowledge. One word for *dream* in the Greek language is *enupnion*, which is defined as “something seen in sleep or a vision in a dream.”

Dreams can originate strictly within the natural mind or can be given as messages from God's Spirit and received within the mind. They are not always easy to understand, but dreams are one means by which God might choose to speak to us.

Webster's dictionary defines a *vision* as “the act or power of perceiving abstract or invisible subjects as clearly as if they were visible objects.” A *vision* is also defined as “foresight.” One Hebrew word for *vision* is *chizzayown*, which literally means “a revelation.” A Greek word translated as “vision” in the New Testament, *horasis*, means “the act of gazing at something or an inspired appearance.”

Dreams and visions are basically the same except that a dream occurs during periods of sleep, while a vision generally refers to images or revelations received in picture form while awake.

I have often heard people say that they had a dream just before getting out of bed in the morning, but they were not sure if it was a dream or a vision since they thought they were awake at the time. Whether these were dreams or visions is immaterial. More important is the message of the revelation.

Joshua 1:8 tells us to meditate upon God's Word both day and night. Meditating on God's Word before bed often results in revelation through a dream. At times this might be a divine revelation—God speaking to you through the dream. Or it might be a personal revelation—your subconscious mind revealing your deepest, innermost thoughts. Psalm 16:7 confirms this: “I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart [thoughts or inner man] also instructs [counsels] me in the night seasons.”

How We Receive Dreams

Dreams are messages sent either from God’s Spirit or from our own souls, which comprise the mind, will and emotions. The subconscious mind within our souls provides the background or screen for these messages to be displayed on.

Spiritual dreams are inspired by God, then communicated to our subconscious minds. These must then be received and discerned by our conscious minds through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Just as television and radio waves are broadcast through the air and must be tuned in to, so dreams are constantly being broadcast to the subconscious mind, both by God’s Spirit and by our own souls. We must learn to turn on our receivers and tune in to the messages being sent.

The prophet Micah said that he “saw” the word of the Lord (Micah 1:1). How did he see this word? The New International Version of the Bible calls this a vision. Micah likely saw images or pictures projected on the screen of his mind, which communicated God’s word to him.

If we compare the communication of the Spirit of the Lord through dreams to other methods of divine communication mentioned in Scripture—prophecy, a word of knowledge, etc.—the primary difference is that dreams are given first to the subconscious mind before being perceived by the conscious mind.

Remembering Our Dreams

Many people tell me they do not hear from God in dreams because they do not generally remember their dreams. And when they *do* remember a dream, they recall only fragments—scattered images or happenings that make little sense in the light of day. This is seen in Scripture when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a dream that disturbed him a great deal, yet he could not recall what he had dreamed. God showed the dream to Daniel and gave him the interpretation as well (see Daniel 2:1–47).

Job 20:8 describes the fleeting nature of dreams: “He will fly away like a dream, and not be found; yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.”

Sleep specialists tell us that everyone dreams for a period of time during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. So if all of us dream every night at some point, why do we not recall what has been dreamed? There are several explanations. One is that God created the mind to be constantly active, 24 hours a day, making it unlikely that every thought or image that flashes across the mind, whether conscious or subconscious, is meant to be remembered and studied.

Another explanation could be that because dreams have not been taken seriously or valued by much of our culture, as products of this culture we allow our conscious minds to reject dreams as unimportant and quickly forget them. In effect, we turn off our receivers. Additionally, if we fail to understand a dream immediately, we tend to assume that it has no significance and dismiss it, neglecting to search for any meaning the dream might hold. As you read this book, it is important that you begin to understand that dreams are often conveyed in your subconscious mind in a symbolic fashion, and that it will take time to develop a workable understanding of your own personal language of symbols.

Yet another reason we do not always remember our dreams is that we do not choose to record them in a timely manner. We wake from dreams, “rehearse” them in our minds and assume we will recall them later. And many times this works. Scientists have determined that chemicals called serotonin and norepinephrine exist in the memory banks of the brain for the purpose of transferring thoughts from short-term memory to long-term memory. If we make the effort to remember certain thoughts or, in this case, dreams, these chemicals “print” those dreams in our long-term memory banks. If this occurs immediately after waking, then there is the possibility we will be able to call the dreams to mind later.

Sometimes, however, this memory method fails. I have on several occasions awakened in the night with a dream I desired to remember. In some instances the dream answered many questions regarding situations I was dealing with. As I lay in bed and went over the dream in my mind, I felt confident that it would be impossible to forget a dream of such insight and clarity. Nevertheless, when I awoke in the morning I could not recall even the most general details of the dream. If I had only remembered some of those dreams, maybe I could have changed the world!

If you are serious about understanding your dreams, you should be prepared for such instances by keeping a notebook and pencil by the bed.

Another method might be to voice-record the dream using your cell phone or other digital recording device. Then, when you awaken in the middle of the night, you can record the dream and safely go back to sleep knowing the dream and its details will be waiting for you to explore in the morning.

God wants you to remember important dreams! It is not hard to learn how.

This is a necessary step for proper interpretation of dreams and visions. We see that even Daniel had to write down his dreams and visions: “In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts” (Daniel 7:1).

Even if you voice-record the dream, it is still a good idea to keep a journal of your dreams and visions and their interpretations. Have a place, either in a notebook or on your computer, where these revelations are kept together in one place. There are times when God will give a series of dreams or visions that do not seem related to one another until you see the pattern as you review your journal.

Right now you might be thinking, *I can't record what I can't remember!* Your brain, however, can actually be trained to make note of dreams even while you sleep. If you are seeking the Lord to hear His voice through a dream, you can learn to be aware of what you were dreaming even when you awaken slightly to roll over. If you lie still and ask the Lord to show you what you were dreaming, it is amazing how often the focus of the dream appears.

In the morning, it is best to pay attention to what you are dreaming even before the alarm goes off when you begin to stir. If you have slept soundly until the alarm, begin to pray actively as soon as you awaken and ask the Lord to bring the clarity of what you were just dreaming. If you hop right out of bed and get busy, your mind will move forward and no longer hold on to the dream.

A final reason we have difficulty remembering our dreams, even after we have recognized God as the source, is simply that we lack the desire to hear His voice or to put forth the effort necessary to understand what He is saying. We cannot afford to be apathetic or dull of hearing when our heavenly Father is speaking to us. We should cry out to God to give us that hunger that can be quenched only by communing with Him. Hearing and responding to the voice of the Lord never fails to intensify the intimacy of a relationship with Him.

God Is Still Speaking Today!

God is still speaking today and uses a variety of means to communicate with us. He speaks from both the *Logos* (the written Word) and the *rhema* word of God (a timely, Holy Spirit–inspired word, often from the written Word or via the gifts of the Spirit). He will speak through an inner witness in our spirits. He will speak to us through godly counsel and through biblical preaching. God will also use nature, circumstances and godly authority to speak into our lives, but we must have ears to hear and hearts to receive what He is saying.

Biblical accounts help us understand why God sends messages through dreams and visions. Primarily it is because He has something to communicate to us. He might be teaching us regarding personal areas of our lives; exposing hidden motives or agendas in our hearts that need to change; revealing areas where we should concentrate our prayers and intercession; or explaining more about His love and His plan for our lives. The messages He desires to convey to us are often unique and varied.

God will use our dreams to bring instruction and counsel to us, even as we sleep. Scripture tells us that God Himself often appeared to individuals in dreams (see Genesis 28:10–16; 2 Chronicles 1:7). On other occasions an angel of the Lord appeared in dreams (see Genesis 31:10–12; Matthew 1:20; 2:13).

God also spoke through symbolic dreams to such worldly men as Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh, as well as to godly men like Daniel and Joseph. These men had divine encounters with their Creator through dreams that required an interpretation in order for them to benefit from the message

contained therein. Once they received the interpretation, it changed their lives!

An ordinary Nazarene carpenter with no formal religious training, Joseph dreamed dreams regarding Mary and the baby Jesus in which an angel gave specific instruction concerning the child's well-being and safety (see Matthew 1–2).

Interpretation of the Four Horsemen Dream

The dream at the beginning of this chapter was a prophetic word, not only to those nations where I was ministering but also to the Body of Christ. The four angels, or “Four Horsemen of Awakening,” are being sent to earth to assist the Church in bringing a last days revival and harvest. Unlike the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse described in the book of Revelation, which bring death, war, famine and conquest, these angels are being sent for breakthrough, revival and miracles. They were on a golf course, for Paul speaks of finishing the course. The crocodile was a symbol of leviathan (see Job 41), which represents a spiritual force of darkness that tries to threaten, intimidate and delay God's purposes from moving forward.

The key to the dream was that the angels were waiting for something in order to confront the opposition and be able to advance. What were they waiting for? They were waiting for the Church to arise and pray, to engage in the battle with them so the final celebration could take place.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who are urging us on to the finish line. God was letting us know that He has sent an angelic force to assist us in bringing revival and awakening to the nations. Hebrews 1:14 tells us that angels are sent to assist those who are to inherit salvation. This dream brought encouragement that God is sending help from heaven to fulfill our mission, revelation regarding the stronghold of opposition and a strategy to move forward through prayer.

God still speaks today through dreams and visions, but only those who have their hearts and spirits tuned to His Spirit will hear and receive all that God has for them.

Questions for Consideration

1. What recording method can you use when you awaken from a dream in the night? Digital voice recording? A dream journal?
2. Have you ever had a dream in which you felt God was speaking to you? If so, record it now in a journal (in a notebook or on your computer).
3. Do you have difficulty remembering your dreams? What are some steps you can take to help you remember?
4. Have you ever had a vision? Remember, this might be God flashing pictures upon the screen of your mind. Perhaps during a time of prayer someone's face or a situation popped up. If so, record one instance of a vision in your journal.

2

Dreams, Visions and Prophecy

I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets.

Hosea 12:10

David Yonggi Cho, pastor of one of the world's largest churches in Seoul, South Korea, has said, "Pictures are the language of the Holy Spirit." The word *visions* in Hosea 12:10 comes from the Hebrew word *chazown*, which means "revelation, an oracle, a dream or vision"—all ways in which God uses pictures to speak to His people.

Right now, you might be saying to yourself, *Pictures I understand. I mean, everybody dreams. But who am I to hear from God? Don't you have to be somebody special, like a prophet? Are there real prophets anymore? What is prophecy anyway?* All excellent questions. Let's start with the last one first.

Prophecy, as defined by Dr. Bill Hamon in his book *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* (Destiny Image, 1987), is "God communicating His thoughts and intents to mankind" or "God speaking." As we have seen in Scripture, God often chose individuals to hold the ministry office of prophet—Samuel, Daniel, Deborah, Elijah, Elisha, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, to name a few—to stand as God's representatives and deliver His spoken word to individuals, groups and even cities and nations. But He also chose to speak directly to very ordinary men and women to communicate His purposes.

In the Old Testament God chose to limit how He spoke to the people of Israel by giving revelation only to those anointed as prophets. If God

desired to speak to a ruling king, He used a prophet to deliver the message. If He wanted to speak to the nation, He used the voice of a prophet. But in the New Testament, in the time of our new covenant with God, He has made clear that He is pouring out His Spirit on all flesh, with the result that every believer can hear the voice of God in dreams, visions and prophecies.

Look at the words the apostle Peter spoke on the Day of Pentecost after the Holy Spirit was poured out on 120 disciples of Christ who had gathered together in Jerusalem in the Upper Room waiting for the “promise of the Father”:

“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.’”

Acts 2:16–17

Peter identified this outpouring of the Spirit to be the fulfillment of a prophecy given in Joel 2:28 and proclaimed that the gift of the Holy Spirit was for all who would believe in Christ, without respect of persons (see Acts 2:38–39). Prophecies, dreams and visions would be given to male and female, young and old alike.

What an amazing time to be alive!

In this book I sometimes use the term *prophetic dream* to refer to a dream through which God has spoken to an individual in order to communicate a divine message. This message might have to do with the dreamer and his or her life, or another person or situation. The Bible tells us that the purpose of prophecy is to bring edification, exhortation and comfort to the one receiving the word (see 1 Corinthians 14:3). A dream, therefore, that encourages, exhorts or comforts and is biblical in context can be considered a prophetic dream.

Yet many people—particularly in Western cultures—have difficulty accepting the idea that dreams hold any significance for their lives. One reason for this, as we have seen, is that they rarely remember their dreams. Another is they do not understand the pieces of dreams they *do* remember. As a result, dreams are typically rejected as nonsense.

As a matter of fact, most of us have used the phrase “Don’t worry; it’s just a dream” at one time or another, dismissing our own dreams or the dreams of others as merely figments of the imagination—fantasies conjured by the subconscious mind that are best ignored.

From childhood many of us have been taught erroneously that dreams do not really mean anything, that they are unimportant and have little or no relevance to our lives. This is not necessarily the fault of our parents but more an indication of the philosophic and scientific thought of Western culture, which has been slow to understand the language of symbolism that is vital to dream interpretation.

Prophetic Dreams and Visions in History

Around 400 BC, the Greek philosopher Plato set forth the premise that there are three valid ways to obtain knowledge: by the five senses, through reasoning of the mind and from the spirit realm. Some fifty years later Aristotle revised this idea. He believed that the five senses and reasoning of the mind were the only valid means for obtaining true knowledge; he gave no credence to spiritual revelation.

Aristotle's view was endorsed down through the centuries until it became rooted in European thought and culture. Eventually it crept its way into the Church, which then banished any doctrine that approved the spontaneous flow of revelation through the Spirit of God, including prophecy, healing and tongues and interpretation. Visions and dreams were considered to be little more than unreliable products of the imagination.

Even so, miracles occurred and prophecies were spoken here and there in Europe and, later, in America, particularly at times of revival or awakenings. But it was not until God began pouring out His Spirit in the early 1900s, largely through the Pentecostal Movement, that the Church at large began to reawaken to the realities of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ordinary men and women of God once again spoke with new tongues, received words of revelation and knowledge, dreamed prophetic dreams and saw visions. God released His supernatural power in healing and miracles through such notable public figures as Oral Roberts, T. L. Osborn and Katherine Kuhlman. With the growth of the charismatic renewal and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit even in denominational churches, the gift of prophecy began to be recognized by both the presbytery and the congregation.

As God's process of restoration has unfolded in the Church, a number of gifted individuals have been recognized as appointed by God to the office of prophet and have operated effectively in this ministry. This prophetic movement has permeated the Body of Christ and helped reestablish the biblical truths regarding God's desire and willingness to speak to mankind in a personal way. In addition to raising up new prophets, God is releasing a prophetic generation among His people who have learned to hear His voice more clearly and receive prophetic insight through the Holy Spirit.

After many centuries of darkness, the Church has once again begun to look to the spiritual realm as a valid means through which God imparts knowledge and is now rising to receive godly, prophetic insight into spiritual and natural matters through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Along with the outpouring of God's Spirit has come a desire within His people to understand what He is saying through dreams. Hearing the voice of God for ourselves—and for others—has become a vital part of the Christian walk for a growing number of believers.

As God pours out His Spirit, the Church
is awakening to His voice.

Unfortunately many in the Church still believe God to be a silent observer of human affairs; thus, they resolutely close themselves off from receiving any gift from God's Spirit—and look to other sources. The occult has long stood as a means, albeit illegitimate, of "revelations" of the future. Sadly enough, many Christians dabble in the occult through horoscopes, tarot card readings, Ouija boards, palm readings and the like. They sometimes claim to indulge in these practices "just for fun," yet they never fail to share in astonishment any information they perceive as factual. Why would a believer choose a counterfeit when the real thing has been made available through the Holy Spirit?

Dreams Do Not Indicate Spiritual Superiority

Just as one does not have to be “special” to hear from God, neither does a propensity for dreaming indicate that one has spiritual superiority or right standing with God. Science tells us that nearly everyone dreams approximately one hour per night. Some dream more; some less. Some have a greater capacity to remember what they have dreamed; some have less. Dreams, like rain, fall on the godly and the sinner, the righteous and the unrighteous.

After God spoke in a dream to the wife of Pontius Pilate, she sent word to her husband regarding the trial of Jesus: “Have nothing to do with that just Man” (Matthew 27:19). We have no way of knowing her spiritual condition, although it seems unlikely she was a follower of Christ.

King Abimelech and his house were under the curse of God. Because Abraham feared for his life, he had deceived the Philistine king, telling him not that Sarah was his wife but his sister. Abimelech was attracted to Sarah and intended to marry her. Before he consummated the marriage, however, God spoke to him: “God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, ‘Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man’s wife’” (Genesis 20:3).

God sent this troubling dream to King Abimelech to protect Sarah, through whose union with Abraham the promised Messiah would come. Some say that God does not give us nightmares, yet Scripture is clear that it was God who spoke to Abimelech in this dream and said, “You are a dead man.” This was not a happy dream. God will do what is necessary to cause us to recognize and receive His messages to us.

Abimelech heeded the dream, returned Sarah to her husband and sent them on their way with gifts of sheep, oxen, servants and a thousand pieces of silver.

Abimelech was not necessarily a godly man (see Genesis 20:11), but he recognized God’s voice in his dream and took swift action to make things right. The dream instilled the fear of God in him, and because he cooperated with the Lord, he was blessed with children and prospered (see verses 17–18). Archaeological finds have shown that the land of Gerar was prosperous during the period of the patriarchs.

Scripture thus shows us that God can and will use dreams to speak His thoughts and intentions to all of us—to the unrighteous as well as the godly.

Do We Have Ears to Hear?

If God is indeed using dreams as a means of imparting spiritual insight, we are wrong to discount them. The Bible tells us that God's people "are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

Think of the consequences if Joseph, Mary's husband, had ignored the dream in which he was told to take Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt to protect the child's life (see Matthew 2:13). What if another Joseph had failed to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh and never set up a storehouse of provisions to carry the nations through severe famine? Jacob and his family would never have come to the land of Goshen to receive provision and protection during the early days of the birth of the Hebraic people. God's plans for them would have been greatly affected had these men not taken seriously the warnings spoken to them in their sleep.

God delights in communicating with His people; therefore, we must listen more closely to what He is saying through dreams. Even though we will not always have instant understanding, we will be opening an avenue of prophetic insight into God's purposes for our lives.

God is always speaking, but do we hear what He is saying?

Questions for Consideration

1. What is prophecy?
2. Has God ever spoken to you? How did you perceive it to be the voice of God? Was it audible or more of an impression on your mind?
3. What are some of the different ways you can hear a personal message from the Lord?

ACTIVATION

Will you pray now and ask God to speak to you or show you a picture of what He wants to communicate to you? After you pray and ask this from the Lord, remain still for a time and meditate on Him, listening and looking with your spiritual eyes. When you see or hear something, record it in your journal.

3

Spiritual Dreams and Visions

“It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit.”

Acts 2:17

I dreamed I drove up to a business that changes the oil in your car. I saw a sign in the window that read: “Change Your Oil; It Will Change Your Life!”

God was not speaking to me about having the oil changed in my car, but rather about getting a “spiritual” oil change. Oil is a biblical symbol of the Holy Spirit and His anointing. Psalm 92:10 says, “I have been anointed with fresh oil.” God was challenging me, through this dream, to understand that as I keep my spiritual life fresh, He will cause the anointing of His Spirit to increase and become more effective.

There are those who believe that all dreams and visions are inspired by God. Others believe that dreams are strictly soulish in their origination, produced out of the subconscious mind, and that visions are nothing more than daydreams or products of an overactive imagination. Which of these, if either, is correct?

Scripture supports the idea that there are three different types of dreams and visions, each of which can be traced to a different source:

1. Spiritual dreams and visions, which are inspired by God’s Spirit
2. Natural, or soulish, dreams and visions, which are produced by the natural processes of a person’s mind, will and emotions
3. False or occultic dreams and visions, which are demon inspired or crafted deceitfully by evil hearts

As you learn to interpret your dreams, you will find it helpful to understand these different sources of inspiration to ensure a proper and balanced response.

In this chapter we will look at spiritual dreams, and follow with natural and false dreams in the next chapters. A spiritual dream or vision is one that is inspired by God's Spirit and communicated through the natural mind to relay a divine message. This message can be a personal revelation, insight into a natural situation or a foretelling of future events.

Pray That You May Interpret

Many people who do not know how to interpret their dreams have a difficult time grasping the concept of revelation coming through a series of seemingly meaningless and disjointed pictures, scenes and conversations. How can something that makes no sense to the natural mind contain revelation?

In this sense, I liken dreams to the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues, which are recognized as valid gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation in many churches today. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 14 that when Christians are gathered together and a message is given in an unknown tongue, the message will not bear fruit unless it is followed by an interpretation. The person speaking by God's Spirit is speaking mysteries that cannot bring edification, exhortation or comfort to the church body unless interpreted. The tongue alone gives an unclear message and, though God is speaking, the church body cannot benefit unless it can understand the meaning behind the message. The message in tongues becomes of no effect or value unless someone is yielded to the Holy Spirit to give an interpretation.

"Therefore," Paul writes, "let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret" (1 Corinthians 14:13).

Similarly, a dream can be a prophetic message to an individual, yet without a Spirit-led interpretation and proper application, the dream becomes of no effect or value.

Nebuchadnezzar's dreams would have been worthless, more of a burden than a blessing, had Daniel not been there to give the proper interpretation

and application. Likewise, Pharaoh required someone with prophetic insight to interpret his dreams. Joseph enabled an entire region of the world to survive seven years of deadly famine by discerning God's plan given through Pharaoh's dream.

Just as there are those who are gifted in tongues and interpretation, there are those who are gifted with the ability to interpret dreams. Though we all may learn to interpret our dreams, God enables some specifically for this purpose. Joseph and Daniel were men anointed by God to interpret dreams that changed the destinies of nations. Without the utilization of their prophetic gifts, the dreams of their kings would not have produced the fruit God intended, and history might well have been affected.

Just as we are to pray that we may interpret tongues, so we should also pray to interpret our dreams. When we awaken, dreams often resonate with an uncertain sound or unclear meaning; once illumination is sought and given, however, the dreamer can receive edification from the dream.

Different Types of Spiritual Dreams

There are several types of spiritual dreams through which communication with God takes place. We will look at dreams that involve (1) God speaking to your spirit, (2) your spirit or soul speaking to God and (3) God alerting your spirit to pray.

God Speaking to Your Spirit

When God speaks to your spirit through dreams, the dreams are prophetic in nature, originating with and birthed by God. They contain revelation about your life or circumstances, revelation for someone else or even revelation for a corporate body of people or a nation. Similar to the purpose for prophecy, these dreams also have the purpose of edification, exhortation and comfort.

An example of a dream of this nature was given to me by a woman in a leadership position. She dreamed in great detail of our church body participating in a worship service. In her dream, we were having difficulty breaking through into God's presence, but as our new worship leader led us

forward, we soon experienced the presence of God such as we never had before. The majesty of God was displayed through glorious colors in the train of His robe. This brought us into a new communion with one another as well as with our Lord.

This was a dream that encouraged the dreamer with the beauty of the presence of the Lord during this time of breakthrough in worship. It also blessed our worship leader and gave him confidence in his new position. Most importantly, however, this dream spoke of a new level of intensity of worship and a deeper manifestation of God's presence in the midst of our church that God desired to bring us into as we persevered in our praise.

The dream edified the dreamer, but also the dream and its message were prophetic to the entire church body. Interestingly, for several months following this dream, a number of prophetic leaders around the country spoke to us of a new level of worship and a new glory to be revealed in our midst, thus confirming the message of the dream.

Some years ago I had this spiritual dream. A Hitler-type dictator came into our town and began to take over, one house at a time. He used different tactics at each house to cause the individuals to comply with his rule and deny the Lord. With some he used torture; with others he maintained a steady siege, slowly wearing them down. Then he was at my door. I asked myself, *What would it take to get me to submit to him? What is my price?* He sent his troops in, but they did not touch me. Instead they took my children away, knowing that this would be the most effective way to get to me. The dream ended with a voice asking, "What is your price to deny the Lord?"

This dream examines a fear shared by most mothers; however, it was speaking to me in some very specific areas of my life at the time of the dream. One area involved my commitment to God in ministry and my commitment to my family. As a co-pastor of our church with children still at home, I often struggled with the balance between ministry and family. While my family has always been my priority, I recognized that I could not deny God's mandate on my life for ministry. This dream came at a time when I was feeling reticent about some of the things God was directing me to do, because I was uncertain how this involvement would affect my family life. This dream stirred me to examine how I would respond to the Lord and His calling upon my life and how I would balance the responsibilities of my family.

Beyond this personal message, however, the Lord challenged me, showing that He was putting this same question to the Body of Christ: What is our price to deny the Lord and compromise our calling? Believers often say they would gladly die for their Lord, yet they struggle to live for Him, allowing Him to have the first place in their hearts and the final say in their lives. Often when it comes to being obedient in some very simple areas, many cannot seem to make a commitment. This dream was a message not only to me personally but also to the corporate Body of Christ.

Your Spirit and Soul Crying Out to God

A second type of spiritual dream is when your spirit or soul cries out to God. In a dream of this type, the redeemed spirit (or unredeemed spirit, in the case of an unbeliever) might be calling for needed assistance or might simply be expressing the inner thoughts of the soul. Such dreams usually originate in the spirit as a cry for God's intervention, whether through direction, correction or instruction.

A woman I once counseled had a recurring dream of waking up paralyzed—unable to move or speak. She tried in the dream to call on the Lord for help but was unable even to speak the name of Jesus. She was desperate for divine intervention in these dreams. When I asked her if she felt helpless or paralyzed over situations in her life, she replied tearfully that she did. These dreams were her cries to God for help in situations she felt were out of her control.

Most of our dreams fall into this category—personal spiritual dreams that bring self-revelation and instruction. These dreams reveal to us hidden parts of our soulish nature or even parts of our spiritual nature that we might otherwise fail to recognize.

Spiritual dreams are an important way
to hear God—and to commune with Him.

I once dreamed that I shot a man of God who is known for his tremendous teachings on faith. I then threw the gun away and tried to cover up my crime. I did not know this man personally, but I knew what his teachings represented to me: my walk of faith.

God used this dream, which originated in my spirit, to reveal certain things to me about the condition of my soul. It helped me to pinpoint areas where I had “assassinated” my own faith and then tried to cover it up. These specific areas were not found in the dream; however, the dream was a catalyst whereby God was able to reach me and bring clear revelation.

The dream helped me to understand situations I had been praying about without seeing any answers to my prayers. God heard my heart’s cry and was able to stir my spirit to reveal keys to overcome my lack of faith and to receive His promises and provision to me.

God’s Spirit Stirring Your Spirit to Pray

Sometimes God’s Spirit will use dreams to alert you to the need for intercession. Romans 8:26 tells us that “the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When we pray, we do not always understand why we feel a burden to allow the Spirit of God to pray through us, yet we feel the urgency to intercede on behalf of another. At times our dreams will awaken us and alert us to begin to pray.

I have experienced dreams dealing with life and death numerous times in my life. In one dream I saw my brother killed in a car accident as his car rolled and crushed him. I awoke with tears streaming down my face and began to pray for him. The next day, I received a call from my mother. She told me that my brother had been in a serious car accident earlier that day. His car had been struck and rolled over—but my brother stepped out without injury!

I believe prayer changes things. God alerted me through my dream and, at least in part, because of my obedience to pray and come into agreement with God’s purposes for my brother, God spared his life.

We must be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit of God and obedient to pray when our spirits are stirred, for this is yet another way that God will communicate His heart to us.



I awoke with tears streaming down my face and began to pray for my brother.

A woman I know once had a dream in which God directed her to intercede for her sister. She dreamed that her sister began to have a seizure and fell to the ground. In the dream, this woman laid hands on her sister and prayed for her, rebuking the sickness and imploring the Lord to heal her. It was quite a lengthy time of prayer in the dream, but as she finished praying, her sister became well.

The next day, her sister, who was in another state at the time, fell and began to have a seizure. In a short period of time, however, she came out of the seizure and was fine. In this case, intercession that occurred the night before in a dream perhaps prevented further difficulties or complications.

Many spiritual dreams are not as literal in their interpretation but are highly symbolic. Nevertheless, God can use your dreams to bring insight, illumination, revelation and edification to your spirit and soul as you attune your ear to His Spirit.

Questions for Consideration

1. Is every dream or vision from God?
2. If you pray to be able to interpret your dreams, what do you think will happen?
3. What are the three types of spiritual dreams?
4. Have you ever had a spiritual dream? If so, which type was it?
5. What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit and your spirit both communicate through dreams?

4

Natural Dreams and Visions

A dream comes through much activity.

Ecclesiastes 5:3

Not all dreams contain revelation sent from God. When we are awake, not all of our thoughts are God's thoughts running through our minds.

Likewise, when we sleep the natural mind continues to process natural thoughts. Events from the past, people we have known, situations we are currently dealing with, circumstances or people that are upsetting us—many things cause us to experience natural dreams.

Not all visions are from God either; visions can, in fact, be products of our natural minds or imaginations. Some people are very adept at daydreaming or escaping into a world of fantasy by allowing their minds to wander. The various plots, places and conversations they envision can seem so real to them that they lose a sense of what is happening around them.

Natural dreams and visions are not produced by the Spirit of God but by the soul—the mind, will and emotions. Because the images originate in the soul, they give insight into what is affecting us both consciously and subconsciously. Here are three ways natural dreams and visions reveal what is on our minds.

Natural Dreams Reflect the Day's Activities

Ecclesiastes 5:3 tells us that a dream might come “through much activity” (or, as the King James Version puts it, “through the multitude of business”), when our minds are occupied with circumstances or events. In such dreams, it is possible to find a solution to a problem or even locate lost objects. These types of solutions do not necessarily indicate divine revelation but might be the subconscious mind dealing with the situation at hand or calling to remembrance the place where the missing object was left. I like to refer to these as soulish dreams.

Since dreams are communications from our subconscious minds, it stands to reason that anything we think about during the day could enter our dreams. During times when I am engaged in spiritual warfare, the content of my dreams often has to do with situations involving the dark forces of the enemy. During times of intense ministry, I find myself praying and ministering all night long in my dreams. These are not necessarily spiritual dreams; they could merely be my mind addressing the day’s activities.

As we sleep, the subconscious mind continues to process the vast amount of sensory, emotional and intellectual information we experienced during the day. August Kekule, a leading nineteenth-century German chemist, reported that the discovery of a certain chemical structure came to him in a dream. It is likely that his subconscious mind continued to work on the problem long after his conscious mind was at rest.

Elias Howe, while inventing the first sewing machine, solved a problem through a dream. He dreamed of being captured by savages who carried spears with holes in their tips. From this he derived the idea of putting a hole in the tip of a needle rather than at the back end as in a hand needle.

Robert Louis Stevenson was inspired by a dream to write *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a classic work.

Some dreams are your mind processing events in the world around you.

Sometimes natural dreams simply reflect what we saw or heard during the day. Once when I was a child, I fell asleep in front of the television and

dreamed of a new invention. It looked like a hairbrush that blew hot air and could be used for styling your hair. When I woke up, I was excited because I had a great idea for a portable hair dryer and wanted to share it with someone. Fortunately, before I had an opportunity to tell anyone about my inspired invention, I saw a new television commercial advertising something I had never seen before: a blow-dryer. Apparently, in my semiconscious state I had watched that commercial and then dreamed about inventing the blow-dryer. (Wow! Am I ever telling my age with that story!)

This was merely my subconscious mind calling to remembrance something my conscious mind was not aware of seeing. While some might say God could have been pointing out my creative abilities through this dream, I believe it was soulish in nature rather than spiritual.

Natural Dreams Reflect Physical Needs

Just as our minds can inspire our dreams, so can our physical bodies. You have probably heard the term *pizza dreams*, which usually refers to dreams being stirred up by something spicy or heavy that you ate before bedtime. Sleep specialists have noted that certain foods and some medications can affect dream patterns. These are natural dreams, motivated by natural stimuli or activities.

One woman I spoke with told me that when she took a certain over-the-counter medication she experienced horrible nightmares. When she stopped taking the medication, the bad dreams also stopped. A few months later, she tried taking the medicine again and had the same reaction, experiencing unsettling, even horrifying dreams. These dreams were clearly the result of a stimulant to her bodily system.

Sometimes a bodily need, such as hunger or thirst, can prompt a dream. Isaiah 29:8 tells us, “As when a hungry person dreams of eating, but awakens hungry still; as when a thirsty person dreams of drinking, but awakens faint and thirsty still” (NIV).

I heard of a woman who dreamed that she woke up and got out of bed to use the bathroom. The dream seemed so real that she had an accident! I do not feel that any spiritual significance should be assigned to such a dream.

This was merely the subconscious mind responding to signals sent by the body and her physical body responding to her subconscious thoughts.

One night during a fast of several days, I dreamed of great tables of my favorite foods set before me. Some might say that this dream was addressing my spiritual hunger and the provision God had made to fill that hunger. Or perhaps that He had prepared a table for me in the presence of my enemies (see Psalm 23:5). Perhaps. But truthfully I felt the dream was a natural response from my subconscious mind, letting me know that I was hungry. My body, which had not been fed for three days, was sending signals to my brain saying, “Haven’t you forgotten something? Feed me!”

In another dream I was outside during the winter and had not dressed warmly enough. I remember running toward my house to get out of the cold. I would huddle next to trees and big rocks looking for any small measure of warmth. When I awoke, shivering, I discovered that my husband had stolen the covers from my side of the bed! My subconscious mind was likely responding to the fact that I was cold and sending a dream-producing signal to my brain.

Natural Dreams Reflect the Mind’s Meditations

Most of us find it all too easy to stay so busy with the activities of daily living that we fail to take the time to slow down and look at issues that are bothering us. As we sleep, our subconscious minds seize the opportunity and bring these problems to our attention.

Hurtful or traumatic experiences from the past can show up in our dreams. At times God will use these natural dreams to bring a spiritual message to us. Other times our dreams act as reminders that we still have areas of hurt or wounding that must be tended to if we are to be emotionally healthy.

Since that which we allow our minds to mull over and dwell upon during the day will often appear later in our dreams, it is important to spend our waking hours meditating upon the right things. If you are not receiving any insight in your sleep and rarely experience dreams having to do with spiritual matters, you might want to investigate what you are allowing your

mind to meditate on. God has commanded that we should meditate upon His Word day and night:

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Joshua 1:8

As we partake of and digest the Word of God during the day, our minds will continue during the night to assimilate the truths we have read. Psalm 119:55 says, “I remember Your name in the night, O LORD.” Read and meditate on the Bible, and your dreams will take God’s truths and apply them to areas of your natural life. And as you heed God’s words to you, you will experience His life-changing power.

Questions for Consideration

1. What is a natural or soulish dream? What are some contributing factors that can produce one of these dreams?
2. How does Ecclesiastes 5:3 help us determine if a dream is spiritual or natural?
3. Is there such a thing as a “pizza dream”? Have you ever had one? What external factors contributed to the forming of that dream?
4. What do your dreams reveal that you are pondering during the day? How can you determine that these are natural as opposed to spiritual dreams?

ACTIVATION

Can you remember a time when you were going through emotional turmoil or a challenging situation and had a dream that reflected it? Write that now in your journal as an example of a soulish or natural dream.

5

False Dreams and Visions

“Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the LORD, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies.”

Jeremiah 23:32

For the idols speak delusion; the diviners envision lies, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain.

Zechariah 10:2

The Bible speaks clearly of dreams that are false. A false dream or vision is one that attempts to establish ungodly principles or deception concerning biblical truth in the mind of the dreamer or in those to whom the dreamer tells the dream.

In examining the word *false* in the above verses, we find two different types of false dreams. The word *false* in Jeremiah 23:32 is from a Hebrew word that indicates someone is telling a purposeful deceit or a lie—in short, a sham. These purported visions manipulate others toward a selfish agenda or an ungodly way of thinking that would serve the deceiver’s best interest. These are not visions at all but proceed from a wicked imagination to suit a selfish or demonic purpose.

Someone with a deceptive intent, for example, could stand during a church service and say, “I had a dream last night, and God showed me that everyone who gives me a thousand dollars will be blessed!” The person would be using the premise of a dream to manipulate people for his own selfish agenda.

The word *false* in Zechariah 10:2 indicates destructive evil, idolatry or deception. Such dreams and visions originate in the wicked, deceptive

imaginings of a man's heart; they can also indicate a demonic manifestation speaking false and lying words.

The Word of God puts false dreamers in the same category as false prophets, telling us that their purpose is to draw people after other gods. Remember, in the Old Testament God limited how He communicated with His chosen people, Israel, speaking only through prophets. He also said that He would make Himself known to a prophet through dreams and visions (see Numbers 12:6). A false prophet, therefore, attempts to lead people astray through sensational, mystical revelation that supposedly came through dreams or by doing some kind of sign or wonder.

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Deuteronomy 13:1–3

False dreams can come from our own carnal minds attempting to lead us away from God's principles and precepts. False dreams can also be occultic or demonic in origin and given to convey darkness's own prophetic messages. If anyone tries to teach or preach a message that has been inspired by a dream or vision, it is crucial to determine whether the message aligns with the written Word of God: “[False] prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart” (Jeremiah 14:14).

A Caution to Dreamers

In seeking to understand our dreams, we must be cautious not to become too dependent on them; some people expect to be directed by their dreams on a daily basis. This is dangerous ground that can open them to a spirit of error and deception. Soulless dreams can easily lead people astray by speaking to their heart's fleshly desires.

One man came to my husband and me for counsel saying that God had told him in a dream to quit his job and stay home to pray eight hours a day.

We asked him how he was going to pay his bills and how he was going to eat. He said merely, “God will provide.” While this sounds very spiritual, we shared with him counsel from the Word of God that says, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

On another occasion my husband and I were counseling a young man who had allowed himself to become discouraged and a bit bitter over the long process of training for a particular ministry. He wanted to be launched into full-time ministry; however, there were still many broken places in his soul that, without a greater degree of healing, we knew would make it difficult for him to succeed.

He came to us very excited one day because he had had a dream telling him he was ready to go. He was determined to start a ministry. We tried to help him understand that it was not wise to make a major life change based on one dream and that in the multitude of counselors there is safety. But he would not listen. He set out in ministry—and did not last long. He got discouraged and returned to secular work, now with no intention of ever following the call of God on his life.

Considering the various sources of dreams, it is never wise to depend solely upon them for wisdom and counsel.

Christians must be careful to measure all revelation—including prophecies, dreams and visions—by the principles found in the Word of God. Galatians 1:8 warns us: “Even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”

Paul was saying even if an angel appears to you and gives you incredible revelation, it does not matter how supernatural your experience may seem: That revelation must line up with the Word of God. We need to be careful

not to be deceived by angels of light, who are actually demonic beings masquerading as messengers from God. God's Word will be your guide as you learn to discern between true angelic messengers and false demonic deceivers.

A good example of this kind of deception is found in the history of the Mormon church, which is based on visions received from the angel Moroni to a man named Joseph Smith. Through the doctrines received in these visions, a new religion was established and another gospel was proclaimed. *The Book of Mormon* is actually also called "Another Gospel of Jesus Christ." Paul specifically warned us about angels that preach "another gospel." Had Joseph Smith measured these visions against the principles found in God's Word, he would have seen that his new revelations were not consistent with the truth found in Scripture. Instead, millions have since followed his teachings.

Another example is the religion of Islam. The Islamic "holy book," the Quran, is a compilation of prophetic visions given to Muhammad in which the angel "Gabriel" supposedly came to bring a new gospel, or a new way to please Allah, whom Muslims revere as God. We know from comparing these messages to God's Word that this was not, in fact, Gabriel, the messenger of God, but rather a false angel of light, who again brought "another gospel" of which Paul warned.

Likewise, many well-meaning Christians have been led astray in their personal lives by incorrectly interpreting revelation given to them through dreams, visions, prophecies or even by a still, small inner voice, which they believe to be God's voice but, rather, might be their own unhealed, deceitful hearts speaking to them. Scripture tells us that "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26) and "'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8).

We should never depend solely upon prophetic words in dreams and visions to lead us in our daily walks, although at times God might indeed choose to speak a word of direction to us through this means. We are to be led by the Spirit of God through personal prayer, the study of His Word and wise counsel—not by continuous interpretation of dreams or prophecies. Only by daily following Jesus Christ and embracing sound doctrine from His Word will we receive true revelation and true interpretation of dreams and visions when they come.

Dreams of Diviners

In a day when psychics and the New Age movement are thriving, we must be careful where we seek revelation and truth. God is the only source of valid revelation. The dreams of diviners are inspired by unsanctified human thoughts (humanism) or by dark angels, and the people of God are not to be led by them.

Pastor and author John Watson, in his book *Christian Dream Interpretation* (n.p., n.d.), sums up the Christian's responsibility to be discerning concerning the dreams of others:

It is very important to be Bible-based, submissive, servant Christians. The test of our character will reflect into our dreams and our walk with God. Distortions can be limited by our submission to God and his people. The dreams of the rebellious are often dangerous.

Nightmares

God will occasionally use a dream that startles or frightens to get our attention. I believe this happens when God has been trying to deal with the dreamer concerning a certain issue in his or her life for some period of time; but because of dullness of hearing or perhaps negligence to heed the voice of the Lord, the dreamer simply has not paid attention. Thus, he or she has the unpleasant experience that we call a nightmare or a bad dream.

As mentioned earlier, King Abimelech had a nightmare in which God told him he was “a dead man” for taking another man's wife (Genesis 20:3). The dream frightened him to the point that he not only returned Sarah to Abraham but also loaded them with riches by way of apology. Pilate's wife sent word to her husband that she had “suffered many things” in her dream about Jesus (Matthew 27:19). Perhaps her frightening experience contributed to Pilate's washing his hands of the matter.

As with most dreams, there are several sources of nightmares. Hidden areas of the subconscious mind, things we read or see or hear and areas of long-term or recent anxiety all can produce frightening dreams. Soulful nightmares, though fearful, often hold a key that will unlock areas needing emotional release or healing and should be examined.

Some nightmares, on the other hand, are avenues for tormenting demonic spirits to harass and rob a person of his or her inner peace and joy. I once struggled through a three-month period during which I had one terrifying dream after another. While I did discover areas of unseen fears in my life, these dreams caused such emotional conflict and confusion that I became afraid to sleep at night. I prayed and took spiritual authority over the dreams and enlisted others to pray with me until the spirit of harassment and torment was broken.

I do not believe those dreams were inspired by God, but God did cause me to confront hidden fears through that time of conflict. The important thing to remember is that not every startling dream is of evil origin but, rather, might be God dealing with unseen areas of our souls and causing us to face disturbing truths about ourselves. Why? “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Dealing with Nightmares

If you or someone you know is having difficulty dealing with harassing dreams that are producing fruits of fear, anxiety and terror, it is probable that these dreams are not from God but, rather, are either soulishly or demonically inspired. If you sense an area of your soul being revealed, record these dreams and ask for God’s guidance and direction concerning the interpretation and application. If necessary, your pastor or a counselor might be able to help you determine how best to deal with that which you discover.

Such nightmares might be a response to something you have allowed your mind to feed on—movies, books, television programs, ungodly ideas, fears. These thoughts, once planted in your mind, can grow into fearful things and become areas where spirits of darkness can begin to torment and harass you. When dealing with thoughts brought on by a spirit of fear or other demonic spirits, Christians should know we have been given spiritual authority over such things by the Word of God:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into

captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

2 Corinthians 10:3–6

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

Diligent prayer and use of the sword of the Spirit—God’s Word (see Ephesians 6:17)—will secure your release from torment. Seek prayerful support from others who can stand with you against such attacks. Believers of Christ do not need to suffer unnecessary torment from their own souls or at the hands of the enemy. Jesus provided for our healing and deliverance from all such harassment when He shed His blood on the cross and gave us power over all the works of darkness (see Luke 10:19). We must lay hold of the full provision He made for our spiritual liberty and walk in freedom from fear—even as we sleep!

Questions for Consideration

1. What are false dreams?
2. Are these always demonically inspired dreams or could these be words of deception to achieve a selfish or evil goal?
3. Why did God give such strong warnings about this in the Old Testament?
4. Are all nightmares from the devil?

ACTIVATION

Can you remember a nightmare you had? Journal about it now and ask the Lord if this was a message from Him in any way or if somehow the enemy was trying to torment or lead you astray. Did the dream bring

confusion or give clarity? If confusion, it was from the enemy. If it brought clarity on what you are contending with, it was probably from the Lord.

6

Knowing the Source of Your Dreams

Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Hebrews 5:14

So how can you tell whether a dream is from the Lord?

I am asked this question all the time. In truth, there is no easy way to describe how to discern between dreams and visions that are strictly soulish in nature, those that are demonic in origin and those that are Holy Spirit inspired. One can *learn*, however, to discern among these through diligence and practice. Just as we need to exercise our spiritual gifts to learn to discern the voice of God, so it is with dreams and visions. We can test them and even practice with them until we come to a place where it is possible to distinguish that which is from God and that which is from our own souls or darkness. It is like learning a new language. The more you practice, the easier it becomes.

Determining Factors of Spiritual Dreams

Since dreams and visions come from different sources, how do you determine whether or not a particular dream or vision is prophetic or natural? Spiritual or soulish? Divinely or demonically inspired? Several

indicators found in God's Word will help you know which dreams are from Him. Ask yourself the following questions any time you receive a dream, vision or revelation, or when a message purporting to be prophetic is communicated to you from another person.

1. Is the message of the dream or vision consistent with the doctrines and principles of the Word of God?

The written Word of God, the Bible, is the standard by which all revelation must be judged, for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

People all over the world hold many different opinions concerning the nature of truth, and the moral and ethical standards we should live by. God's Word, however, provides consistent guidelines that govern all mankind. When interpreting revelation, it is important that the message in no way contradicts the precepts of God's Word.

All spiritual dreams or visions will align with biblical truth. If the dream you are interpreting does not, it is likely soulish in origin. Do not pore over the Bible seeking an obscure passage that, taken out of context, seems to confirm the dream; rather, examine the dream in the light of the whole Word of God.

2. Is the message of the dream or vision consistent with the teachings, character and nature of Jesus Christ?

A spiritual dream or vision will always magnify the Person of Jesus Christ and His principles. Jesus came to liberate us from the letter of the Law. He came so that all who receive Him as Lord and Savior might have their sins forgiven and be set free, the bondage of sin broken that they might have peace. Any interpretation of a dream that puts individuals into bondage of any sort should be reevaluated based on Jesus' teachings and His undying love, which He showed for us and which He expects us to show for one another.

All revelation from spiritual dreams and visions will lead us into a closer, more committed relationship with our King. Any thought that comes from a vision or dream that makes Jesus less than the Son of God is erroneous, for He is our only way of salvation. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

3. Does the message of the dream or vision lead to righteousness?

From Genesis through Revelation, the Bible admonishes God's people to pursue righteousness, to lead a life that is free from sin (see 1 Timothy 6:11). This includes both sins of action and sins of attitude. Jesus was as concerned about what a person thinks in his heart as He was about what the person does. The interpretation of a spiritual dream will always lead into a more holy and pure walk with God. If the message of the dream is self-serving or speaks to soulish desires, it is not a spiritual dream.

4. Does the individual sharing a prophetic dream or vision have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

Scripture records instances of God communicating to the unrighteous through dreams and visions. Most often, however, He chooses to communicate with His children. Seldom will God speak anything more than a personal word of encouragement or admonition to an unbeliever or someone who is not walking in right relationship with Him. Revelation given for the edification of someone else will rarely come from one who does not personally know Christ.

These questions are based on foundations of the Christian faith and provide guidelines by which all revelation must be judged. Those who receive visions must not be so overwhelmed by the experience that they fail to measure the vision by God's standards.

Let's look again, for example, at Muhammad, a devout man who received visions that he said were given by the angel Gabriel. This angel "revealed" that Muhammad and Jesus were both prophets of Allah, and denied Jesus' divinity, death and resurrection. By God's biblical standards, therefore, the visions must be rejected as false.

Other Indicators of Spiritual Dreams

Other indicators found in Scripture will help you to determine whether or not God is speaking to you, particularly through dreams, which may be used as flags to get your attention.

One indication of a spiritual dream is the *stirring of your spirit* or your emotions upon waking. You might not directly relate it to what you have

just dreamed—you might not remember dreaming at all—but your spirit has been stirred nonetheless. We see this in Scripture when King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly disturbed him, yet he could not remember it. When this occurs, you may often recall the dream if you lie still and ask God to bring it to your remembrance.

Another indication of a spiritual dream is when it causes you to *search your soul* or ask yourself questions, or you might have had questions answered within the context of the dream. Many biblical dreams were soul-searching types of dreams that caused the dreamer to examine his life or direction. The dreams of Jacob are examples of this. After encountering the Lord in his dreams, Jacob dealt with his tendency to cheat and steal. Jacob, “the supplanter or deceiver,” became Israel, “Prince with God.”

God’s voice can be heard even in simple dreams.

Yet another determining factor is the *repetition of a dream* or having similar dreams. A scriptural example of this is Joseph’s two parallel dreams: one in which the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down to him; the other in which his brother’s sheaves of grain bowed down to his sheaves (see Genesis 37:6–10). Later, in Genesis 41, we read that Pharaoh also had two similar dreams that the Lord used to get his attention: the dreams of seven fat cows and seven lean cows, and seven fat ears of corn and seven lean ears of corn.

Recurring dreams should be logged and analyzed; the message contained therein could possibly hold an important key to the dreamer’s life and circumstances. I had a series of dreams that were all different, but there was one recurring part. At some point in each dream the lights would go off, and I would go searching for the power box to flip the breaker to turn the power back on. Then the dream would continue. God showed me that I had to make sure that my power box (my prayer life) stayed properly charged so that the light of revelation could stay on uninterrupted.

Always be ready to listen to any dream you receive. Many times God will give you a dream that seems unimportant and of no consequence, yet turns out to be of great significance.

Spiritual Visions Come in Various Forms

Visions are communicated and experienced in many ways. Divine or angelic appearances, trancelike visions, and perception of the future or the spiritual realm with the natural eye or with the eyes of the spirit are some of the different ways God gives visions.

Balaam was an Old Testament prophet described as the man who “saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open” (Numbers 24:4 KJV).

Peter fell into a trance when he received the vision of the sheet being lowered from heaven. This vision seemed contrary to all that he had been taught through Jewish tradition; however, God spoke to Peter three times within the vision until Peter got the message. The result of this vision was that Peter took the Gospel to the Gentiles for the first time (see Acts 10:9–16).

Falling into a trance is not necessary, however, for one to have a vision. As Stephen was being stoned, he saw heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (see Acts 7:55). Cornelius had a vision while he was praying and saw the angel of the Lord, who instructed him to send for Peter in Joppa (see Acts 10:1–6). When Jesus first set eyes on Nathaniel, He told Nathaniel that earlier He “saw” him sitting under a fig tree (John 1:48). How did Jesus have this vision of Nathaniel? Probably by seeing him through the eyes of His Spirit.

Visions come in many ways. It is always important to judge the revelation according to God’s Word, not on the experience itself, for Satan himself can appear as an angel of light (see 2 Corinthians 11:14).

If you determine that a dream is not spiritual, but is soulish or natural, pay attention to it nonetheless, for your mind can show you things about yourself that you might otherwise fail to see when awake.

Remember, too, that it is wise to write down all your dreams. This will help you better discern between those that are spiritually based and those that are soulish in nature. Then, as you learn to interpret your dreams, you will find it becomes easier to identify the source.

Questions for Consideration

1. What are some of the factors that will assist you in determining whether a dream or vision is from the Lord?
2. How might God emphasize to you that the message in a dream is important?
3. What are some of the ways you might experience a vision?

7

Dreams Reveal the Heart

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

Jeremiah 17:9

One of the primary functions of spiritual dreams is to speak to the issues of the human heart. God uses dreams to address areas of spiritual weakness in our lives, as well as areas where we need emotional healing. Dreams help us look beyond our preconceived ideas of who we are and make an honest assessment of our hearts' conditions. Dreams can connect us to the heart of God as our hearts are healed and come into closer alignment with His plans and purposes for our lives.

The Wallpaper Dream

My husband and I decided it was time to renovate our kitchen. When we built our house we put up wallpaper that had a fruit border with vines that trailed down the wall. I had grown tired of the vines and wanted to paint the kitchen a cheerful yellow. But we had a problem: The wallpaper would not come off. After we made several attempts with products recommended for wallpaper removal, the man at the paint store said just to prime the wallpaper and paint right over it. That sounded like a winner to me. So we went home and did that. At the end of the day I had my pretty kitchen with yellow painted walls. The vines were finally gone!

That night I had a dream. I was sitting in my new kitchen when all of a sudden the vines started growing out from under the paint and taking over. I was alarmed and asked, “What’s going on?”—and I heard the voice of the Lord respond: *This is what happens when you merely cover up things that are too difficult to deal with. . . . They grow back.*

Well! This dream challenged me about some things in my heart that had gone unattended. I had allowed myself to sweep those things aside and not deal with the disappointment I was feeling. I told myself, *Things will be okay, no big deal, I am fine*, but in truth I had not brought my heart to the Lord for healing, and as a result some vines were beginning to grow out of the root of bitterness that Scripture says would trouble me and defile many (see Hebrews 12:15).

The dream brought healing to my heart as the Lord let me know I did not have to bear those things all by myself, and that if I was hurting He was there to bring healing. I discovered that as I shared this dream with others, God was able to use the message as a tool to bring healing to those who had been hurt or disappointed, or were suffering from grief.

The Lord searches our hearts and knows what is within us. Most of us do not really know the deep thoughts and intentions of our own hearts; therefore, we must rely upon the Spirit of God to try, to prove and to reveal that which is within us.

God is continuously drawing us into a place of recognizing those things in our hearts and on our minds that are not in keeping with His ways and His principles. His Word tells us that our ways are not His ways; neither are our thoughts His thoughts (see Isaiah 55:8). God’s desire is to communicate with us, to reveal our own thoughts to us, without all the walls of defense or deception that we build around ourselves as a form of protection by the light of day.

David prayed: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23–24). This must be the prayer of every saint who strives to walk in a holy way before the Lord. In order to have our hearts and consciences purged and made pure, we must learn to be honest with ourselves—and with God—about our shortcomings, our sins and our selective blind spots. We must allow God to expose what is on the inside so that it might be properly dealt with through repentance, prayer and commitment to change.

In another dream I was standing in the foyer of a beautiful two-story house. There was a double staircase, one along each wall, that circled up to a landing on the second floor. As I stood in the middle of the foyer I exclaimed, “Look, the staircases look like a heart!”

I then heard a voice speak to me in the dream and say, “That’s because the heart is the key to going to the next level.”

Ultimately, God is after our hearts!

Dreams Bypass Our Walls of Self-Defense

Because dreams are produced through our subconscious minds, they normally bypass our various self-defense mechanisms and preconceived notions about our strengths and weaknesses and go right to the truth of the matter. A personal example of this is a dream I had several years ago. I co-pastor a church with my husband and am very involved in ministry. I felt that everything in my life was pretty much in order. I was seeking God, praying, reading the Word, listening to His voice. But then the Lord gave me the following dream that opened my heart to a whole new place of healing from past wounds and fears.

The dream began in front of a big, beautiful two-story house. As I walked through the front door, it was readily apparent that the house was expensively decorated and neat as a pin. Yet as I began to walk down the back hallway, the house began to grow darker and darker. I found some rooms with the doors closed. As I opened one and then another, I was terrified by what I found in the rooms: darkness and sin. I went running out of the house.

As I stumbled, breathless, onto the front porch, I saw my four-year-old son standing next to a busy road. He was teasing me, acting as if he was going to run out into the middle of the road. I yelled, “Come back!”—but he continued his taunting. Then he ran away from the road and skittered onto a frozen pond. I followed, chasing him out to the middle of the pond, where the ice began to crack. The next thing I knew, the ice had broken and I was being swallowed by the icy waters. Then I woke up.

To be honest, this was a nightmare! I woke terrified, gasping for breath, rebuking the devil. Then I sensed the Lord say, *No, Jane, this is Me!* As I

prayed and asked the Lord the meaning of the dream, I sensed that His response was this: *If I show you what it means, you will be responsible for changing certain areas of your life. Will you be obedient?*

Not knowing what the specific areas of change were to be, I had to stop and think for a moment. Was I willing to sign the bottom of the contract and then leave the fine print for Him to fill in later? I know my Father intends only good for me, so I replied, “I will.”

Here is the interpretation of this dream.

The house represented me. On the outside it looked well cared for. On the inside, most of the front rooms looked inviting, comfortable and well furnished. But as I explored the house further, God showed me areas of my life that I had not allowed Him to clean up—“rooms” that were dark and frightening. These were parts of my life that no one else saw, that I had refused to yield to His touch. Then, as I ran out of the house and saw my son by the road, God impressed upon me that he represented the immature portions in my life where I had refused to grow up. My son was flirting with danger by the road. This is what these areas of immaturity were causing me to do in my own life. As I reflected on the part of the dream in which I ran after my son onto the icy surface of the pond and I fell in, I realized that if I were to pursue or chase after these immature areas of my life, the end would be my destruction.

This was a very personal dream, but I share it with you to demonstrate how God can show us the true motives, intentions and conditions of our hearts through our dreams. If any man or woman of God whom I respect had shared with me those very convicting truths about my life, I might not have received those words because of pride or faulty self-perception. Because this was something that I discovered myself through prayerfully considering my dream, however, the interpretation was difficult to deny.

So I repented of closing off those areas of my life to the Lord, and I prayed for God’s grace to help me continue to change so that I might be more pleasing in His sight.

Job’s Understanding of Dreams

The Bible speaks of God's dealing with the heart through dreams. We see in the book of Job that even when God speaks repeatedly to us during our waking hours, we still might not perceive His voice. So it is through dreams that God often must accomplish His purposes:

“Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words. For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man, He keeps back his soul from the Pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.”

Job 33:13–18

This passage is rich with information concerning the function of dreams as used by God. Set in context, Job had been complaining to God that he had been kept in the dark concerning the meaning of His dealings with him and was therefore convinced that God was dealing with him as He would deal with an enemy. Job's friend Elihu told him that God had, in fact, been speaking to him all along, but Job had not been listening.

Let's be honest. Oftentimes we get caught up in the busyness of life and do not stop to recognize when God is trying to speak to us. He will speak one way, then another, but we still fail to perceive it. God is so faithful to His people that He will make repeated attempts to convey His thoughts to us. He will even go so far as to speak through our subconscious minds while we sleep. Let's examine portions of this passage from Job to gain greater insight.

Visions of the Night

A dream is referred to in this passage as “a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds” (verse 15).

As we discussed previously, there is little difference between a dream and a vision—one occurs during sleep and the other usually during waking hours. Dreams occur both during times of deep sleep and times of slumber, or lighter rest. *Slumbering* describes the time early in the night (when you have not yet entered deep-sleep patterns) or right before awakening in the morning.

Some of the most vivid dreams I have had occurred during times of slumber when I awakened in the morning and decided to sleep “just a little

longer.” Sleep experts agree that dreams most often remembered occur during these times.

God Uses Dreams to Open Our Ears

With our busy, hectic schedules, much of the time our ears may not be open to hearing the voice of God. This passage says that God “*opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction*” (verse 16, emphasis added).

Although we might feel the Holy Spirit begin to tug at our hearts, we often do not take time to listen. If we have set aside a quiet time for prayer and meditation on the Word, God might choose to speak to us then through Scripture or with a still, small voice. But He might also choose to speak at a time that we feel is not terribly convenient for stopping to grasp what He is saying.

I remember times when my children were young that I received an answer to prayer or a revelation from the Lord during very noisy, very active moments. Sometimes I received what He said completely, while other times (when it seemed I could barely hear myself think) it was difficult to get the full impact of His meaning.

In order to receive something fully from God, not only must we be listening for Him but our hearts must be prepared as well. Preparing our hearts to receive Him enables us to be not only hearers but also doers of His will.

During our dreams, God bypasses the shell surrounding our hearts that makes us dull of hearing. Dreams give us ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. We must, however, consciously alert our minds that the Spirit indeed speaks during our sleep. In the *Bethany Parallel Commentary of the Old Testament* (Bethany, 1985), Bible commentator Adam Clarke describes it this way: “A dream or a vision simply considered is likely to do no good; it is the opening of the understanding and the pouring in of the light that make men wise to salvation.”

We must open our hearts as well as our ears in order to obtain full revelation through dreams.

God Uses Dreams to Bring Instruction

Verse 16 of this passage says that God not only opens our ears, but “seals [the] instruction.” The Hebrew word here for *instruction* is *mocar*, which is interpreted in the Old Testament as both “instruction” and “admonition.” Webster’s dictionary defines *admonition* as “the act of warning or notifying of a fault, to reprove with mildness, to counsel against wrong practices; to caution, advise, or exhort; to instruct or direct; to remind; to recall or urge to duty.” God instructs in all these ways in dreams and imprints upon the soul deep and lasting impressions, much the same way a seal is used to make an imprint in wax upon a document.

God Uses Dreams to Bypass Pride

This particular portion of Scripture is especially important in the discussion of dreams that reveal the true condition of the heart: God does these things “in order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man” (verse 17). Pride cloaks the sinful intentions and evil purposes of our hearts. When we hide behind our pride, we fall prey to self-deception.

When God strips this pride away, we must face the things inside of us that are ungodly, immature, even sinful. When we dream, our hearts plead with us to do that which is right and to turn from our evil ways. Strive as we might to do good during our waking hours, we often learn during our sleep that although we have not given in to temptation, in our hearts there remains a struggle to overcome sin.

Dreams are formed from thoughts and images in our minds, often showing us sin in our hearts that our conscious minds have refused to acknowledge. God desires that we be dead to sin and that sin not reign in our bodies. We are not to be conformed to the ways of the flesh but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, both consciously and subconsciously (see Romans 12:2).

Even the apostle Paul experienced the battle between the carnal, fleshly mind and the spirit (see Romans 7:18–23). Today we are ever engaged in the same battle. Dreams often reveal areas of struggle within us—areas of weakness or imperfection where the enemy attempts to catch us unaware.

Dreams often reveal areas of struggle within us.

While we are on the earth, each of us continues in God's perfecting process (see Philippians 1:6). Do not be fooled into thinking this: *If there was sin in my heart, I would know about it.* God's Word tells us the heart is deceitful. We must, therefore, allow Him to search us continuously for "any wicked way" and lead us "in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:24).

The purpose in God's revealing our sin and weaknesses through our dreams is to draw us into closer communion with Him. Our dreams should not become a source of condemnation but should prompt us to seek to understand what God is saying. When we feel convicted of sin in our spirits, God's intention is not to leave us in a helpless and hopeless state but to bring us to a place of repentance. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Nebuchadnezzar Dreams from His Heart

I have previously mentioned the story of King Nebuchadnezzar and his disturbing dreams. Let's look at how God used dreams to reach the heart of this pagan king and turn his life around. We will also see how God used the troubled dreams of this ruler to bring a young Jewish man, Daniel, to prominence, as he was able to interpret both his own dreams and the dreams of the king.

The king of the great nation of Babylon awoke one night from a dream that troubled his spirit—a dream he could not remember.

So Nebuchadnezzar sent for the magicians, sorcerers and astrologers of his court and demanded that they tell him his dream and, while they were at it, provide an interpretation. The royal advisers responded that they would be happy to give the interpretation if the king would tell them the dream.

Knowing, however, that his wise men were not above speaking “lying and corrupt words” to mollify him (Daniel 2:9), the king demanded that they first tell him his dream, then interpret it. “And by the way,” the king added, “if you cannot do this, I will have you all killed!” No pressure.

There was in the king’s court a young man of Judah who, though a captive in the land of Babylon, had gained favor and goodwill in the court because he remained faithful to the God of his fathers. Daniel was considered a wise man in the kingdom and would have suffered the same fate as the magicians had he not prayed and asked the Lord to give him the king’s dream and its interpretation. The Lord was faithful to answer him and gave Daniel a night vision. In other words, Daniel dreamed the same dream the king had.

When Daniel approached the king, he told him that only God in heaven could reveal these secret things:

“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: As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.”

Daniel 2:27–30

Daniel said that the reason God gave the king this dream was so that he could know the thoughts of his heart. God’s highest priority is to draw our hearts close to Himself. If He wants to reveal issues that will keep us from properly connecting to Him, He might use a dream, a vision or a prophetic word to bring things to light.

Daniel went on to give the king the dream and the interpretation, which prophesied about Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom and a greater kingdom to come. The king was so excited by this revelation that he fell on his face before Daniel and declared his God to be “the God of gods” (Daniel 2:47). Then he honored Daniel and made him a wealthy ruler over the province.

But the king did not heed the dream’s warning and, as so many do after the thrill of an exciting spiritual experience wears off, Nebuchadnezzar returned to his ways of sin. The next chapter finds Nebuchadnezzar erecting a statue in his own honor, and when three of Daniel’s friends refused to bow before it, he threw them, bound, into a fiery furnace. Once again he had an

encounter with God as he saw not three but four men walking around unharmed in the midst of the flames; he realized their God was walking in the fire with them, protecting them. He brought the young men of Judah out of the fire and declared their God to be superior to all other gods.

Once again God began to deal with Nebuchadnezzar, as God will often speak more than once to get His point across. The king had another vision, one that frightened him, and again he called for his astrologers, magicians and soothsayers. Again they could not tell him the meaning of his dream, so Daniel was summoned.

The king described his vision to Daniel, who hesitated to give Nebuchadnezzar the bad news. Daniel told the Babylonian king that the Lord would cause him to be driven from his throne and into the fields, where he would live with the beasts and eat grass like the oxen—until Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and that He gives reign to whomever He chooses. So Daniel counseled the king: “Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; *break off your sins by being righteous*, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity” (Daniel 4:27, emphasis added).

In the face of such a dire prophecy, you would think the king would do whatever was necessary to ensure that this calamity did not befall him. Yet just one year later the king walked into the palace and began boasting of how *he* had built this great Babylon by the might of *his* power and for the honor of *his* majesty. While the words were still in his mouth, a voice thundered from heaven, saying: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!” (Daniel 4:31).

God then drove the great king into the fields, where he ate grass as the oxen and where his body became wet with dew from sleeping on the ground. His hair grew “like eagles’ feathers” and his nails “like birds’ claws” (Daniel 4:33).

The Dream Revealed the Heart of the King

God’s message to Nebuchadnezzar was conveyed through dreams that disturbed him. Though he did not understand what the dreams were saying,

the king knew they contained a significant message. God was dealing with his heart and instructing him in the ways of repentance.

God will deal with us in the same manner at times by giving us dreams that we do not understand but that disturb our peace of mind. When this happens, the dream should be interpreted and a godly response given.

Had the king heeded the warnings given both by his dreams and by Daniel, he would not have found himself in such a desolate condition. The great ruler of Babylon became an outcast because he refused to turn from his pride and idolatry.

Many a great leader down through history has been destroyed for the same reasons. Failure to repent, failure to acknowledge God, stubbornness, pride and wickedness all contributed to mankind's sad state.

God's Spirit Leads Us to Repentance

After a length of time, Nebuchadnezzar's understanding returned and he realized the error of his ways. He finally acknowledged God and blessed Him and praised Him as the ruler of the everlasting dominion. He was then restored to his place of honor as king.

From his throne he proclaimed: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in *pride* He is able to put down" (Daniel 4:37, emphasis added).

God did what was necessary to get Nebuchadnezzar's attention, beginning with dreams and their interpretation and proceeding to judgment when repentance was not forthcoming. In the end, the king repented and gained spiritual understanding.

Daniel Knew God's Voice

Daniel was God's prophet, His spokesman to the great Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel had a gift for interpreting dreams, which, had the king listened and responded appropriately, would have spared the king much heartache. Daniel interpreted dreams through God's enablement, much the same way a prophecy or a word of knowledge is received from the Lord. The Holy Spirit revealed the dreams to him and provided their interpretation.

Daniel was able to interpret dreams because he had learned to listen to and trust the voice of God. While someone might have a natural ability to dissect and analyze dreams, spiritual dream interpretation is only possible as one is able to hear and understand God's voice.

Daniel prayed to the Lord several times each day, so he knew the Lord's voice when, under threat of death, he was forced to interpret the king's dream. Knowing God and His voice are imperative if you desire to receive the full benefit of your dreams.

God was able to use Daniel in this important role because the young man had purposed in his heart to be a man of integrity and holiness, even in the midst of a corrupt pagan culture. He and his friends did not allow themselves to be defiled by the ways of Babylon; they kept themselves pure. Because of their dedication to serving their God, the Lord chose to bless 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).

Daniel's gifting clearly came from God. Magicians and astrologers with their occultic powers could not give the king the interpretation he sought. Even today, those who boast of psychic powers and the ability to interpret dreams cannot give accurate revelation apart from the power of the Holy Spirit.

Daniel was gifted by the one true God. Through hearing God's voice, he was able to speak revelation concerning the rule of six kingdoms: Babylon and the Medo-Persian kingdoms, which he served in his captivity, and the Grecian, Egyptian, Syrian and Roman kingdoms, about which he was given visions (see Daniel 11:1-7). God's divine gifting gave him favor and insight to affect entire nations.

In these last days, as God pours His Spirit out on all flesh and godly men and women learn to hear God's voice through dreams and visions, the destiny of entire nations may once again be affected by the word of the Lord that brings life!

Questions for Consideration

1. What is the number-one reason God will give you a dream or a vision?
2. How will God use a dream or vision to open your heart to Him in a deeper way?
3. How did dreams turn Nebuchadnezzar's life around?

ACTIVATION

Pray and ask the Lord to show you any area of your heart that needs His healing touch so that you can experience a deeper level of connection with His heart. Ask Him to give you a dream or a vision to show you something specific and what He is asking you to do in response. Write this in your journal.

8

Dreams of Encouragement

God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19

My husband and I were once given great comfort and encouragement by way of a vision that came to a woman we had never before met. This woman, who lived 45 miles away, was praying in her living room one afternoon when suddenly the image of a baby dropped into the middle of the room and hung suspended in the air. She could not see the baby's face, but she thought it was odd that both the baby's hands and feet were covered by socks. She prayed for the child but did not understand the vision—that is, until later on that week.

I had just given birth to a son with a facial birth defect. The area of his defect was so sensitive that we had to keep socks on his hands to keep him from harming himself. We dedicated him to the Lord during one of our Friday night services when the woman who had experienced the vision happened to be visiting our church. When the baby was held up to the Lord in dedication, she realized that my son was the baby who had appeared in her living room.

God had used the vision to inspire this woman to organize prayer for my son during the early days of infancy and corrective surgery. We knew that the Lord had been watching over us and our child, but when we learned of this woman's vision and her prayers, we were blessed with a tremendous amount of fresh encouragement and hope during a traumatic season in our lives.

Exhortation from Revelation

The Lord our God cares about everything that affects and influences the lives of His children. His desire is to meet all our needs according to His great riches. Too often, however, we have our own ideas about how God can best meet our specific needs.

When we do not receive the answer we expect during a time of struggle or if the answer has been long in coming, we sometimes begin to lose hope, become discouraged or even doubt that God will answer at all. During such a time, God might speak to us through a dream or vision to exhort and encourage us.

Scripture shows that God often spoke to people in time of need for the purpose of bringing comfort and hope through revelation. Let's look at several of these examples and see how God used dreams or visions to speak to them.

Abraham: A Future and Heritage Revealed

Abraham was a wealthy man. He owned many cattle, a great deal of silver and gold and seemingly had it all, but something was missing. He had no children, no heir to whom he would leave his wealth upon his death, for his wife was barren. But Abraham was a man of God, and the Lord appeared to him in a vision and promised him an heir, a child of his own. He then told Abraham that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. And Abraham believed God and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness (see Genesis 15:1–6).

That evening Abraham fell into a deep sleep, and the Lord showed him things concerning the future of the nation of people (Israel) that would be descended from him. The Lord told of how they would be enslaved in cruel bondage to another nation (Egypt) for four hundred years, but the Lord would deliver them and they would come out with great possessions and return to the land He had promised to Abraham. The dream also revealed that Abraham would live a long life and die in peace at an old age (see Genesis 15:12–16).

That same night, in a dream, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham to give the land “from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates” to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 15:18). Though for a time his descendants would be slaves, God promised that Abraham’s seed would return and claim the land on which Abraham stood as their rightful possession. This was God’s prophetic promise to Abraham, and the covenant God made for the future of the Hebraic people came through a dream.

The birth and destiny of an entire nation was revealed in a vision and a dream and came to fruition because Abraham believed the word of the Lord. Abraham longed for an heir and God spoke to his need far beyond his expectations. At times, the promises we receive from God are generational prophecies that our children and their children will bring to complete fulfillment. Prophecies to individuals sometimes require a lifetime to fulfill, while prophecies to families can require an entire generation. Prophecies to nations might not be fulfilled for many centuries.

Jacob: Strategy for Prosperity Revealed

In Genesis 28 we find Abraham’s grandson Jacob on his way to the house of Laban to take a wife. Through trickery, Jacob had stolen the birthright of his elder brother, Esau, and obtained the blessings normally given to the firstborn. Esau sought to kill him for his deceit, so Jacob’s mother, Rebekah, sent him away to seek a wife in the land of her brother Laban. On the way Jacob stopped for the night, and as he slept, he dreamed:

He dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.”

Genesis 28:12–13

The Lord went on to assure Jacob that He would be with him wherever he would go and that He would bring Jacob back to the land that He had promised to him (see Genesis 28:15).

Two wives and twelve sons later, God spoke again to Jacob in a dream (see Genesis 31:10–13). For many years, Jacob had been working for his father-in-law, Laban, who had been cheating him all that time. In the dream,

God revealed to Jacob a plan for fairly dividing Laban's flocks and taking his rightful portion for himself. If he did this, God would cause supernatural increase to come to him. (This is the first recorded instance of God imparting sound business strategy and financial advice through a dream.) God also used this dream to tell Jacob to take his wives, his children and his flocks and return to the land of his father.

Jacob, the "supplanter," had stolen his birthright; actually receiving the blessing of the Lord was a long and arduous process as God allowed Jacob to be dealt with deceitfully by Laban. Through a dream, God's promise had been given, and through God's purging process, the promise was fulfilled and Jacob was renamed Israel, "Prince with God" (see Genesis 32:28 KJV).

Dreams will often challenge us to change just as Jacob was challenged to change. Just because God did not directly address Jacob's character flaws in his dreams did not mean that God approved of all that happened in Jacob's life. Similarly, when we receive a word from the Lord, whether through prophecy, dream or vision, we must know that the outcome of His word will depend on our obedient cooperation with God's processes of maturing and purging in our lives.

Joseph: Future Ministry Revealed

Joseph was a young man of seventeen when he had two dreams that seemed to do nothing but get him into trouble. Of all of Jacob's twelve children, Joseph was the most loved and favored by his father. As a result, his ten older brothers grew intensely jealous; they hated Joseph and "could not speak peaceably to him" (Genesis 37:4).

The strife in Jacob's household was exacerbated when young Joseph had two dreams—one in which his brother's sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, and the other in which the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. Joseph shared these dreams with his brothers and, perhaps understandably, his brothers hated him all the more. Even his father rebuked him, although he took heed of what Joseph had said (see Genesis 37:5–11).

When Joseph described the dreams to his brothers, he did not do so out of pride or boasting but perhaps with more zeal than wisdom. His brothers became so outraged that, while in the fields tending their flocks, they sold their dreaming brother into slavery to a caravan traveling to Egypt. Joseph

served many years in slavery and even spent time in an Egyptian prison, although the Lord used these events to put him in a position of power where his dreams were fulfilled.

Prayerful consideration should be given concerning sharing our dreams. Much chaos and unnecessary turmoil can be avoided if we will only act in wisdom. Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus that God would give them wisdom in addition to revelation (see Ephesians 1:17). Revelation without wisdom can cause great heartache and pain; both must be utilized in proper balance to accomplish God's ultimate purposes.

Joseph's dreams were not particularly difficult to interpret—even his thickheaded, hard-hearted brothers knew what they meant. Perhaps Joseph was unwise to share these dreams with his already jealous siblings. Nevertheless, God orchestrated the ensuing events to thrust Joseph into God's plans for the destiny of Egypt and, eventually, the children of Israel.

Sometimes dreams reveal your destiny;
it often takes faithful perseverance to
see that destiny come to fruition.

So what purpose did the dreams themselves serve? God's promise of greatness given through the dreams gave Joseph hope, guidance and encouragement, which kept him from forsaking the God of his fathers during difficult times of betrayal, slavery and false imprisonment. Joseph's faithfulness to follow the ways of God was key to his success.

Because Joseph remained faithful through times of testing and trial, God remained faithful to Joseph and brought his dreams to pass. While in prison, Joseph interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Later when the butler was restored to his position in the palace, there came a time when the Pharaoh needed some dreams interpreted and he remembered Joseph in prison. Joseph was brought out of the prison, cleaned up and taken to stand before the greatest ruler of the greatest empire of the day.

Notice, it was the same gift that got him into trouble that ended up getting him out of trouble! As a result of proper dream interpretation as well as anointed strategy to use wisdom to implement the revelation from the dream, Pharaoh made Joseph prime minister over the land of Egypt, and Joseph saw the country through seven years of famine. In one day, God brought Joseph from the pit of the prison to the fulfillment of his dream in the palace. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt for provisions, they bowed before him just as the dreams foretold.

God could have been speaking to Joseph's need for being accepted and loved by his brothers through these dreams, but God had much more in mind. God had a destiny for Joseph that would be fulfilled only after many years of hardship and faithfulness. Interestingly, Joseph grew up in a family of shepherds. But while he was in Egypt serving in Potiphar's house, which was a large agricultural estate, Joseph learned agriculture and leadership. While in prison, which was a governmental agency, Joseph learned government. He would need understanding of both agriculture and government, rulership and leadership to serve effectively as Pharaoh's right-hand man in the time of famine. God caused the whole nation to be blessed because of Joseph, and he was positioned there through the chain of events that began with a dream.

Dreams and visions might reveal your future ministry and destiny, but they rarely reveal the process God will use to bring their fulfillment.

Joseph responded to God's promise by remaining faithful to Him even in a strange land and under trying circumstances. God remained faithful to Joseph and, in His time, fulfilled His word and brought these dreams to pass, saving not only Joseph and his family but also the future nation of Israel.

Gideon: Assurance of Victory Given

Gideon was encouraged by a dream that was dreamed by an enemy soldier. The dream and its interpretation were given to bolster Gideon's faith as he was preparing according to the instructions of the Lord to lead a mere three hundred Israelites into battle against a multitude. God directed him to go and listen to what the men in the enemy ranks were saying on the

eve of battle. There Gideon overheard one man talking to another about his dream:

And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, “I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed.”

Then his companion answered and said, “This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.”

And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, “Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.”

Judges 7:13–15

This dream ministered directly to Gideon’s need for confidence to enter into warfare with the Midianites. He responded faithfully to the encouragement of the Lord by first worshiping the Lord and then returning to his outnumbered troops and declaring that the Lord had already delivered the armies of Midian into their hands. This declaration gave Israel the boldness and courage needed to follow Gideon into battle with his unconventional weapons of warfare (trumpets, pitchers and lamps) and utterly destroy their enemies.

As with dreams God gives today, this dream imparted confidence in God’s ability to bring victory in difficult situations. If we seek Him, God will always give us hope and courage when we face battles, whether they are inner conflicts or spiritual warfare. He may use your dreams to provide a vision of the victory or to instill confidence in His ability to triumph in your situation.

Solomon: Wisdom Imparted to the King

Solomon was crowned king of Israel after the death of his father, King David. Solomon loved God with all his heart, but he was young and lacked confidence in his ability to rule the people. While Solomon was in Gibeon, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask! What shall I give you?” (1 Kings 3:5).

Young Solomon could have asked for anything—long life, fabulous riches, great power. Instead he humbly asked for the wisdom to discern between good and evil that he might properly judge the people of Israel. Solomon’s request pleased the Lord, and God released to him a measure of

wisdom so great that the world has not seen the equivalent since that time. God gave Solomon an impartation of wisdom while he dreamed!

God had seen the heart cry of His servant, and He spoke and released His anointing through a dream. Thereafter, Solomon ruled with confidence and wisdom, and long life, fabulous riches and great power were added to him. When the Lord uses our dreams to speak to an area of need in our lives, there may come an impartation of God's Spirit that releases power and revelation to alter our character and abilities.

From these biblical examples we see that God will often identify a need in our lives, minister a word or message in regard to that need and then await our response. For some of these great men of God, their needs were not met immediately; however, the promises contained within their dreams gave them determination to press past difficult circumstances and persevere until the promises were fulfilled.

Dreams Can Release Rejoicing

While my husband and I were building our new home, I experienced some anxiety regarding the money needed to make certain changes we had requested during construction. The most costly change involved putting a tile roof on the house rather than one made of asphalt. As my faith was undergoing a bit of stretching, I had the following dream.

Everyone was excited because we were putting on our new tile roof. The excitement stemmed from the fact that the tiles were made of a new and innovative and costly material—the very best! The tiles were made from the dried, preserved bodies of *tarantulas*. Frankly, I was having a tough time seeing what was so exciting about these strange tiles. Then I found myself going into the homes of people I knew, and I saw they were raising baby tarantulas with great joy and excitement. They were feeding them, putting them to bed, etc. Again, this did not seem normal but was very strange to me.

When I awoke, I was perplexed by this dream and thought, *Surely this can't have an edifying meaning. Everyone knows spiders are evil.* All day

the dream stayed with me. Late that night I lay in bed, praying and pondering the dream.

I decided to get out of bed and look up *tarantula* in the encyclopedia. This is what the entry said: “In the Middle Ages it was believed that people bitten by the tarantula spider became ill with *tarantism*. In the disease, which was superstition, the victim developed a strong desire to dance!”

The encyclopedia went on to say that this dance, the disease and the spider were all named after a town in Italy called Taranto—which, oddly enough, called to mind the Canadian city of Toronto, where there had been a highly publicized outpouring of joy among God’s people. I also learned that the bite of the tarantula is actually not harmful to humans, and that the tarantula is the only spider that aggressively chases down its prey instead of waiting for food to become trapped in its web.

The Lord used my dream to say that He was going to cover our home with joy and rejoicing, which was symbolized, strangely enough, by a tarantula. As people fear the spider’s bite without cause, so I was acting in fear instead of faith. God was assuring me that my worry was groundless because He would provide us with joy and abundance.

In my dream, the spiders were also being raised in the homes of our church members. God was encouraging me with the promise that His joy would be poured out in every home in our congregation, and that it would produce boldness to go forth in His name and destroy the strongholds of the enemy.

When the interpretation finally came, I was overcome with joy and laughter and was full of faith. Who would ever guess that a tarantula would cause rejoicing!

Dreams and Emotional Healing

Since dreams may reveal what is within our hearts, they can give voice to certain emotional issues that have been suppressed or otherwise ignored in our conscious thinking. Dreams often remind us of these unresolved matters of the heart and encourage us to deal with them so that we can be whole.

Even if you think consciously that certain events from your past have been dealt with sufficiently, your subconscious mind will often recognize

when something has been left undone and will remind you through dreams that healing or even simple acknowledgment must take place. By bringing such matters to mind, God calls our attention to the need for healing and begins the healing process.

Often we build walls around areas of emotional pain to shield us from the hurt. God will use dreams to bypass these walls and go directly to the source of the pain.

A man who had lost several close family members in different ways in a short period of time told me that he was dreaming about these loved ones every night. Consciously, he felt that he had accepted their deaths and was bothered by the recurrence of these dreams.

I asked if he had ever allowed himself to grieve his loss or if he felt he had to keep up a good front and be strong for others who were grieving. He thought about this a moment and replied that he had never really dealt with his own grief. I prayed with him, and we asked the Lord to help and encourage him during his grieving process. From that night forward the dreams ceased.

What this man's conscious mind had not allowed him to feel or deal with, his subconscious mind would not let him forget. God spoke to his need through his dreams and prompted him to seek the Lord for emotional healing.

Questions for Consideration

1. How can a dream or vision bring hope and encouragement to a believer?
2. If you receive a revelation from God regarding a future promise through a dream or vision, how do you stay focused on that vision in challenging times?
3. How can God use a dream or vision to minister to an emotional need in your life?

9

Warning and Direction from Dreams and Visions

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

God is always faithful to direct the paths of His people. He can send dreams, visions or the stirrings of His voice to us to assure us we are in the right place at the right time. If need be, He may even send a dream that gives direction or warning to alert us to His purposes.

I do a great deal of commercial flying, traveling to speak at churches and conferences. Several years ago I had a dream in which I was running through the Atlanta airport to catch a connecting flight. When I got to the gate, the gate agent said, "I am sorry, but you have missed your flight. As a matter of fact there is your plane taking off now." She pointed out the window, and I saw a plane take off but then quickly come crashing down at the end of the runway, bursting into flames. A shot of panic rushed through my body as I realized I was supposed to have been on that flight!

I woke up startled by what I had seen in the dream. I jotted it down quickly but then comforted myself with the knowledge that I would not be flying anywhere anytime soon since I had taken several months off to be home. I said a brief prayer and then put it out of my mind. But a few weeks later I had to make an unexpected trip and found myself making a tight connection in the Atlanta airport. As I was running to catch my flight, I realized, *This is my dream!*

When I arrived at the gate, the agent said, “Are you Mrs. Hamon? We held the flight for you!”

Because of my dream I was not sure I should board. I had two options: I could get on the plane or I could take the next flight. I had to know immediately what God was saying to me. Was God telling me not to get on this plane? Then I had the sense that the dream was indeed a warning, but the message was not to avoid the flight. I was supposed to get on the plane—but not as a passenger; I was to go as an intercessor. Normally when I fly I settle into my seat and fall asleep before takeoff. This time I prayed instead of sleeping!

We took off without incident. Halfway through the flight, however, the plane was struck by lightning, which knocked out the hydraulics. The pilot announced that we had to return to Atlanta. The flight attendants reviewed the emergency landing procedures with us, and when we approached the runway, emergency vehicles were stationed and ready. It was a dangerous situation. But because God had given me the warning through a dream, I was on that flight as an intercessor. The plane was carefully landed, and all the people on board were safe.

God was teaching me about His faithfulness to order our steps. He knows exactly how to speak to us so that we can receive proper instruction, direction and even warning to keep us in the middle of His plan. I believe He gave me the dream so that I would understand my divine assignment to pray that the plans of death and destruction would be interrupted and that lives would be preserved.

I asked the Lord later why I could not have just prayed about that flight from the airport, and I felt Him say to me, *Because I knew you would pray harder if you were on the flight!*

Dreams and Visions of Direction

The Lord will at times give direction through dreams and visions. Such was the case two thousand years ago when the Lord spoke to a carpenter named Joseph in the lowly village of Nazareth.

Joseph and Mary were betrothed when Mary was discovered to be with child. Being a man of honor, Joseph planned to break off the betrothal

quietly and privately. But an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for she was pregnant not with another man's child but with a Son conceived by the Holy Spirit, and they were to name Him Jesus. So Joseph took Mary as his wife, and when she bore a Son, they named him Jesus (see Matthew 1:18–25).

Every day Christians everywhere pray in the mighty name of Jesus. We call upon that name, sing songs magnifying that name and share the Good News about that name. There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved but by the name of Jesus (see Acts 4:12). And this name was given to the Christ child because of direction given in a dream.

A man once told me of a dream he had while he was in the midst of a geographic relocation. He had a dream showing him his new house in detail, all the way down to the shrubbery in the front yard. When he arrived at his new location and began house hunting, he came upon the very house he had seen in his dream—down to the smallest detail. He knew God had spoken to him, and that this was the house he was to purchase. This dream brought the direction he needed to make a confident decision.

Dreams and Visions of Warning

In dreams of divine warning, God directs us to do something—or not to do something—in order to protect us from danger that we do not see or discern. Often such dreams are dismissed as fantasy or fear, when in actuality God is speaking and directing us to take action.

We must use discernment to interpret such dreams and act on revelation when it comes, but we also must not allow ourselves to become paranoid, reading danger into every dream we have. To do so would cripple us emotionally and place us in bondage. As you learn to discern God's voice through dreams, you will learn to recognize warnings when they are given.

Once we discern that God is warning us of impending danger, we must yield ourselves to prayer to cut off the intended evil. Just because you dream something frightening, something you feel is a warning, does not mean that thing has to occur. Many times in Scripture, God seemed to have made up His mind to rain down judgment upon a people for their disobedience, until someone interceded on their behalf, praying that God

would show mercy, and His hand of judgment was stayed (see Numbers 14:11–20, for example).

We must remain sensitive, allowing the Holy Spirit to direct us how to pray in these situations. Many Christians have dreamed, for instance, of the death of a loved one. This could mean that God wants us to pray for protection to divert the plan of death, or it could be God warning and preparing us emotionally for a loss He has already determined will occur. Or it could have an entirely different meaning altogether, such as speaking of the death of a part of ourselves. Or perhaps God is planning to do something new in our natural relationships.

The Wise Men's Dream

Matthew 2:1–12 tells the story of the Magi—wise men from the East—who sought the newborn King of the Jews that they might worship Him and bring Him gifts. Herod, the wicked ruler of Judea, was troubled by their appearing. After learning from the chief priests and scribes that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, he tried to trick the Magi into locating the new King for him. With the help of a mysterious moving star, the Magi found Jesus and set before Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

But as they prepared to leave, God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, for he sought to take the child's life. The wise men departed and went a different way back to their own country. Young Jesus was spared from Herod's murderous treachery because the Magi obeyed the direction of the Lord given through a dream.

Joseph's Dreams

Being sensitive to the direction of God concerning a place to live and the timing of their move, Joseph did not return immediately to Nazareth from Bethlehem; instead he took his family to Egypt: “Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him’” (Matthew 2:13).

The angel of the Lord instructed Joseph through a dream to arise and take his family into Egypt until God brought him further word. Joseph obeyed,

enabling the prophecy in Hosea to be fulfilled: “Out of Egypt I called My Son” (Matthew 2:15).

The young family was again uprooted when the angel appeared once more to Joseph and told him that Herod had died and it was time to return to the land of Israel (Matthew 2:19–20).

Do not treat casually a dream or vision
you perceive to be a warning.

During the journey, Joseph heard the news that Herod’s son was reigning in Judea, and he feared for his son’s life. The angel appeared to Joseph in yet another dream and instructed him to settle in Galilee: “Being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, ‘He shall be called a Nazarene’” (Matthew 2:22–23).

Each of these moves was made according to the direction and timing of the Lord.

Abraham Lincoln’s Dream

We must be sure to heed dreams or visions we perceive as warnings and not dismiss them. Such a dream was given to Abraham Lincoln the night prior to his assassination. In his dream, he saw himself descending a staircase and entering a room where he saw a coffin surrounded by guards. When he asked what was happening, someone told him that the president had been shot. After awaking from this startling dream, he had a vision of himself in a boat taking a long journey to a distant shore.

Yet when it came time to go to the theater on that fateful night, he dismissed his bodyguard and inadvertently put himself in the path of an assassin’s bullet. Had he regarded his dream as a warning, he could have taken extra precautions and avoided premature death.

Vision of Our House in Flames

I once had a vision of my house going up in flames. I did not react in fear, but I did pray and ask that any evil planned for the house or our household would be diverted. I did not give the vision a second thought after that time.

Three days later, while changing a light bulb in my son's bedroom, I found a sock that had somehow been thrown into the lampshade and had burned. Had that light bulb not burned out, it could have started a fire; but because I heeded the warning given by God, prayerful intervention was made and tragedy was possibly avoided.

Signposts for the Apostles

The Lord sometimes gave direction or warnings to the disciples of the early Church through the experience of visions.

We read that a persecutor of the Church, Saul of Tarsus, had a startling encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Saul fell to the ground and was converted on the spot. But when he arose, Saul was blind and had to be led by the hand to Damascus, where he remained blind for three days.

Meanwhile the Lord appeared in a vision to a disciple named Ananias and directed him to go to Saul:

To him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

Acts 9:10–12

Ananias had heard much about this persecutor of the righteous, and he argued briefly with the Lord. But the Lord told him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15–16).

This vision was extremely directive, as was a later night vision given to Saul (now Paul) in which a man from Macedonia said to him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). Paul went to minister in Macedonia as a result of this dream but had a very challenging time. As a matter of

fact, he was beaten, put into stocks and thrown into prison. For all of that difficulty, it is recorded that he had only a few converts. But one of those converts was Lydia, the seller of purple, who went back to Thyatira and started a church in her home and brought revival to the whole region.

Along with the biblical examples of God speaking and directing the specific steps of His followers through dreams and visions, we see that He continues to speak to us today in the same way, as we desire earnestly to fulfill His will.

Questions for Consideration

1. List three dreams from the Bible in which God gave someone a warning.
2. What do you do if you have a dream that brings a warning?
3. How did God use dreams to direct the apostles in the New Testament?

10

Dreams and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

Romans 14:19

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts. . . . Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

1 Corinthians 14:1, 12

Where does the Holy Spirit go when we are asleep? And what happens to our spiritual gifts? Of course the Holy Spirit does not sleep but abides in us at all times, as do the wonderful gifts He brings. He dwells within us whether we are asleep or awake, manifesting the gifts and callings of God in our lives.

Although dreaming is not one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12, dreams can be a conduit through which some of these spiritual gifts flow. As we have seen, many dreams are inspired by the Holy Spirit, so it is only natural for an individual's spiritual gifts to become evident when he or she dreams. It is important to note that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to edify the Church and are generally activated to bless others (see 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12). As the gifts of the Spirit operate in dreams, therefore, it is not unusual for the message of a dream to relate to someone other than just the dreamer. Let's look at some examples of how the gifts of revelation are made manifest in our dreams.

Prophecy

God will often speak to His people concerning future events. Though dreams can be difficult to interpret if they are heavy with symbolism, God could be speaking through them concerning changes or challenges that are to come.

Some people have prophetic dreams or visions with great accuracy of detail, showing the identity of someone they will meet or places they will go and what is to be said and done. Those who have the gift of prophecy often dream of things to come. Abraham, Jacob and the prophet Daniel were given dreams that predicted future events not only for their own lives but also for nations.

If you feel that God has spoken prophetically to you, always begin by checking the revelation against Scripture. Then submit the revelation to someone in a position of authority who can counsel you in your interpretation. Those who receive every dream eagerly as personal prophecy for the future are placing themselves in a dangerous position in which they can easily become deceived by the enemy. We all have blind spots, so it is wise to allow someone else to evaluate your interpretation of dreams, especially if the dreams are going to influence you in any way to make a major life decision. We always must act with wisdom when seeking revelation.

Also, be cautious not to build doctrine around revelation contained in a dream. This is a dangerous trap, one that others have fallen into only to be led into deception.

Here are a couple of examples of prophetic dreams.

A Church in Danger

While not all who have the gift of prophecy dream dreams of national importance, some receive revelations of a corporate nature concerning the future of a local church or area. The pastor of a large West Coast church once told of having a dream in which a large group of radical demonstrators converged on his church bent on destroying property and harassing church members. The dream concerned him so much that he had a large fence installed around the church grounds.

Within months the church found itself in the midst of political controversy over a citywide prayer meeting concerning the abortion issue. During the evening prayer meetings, hundreds of radicals came to the church to attempt to disrupt their prayer activities and to attempt to do violence. Police were called in to control the crowds, and the fence aided greatly in protecting those praying inside the church. This dream was very literal in its presentation and its fulfillment.

Blizzard in Florida

I once dreamed of a strange winter storm hitting the coast of the panhandle of Florida with blizzard-like conditions. It was almost like a winter hurricane. The dream contained great detail regarding a number of events, which I recorded.

Five weeks later in the month of March, a storm hit the panhandle of Florida with high winds and snow. The TV weather people actually called it a “winter hurricane.” I had not realized at the time that the dream was foretelling an actual event. When this storm occurred, I realized I needed to be prepared for the other things that took place in the dream.

The prophetic ability to see a future event enables us to understand times and seasons and to know what to do, much like the sons of Issachar in Israel (see 1 Chronicles 12:32).

Turnip Greens

In another prophetic dream, I came home and found the grass in my front yard pulled up and turnip greens planted in its place. There were rows and rows of turnip greens! Now, I do *not* like the taste of turnip greens. It does not matter how they are cooked; I just do not like them. When I woke up I thought, *Hmmm, what a funny little dream*, and paid little attention to it.

I got out of bed, got dressed and went to the store. As I was walking across the parking lot, a little old man approached me. He shoved a big bunch of greens in my face and said, “Ya wanna buy some turnip greens?”

I was startled and instantly remembered my dream. A bit shocked, I said, “Thank you, but no, thank you.” I went immediately back to my car, shut

the door and said, “Okay, Lord, I get the message. What are you trying to tell me?”

When I asked if the silly little dream had any meaning, God showed me that He was preparing to do a new planting in my life. He was getting ready to pluck up the things that were comfortable and pleasant and replace them with things I did not like but would be good for me. Ugh! What a prophetic word!

This began a time of purging and growth in my life. For the next year, God took me through a season when I had to eat my words for all the times I had said, “I’ll never do this” or “I’ll never do that.” Every one of those “nevers” tasted like bitter turnip greens to me. But in the end, I had to agree that they were good for me. I was stronger and healthier in my spiritual life because of the sometimes painful process God had taken me through. It would have been much more difficult to endure had God not prepared me for it with that little prophetic dream.

Words of Knowledge

Revelation beyond natural knowledge comes through the gift of the Holy Spirit known as a word of knowledge. God is faithful to reveal things that are vital to our spiritual walk when we have needs that supersede our natural limitations.

One example of the word of knowledge in operation in dreams involved a church that reported the disappearance of one of its young women who was active in prayer ministry. One day she left work and never made it home. There was evidence she had been kidnapped. She had been missing for a day when the pastor called, asking if we would pray to see if God would give any insight about her location.

That night before going to sleep, I asked the Lord to give me a dream to show me where she was and whether she was alive or dead. As I slept, I dreamed of an old cabin next to a murky river with red clay around it. I did not see the young woman in the dream but knew she was in that cabin unharmed. When I woke up, I had the feeling she was all right.

The next morning I repeatedly called the pastor to share my dream with him but received no response. That afternoon, he returned my call, telling

me the good news that the woman had escaped from her captor and walked back into town unharmed. When I told him my dream, he said, “That is amazing! That’s exactly where she was held!”

God had given me supernatural insight and information—a word of knowledge—through my dream. I was excited that God had spoken to me and revealed such intricate information. But I asked the Lord, “Why did You give me this dream? It didn’t actually help find her. You had already sent her help so that she could be free. So why bother giving me a dream?”

I felt the Lord’s response to me was, *To show you that I could. Sometimes you have not because you ask not.*

He is helping us know that He has made that type of revelation accessible to us. All we need to do is ask!

Words of Wisdom

Words of wisdom are words of direction, spiritual instruction or counsel that are prompted by the Spirit of God through divine revelation. As mentioned before, dreams can often be instructional and directional, bringing a word of wisdom to address a specific problem or circumstance or decision in one’s life.

Jacob’s Business Dreams

Jacob received a divine word of wisdom through a dream as he contemplated taking his possessions and leaving the house of Laban. Many years before, when Jacob had begun to work for Laban, they had made an agreement concerning which of the flock were to be Jacob’s—those of the flock that were streaked, speckled and spotted. This would give Jacob a fair portion of the flock for his salary.

But as time passed, it was Jacob’s portion of the flock that increased, and Laban grew jealous of Jacob’s wealth. Laban dealt deceitfully with Jacob and changed his wages ten different times over twenty years. Now, as Jacob sought to leave with his possessions and return to the land of his father, Jacob was anxious concerning how Laban would respond. So God sent a

dream to Jacob at this time (during the breeding season) and gave him wisdom for dealing with this difficult situation:

“The angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob.’ I answered, ‘Here I am.’ And he said, ‘Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. . . . Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.’”

Genesis 31:11–13 NIV

This dream gave Jacob a plan of action for receiving the inheritance that God said was rightfully his and that Laban had tried to steal from him.

Later, when Laban heard that Jacob had left with his daughters and the flocks, he became angry, but God sent a dream warning Laban not to do Jacob any harm or to even speak poorly of him (see Genesis 31:24). God protected Jacob’s inheritance by instilling the fear of God in Laban through a dream.

Even as God desires to bless His people with their rightful inheritance, there will always be the Labans in this world who attempt to rob the blessing from the people of God. As we are sensitive to hear God’s voice and receive wisdom from His throne, however, He will show us even through our dreams how to take that which is rightfully ours without having to compromise our integrity in our business dealings. Jacob heard the voice of the Lord, and because he had allowed God’s processes and dealings to be completed in his life, he was able to receive the blessing he had always sought.

Blessings in Business

A young man who works as a commodities broker called me one day to tell me of a dream he had had the night before. In the dream he went to his office and turned on his computer. As he looked at the screen, he saw the commodity symbol for coffee flashing, indicating a new high in the trading price. He specifically saw the number *\$1.44*. Coffee was trading in the mid-80-cent range at the time he shared the dream with me.

We both commented on the prophetic nature of the dream and decided to simply watch to see what happened with the coffee market. Three weeks later, I received a phone call from the excited young man. He told me that when he turned to his computer screen that day, he saw the symbol for

coffee flashing at the price of \$1.44—just as his dream foretold! A freeze in South America had sent the price of coffee soaring. A minimal investment in one coffee futures contract at the time of his dream would have resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in profit!

We must remain watchful, even in our sleep, and listen carefully when the Lord speaks.

I am not sure my “wait and see” counsel was very good, since he could have received a great amount of wealth, but God taught us that through His voice He could cause wealth to transfer to the righteous and business strategies to be released. God wants to prosper His people and will at times bring a wealth creation strategy through a dream or vision.

A word of caution before you invest your savings in coffee, pork bellies or gold based on a dream: If you believe God has spoken to you about your personal future, remember to submit the revelation to someone in a position of authority who understands God’s voice, who can counsel you in your interpretation. *Never make a life-changing decision based solely on your own interpretation of a dream.* Rather, seek the confirmation of two or three who can provide mature counsel, for “in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14).

Many in the Church believe that in these latter days, God is causing the wealth of the wicked to be laid up for the just (see Deuteronomy 8:18; Proverbs 13:22). When Jesus sensed Peter’s concern about paying the Temple tax, He sent him fishing with instructions to look for the appropriate coin in the mouth of the first fish he caught (see Matthew 17:27). Just so, the Lord could reveal divine opportunities for prosperity through supernatural revelation today. We must stay alert to recognize the blessings He wants to release upon His Church.

Discerning of Spirits

Spiritual activity is revealed through dreams to those who have the gift of discerning of spirits. This is not, however, a license to assume that someone is evil or that you are discerning spirits because of a dream of some wrongdoing by that individual. Your dream might have many other interpretations. Many with a gift of discerning of spirits can fall prey to a critical spirit if they are not careful. Such gifts are given to edify the Body of Christ, not so that we may pass judgment.

That said, spiritual forces that are influencing people or situations can be discerned through the insight of the Holy Spirit. Dreams are one avenue by which this gift operates.

Poisoning of the Leader

I once dreamed that someone poisoned the leader of our ministry with the intent to kill him. He did not die in my dream but became very sick. As pastors of the church, my husband and I stood up to ask for special prayer on behalf of our leader. In the dream, before we could pray someone came running up to me and whispered that we should not announce what had happened because the person who had done the poisoning was right in our church. No one's name was mentioned.

When I awakened from the dream, I felt concerned. I recorded the dream and began to pray about its meaning. It seemed to indicate that a spiritual attack was coming against not only the leader but also the ministry, and that its intent was to bring death—not just physical death but also the death of the vision of the ministry. If this line of thinking was correct, the death would result from a poisoning of minds and would be perpetrated from within the ministry. I asked the Lord to search my heart and show me anything within me that could be poisoning me. I applied the meaning of this dream personally first, since God's primary purpose of dreams is to show us our own hearts.

Before nine o'clock that morning, I received two phone calls. One was from a church intercessor to whom the Lord had revealed a spiritual assignment against our church that was attempting to bring death. He mentioned specifically the name of our leader but felt that the whole church

was being affected as well. The second phone call was similar, but this individual had had a dream that revealed a spirit of death coming against our church.

My dream and these two confirmations caused us to begin to pray as a church against the plans of the enemy. Since we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against a spiritual foe, this is where the battle was won (see Ephesians 6:12). Through the revelation from dreams, the gift of discernment and prophetic intercession, every strategy of the enemy was defeated.

The Spirit of Perizzites

On another occasion my husband and I were preparing to travel and minister in a series of churches we had never visited. The week before we left I had a dream. I saw us, on the Thursday night of our itinerary, standing in a church and preaching against the “spirit of the Perizzites.” (I was not sure at the time where we would be on that Thursday night as someone else was scheduling the trip.) When I woke up, I wrote this down and went to look up the meaning of this name.

The Perizzites are mentioned in Genesis 15, Deuteronomy 7 and in the book of Joshua. This was one of the tribes that the children of Israel were told to drive out of Canaan. The name of this tribe meant “division” and “contention.”

When we arrived at the church on that Thursday night, it became evident that the church was full of division and contention. Even the leadership of the church was divided regarding future direction. We were able to encourage them to stand against the forces of darkness that had come to destroy them. God was so concerned over the situation that He sent a dream to alert me as to what we would encounter.

The Gift of Faith

The gift of faith is a supernatural ability to believe and receive God’s promises, even in the face of seemingly impossible circumstances.

My husband and I were holding to a promise that God would provide us a new house. One night I dreamed that someone walked up to us and handed us a large check and said, “Here, go and build your house.” The amount on the check was unusual in that it was not an even number. We were, needless to say, very excited.

When I awoke, I recorded the dream and the specific amount on the check in my journal. I shared the dream with my husband and we agreed in prayer to receive this blessing from the Lord.

Seven months went by as I waited expectantly for the fulfillment of this dream, but no one came forward to present us with a check. We felt led by the Lord to prepare to build our home by getting financing from a bank.

To our great disappointment, however, we did not have enough money to make the full down payment. I asked if the bank could make up the difference but was told that they could not lend us any additional funds. Yet I knew that, somehow, God was going to make a way.

The woman at the bank told me she would see if there was anything else she could do. I thanked her and hung up the phone. Fifteen minutes later, the bank officer called and told us they could increase our loan to a certain amount. Then she named the amount. *It was exactly the same figure from my dream seven months earlier.* The amount on our loan papers was the same figure written in my dream journal.

The miracle was made complete by God when He put the rest of the money we needed for our down payment into our hands just days before we signed the papers.

This dream, with its specific amount and fulfillment, brought tremendous faith and a supernatural ability to believe God to supply our every need.

The Gift of Healing

Can the gift of healing operate in a dream? Can God use a dream to bring His anointing for the miraculous?

A pastor friend of mine related a dream to me in which this very thing occurred! He had torn his Achilles’ tendon and was suffering a great deal of pain and immobilization. One night he dreamed he was at his church service, and I was there ministering as a guest speaker. He said that I began

calling out words of knowledge for healing, then laying hands on people, and they were being healed. I called out his affliction. “Who here has a torn Achilles’ tendon, and you are in a lot of pain?”

He raised his hand and said, “That’s me.”

In the dream I laid hands on him and prayed for him. The next day when he got out of bed, his Achilles’ tendon was completely healed!

Let me be clear: I did not travel into his dream to lay hands on him. I was a symbol to him of the prophetic voice of the Lord that releases anointing, healing and life. The dream activated his spirit to rise up in faith to receive his healing. The results were miraculous!

These are examples of how the Spirit’s revelatory gifts can operate in our dreams. As you begin to use your spiritual gifts during your waking hours, these same gifts may produce the fruit of revelation generated by the Spirit of God while you sleep.

Questions for Consideration

1. Do you know which of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit (listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10) God has given you to use to minister to others?
2. Can you identify any time when you had a dream or a vision in which one of these gifts was in operation?
3. How can you stay in a place of wisdom, balance and safety when you receive a dream or vision that you feel asks you to do something or to make a change in your living circumstances?
4. Write the names of three people you trust who have prophetic insight and leadership wisdom to help you move forward with applying revelation.

Dreams, Visions and Spiritual Warfare

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

During Sunday morning prayer I had a vision of a boxing ring. In the ring were two demonic spirits. One was called the Destroyer and one was called the Devourer. Instead of fighting each other, they were mocking and jeering the onlooking crowd, a gathering of believers. They were taunting the people, saying, “Come fight us, we dare you!”

As I saw this vision I began to get frustrated because no one was getting into the ring to fight. I asked the Lord, “What is wrong with these Christians? Don’t they know that You have given them authority to win this fight? Why won’t someone step up and knock them out?” Then I saw it. The boxers were wearing their pre-fight robes, and on the back of each one was written *This Is Just Life!*

I then realized that the enemy was devouring and destroying the lives of these believers because they did not understand that many of their difficulties were the result of demonic influence and that they could fight back. “Well, this is just life. This is what happens in a tough economy, you struggle financially. This is what happens when you get older, you start getting sick or your body breaks down. This is what happens when you

send your kids to school, sometimes they go into rebellion. This is just life!”

And I heard the Lord in my vision say, *This is not Just Life. This is a spiritual battle. Tell My people they need to fight the good fight of faith, and in My name they will win!* God revealed that the plan of the enemy was to blind our eyes to what was happening. Once revelation came in the dream, the believers engaged the enemy and won!

In 2 Kings 6, we find the story of Elisha and his servant being surrounded by the armies of Syria, who sought to destroy the prophet. Every time the Syrians tried to move against Israel, they found that someone, presumably a spy, had exposed their plans. When they learned that the prophet Elisha was getting inside information concerning their strategies directly from the Lord, they sought him out, surrounded his camp and made plans to kill him.

Early that morning as Elisha and his servant awoke, they saw a great host of the enemy encamped about them. Elisha was not troubled. His servant, on the other hand, was beginning to panic. Elisha calmly said to him, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16).

The servant must have looked at Elisha as if he were crazy. “What do you mean?” he protested. “There are only two of us and thousands of them!” Elisha, however, knew what was *really* happening. God had given him the vision to perceive the situation from a heavenly perspective. So he prayed for his servant to be given that same vision:

Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 6:17

Just as the Lord revealed to Elisha the battle plans of the king of Syria (see 2 Kings 6:8–12), enabling victory to come to the house of Israel, so God is uncovering for the Church the plans and tactics of our enemy, the devil, so that we may do battle and defeat our wicked foe. The Lord reveals such plans through prophecy, words of knowledge, words of wisdom and discerning of spirits. He also sometimes chooses to use dreams and visions to alert us to spiritual activity.

Occasionally several people in our local church body (and sometimes people who live elsewhere) will all be troubled by the same disturbing

dream. These individuals come to me as pastor of the church only to discover that several others have had similar dreams within a short period of time. It usually turns out that these dreams provide revelation concerning upcoming or ongoing spiritual warfare involving the people of our church.

Prayer is the key to responding properly to such dreams. In recent years, God has been raising up a worldwide army of intercessors—prayer warriors who are sensitive to our Supreme Commander’s direction and are trained to do battle through prayer. These mighty warriors call upon God for His divine intervention and angelic assistance, just as Daniel did when he battled a spiritual power known as the prince of Persia (see Daniel 10:13).

Many times the dreams given to these intercessors expose the enemy’s plans for natural disasters such as storms or earthquakes. Some have dreamed of destructive storms sweeping through their towns and leveling them flat. But when the foreseen storms actually hit, the prayers of the saints prevailed and damage was minimal.

Battle in faith—not fear—when God directs you through a dream to enter spiritual warfare.

We must not underestimate the power of prayer in dealing with the dark forces that come against God’s Church. Instead we must arise with boldness and take our rightful authority given to us by Christ (see Luke 10:19). To be most effective, we must utilize every biblical means for obtaining divine insight into the heavenly realm, be it through prophecy, discerning of spirits or dreams and visions.

On several occasions I have had explicit dreams concerning demonic forces. At one point in my life I was battling what I thought was a spirit of infirmity, manifesting through one infection and sickness after another. In a dream a caped figure resembling a superhero character appeared before me and declared, “I am the spirit of death, and I have come to take your life!”

I was very frightened. Then, within the dream, the Spirit of God rose up boldly within me and confronted this demonic force. “Why are you telling me this?” I demanded.

Then I saw this horrifying spirit begin to shrivel and cringe in fear. He looked back over his bony shoulder, and I saw the finger of God pointing at him commanding him, *Tell her who you are!* God forced this demonic spirit that had been harassing me to reveal himself so I could stand in the authority given me in Jesus’ name and defeat this enemy. I woke and prayed and broke the power of the spirit of death. Soon afterward, I was strong and healthy again.

Warfare and Intercession

In one dream, I was flying through the air, binding hordes of demonic forces as the intercessors of our church walked on the ground and shined a huge spotlight on their hiding places. I was frightened in the dream, although I knew I had the power and authority to do what needed to be done. I remember dealing specifically with a witchcraft spirit that had been coming against our ministry.

When I awoke in the night, I sensed that there was in fact a spirit of witchcraft coming against us. I turned to wake my husband, who was sleeping soundly. I touched him on the shoulder and quietly said, “Tom.” Suddenly he jumped out of bed and began rebuking evil spirits and commanding them to leave our house. I had not said a word to him about what I was sensing, yet he knew immediately what God was directing us to do. He startled me so much—if I was not fearful before, I certainly was then!

We began to pray and move through our house, rebuking the spirit of witchcraft. We were surprised to see our children all lying on the floor instead of in their beds and were seemingly being tormented, for they were tossing and turning and wrestling in their sleep. Our oldest daughter came out of her room with a nosebleed, the blood running down her neck and arms. It was a frightening sight in light of what was happening. We continued to pray over our church and the churches connected with our ministry until we felt the spiritual attack had lifted.

Interestingly, the next day we heard from several others who had had similar experiences at approximately the same time that night. God revealed through the dream what was happening and directed us in the prayer and spiritual warfare that needed to take place.

Again, it is important to evaluate carefully any dream involving demons or even angels. Do *not* look continually for revelation concerning demonic activity through dreams and visions. To do so can leave you open to demonic influence and deception. But when God does stir you in a dream and directs you to pray, you can pray confidently knowing that Christ has already won the victory for us. We must enforce that victory in our lives and on the earth through prayer.

Dreams and Deliverance

At times, God will use the revelation from a dream or vision to bring forth deliverance for an individual or a situation.

Earlier in her life, a woman I know had suffered from the bondage of anorexia—an eating disorder in which (mostly) women and girls desire to be extremely thin, which is achieved through starvation and sometimes frequent vomiting. The anorexic uses these measures to cleanse or purge herself and thus feel in control of her life. This particular woman received deliverance and healing from the Lord and was able to walk in freedom.

Years later this woman's teenage daughter began to experience the same difficulties and bondage. The Bible tells us that spiritual curses can be passed from one generation to the next because of the forefathers' sins (see Exodus 34:6–7). During a season when this woman was praying and fighting for her daughter's life, the Lord gave her a dream and showed her that her daughter was affected by a generational curse that had originated with her ancestors, the Creek Indians.

In the dream this woman saw her Indian ancestors and rows of green corn. She decided to research the significance of this dream and found that the Creek Indians held an annual green corn ceremony in which they would eat green corn and then vomit it back up. They did this for three days as a form of cleansing and purging the soul. She realized that the disorder was the result of a generational curse passed down their ancestral line. She was

able to pray for her daughter and bring forth deliverance by the Spirit of God. Today both mother and daughter are walking completely free from this bondage.

Personal Testimony of Freedom

Early in my ministry life, when I was still learning about the reality of the spirit realm and how to deal with demonic assignments against me, I had an experience in which God gave strategies for my deliverance.

Our church was holding a ministry conference, and a certain man followed me around insisting that I give him a prophetic word. We have a protocol for ministering prophecy, so I told him he needed to go to his assigned place to receive ministry, as we did not minister outside of the specific opportunities provided. We wanted everything recorded and in order. But he persisted.

I have a gift of discernment and something about this man bothered me. I did my best to avoid him, not knowing how to handle what I felt. The last morning of the conference, however, he approached me and again insisted I prophesy to him. I was ready to tell him I did not have a word for him, when I heard God say to me, *Ask him what he is doing with the woman who isn't his wife.* So I did.

The man looked shocked and said, "Who told you that? How could you know that? Hmmm, I will need to think about that!" Then he said angrily, "Now I have a word for you!" And he cursed me with sickness. I shook it off, said that I did not receive his word and walked away.

A few days later I came down with strep throat. But this did not act like a normal sickness. I was sick for weeks. I went through three rounds of medicine from the doctor and still was not getting well. I never associated any of the sickness with the words the man had spoken to me.

One night I had a dream in which I saw the man from the conference. I was at his house. It was called "The House of the False Prophet." He told me to go into a room, and when I did I was trapped fighting for my life within the room for weeks. When I came out he was shocked. He said, "You have been in that room for fifty-three days and were never supposed to come out alive!"

When I woke up I knew God had given me a key to my deliverance. I got out of bed and checked a calendar. Sure enough, it had been exactly 53 days since the incident. I woke my husband, we engaged in breaking off this assignment of death that came from the false prophet, and I was healed instantly. The next day I woke up in perfect health.

God knows the root of every issue we are dealing with. Sometimes He shows us practical things to adjust in our lives, and sometimes He gives revelation about how to deal with things on a spiritual level. When the attack is hidden from our understanding, He knows how to bring things to light, often by giving a dream or a vision.

Questions for Consideration

1. Considering the dream about the boxing ring with the Devourer and Destroyer, find a few Scriptures that refer to Satan this way and see if God brings you any further revelation about their role to rob your life.
2. Have there been any areas in which the Devourer has stolen your blessing, and you have accepted it as “This Is Just Life”? If so, ask the Lord to restore what the enemy has taken from you.
3. How can God use dreams and visions to bring you to a new place of freedom in Christ?

12

The Language of Symbolism

And [the butler and baker] said to [Joseph], “We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.” So Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God?”

Genesis 40:8

In order to examine the messages contained in our dreams and visions, we need to understand symbolism. Sometimes revelation is straightforward, requiring few interpretive skills to bring understanding. In most cases, however, dreams and visions come to us in disjointed scenes, pictures and conversations that make little sense on their own.

Most dreams contain images of people, places, things and activities that are symbolic of specific emotions, ideas, character traits and even events. This is where the language of symbolism comes in. Some people dream short, concise dreams, while others dream as though they are watching a feature-length movie. (Some people even report dreaming end credits!) The length of the dream does not matter—only what it contains and what those elements communicate.

Dr. Gayle Delaney, who spends a great deal of time studying dreams from a scientific perspective, says, “Dreams are very much like poetry. You understand them if you get the metaphor.” Understanding symbolism is essential to accurate dream interpretation.

Symbolism is our most elementary language. Ancient cultures recorded their histories using pictures and symbols. When traveling in a foreign land today you need not fear finding yourself in the wrong restroom because symbols for men or women mark the way. Road signs utilize symbols to

give information and direction. Symbols are a basic language and can be easily understood.

I find, however, that the subject of dream symbolism tends to intimidate people; they usually think the images are too difficult or too complex to understand. As I mentioned previously, part of the reason for this is the prevailing attitude of the Western culture, which has a basic lack of patience when it comes to symbolism.

This is not so in the cultures of the Eastern world, of which the Jewish people are part. Jesus never hesitated to speak to His disciples using the language of symbolism; His parables were rich with images. Sometimes He interpreted the parables, since their meaning was veiled.

You might ask why Jesus did not just say what He meant without concealing the meanings in symbols. This could be because imagery is more deeply experienced and remembered. John Sandford, a popular Christian author on the subject of dreams, describes it this way in his book *The Elijah Task* (Victory House, 1977):

The Eastern courtesy of speaking indirectly is founded upon this principle, that each man retains best what he has discovered for himself. So God often prefers to speak indirectly. We may prefer to be like Thomas, who directly put his fingers in Jesus' side, but Jesus pronounced us more blessed who have believed not seeing directly (see John 20:29).

Though symbols take a little more effort to understand, it is well worth the study so that we might more fully comprehend God's messages to us.

God's Book of Symbols

Dream interpretation would be very easy if someone could write a book listing every possible symbol and its meaning; that way we could simply plug in the appropriate dream images and arrive at a clear interpretation. Unfortunately this does not work. Because symbolism is highly individualized according to our life experiences—as well as our perceptions of those life experiences—it is impossible to compile a comprehensive, authoritative book of symbols. Each symbol means something different to each person.

Because dream images come from an individual's subconscious mind, they represent different things to different people.

A man who loves dogs, for example, might have a pleasant dream in which a dog appears in a room with him. But this dream would have an entirely different meaning for someone who harbors a tremendous fear of dogs. The dog symbolizes different things to these two different people. To one it represents comfort, friendship or safety, while to the other it represents fear and danger.

The Bible should be your primary source for discerning what a symbol means. The Word of God is rich with typology and symbolism and can give depth of understanding to pictures. Though you will not find every symbol in Scripture, it is often a big help in bringing clarity to what the Lord is saying in each instance.

At times, other research materials can be helpful. A dictionary is a useful tool when a symbol stands out in a dream that has little relevance to the conscious mind. If you need a broader understanding of the definition of a symbol, Google it! Be careful, however, not to subscribe to interpretations of dream symbols that you can find online, as many of these come from occultic, New Age or non-biblical psychological sources. While believers and non-believers alike can recognize the cries of their hearts and souls, without God's influence it is easy to miss the revelation contained within dreams. When it comes to symbols, you can gain understanding through research, but let the Holy Spirit illuminate the meanings in your heart.

Dual Meanings in Dreams

Our dreams often have dual meanings—two separate but related interpretations. These are referred to as the primary and secondary meanings, or internal and external meanings.

King Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream is a biblical example of the dual nature of dreams. The king of Babylon dreamed of a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. Daniel interpreted the dream, saying that God had revealed both the future as well as the present condition of the king's heart (see Daniel 2:28–30). As he gave the interpretation of four kingdoms and the coming of the Messiah, Daniel chose not to disclose the aspect of the dream that concerned the king's spiritual state. God would deal with the king's heart.

We should always look beyond the primary interpretation of a dream to see what lies beneath the surface. God could be revealing various areas of our personal lives that need to be dealt with.

Here is an example. Because we live in a day of tremendous spiritual warfare, it would be natural for me to interpret a dream concerning a battlefield or military outpost as a battle raging in the heavenly places. While this might be the primary interpretation, the dream could also represent further dealings of God's Spirit regarding an inner conflict that my subconscious mind or my spirit is struggling to resolve. If we remain open to the deeper meanings of our dreams, we will be better equipped to cooperate with God in becoming healed, whole individuals.

Consider your dreams prayerfully. It is easy to miss the deeper meaning by settling for a shallow interpretation.

For this reason any time we dream of another person we must allow the Holy Spirit to provide the proper interpretation. Is He in fact showing us something prophetic regarding that person—or is He telling us something about ourselves? In the dream I relayed earlier about chasing my son, he

was flirting with danger and eventually fell through the ice of a frozen pond. Had I looked at the dream from a surface level, I would have supposed that God was showing me something regarding a dangerous circumstance ahead for my son. But this would not have been a proper understanding of that dream, for God was trying to deal with my own heart. If I had not carefully and prayerfully considered the dream, I would have missed the message.

Let me share with you another dream that illustrates this point. A certain couple in our church was seldom consistent in their attendance. There were many reasons for this. I knew, however, there was some dissatisfaction that kept them from entering fully into fellowship. One night I had a dream in which someone stole their children. After some time, the thief dropped off the children at the church and sped away. We were overjoyed that the children had been returned! But when we tried to contact the couple to let them know we had their precious children, we learned that the couple had changed their phone number and moved. We had no way to contact them.

When I awoke, I sensed immediately that this dream described the couple and the way they had isolated themselves from the church. If they needed us and we actually had the solution to their problem, we had no way of connecting with them. I acted on this interpretation, contacting the couple and encouraging them to stay involved and in touch so that as needs arose we would be able to help in whatever way we could. I did not tell them my dream; I felt that I only needed to do what I could to keep them from being isolated.

I then put the dream aside. A few months later, however, the Lord dealt with it further.

Jane, remember the dream about this couple? He asked.

“Yes, Lord! They seem to be doing so much better since I had the opportunity to pray for them and encourage them.”

Jane, look at the dream again, the Lord directed me. *It wasn't only about them—it was also about you!*

As I prayed, the Lord revealed a deeply personal message in the dream. The couple represented that part of me that struggled with commitment and faithfulness, and the enemy came and stole my children—my blessings and inheritance from the Lord—because of it. As the couple in the dream had isolated themselves from the church, so I had isolated myself from Him through insufficient prayer and study of the Word. In the dream the thief

returned the children, but because communication was cut off, the children could not be given to their rightful parents.

In my life God let many stolen blessings be returned to me, but first I had to establish a prayerful relationship with the One who held every solution to every problem I faced. God dealt with me about trying to handle things in my own strength and wisdom. This dream had a dual meaning, and I was required to respond to both aspects of it. Through dependence upon the Holy Spirit's guidance, I arrived at the proper interpretation.

The Setting of a Dream

We will look in the next chapter at many specifics regarding symbolism, but I want to begin here with the importance of understanding the setting of a dream. This is the first step to interpretation. The setting is where the dream takes place, both in the dream itself as well as the literal environment of the dreamer's life.

We read, for instance, in Genesis 40 that Joseph interpreted two dreams, those of Pharaoh's butler and his baker, dreamed on the same night. The men's day-to-day environments, the backdrops or settings of their lives, were nearly identical: personal service to Pharaoh and his anger toward them. And on the surface the dream settings also looked similar: Both dreamed of their employment. But the correct interpretations were as different as life and death. When interpreting dreams, you will need to examine carefully the settings of your dream and your life in order to understand what the dream is really saying.

Begin any dream interpretation by identifying where the dream itself is staged. Is the dream set in your home? Perhaps God is speaking to you about your personal life. Is it set in a church? Perhaps He is speaking to you about your ministry involvement or relationship within the Body of Christ. Is it set at your place of employment? God could be speaking to you about your work ethic or the fulfillment of your destiny and purpose. What message is the setting of the dream sending you through symbolism?

A prayerful look at the circumstances of the dream will help with this. If you think of the circumstances of a dream as "places"—such as places of pain or hurt or happiness—then you will have a clearer idea of the message.

Dreams are not limited to a current situation, sin or struggle. They might deal with your future and destiny. They might speak a message of hope or peace. They might reveal a long-standing problem or something from the past you have tried to forget. God knows all things about you and uses dreams to bring some of those things to your mind. Many of us struggle with insecurity or loss of identity or unforgiveness. These types of circumstances often surface during sleep, when our natural defenses are down.

Next consider the setting and circumstances of your day-to-day life, and how they interact with the dream.

I had an interesting dream that became clear when I understood the setting of the dream in relation to the setting of my life. It began on a college campus and involved three girls who were roommates. One of the girls was rich, one was poor and one was from a middle-income family. The poor girl hated the rich girl. The rich girl had difficulty getting along with the poor girl. The girl in the middle was constantly trying to reconcile their differences.

One day the poor girl went to her boyfriend, a rough-looking character dressed in black, and asked him to help her kill the rich girl. The girl in the middle learned of the plot and called her father, hoping he would intervene. That night, as the rich girl was walking across a bridge on her way home from class, the poor girl and her tough boyfriend stood in her path and began to disclose their murderous intentions.

Suddenly the girl in the middle appeared with her father and stepped between the attackers and the rich girl. The poor girl, realizing her folly, repented quickly of what she had almost done and told her boyfriend to stop. The boyfriend was determined, however, and proceeded to confront the father. The father wrestled with the attacker and eventually threw him over the side of the bridge into the icy waters below. He then gathered the three girls into his arms and told them they were all three his daughters who were separated at birth, and now they were together again as a family.

When interpreting a dream, begin by
putting the setting of the dream

alongside the setting of your life at the time.

I know this sounds like a bad novel, but this is how the dream went! And the Lord used it to show me something about myself.

The setting of the dream was a college campus. It made sense that this represented a time of higher learning, but that had little relevance until I also viewed the setting of my day-to-day life.

The circumstances of my life at the time of the dream were days filled with frustration and stress. I was a young mother with full-time ministry responsibilities and undergoing intense emotional adjustments by constantly being pulled in several different directions at once.

This was the key to unlocking the dream. Once I understood that my life “setting” of inner conflict was being expressed symbolically as the “setting” of a college campus, I could see that God was using these difficult experiences as a time of growth and maturing.

Regarding the interpretation, this is what the Lord showed me. When it appeared that the poor (sinful) girl was going to overcome and destroy the (spiritually) rich girl, the one in the middle who was trying to bring balance ran and got her father (God, the Father), who destroyed the attacker (the enemy of my soul). The poor girl had a change of heart and attitude and the end result was that God reconciled all three girls (all three parts of me), and they basically lived happily ever after.

Note that God uses different characters in a dream to represent different parts of an individual’s life or difficulties within his or her soul. The three girls represented different parts of me: the part that was spiritually rich, confident and secure; the part that was spiritually poor, easily caught up in emotions and susceptible to deception; and the third part always trying to reconcile the other two.

God was asking me to allow Him to defend me and bring balance to my life. This dream ministered tremendous peace to my soul during a difficult time.

Though there was actually more to the dream and further interpretation, this shows how looking at the setting of your life along with the setting of

the dream helps ensure proper interpretation. Without an understanding of the inner conflict I was facing, it would have been difficult to arrive at a full interpretation.

A Glimpse of the Eternal

We see in Daniel’s prophetic interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream regarding the four beasts that dream symbols can occur in settings of great spiritual significance. If you have not read Daniel 7 recently, I encourage you to do so. The first half of the chapter explains the dream; the second half gives an interpretation.

When Daniel asked for clarity about the dream, he was told that it involved events that would not take place in his lifetime. The dream was a revelation regarding the end-time kingdoms of the world and the evil one who would arise. The dream also spoke of the judgment of God and rulership of His people in an eternal Kingdom. Daniel ended his account, saying, “As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart” (Daniel 7:28).

Sometimes the symbolism regarding the setting might be beyond our potential to understand; in these cases, a glimpse of eternity is what our spirits need to help us press on in our daily lives.

Questions for Consideration

1. What are some familiar symbols that you see around you every day, and what do the symbols mean?
2. Jesus taught using parables, which were full of symbolism. Identify three parables and the symbols used to bring the message.
3. According to John Sandford, why does God choose to communicate through symbols?
4. Can a symbolic dream have more than one meaning?

5. How does an understanding of the setting of a dream alongside the setting of your life help determine the interpretation?

ACTIVATION

Think of a dream or vision you have had. What was the setting within the dream? What was your life setting at the time of the dream? When you look at the two side by side, can you determine what area of your life it addresses? Does this help bring clarity regarding the interpretation?

13

Basic Symbols

Scripture is rich with symbolism. In fact, without a basic understanding of some of the symbols used by biblical writers, much of the message conveyed by the Spirit of God would be lost on us. As we have noted, Jesus spent a good deal of His time teaching through the use of parables rich with symbolism.

In learning to understand your own personal language of symbols that appear in your dreams, you will find it helpful first to comprehend the symbolic nature of Scripture. Some symbols, for example, are used to characterize more than one person or object. A lion is used to represent Christ, His saints and even Satan:

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . . has prevailed to open the scroll.

Revelation 5:5

The righteous are bold as a lion.

Proverbs 28:1

Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8

Let's look at some examples of symbols used in Scripture to help you begin to understand symbols in your own dreams.

Christ Is Symbolized As:

Scepter	Numbers 24:17
Commander of an army	Joshua 5:14
Warrior	Psalms 24:8

Rose	Song of Solomon 2:1
Sanctuary	Isaiah 8:14
Foundation	Isaiah 28:16
Servant	Isaiah 53:11
Branch	Jeremiah 23:5
Fountain	Zechariah 13:1
Ruler	Matthew 2:6
Physician	Matthew 9:2
Bridegroom	Matthew 9:15
King	Matthew 21:5
Light	John 1:4
Bread	John 6:48
Door	John 10:7
Vine	John 15:1
Judge	Acts 10:42
Rock	1 Corinthians 10:4
Head	Ephesians 5:23
Cornerstone	1 Peter 2:6
Shepherd	1 Peter 5:4
Lion	Revelation 5:5
Lamb	Revelation 5:6
Bright Morning Star	Revelation 22:16

The Holy Spirit Is Symbolized As:

Rain	Psalm 72:6
Fire	Matthew 3:11
Dove	Matthew 3:16
Oil	1 Samuel 16:13 Psalm 45:7
Wind	John 3:8

Water Revelation 22:17

The Saints Are Symbolized As:

Treasure	Exodus 19:5
Sun	Judges 5:31
Trees	Psalms 1:3
Deer	Psalms 42:1
Doves	Psalms 68:13
Sheep	Psalms 78:52
Eagles	Psalms 103:5
Lions	Proverbs 28:1
Lambs	Isaiah 40:11
Stars	Daniel 12:3
Jewels	Malachi 3:17
Salt	Matthew 5:13
Lights	Matthew 5:14
Babies	Matthew 11:25
Fish	Matthew 13:47-48
Children	Matthew 18:3
Servants	Matthew 25:21
Branches	John 15:2
Runners in a race	1 Corinthians 9:24
Body	1 Corinthians 12:20
Soldiers	2 Timothy 2:3
Vessels	2 Timothy 2:20
Stones	1 Peter 2:5
Bride of Christ	Revelation 21:2

Satan Is Symbolized As:

Lightning	Luke 10:18
Thief	John 10:10
Lion	1 Peter 5:8
Red dragon	Revelation 12:3
Serpent	Revelation 12:9

This list shows that Scripture is full of symbolism. Those who desire to glean truth from it must have a basic understanding of this veiled way of communicating.

Symbolism in the Parables

Matthew 13 records Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

Matthew 13:24–30

In this particular chapter Jesus used several different parables to illustrate the truths of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is likened to a sower and his seed, a mustard seed, leaven, treasure hidden in a field, a merchant seeking beautiful pearls and a net cast into the sea.

When the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him to explain the parable of the tares, He began by assigning meaning to each of the symbols used in the story:

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.”

Matthew 13:36–39

When I interpret a dream or vision I begin by writing the revelation down in its entirety. After observing the setting of the dream in relation to my life setting at the time, the next thing I do is make a list down one side of a page with each symbol. Then I jot down descriptive words that come to mind for each symbol. Remember, you have the mind of Christ, the Holy Spirit within and the ability to hear the voice of the Lord. God will inspire you and your thought processes.

Notice how Jesus took each symbol and gave it a meaning:

Symbol	Meaning
The sower	The Son of Man
The field	The world
The seed	Children of the Kingdom
The tares	Children of the wicked one
The enemy	The devil
The harvest	The end of the world
The reapers	The angels

After assigning meaning to each of the symbols, Jesus then put them together to give the disciples a full interpretation:

“Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Matthew 13:40–43

You will find it helpful when interpreting your dreams to use a similar method to the one Jesus used. Remember to begin by understanding the setting, then make a list of symbols that appeared in the dream and assign meanings to them. Putting all of this together will help you understand the full meaning of the dream. In order to reach an accurate interpretation, you must (1) be sensitive to the voice of God’s Spirit and (2) know what the symbols in your dream mean to you.

Think of it like a jigsaw puzzle. The setting is the frame and the symbols are the pieces. Once you have an idea of what the pieces look like, you can

fit them together to reveal the picture (the interpretation).

Personal Symbols

Since each person has his own personal language of symbolism, I cannot provide you with a comprehensive book of symbols. I can, however, give you certain guidelines for interpreting symbols that I believe will help you begin to understand your own personal dream language and develop the ability to think symbolically. The following are symbols that I use as guidelines when interpreting my own dreams.

Houses

Jesus often used the imagery of houses to represent a person's life and personality. Matthew 7 tells how He spoke of the house built on the rock and the house built on the sand to distinguish between different foundations on which a person's life is built.

Quite often when I dream about a house, the house represents me. The Lord is showing me insight into my personal life. I look at the condition of the house on the outside and the inside and seek to determine what God is saying concerning my life.

You recall my dream about the house that looked wonderful in the front rooms yet had dark and dirty rooms locked away in the back. This was the basic condition of my soul at the time—immaculate on the outside but harboring hidden areas in need of God's all-powerful cleansing touch.

I have also experienced dreams in which I came to a new door in my house. When I walked through the door, I discovered a whole new wing. This type of dream speaks of new areas of my life that God was opening up, whether in my personality or my ministry, or gifts and talents that God was bringing forth that I did not know existed.

During the time when we were building our home, I had dreams involving the home-building process. These dreams had varying interpretations, some on a purely natural level, since much of my time was occupied with many questions that arose. But on a spiritual level, God used

the dreams to speak to me of areas of my life and family that were in the process of being built up.

Houses also signify a past time in our lives and something God desires to address from that period. Dreams of a childhood home can help us deal with emotions like fear that were set into place in our youth and still affect us in our adult lives. Or such a dream can pinpoint a specific traumatic experience or hurt (directly or indirectly). Again, because dreams are symbolic, you need to look past the seemingly obvious circumstances of the dream and see what is being conveyed from a spiritual perspective.

As a young teenager I often dreamed of various neighborhood houses from my childhood. These dreams usually contained evil or frightening scenes, even though I remembered my childhood as happy and carefree and my visits with neighbors as anything but traumatic. It was not until years later that God opened a door in my mind and brought back the memories of a man in my neighborhood who made improper advances toward me. Once God had healed those traumatic memories and I began to investigate my dreams, I realized that God, through my subconscious memories, was dealing with deeply imbedded pain that my conscious mind had blocked out.

People

People who appear in your dreams can have several meanings. You might be dreaming prophetically about someone else, or God could be showing you a part of yourself. The latter should be investigated first before you assume the dream refers to someone else. Again, let me caution you that when dreaming about another individual whom you know, you must be extremely careful not to assume a casual, surface interpretation.

If a wife dreams, for instance, that her husband is being unfaithful to her, she should not assume that this confirms her suspicions. Rather, God might be dealing with her own insecurities and her need to establish trust in her marriage. Disturbing dreams about a boss or a pastor do not mean that you should mistrust these people; the interpretation could lie in your ability to relate properly to people in authority.

An example of this is a dream experienced by a teenager in our church. In her dream she was in a dentist's chair. A younger girl whom she had had

some struggles with held the controls to the chair. The younger girl caused the chair to shoot up into the air, dumping the teen onto her head. The fall caused her not to be able to see straight, so it was hard to determine whether this was an accident or the young girl had done it on purpose.

Had the teen assumed a surface interpretation, she could have felt the younger girl was trying to manipulate her or cause her harm. Actually, after she inquired of the Lord, she believed the correct interpretation was that the younger girl was representative of the immature part of herself that she struggled with. This immature part of her was trying to control her and cause her harm, which would cause her to lose her vision and purpose. When she considered this as a warning from the Lord, she welcomed the opportunity to develop maturity in a crucial area of her life.

If you determine that a person in a dream represents a part of your life, first look at the dominant personality trait of the individual or what that person symbolizes to you. How does that person make you feel? God might be using the image of this person to pinpoint a blind spot in your personality that needs adjustment.

Suppose, for instance, that you dream about a friend who is pressuring you or manipulating you to do something you know is wrong. You should ask yourself: *Is this something I am tempted to do with my friends or is this an area in my life I need to be alerted to?* Then be sensitive to hear God's message. Listening to the Holy Spirit is the most important part of finding the true interpretation to any dream.

When in a dream a particular person frightens you or offends you, take a closer look at areas of your own life where you are possibly doing the same to others. As in my dream about my son, I was not actually dreaming about my child, but rather God was desiring to deal with the areas of my life that were young and immature before they could hinder my spiritual growth.

Sometimes when we dream about the opposite sex, God might be showing the need for balance in different aspects of our character. In each of us there exist characteristics and traits that we typically think of as being either masculine or feminine. We generally consider soft, tender, gentle, submissive traits to be feminine. Those traits that are strong and authoritative are generally considered to be masculine in nature. Dreams involving a mother or sister or grandmother might be highlighting one's feminine traits, while dreams involving a father, brother or other male family figure could be pointing toward one's more masculine traits. God

could be challenging the dreamer to develop or get in touch with that particular side of him or herself.

Again, there are no set rules here. It is always best to inquire of the Lord to gain full understanding of your dreams.

Crowds of People

A crowd of people in your dream often represents your concern over public opinion or feelings of peer pressure. Look closely at your dream response to the crowds. Is God dealing with fear of man or fear of going against the crowd? He might be challenging you to rise above the status quo and break into a new area of His calling on your life.

Flying

Many people report having wonderful dreams of flying, experiencing the exhilaration of soaring above the earth. When I fly in my dreams, I usually have to exert effort—flying does not come easily for me. Once I make the effort to get off the ground, however, I am usually successful. I normally relate this to the struggle of trying to overcome something and the rewards afforded me from the victory. Overcoming takes effort, thus my tendency to have difficulty getting airborne. But once I overcome, I have a new, fresh perspective of my situation, which is the same with the sensation of flying in dreams.

Flying to new heights might speak to new opportunities, ministries or gifting that God desires you to move into or new areas of freedom that God desires for you to experience. Flying has often taken me out of the grip of a would-be attacker in my dreams. The Word of God is rich with promises to those who overcome: “Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles” (Isaiah 40:31); “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” (Revelation 2:26).

God often shows me areas to overcome and the benefit of overcoming through dreams involving flying.

Animals

The symbolism attached to various animals comes from each dreamer's personal experience, although some animals typically bring certain characteristics to mind. Snakes often make people fearful and represent subtlety, trickery or danger. They can also represent wisdom, as in "wise as serpents" (see Matthew 10:16). Dreaming of a large animal such as an elephant or rhino or bull could be speaking of situations or emotions that you feel intimidated by, as though they could run you over and flatten you.

A good example of how the Lord uses animal symbols in dreams is found in the book *Hippo in the Garden* (Highland Books, 1993) by Pastor James Ryle. In this book Ryle tells of having a dream in which he saw a man lead a large hippopotamus into a garden. As he lay in bed contemplating this dream after waking, the Lord impressed on Ryle that the hippo represented a "strange" thing He was getting ready to do in His Church.

He likened the hippo to the prophetic movement, comparing several natural characteristics of the hippo to the prophet. The mouth of the hippo is one of its more distinctive characteristics, so it is interesting that God would choose this animal to represent His mouthpieces, the prophets. Ryle also notes that the hippo serves an important ecological function: In the riverbeds, it eats and stomps down weeds that would otherwise grow unimpeded and choke off the flow of the river, causing the water to become stagnant. One of the purposes of prophetic ministry is to destroy in our lives the weeds that would choke off the flow of the river of God and cause our spiritual walk to become stagnant.

Colors

Colors have always had a highly symbolic value, even in Western culture. Flags of different countries utilize colors based on the values of that particular land. The flag of the United States of America incorporates red, representing courage; white, representing purity; and blue, representing loyalty. Some of the symbolic colors mentioned in Scripture include red, white, green, blue, yellow, purple, scarlet, gold, silver and brass.

Red often symbolizes the blood of Christ, redemption and salvation, but red can also symbolize courage, anger ("I saw red") or fire. Blue is often a

soothing color representing hope and healing, but the opposite can also be true. Having “the blues” speaks of being depressed or without hope. Yellow is generally a bright and cheerful color but can also represent lack of courage or fear. Green often symbolizes life, while white denotes holiness and purity. Purple has long been thought to represent royalty and majesty. Black quite often signifies evil or darkness.

Investigating the different qualities you assign to individual colors will give depth to the interpretation of certain elements of your dreams. A favorite color appearing in a dream will obviously hold significance that differs from a color you do not like.

Clothing

The clothes you are wearing in a dream give insight into the message of the dream, especially if the clothes stand out as being either casual (comfortable) or formal (sophisticated or stiff). Many people have dreams of arriving at church, at school or at work in their underwear or naked. While there are many different interpretations of this dream situation based on the current circumstances of the person’s life, I usually relate such dreams to either a time of being unprepared or fear of certain weaknesses or hidden matters being “exposed.”

Money

Money can be prominent in some people’s dreams based on a lack of money (or perceived lack) or an abundance. Money can also signify a person’s desire for security or power. Take a good look at the role money, finances or material prosperity plays in your dreams. As Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Death

Death or dying in dreams is usually not a foretelling of actual physical death but may speak of God’s bringing death to the “flesh” in areas of our lives that are not surrendered to Him. We also must be open to God’s use of

death in dreams to reveal the evil intentions of the enemy so that we can respond in prayer and confound the enemy's plans. Death in a dream can also mean that the dreamer is fearful or insecure, since the ultimate fear is the fear of death. Such dreams can be spiritual, revealing ideas to our hearts, or soulish in origin, mirroring our fears.

Pregnancy or Babies

Women (and at times men) might dream of having a baby or being pregnant. Some tend to interpret such dreams as confirmation of the impending birth of a natural child. These dreams can also have a spiritual meaning, such as being pregnant with vision. Or the baby may represent something that God wants to birth in the dreamer's life or a situation that requires constant care and attention.

Numbers

Numbers are highly symbolic and rich in meaning. The following are the accepted meanings of numbers according to biblical numerology.

Number	Meaning
One	Unity, God
Two	Agreement, witness
Three	The Trinity, deity
Four	The earth (four winds, four corners)
Five	Grace, redemption, five-fold ministry
Six	Man
Seven	Perfection
Eight	New beginnings
Nine	Manifestation of the Spirit
Ten	Judgment
Eleven	Mercy

Number	Meaning
Twelve	Government of God
Thirteen	Double blessing, double cursing

Other Symbols in Dreams

The wide variety of symbols appearing in dreams prohibits a thorough discussion. Some other common symbols found in dreams include the following:

Weather conditions such as storms, tornados, snow or even a bright sunny day could shed some light on the setting of the dream and give some indication of the message the dream is trying to communicate.

Vehicles in dreams might indicate how you as the dreamer feel in regard to being in control of certain situations in your life. Are you driving the car, sitting in the passenger seat or riding in the backseat with no control or influence whatsoever on where things are going? Are you being a “backseat driver”? Are you riding a bike, making slow but steady progress? Bikes are also self-propelled. Is God speaking to you about self-motivation? Self-promotion? Self-sufficiency? Are you riding this bike on a busy city street, leaving you feeling vulnerable? Are you riding a bus, possibly feeling pressured by a lot of people to go along with the crowd?

An interesting recurring theme in the dreams of several men I have spoken with is the *severing of fingers* from their hands. The hand is scripturally referred to as representing strength, power or control. God could be illuminating areas where these individuals feel they are losing power or control in their lives.

Symbols and Culture

Different symbols have very different meanings in different cultures. I was once teaching on this subject in a Chinese culture and was asking the people what their thoughts were on certain symbols so that I could train them to interpret. Normally when I call out the color red, people from Western cultures will respond that it symbolizes the blood of Jesus, forgiveness, courage or anger. But when I called out red with a group of

Chinese people, they responded “Money!” They went on to say things such as the New Year, marriage, love, luck and happiness. Traditionally at the New Year, the Chinese give one another gifts of money in red envelopes, thus the association of red with money. Red is also the color at traditional Chinese weddings. The bride and groom wear red, wedding guests wear red and decorations are done in red.

Whatever symbols appear in a dream, they must be either interpreted by the Holy Spirit or analyzed in light of the dreamer’s experience. Never impose your interpretation of a symbol on someone else if the dreamer does not bear witness to it. God will give the dreamer assurance and peace when the proper representation of the symbol is found.

Questions for Consideration

1. Why can you not just buy a book that lists symbols and plug in the meanings to help you interpret dreams?
2. What basic knowledge do you need to interpret revelation that comes through a dream or vision?
3. List several things the symbol of a house can represent.
4. When you dream of another person, does it mean that God is giving you prophetic insight into that person’s personal life?

14

Interpreting Your Dreams and Visions

God desires to see the lives of His children transformed by His power and love. He gives us every opportunity to make choices to become more conformed to the image of His Son. When He sends forth His Word, He intends for it to accomplish a purpose in the lives of those who receive it (see Isaiah 55:10–11; Romans 8:29).

Before we can respond to God’s voice, however, it is important to be able to interpret clearly and properly what He is saying.

Whatever God is speaking to you, it is always in your best interests to follow His leading. He sees the end from the beginning, after all, and you can rest assured that whatever He asks is for your own good and for the good of the Body of Christ.

When a dream comes to you and you recognize God’s voice, you can be sure He will expect you to respond to what He is saying. Learning the art of interpretation and understanding what is being conveyed in your dreams are necessary before you can properly respond.

We have discussed at length the validity, purpose and language of dreams. Now we will look at the principles for interpreting dreams so that you may please God by responding properly.

Anointing for the Interpretation of Dreams

Just as some people are anointed to prophesy, so some people have a gift for interpreting dreams. Daniel and Joseph were prophets who were also

divinely gifted to interpret dreams. As a matter of fact, the main thrust of their prophetic ministries was interpreting dreams for national leaders. They were provided a forum for the word of the Lord to come forth, and they changed the course of history.

Although dream interpretation is not one of the nine gifts of the Spirit, the prophetic nature of gleaning revelation from dreams utilizes some of these gifts. Those with a strong prophetic anointing often demonstrate a supernatural ability to discern the meaning of dreams.

Although most of us are not called to be prophets, many of us have the gift of prophecy (see 1 Corinthians 12:10) and with practice can become quite proficient at dream interpretation. Scripture tells us that every one of us can actually prophesy, that is, hear God's voice and say what He says (see 1 Corinthians 14:31).

It does not take special gifts or abilities to move or minister under a spirit of prophecy, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). The only requirement is that you be yielded to the Holy Spirit. Just as any saint can operate in the spirit of prophecy, so can any saint participate in dream interpretation. Simply by being sensitive to the Spirit of God and to the language of dream interpretation, you can begin to receive insight from your own dreams. As you learn to discern the voice of the Lord in your dreams, confidence will arise, truth can be applied and lives can be changed.

Any process of interpreting requires not only the anointing of the Holy Spirit for clarity but also the Word of God to avoid error. Once you receive an interpretation, regardless of its content—correctional, directional or simply edifying—it is important that you measure the interpretation against the principles of God's written Word. All revelation, whether from prophecy or dream interpretation, must spring forth from and agree with the principles set forth in God's Word.

Steps to Interpreting Dreams and Visions

Whether you are a beginner or a veteran of dream interpretation, the following are some guidelines to employ when interpreting your revelations. It is wise not to begin to interpret the dreams or visions of

others until you have established a workable knowledge of your own language of symbolism.

As with Daniel and Joseph, God will divinely gift certain individuals with the ability to discern the interpretation of dreams and visions. If you do not feel that you are one of those individuals, do not despair. You, too, can learn to interpret your dreams and visions by remaining open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through diligently investigating what God reveals. It is very similar to learning a language; the more you do it, the more proficient you become. In this case you are learning the language of dreams.

The following are some basic steps for interpreting your dreams and visions:

1. *Pray and ask the Lord to speak to you through dreams and visions.* If you desire to have God open your dream life to you, pray before you go to sleep at night. If you want to begin to receive visions from the Lord, set aside a time of worship and prayer and ask the Lord to give you a vision. Remember, a vision is merely God speaking in picture form. Sometimes we do not have simply because we do not ask (see James 4:2). God desires to speak to His people. We must desire to hear what He is saying.
2. *Be alert to the voice of the Lord.* When you pray, *expect* God to illuminate your thoughts and pictures within your mind to receive a vision. When you sleep, *expect* to receive a spiritual dream. Everyone dreams each night. Expecting to receive a dream from the Lord raises your awareness upon waking. Rather than rolling over to go back to sleep or popping out of bed to begin your day, think of what you were dreaming about so that you can remember the details and hear the voice of God. It is much the same as tuning a radio to receive the radio waves that are flowing through the air. God is always broadcasting messages, but our ability to receive them depends on our spiritual receivers being turned on and tuned in to receive the messages He is sending.
3. *Write down dreams and visions in as much detail as possible.* This is often best accomplished by keeping a notebook and pen on the bedside table for easy and immediate availability upon waking. If you are asking for a vision in a time of prayer, have your notebook ready

to record what the Lord shows you. Some find it easier to keep a voice recorder by the bed to record dreams in the night and write them down in the morning. Write the dream or vision down as soon as possible, without trying to interpret as you go and without imposing meaning on the symbols. Write as many main details as you can and also include how you felt after receiving the dream or vision. Were you happy or sad? Confused or frightened? Some find that it is easier to keep the dream fresh if they avoid turning on bright lights to record it in the middle of the night. They write the dream on a large notepad without worrying about neatness and then rewrite the dream the next morning.

4. *Keep a journal of dreams and visions so that you can review the revelations and keep a record of what God is saying to you.* At times God will reveal His thoughts through a series of dreams, which will be easier to discern if the dreams are written down in one central location. I had a series of dreams, each dream occurring approximately one month after the last one, that communicated an ongoing message in a specific area of my life. Had I not been keeping a journal, I might have missed the full impact of what the Lord was showing me.
5. *Consider the circumstances surrounding the dream or vision.* What situations emotionally, physically or spiritually have you faced recently? Is there a question that you are struggling with or a situation you are trying to understand?
6. *Consider the main message of the dream or vision.* What is your initial feeling regarding the dream's interpretation? Is it a dream of warning or direction? Is God trying to show you something about yourself or another individual? (Again, if you feel the dream is prophetic about someone else, stay open to the possibility that the dream has a dual meaning about you.) Record all this information.
7. *Record the setting of the dream and list each object, character and detail and begin to determine what each represents.* If you are unsure what a symbol represents but have several ideas, write them all down and allow the Lord to bring greater clarity as the interpretation begins to flow. When I interpret a dream, I make a list of prominent symbols and write out what I think each symbolizes. If I have several possible

meanings for a symbol, I eliminate the ones that do not apply as the dream's meaning comes forth.

8. *Pray and ask God for the interpretation.* Remember in Genesis 40 when Joseph was speaking to Pharaoh's butler and baker about their dreams? He let them know the interpretations were not going to come from him but that "interpretation belongs to God." Again, in Matthew 13 when Jesus told His disciples the parable of the wheat and tares, they did not understand the message behind His story. Once the crowds were gone, the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable to them. If you take the time to write down a dream or vision, remember the important step of asking the Lord Himself for the explanation.
9. *Remember, dreams and visions are often symbolic.* Look at prominent characters, objects and situations and ask the Lord to clarify what they symbolize. This is a time to rely on hearing the voice of the Lord and receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If you do not receive clarification, use resource materials including the Internet to help determine the meaning of a symbol and why God chose it in His communication with you. Do not press or impose an interpretation. It will come forth in God's time as you remain open to hearing Him. Use common sense. When you have the correct interpretation you will experience an "aha!" moment.
10. *Once an interpretation comes, measure it by the Word of God.* Any revelation that does not agree with the written Word of God should be rejected, however logical or relevant the revelation may seem. If it passes this test, and you have responded in prayer, God might direct you to share it with a friend, counselor or pastor for confirmation or further insight. You will not need to do this with every dream; however, those that suggest a directional change in your life should be validated in this manner: "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1).
11. *Respond to your dream in whatever way God directs you.* Is He requiring repentance in an area of your life? Is He asking for your obedience to go and do something such as call or minister to someone else? Is He simply directing you to pray? Whatever He says to you, do it!

Example of Interpreting a Personal Dream

By his own admission, my husband, Tom, rarely remembers his dreams or receives revelation through dreams. Often our conversations of him explaining a dream sound like this: “In my dream there were some people, but I don’t know who they were. We were going somewhere together, but I am not sure of our destination. When we got there we had something very important to do, but I am not sure what it was. Do you have the interpretation for that?”

At those moments I feel a bit like Nebuchadnezzar’s wise men who were asked to interpret a dream with no details! But on occasion God speaks to him powerful revelations through his dreams. Here is one such dream, which I will use to walk you through the process of interpretation. This is his dream as told to me:

The dream was set on a college campus. The two of us [referring to Tom and me] needed to move from an old building to a brand-new building. But the only way to get there was by crossing a rickety, unstable wooden bridge. You ran out ahead of me and I followed behind. You came to a place on the bridge where a board was broken and fell through the slats down into a deep well. I couldn’t get to you to help you get out. Then as I watched the well began to fill with water. I became fearful for you and again felt helpless as the water came up over your head. Then I saw that you were not drowning. Instead, the water was actually causing you to float to the top. You finally rose up high enough that I was able to pull you out. You were wet, but the two of us crossed over arm in arm to the new building. End of Dream.

The first thing we did after recording the dream was to make our list of scenes, settings and symbols. It looked like this:

- Dream setting: College campus
- Old building
- New building
- Rickety walkway/bridge
- Tom
- Jane
- Jane ran ahead
- Fell through a board
- The well
- Tom’s helplessness
- The water filling the well
- Jane floated

Tom pulled her out
Walking arm in arm to the new building

After creating this list, we began to jot down Tom's thoughts regarding each symbol (remember, we have the mind of Christ). Keep in mind our "life setting"—we are pastors of a local church that is involved in teaching apostolic and prophetic ministry.

- Dream setting: College campus—a place to learn at a new level, educational experience, the community in which we learn
- Old building—old mindsets, old way of doing things, old structures, outdated operations, past moves of God
- New building—God wants to build a new mindset, new structures, updated look, updated function, a new move of God's Spirit
- Rickety walkway/bridge—a challenging, uncertain pathway, a transition point, instability, a point of connecting the old to the new
- Tom—myself, but could also represent the apostolic spirit, values wisdom and principles, like to see the path before me
- Jane—my wife, one I love, but could also represent the Bride of Christ, the Church; could also represent the prophetic anointing
- Jane ran ahead—a warning for Jane not to run ahead of me and to be more cautious? or is she representative of the prophetic forerunner who goes before?
- Fell through a board—a pitfall, she had a fall because she could not see that things under her feet were not strong; foundations? weak areas in my life? in Jane's life? in the church? resulted in separation for a time
- The well—deep, dark, scary situation; deep things of the Spirit? deep calls to deep? something hidden
- Tom's helplessness—a need to trust the Lord who is my help, a situation that I cannot control, something coming that I have no ability to fix
- The water filling the well—water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (rivers of living water) and anointing; initially the water looked as though it was dangerous and would cause Jane to drown; water can symbolize

the purifying work of the Word (washing of the water of the Word); water can also symbolize baptism, the death of the old man so the new can live.

- Jane floated—what looked harmful initially ended up being the solution; it was a time for rising up, coming out of the dark place and into the light
- Tom pulled her out—Jane needed my help to get back on her feet; it was going to take cooperation to move forward together to come into the new
- Walking arm in arm to the new—a joining in agreement, pressing past challenges, saturated but happy to leave the old behind and come into the new

After giving some meaning to each symbol, the next thing to do was put all the pieces together to see what picture unfolded. The beautiful thing about a picture is the variety of perspectives you see when the images are looked at from different angles. This dream had some aspects of personal challenge for Tom that dealt with having a greater level of trust in the Lord during challenging times or transition periods. When a situation arises that is beyond his ability to help, or when things seem out of control, God will cause His Spirit to arise and bring salvation, solutions and safety.

But beyond the personal application of this dream, God was giving Tom a prophetic picture of things to come. God was moving our church, as well as many others in the Body of Christ, into a new season. It was going to involve a learning process as we left the past behind and embraced something that was new and undefined.

This way forward would not always seem certain. As a matter of fact, it might even seem dangerous. Prophetically “Jane” represented what God wanted to do with the prophetic movement within the Church. It is a forerunner ministry that goes out and finds the weak places so that others do not fall into a trap. But the past season of the prophetic in the Body of Christ needed a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. God needed to pull the prophetic movement aside for a moment to saturate it with a new anointing so it could cross into the new.

Prophetically “Tom” represented what God was getting ready to do with the apostolic anointing in the Church. He would not be able to touch or control what God was getting ready to pour out and release. As we prayed

about this, God added insight to show us that some would not understand what was happening and would be offended by it. But God was going to join the apostolic and prophetic anointing together so that the whole community of the church could come into the new things He has for us.

Example of Interpreting a Dream for the Church

As we have learned, revelation given through dreams and visions can apply to the individual experiencing the dream or someone else. Sometimes the revelation is for the local church or for the whole Body of Christ. Dreams can foretell the destinies of entire nations. Since Tom and I pastor a church in which we emphasize hearing the voice of the Lord through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I am frequently given written dreams and visions that relate to what God is doing in our church. I experience dreams and visions relating to our local body of believers on a regular basis.

Occasionally I also receive words that are applicable to the entire Body of Christ. Allow me to share one of these with you and explain how I interpreted the dream.

In this dream I was an executive in a large office building. I was walking out to the parking garage one day and met Tom, who was also an executive in the building. We were not yet married in the dream. We walked to our cars four levels up on the parking deck. On the way up, we passed two scary-looking people. When we got to our parking level, we looked down and could see the lobby of our building in flames! Though we were concerned, the fire did not immediately threaten us. But then a nearby power box on the wall exploded and sent flames shooting throughout the parking level.

We began to run from the fire. When we reached the end of our level and came up against a solid wall, Tom cut a hole in the wall and we lowered ourselves four stories to ground level. When we were safely on the ground, we heard a noise above us and looked up to see a baby in the flames near the hole on the fourth floor. Tom quickly covered himself in a special fireproof lotion and ran back into the building to save the baby.

In the meantime, I confronted the scary-looking people who had apparently set fire to the building. I arrested them “in the name of Jesus.” I was nice to them, and when one of them tried to escape, he changed his mind and said that he would go with me since I had been so kind to him. Tom and I, with the baby, took our two prisoners to the local jail and turned them over to the warden. While leaving the station, we decided to get married and adopt the baby.

In interpreting this dream, which I knew the Lord had given to me, I had to determine first what the setting of the dream indicated and what the different symbols meant. I began by asking the Lord to direct me in my interpretation. Sometimes I have an immediate understanding of the meaning of a dream and its symbolism; at other times it is a process of seeking God, contemplating the symbols and doing research if necessary.

In this instance, I made a list of the setting, the people and the symbols. Then I prayerfully considered each one, filling in the blanks of interpretation as I received clarity from the Lord. My final list was as follows:

- Dream setting: The building is the Church, the corporate Body of Christ. As Tom and I are pastors, the office building represents where we work.
- Tom and I not being married yet represents Church members and leaders not yet unified.
- The people of questionable character are lost souls. And we walk right by them.
- Going up four levels means that God is bringing the Church and its leaders up to a new level. The number four is representative of the earth and restoration.
- The lobby is in flames! The Church is on fire! Many in America have been praying that the Lord will send His fire on the Church. Prophetic words have been coming with regularity concerning God’s sending His fire. In Scripture fire represents three things: (1) judgment (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8); (2) purification (see 1 Corinthians 3:13); and (3) the presence and power of God (see Acts 2:4; Hebrews 12:29).
- The exploding power box is the power of God exploding on this new level.

- We run from the fire. Many church leaders are afraid of the fire. Fearing it will destroy them, they run from it rather than embrace it.
- We escape down four levels. Again, four represents the earth, the world. The fire of God is driving the churches beyond their walls and into the world.
- The baby in the fire represents the new restoration move of God's Spirit, birthed out of the fire!
- Just as Tom rescues the baby, church leaders and members must face the flames in order to embrace the new birthing of God's Spirit.
- Tom's covering himself with lotion is representative of the anointing. We must be covered with the anointing of the Spirit to receive divine protection from holy flames.
- The scary-looking people who set the fire are persecutors of the Church—lost souls. They think they are bringing destruction upon the Church, but instead new life is birthed. God can use the heathen and worldly circumstances to bring fire to our lives.
- I arrest the bad guys. They are captured by the Church. Spiritual authority is utilized in the name of Jesus to take dominion over the enemy, his plans and his cohorts.
- We are nice to them. These lost souls, however evil their intentions, are won over by our kindness and our love.
- We take the criminals to the warden. We bring them to the Lord.
- Tom and I are married. The Church, its leaders and members are unified because of the experience with the fire.
- We adopt the baby. The new move birthed by God out of the flames is embraced by all.

Interpreting this dream took time. It was a process in which I invested a great deal of prayer and meditation over a period of several days. What I learned was that God was showing me His plan for His Church and His purpose for sending the fire. He was assuring me that good things will come as church leaders embrace the new move of God, which will be birthed out of the fire. The Holy Spirit is surely on the move, and new, exciting and challenging days are ahead!

Questions for Consideration

1. Do you have to be a prophet or have special prophetic gifts to interpret dreams?
2. What are the basic steps for interpreting a dream or vision?

ACTIVATION

1. Take one of your personal dreams or visions and work through the steps for activation. Be sure to write a summary of what you feel God is saying to you and requiring of you as a result of this revelation.
2. Pray and ask the Lord for an increased anointing to develop areas of interpretation that you feel are difficult for you.
3. Write a brief summary of this last dream, in your own words communicating God's message to the Church, its leaders and even you personally.

15

Responding to Your Dreams and Visions

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Ephesians 1:17

When God spoke to someone in Scripture, He required a response. When He told Adam not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, He expected obedience. When He told Noah to build a boat, that is just what He expected Noah to do. When He told Peter to go to the Gentiles, God expected Peter to lay aside his traditional mindset and go minister the truths of salvation to those who were not of Jewish descent.

When God speaks today through His written Word, His desire is that His people follow after the truth. When He speaks through His prophets or through someone ministering out of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that word should be judged and confirmed and then heeded. When He speaks in His still, small voice, God requires some corresponding action to that which has been spoken, whether He wants us to pray about something, to meditate on a particular verse, to go forth and perform some service, or simply to be still and know that He is God.

So it is when God speaks to you through a dream or vision. He not only desires to communicate something to you for your own information but also expects you to respond appropriately to whatever He has said. James 1:22 tells us, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.”

When asking the Lord for a proper dream interpretation, therefore, you should also ask, “Lord, how would You have me respond to what You have said?”

Personal Responses

Because most dreams you receive from God deal with personal aspects of your life, it is vital to respond by addressing any area He pinpoints. Many of your personal dreams are not to be shared with anyone else but are between God and you. God often moves to bring about repentance, deliverance or healing in many areas of the soul. Jesus said, “He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18). But God does not do these works on His own; rather, He requires your cooperation to touch and change your life.

Sin

Sometimes a dream will reveal an area of sin that you will have to put away or areas of the flesh that you will be called upon to deny and crucify. When an area of sin is revealed to you in a dream, confess it to your Father, repent of that sin and receive the freedom that comes with forgiveness (see 1 John 1:9).

Hurts

God will sometimes reveal an area of emotional hurt or hidden memories through a dream. The natural mind can deny or suppress memories that are hard to deal with, but the subconscious mind stores and reveals this information. Some dreams of this nature will be soulful in origin as natural memories and hurts surface. God can nevertheless use such dreams to deal with these areas. He will choose the time for these things to come to light so that He can touch these areas with His love and healing. Fearful dreams

may actually be revealing a time of past pain. Remember, God is the healer of the brokenhearted (see Psalm 147:3)!

Oppression

Soulish concerns and anxieties as well as demonic oppression can be uncovered through the revelation of a dream or vision. Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary provided healing for our souls and gave His followers the authority to deal with every demonic foe: "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

When areas of oppression are revealed, stand and take the authority that has been given believers by Christ and win the victory over every enemy of your soul. Do not hesitate to have others pray with you, as there is always strength in joining in prayer with another believer.

Mindsets

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Dreams have a way of exposing ungodly beliefs or mindsets. When a wrong mindset is discovered or an ungodly belief exposed, allow the truth of God's Word to supplant the lie and begin the process of renewing your mind (see Romans 12:2). It often helps to write out the wrong belief and apply the Word of God by also writing out a Scripture verse that tells of the proper principle by which you should live and the attitude you should have.

Prophetic Responses

When God speaks to you prophetically through dreams, they can refer to your life, others' lives or upcoming events. Messages can also address the life of a church body or even the life of a nation.

Warnings

Should you receive a dream of warning, either about yourself or about others, your first priority is always to *pray*! There is no substitute for responding to revelation with prayer. Then you may examine your life and actions to see if there is anything that you need to change. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was one of warning requiring him to make some drastic changes in his life. Had he heeded the warning, he would have been spared much heartache.

Insight for Self

Any time you think that God has spoken a directive word to you—whether through a dream, a vision, a prophetic word or through study of the Word of God—there are certain safeguards to observe in order to respond properly to the revelation. Dr. Hamon's book *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* suggests three steps for determining the direction the Lord is taking you. These steps are (1) the *Word*, (2) the *will* and (3) the *way*. Let's look at these steps to see how they help you perceive the proper response to the personal interpretation of your dreams.

The Word: The first step in understanding the will of God is to go to the Word. You must determine whether or not the direction you are sensing is scriptural in nature. Does the message suggest, for instance, that you lie, cheat or injure someone? If so, the direction is contrary to the principles of God's Word, and you have derived an inaccurate interpretation.

God *never* directs anyone to do anything contrary to His Word. The Bible is the standard measurement by which all revelation should be judged. If you cannot ascertain that the revelation you have received is biblically based, it is extremely dangerous to proceed further in responding to it.

The Will: Once you determine that a revelation is scriptural, you are ready for the next step: determining whether or not the revelation is in line with God's will for your life. Sometimes we know God's general will, such as the injunction to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15), but within that direction the specific will of God for each individual may vary. He sends some to foreign nations, some to share the Gospel with fellow employees or neighbors, some to join a prayer group and pray for those on the front line of spiritual battle.

There are a number of ways to confirm God's specific will for your life that you think is being addressed in a dream. You might have a God-given desire to do something, have specific Scripture verses illuminated by the Holy Spirit, receive prophetic words from others, have a witness of the Spirit or receive godly counsel.

The Way: If you have received green lights in each of these first two areas, you are then ready to proceed to the third step: determining the way God has made for you to accomplish what He has set out for you to do. This will include such details as the proper timing, how to do it, whom you are to work with, the means that will be provided for you to do it, etc. Many people make the mistake of moving forward ahead of God's plans and the perfect timing He has set for them. Once you have clearance to proceed in His will, you will be on your way to fulfilling the purpose of God in this specific area of your life.

Insight for Others

This is the area where people tend to make the most mistakes in responding to their dreams. God does in fact give us dreams regarding others, but it is imperative that we use extra caution and wisdom when responding to such dreams. As we have seen, many times when you dream of other people, you are not receiving a revelation or message for them; instead you are actually dreaming about a part of yourself.

A dream about someone else that has no tangible relation to the dreamer but is purely prophetic in nature is rare. Those who are gifted prophetically—often intercessors or people in positions of authority within the local church—seem to experience this type of dream more often than those who are not, perhaps because they are trained or tuned to God's ways of speaking or because they are in a position to address the circumstances being revealed.

Through dreams, I have been made aware of church members who were experiencing sadness, distress or confusion. As a pastor of our church, I would visit these people the next day and often find them in the emotional state revealed in my dream. I was then able to encourage them that God knew what was happening in their lives and was alerting others to pray on their behalf.

If you have had a dream you believe is prophetic concerning another person, proceed with caution. First, measure your interpretation by the Word of God to make sure it does not conflict. Then take it to the Lord in prayer. God might have given you insight into another person's life for the sole purpose of praying for that individual to draw closer to Him. Sometimes prayer can alter disturbing events or even prevent them from happening. I have at times had a dream about someone and awakened with such urgency to pray that I was sure God was intervening in that person's life at that very moment.

Simple safeguards can help you determine if a dream is revealing personal areas that you need to change or giving spiritual insight for others.

A serious word of warning: Be careful not to impose on others your dreams about them, particularly if you sense that their weaknesses have been exposed or that God has shown you some direction they need to take. This is equivalent to a corrective or directive prophetic word and should be given to that individual only with the proper consent and covering of established leadership. This protects you from giving a wrong interpretation or perhaps having the interpretation misunderstood.

Before you share your dream with the person who is the subject of the dream, you would be wise to go to someone in leadership who can give oversight and determine whether the dream should be shared at all and, if so, how it should be shared and when. Sometimes God does not intend for a dream or vision to be shared with anyone but only that prayer be offered up on another's behalf. You can always pray for the individual that God's plan will be fulfilled in his or her life—the prayer that never fails.

Unless you are seeking counsel from leadership concerning your dream, never share your dream about someone else with others. To share such

subjective material as a dream with others who are not concerned in the matter puts you in a position of gossiping or even slandering the one you dreamed of. First of all, you might not have the proper interpretation. And, second, God never reveals something to expose another individual in a harmful way. Gossip is a destructive force that God will not abide (see 2 Corinthians 12:20).

The end result of any action you take should always be that the individual and the church body are edified.

Spiritual Insight

Prophetic dreams dealing with principalities and powers and activity in the spirit realm also should be addressed in prayer. God might lead you into a time of fasting and prayer and spiritual warfare to deal with certain strongholds that have been discerned. From my own experiences with spiritual warfare, I recommend that you not get too deeply involved on your own; whenever possible, share the warfare dream with intercessors under the proper covering of leadership. The enemy loves to see us off doing our own thing—even good things like intercessory prayer—so that he can separate us and destroy us.

Every individual who has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit and who has a working knowledge of the Word of God has been given power over all the works of the devil. Still, the Bible clearly addresses the purpose and value of joining with others in spiritual warfare. Deuteronomy 32:30 tells us that one shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight. Praying with another increases tenfold the power of your warfare!

Should you receive a dream requiring spiritual warfare, do pray and intercede, but do not forsake the strength God has provided when we join with others in unified prayer.

Prophetic Protocol

In most situations involving a dream of a prophetic nature, it is wise to present the dream to a leader or pastor. As with prophecy, that which is

shared should bring edification, exhortation and comfort (see 1 Corinthians 14:3). The leadership can direct you about the appropriateness of sharing the dream with the individual you have dreamed about.

If those to whom you have submitted the dream recommend you share it, it is always a good idea to have another person present, preferably someone in leadership, in order to avoid any misunderstanding. It may also be helpful to record this conversation for the benefit of having a record of the details of the dream for the individual.

If your dream contains a word for a church leader, you will find that your dream will be received with greater enthusiasm if it is submitted with a spirit of humility—without haughtiness, judgment or accusation. I know of instances when a dream has been thrown down like a gauntlet on a pastor’s desk, with an attitude of pride and self-justification. Clearly this is not the submission of Christ; nor is it the attitude with which we are to approach one another, let alone a spiritual leader.

These simple guidelines should help ensure that when you receive a dream, interpret it and follow through by responding to the message of the dream, you are doing so in accordance with biblical standards and wisdom. This will protect you and others as you endeavor to follow the will of God with proper oversight, accountability and counsel. “Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold” (Proverbs 3:13–14).

Questions for Consideration

1. What should you do with a dream that you think has a prophetic message for another person?
2. What should you do with a dream that you think reveals issues involving spiritual warfare?
3. How do you apply the principles of “the Word, the will and the way” to a dream or vision that challenges you to make a directional change in your life?

A Charge to Dreamers

Some people are supernaturally gifted by God with the ability to interpret dreams and visions, just as some are gifted to prophesy. But for most of us, learning the art of interpretation takes time and likely involves some trial and error.

Do not become discouraged, but remain patient as you learn to discern the voice of the Lord in your dreams and visions. Take the time necessary to develop a personal understanding of symbolism and how to respond properly to revelation. The rewards to your soul and spirit will be great as God visits you with new insight, illumination, inspiration and comfort.

Dreams can be activated by faith, just as Daniel was certain the Lord would enable him to tell King Nebuchadnezzar his dream and its interpretation (see Daniel 2:19). Likewise, visions can be activated by praying and asking God to open your eyes, just as Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened (see 2 Kings 6:17).

Once God's people learn to discern the voice of God in dreams and visions, we will begin to see even greater manifestations of God's power in the earth. Dreams brought promotion to godly, prophetic people such as Joseph and Daniel. Dream interpretations brought these godly, prophetic people into the presence of kings and enabled them to deliver messages that changed nations.

God has promised to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh in these last days. Sons and daughters shall prophesy, old men shall dream dreams and young men shall see visions. God is no respecter of persons. Be sure that you are receiving your full portion of prophetic dreams and visions in these last days (see Acts 2:17–18).

God is challenging us to hear His voice and to receive a fresh impartation of the outpouring of His Spirit. He who has ears to hear, let him hear (see Revelation 2:7)!

[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

Ephesians 1:17–19

Pray this prayer with me:

Father, I thank You for releasing the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that Your mysteries may be revealed to me in a powerful way. I pray You would open my spiritual eyes and spiritual ears to Your voice. I ask You to activate prophetic dreams and visions in my life. Help me to remember what I dream so that I can record accurately what You are saying, interpret Your messages properly and respond appropriately in obedience to Your will. Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon me so that I can prophesy, dream dreams and see visions. Speak, Lord, Your servant hears! In Jesus' mighty name, Amen!

Sweet dreams!

Index

- Abimelech, dream of, [37–38](#), [60](#)
Abraham, dreams and visions of, [23](#), [88–89](#), [108](#)
admonition, [78](#)
Ananias, vision of, [105–6](#)
angels
 the angel “Gabriel,” [59](#), [67](#)
 the angel Moroni, [58](#)
 dark angels, [60](#)
 demons masquerading as angels of light, [58–59](#)
 in dreams, [125](#)
 God’s sending of from heaven to help us, [30](#)
 Satan’s appearance as an angel of light, [69](#)
Aristotle, [35](#)
authority, [62](#), [123](#), [173](#)
- Balaam, vision of the Almighty, [69](#)
belief, ungodly, revelation of in a dream, [173–74](#)
Bible, the
 and dealing with nightmares, [62–63](#)
 measurement of the interpretation of dreams and visions against biblical principles, [58](#), [65](#), [108](#),
 [158](#), [162](#), [173](#)
 meditating upon, [24](#), [53–54](#), [77](#)
 as the primary source for determining what symbols mean, [131–32](#)
 references to dreams and visions in, [23](#)
 study of, [59](#)
 See also symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Bible; symbols of Jesus in the Bible; symbols in the
 parables; symbols of the saints in the Bible; symbols of Satan in the Bible
- chazown/chizzayown* (Hebrew: “a revelation”), [24](#), [32](#)
Cho, David Yonggi, [32](#)
Christian Dream Interpretation (Watson), [60](#)
Clarke, Adam, [78](#)
Cornelius, vision of the angel of the Lord, [69](#)
counsel, [59](#)
 for dealing with nightmares, [62](#)
 for interpretation of dreams and visions, [108–9](#), [114–15](#), [162](#)
 for sharing dreams and visions, [177–78](#), [179](#)
- Daniel
 dreams and visions of, [23](#), [29](#), [108](#)

interpretation of dreams by, [17](#), [25](#), [42](#), [80–81](#), [82](#), [132](#), [138–39](#), [157](#), [181](#), [182](#)
knowledge of God’s voice, [84–85](#)
as a prophet, [33](#), [84](#)
spiritual battle of with the prince of Persia, [123](#)
writing down of his dreams and visions by, [27](#)

David, prayer of, [73](#)

Deborah, as a prophet, [33](#)

Delaney, Gayle, [130](#)

demons

- the angel “Gabriel,” [59](#), [67](#)
- the angel Moroni, [58](#)
- and dreams, [125](#)
- masquerading as angels of light, [58–59](#)
- and nightmares, [61](#)
- revelation of demonic oppression in a dream, [173](#)

direction, in dreams and visions, [101–2](#)

discerning of spirits, [115](#), [122](#), [123](#)

- and the danger of falling prey to a critical spirit, [115](#)
- examples of dreams revealing spiritual activity, [115–17](#)

dreams and visions, [123](#)

- as bypassing our walls of self-defense, [73–75](#)
- definition of *dream*, [23](#)
- definition of *vision*, [24](#)
- of direction, [101–2](#)
- Eastern cultures’ view of, [130–31](#)
- and emotional healing, [97–98](#)
- of encouragement, [87–95](#)
- and expectation, [159](#)
- as the fulfillment of biblical promises, [16](#)
- and the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues, [41–42](#)
- and Greek *enupnion* (“something seen in sleep or a vision in a dream”), [23](#)
- and Greek *horasis* (“vision”), [24](#)
- and having ears to hear, [38](#)
- and the heart, [71–73](#)
- and Hebrew *chazown/chizzayown* (“a revelation”), [24](#), [32](#)
- how we receive dreams, [24–25](#)
- and meditation upon God’s Word before bed, [24](#)
- as not indicative of spiritual superiority, [36–38](#)
- psychological studies of, [18](#)
- and the release of rejoicing, [96–97](#)
- and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, [25](#)
- references to in the Bible, [23](#)
- series of, [27](#), [160](#)
- and slumbering, [77](#)
- of warning, [102–5](#), [174](#)
- Western culture’s view of, [26](#), [34](#), [130](#)

See also dreams and visions, determining sources of; dreams and visions, interpretation of; dreams and visions, personal responses to areas that God pinpoints in; dreams and visions, prophetic responses to; dreams and visions, remembering; dreams and visions, sharing of; natural dreams and visions; prophecy; spiritual dreams and visions; symbolism

dreams and visions, determining sources of

Does the individual sharing a prophetic dream or vision have a personal relationship with Jesus? [66-67](#)

Does the message of the dream or vision lead to righteousness? [66](#)

Is the message of the dream or vision consistent with the doctrines and principles of the Word of God? [65](#)

Is the message of the dream or vision consistent with the teachings and character of Jesus? [66](#)

dreams and visions, interpretation of, [156-57](#)

anointing of the Holy Spirit for, [157-58](#)

basic steps for, [159-62](#)

and counsel, [108-9](#), [114-15](#), [162](#)

example of interpreting a dream for the Church, [166-70](#)

example of interpreting a personal dream, [162-66](#)

and the Holy Spirit's provision of the proper interpretation, [133](#)

measurement of against the principles of the Bible, [58](#), [65](#), [108](#), [158](#), [162](#), [173](#)

and prayer, [41-43](#)

dreams and visions, personal responses to areas that God pinpoints in, [172](#)

hurts, [173](#)

mindsets, [173-74](#)

oppression, [173](#)

sin, [172-73](#)

dreams and visions, prophetic responses to, [174](#)

insight for others, [176-78](#)

insight for self, [174-76](#)

prophetic protocol, [179-80](#)

spiritual insight, [178-79](#)

warnings, [174](#)

dreams and visions, remembering, [25-28](#)

and the chemicals serotonin and norepinephrine, [26](#)

keeping a journal of your dreams and visions, [27](#), [70](#), [160](#)

keeping a notebook by your bed, [27](#), [70](#), [159-60](#)

training your brain to make note of dreams while you sleep, [27-28](#)

voice-recording dreams, [27](#), [159](#)

why we don't remember our dreams, [26-27](#), [28](#)

dreams and visions, sharing of, [72](#), [92](#), [176-78](#)

and counsel, [177-78](#), [179](#)

and gossip or slander, [178](#)

measuring interpretation by the Bible, [176-77](#)

and prayer, [177](#)

Elijah, as a prophet, [33](#)

Elijah Task, The (Sandford), [130-31](#)

Elisha

as a prophet, [33](#)

prayer of for the opening of his servant's eyes, [181](#)

sharing of his vision with his servant, [122](#)

vision of, [121-22](#)

enupnion (Greek: "something seen in sleep or a vision in a dream"), [23](#)

faith, [117-18](#)

false dreams and visions, [41](#)
dreams of diviners, [60](#)
overdependence on, [57–59](#)
types of false dreams, [55–57](#)
See also nightmares

Gideon, and the dream of an enemy soldier, [94–95](#)

God

communication of, [22–23](#), [25](#)
concern of with even the smallest details of our lives, [22](#)
general will of, [175](#)
the *Logos* Word of, [28](#)
the *rhema* word of, [28](#)
specific will of, [175](#)

Hamon, Bill, [32–33](#)

on the Word, the will and the way, [174–76](#)

Hamon, Jane

dream of binding hordes of demonic forces, [124–25](#)
dream of a blizzard in Florida, [109–10](#)
dream of “Change Your Oil; It Will Change Your Life!” [50](#)
dream of a college campus and three roommates, [136–38](#)
dream of a couple and their stolen children, [133–35](#)
dream of the double staircase, [73](#)
dream of her brother becoming sick and dying, [15](#)
dream of her brother getting killed in a car accident, [47](#)
dream of the Hitler-type dictator, [44–45](#)
dream of the house, her son and the frozen pond, [74–75](#), [133](#), [146](#), [149](#)
dream of “The House of the False Prophet,” [126–27](#)
dream of a large check for building their house, [117–18](#)
dream of the missed connecting flight, [99–101](#)
dream of a new invention, [51](#)
dream of not being dressed warmly enough in winter, [53](#)
dream of the poisoning of the ministry leader, [115–16](#)
dream of preaching against the “spirit of the Perizzites,” [116–17](#)
dream of shooting a man of God, [46](#)
dream of the spirit of death, [123–24](#)
dream of tables of her favorite foods, [52–53](#)
dream of the tarantula roof tiles, [96–97](#)
dream of turnip greens, [110–11](#)
dream of wallpaper growing vines, [71–72](#)
dreams of flying, [149–50](#)
dreams of houses, [75](#), [146–47](#)
“The Four Horsemen of Awakening” dream of, [21–22](#), [29–30](#)
and her son’s facial birth defect, [87–88](#)
series of dreams, [68](#), [160](#)
three-month period of terrifying dreams experienced by, [61](#)
vision of the Destroyer and the Devourer in a boxing ring, [120–21](#)
vision of her house going up in flames, [105](#)

healing, [118–19](#)

hidden memories, revelation of in a dream, [173](#)
Hippo in the Garden (Ryle), [150–51](#)
Holy Spirit, [72](#)
 anointing of for the interpretation of dreams, [157–58](#)
 gifts of, [107–8](#)
 Jesus' promise of as a comforter or *paraklete*, [16](#)
 outpouring of on "all flesh," [16–17](#), [33](#), [36](#), [85](#), [182](#)
 outpouring of on the Day of Pentecost, [33](#)
 provision of the proper interpretation of dreams by, [133](#)
 symbols of in the Bible, [142](#)
horasis (Greek: "vision"), [24](#)
Howe, Elias, dream of, [51](#)
humanism, [60](#)
hurts, revelation of in a dream, [173](#)

instruction, [78](#)
intercessors, [122–23](#), [176](#), [178](#)
Issachar, sons of, [110](#)

Jacob, [90](#)
 dreams of, [23](#), [68](#), [90–91](#), [108](#), [112–13](#)
 as "Prince with God," [68](#), [90](#)
 as "the supplanter or deceiver," [68](#), [90](#)

Jesus
 death of on the cross, [62–63](#)
 as "the man in white," [17](#)
 name of, [101](#)
 parables of, [140](#), [143–45](#), [161](#)
 Person and principles of, [66](#)
 personal relationship with, [66–67](#)
 promise of that He would send a comforter or *paraklete*, [16](#)
 in the Quran, [67](#)
 symbols of in the Bible, [140](#), [141](#)
 and the Temple tax, [115](#)
 use of symbolism by, [130–31](#), [146](#)
 vision of Nathaniel, [69](#)

Job 33:13–18, on dreams, [75–76](#)
 a dream is a "vision of the night," [76–77](#)
 God uses dreams to bring instruction and admonition (Hebrew *mocar*), [78](#)
 God uses dreams to bypass pride, [78–80](#)
 God uses dreams to open our ears, [77–78](#)

John (the apostle), visions of, [23](#)

John the Baptist, as a prophet, [33](#)

Joseph (New Testament), dreams of, [23](#), [29](#), [38](#), [101](#), [103–4](#)

Joseph (Old Testament)

 dreams of, [23](#), [29](#), [38](#), [68](#), [91–92](#), [93](#)
 interpretation of dreams by, [42](#), [92–93](#), [135](#), [157](#), [161](#), [182](#)
 as Pharaoh's right-hand man, [93](#)

Kekule, August, dream of, [50–51](#)

Kuhlman, Katherine, [35](#)

Laban, [90–91](#), [112–13](#)

dream of, [113](#)

Lincoln, Abraham, dream of, [104](#)

Lydia, [106](#)

Magi, the, dream of, [23](#), [103](#)

Micah, vision of, [25](#)

mindset, ungodly, revelation of in a dream, [173–74](#)

mocar (Hebrew: “instruction,” “admonition”), [78](#)

Muhammad, visions of from the angel “Gabriel,” [59](#), [67](#)

and the Quran, [59](#)

Nahum, dreams and visions of, [23](#)

natural dreams and visions, [41](#), [49–50](#)

daydreaming, [49](#)

fantasizing, [49](#)

origin of in the soul, [24](#), [50](#)

“pizza dreams,” [52](#)

as a reflection of the day’s activities, [50–51](#)

as a reflection of the mind’s meditations, [53–54](#)

as a reflection of physical needs, [52–53](#)

Nebuchadnezzar, dreams of, [17](#), [25](#), [29](#), [42](#), [67](#), [80–83](#), [174](#)

dual meaning in his dream of the statue, [132](#)

God’s punishment of for his refusal to repent, [82–83](#)

God’s Spirit leading him to repentance, [83–84](#)

as revealing his heart, [83](#)

Nehemiah, as a prophet, [33](#)

New Age movement, [60](#)

nightmares, [60–61](#)

dealing with, [61–63](#)

demonic-inspired nightmares, [61](#)

natural nightmares, [61](#)

sources of, [61](#)

numbers, meanings of, [153–54](#)

Obadiah, dreams and visions of, [23](#)

occult, the, [36](#)

Osborn, T. L., [35](#)

Paul

experience of the battle between flesh and spirit, [79](#)

visions of, [23](#), [105](#), [106](#)

Pentecostal Movement, [35](#)

Peter, vision of the sheet being lowered from heaven, [23](#), [69](#)

Pharaoh, dreams of, [29](#), [42](#), [68](#), [92–93](#)

Plato, [34–35](#)

Pontius Pilate’s wife, dream of, [37](#), [60–61](#)

prayer, [59](#)

and dealing with nightmares, [62](#)
the Holy Spirit's stirring of your spirit to pray, [46–48](#)
for interpretation of dreams and visions, [41–43](#), [159](#)
and sharing dreams and visions, [177](#)
and spiritual warfare, [122–23](#), [124–25](#), [178](#)
See also intercessors

prayer of commitment of one's life to Jesus Christ, [18–19](#)
prayer for dreaming dreams and seeing visions, [182–83](#)
pride, [78–79](#)

prophecy, [34](#), [108–9](#), [122](#), [123](#)
definition of *prophecy*, [32–33](#)
examples of prophetic dreams, [109–11](#)
fulfillment of, [89](#)
gift of, [157](#)
purpose of, [34](#)

prophetic dreams. *See* prophecy; spiritual dreams and visions
prophetic movement, [35–36](#)

prophets
false prophets, [56](#)
the office of prophet, [33](#)
prophets in the Old Testament, [33](#) (*see also specific prophets*)
Prophets and Personal Prophecy (B. Hamon), [32–33](#)
on the Word, the will and the way, [174–76](#)

psychics, [60](#), [85](#)

Revelation, Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in, [29–30](#)
righteousness, [66](#)
Roberts, Oral, [35](#)
Ryle, James, [150–51](#)

saints, symbols of in the Bible, [140](#), [142–43](#)
Samuel, as a prophet, [3](#)
Sandford, John, [130–31](#)

Satan
appearance of as an angel of light, [69](#)
symbols of in the Bible, [141](#), [143](#)

Saul of Tarsus. *See* Paul

Scripture. *See* Bible, the

sin
conviction of, [79–80](#)
revelation of in a dream, [172–73](#)

Smith, Joseph, visions of from the angel Moroni, [58–59](#)
and *The Book of Mormon* (“Another Gospel of Jesus Christ”), [59](#)

Solomon, dream of, [95](#)

soulful dreams and visions. *See* natural dreams and visions

spiritual dreams and visions, [24–25](#), [41](#)
forms of spiritual visions, [69–70](#)
God speaking to your spirit, [43–45](#)
God's Spirit stirring your spirit to pray, [46–48](#)
and praying that you may interpret, [41–43](#)

your spirit and soul crying out to God, [45–46](#)
See also spiritual dreams and visions, indicators of

spiritual dreams and visions, indicators of
repetition of a dream, [68](#)
soul-searching, [67–68](#)
the stirring of your spirit or emotions upon waking, [67](#)

spiritual warfare
and authority, [62](#), [123](#), [173](#)
and deliverance, [125–26](#)
God’s use of dreams and visions in, [120–22](#)
and prayer, [122–23](#), [124–25](#), [178](#)

Stephen, vision of heaven and Jesus, [69](#)

Stevenson, Robert Louis, dream of, [51](#)

symbolism, [129–31](#)
assignment of meaning to symbols, [144–45](#), [160–61](#)
and the Bible as a primary source for determining what symbols mean, [131–32](#)
and dual meanings in dreams, [132–35](#)
and a glimpse of the eternal, [138–39](#)
Jesus’ use of, [130–31](#), [143–45](#)
research tools for interpreting symbols, [131–32](#), [161](#)
and the setting of a dream, [135–38](#), [144](#), [145](#)
See also symbols

symbols
animals, [150–51](#)
clothing, [152](#)
colors, [151–52](#)
crowds of people, [149](#)
and culture, [154–55](#)
death, [152–53](#)
flying, [149–50](#)
houses, [146–47](#)
money, [152](#)
numbers, [153–54](#)
people, [147–49](#)
pregnancy or babies, [153](#)
severing of fingers, [154](#)
symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Bible, [142](#)
symbols of Jesus in the Bible, [140](#), [141](#)
symbols in the parables, [140](#), [143–45](#)
symbols of the saints in the Bible, [140](#), [142–43](#)
symbols of Satan in the Bible, [141](#), [143](#)
vehicles, [154](#)
weather conditions, [154](#)

tongues and interpretation of tongues, [41–42](#)

warning, in dreams and visions, [102–5](#), [174](#)

Watson, John, [60](#)

Word of God. *See* Bible, the

words of knowledge, [111–12](#), [122](#)

words of wisdom, [112](#), [122](#)
and blessings in business, [113–15](#)
and Jacob's business dreams, [112–13](#)

Zechariah, dreams and visions of, [23](#)

Jane Hamon serves, with her husband, Tom, as senior pastor of Vision Church @ Christian International. In their more than thirty years of ministry together, they have built a thriving local church, ministered in more than fifty nations and helped to lead Christian International Ministries, founded by Dr. Bill Hamon. A clear prophetic voice and an eloquent teacher, Jane travels extensively ministering at national and international conferences, consulting with leaders, conducting prophetic workshops and teaching at Bible colleges. She is featured frequently on a variety of Christian television programs. A gifted storyteller, she has sprinkled her three books—*Dreams and Visions*, *The Deborah Company* and *The Cyrus Decree*—with rich personal experiences, extensive research and valuable teaching. Jane attended Christ For The Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas, and later received a bachelor of theology and an honorary doctorate of divinity from Christian International School of Theology. Jane makes her home in beautiful Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, where she enjoys fulfilling some of her favorite roles in life as wife, mother and now “Mimi” to her growing number of grandchildren.

DOES GOD REALLY SPEAK THROUGH DREAMS AND VISIONS?
COULD HE BE SPEAKING TO *YOU*? **ABSOLUTELY.**

In this revised and updated edition of her groundbreaking book, author and pastor Jane Hamon unravels the scriptural meanings of dreams and visions, helping you discern when a dream is prophetic direction for your life—and what to do about it.

This concise, practical guidebook will lead you through biblical texts, demystifying the language of dreams and visions so you can communicate with God in an important new way.

THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS SPEAKING. **DON'T MISS IT.**

Learn to understand and interpret God's messages to you so that you can live fully in His purpose for your life!

"I have read and taught a great deal on the subject of dreams and visions. In all my research, I have found *Dreams and Visions* one of the best-written resources, with great depth yet still easy to understand and apply. It is my joy to commend to you the writing, life and ministry of this excellent woman of God."

DR. JAMES W. GOLL, founder, Encounters Network,
Prayer Storm, 6E eSchool; international bestselling author

"This book is practical, thorough and relevant. I love this book and I love Jane Hamon."

BARBARA J. YODER, lead apostle,
Shekinah Regional Apostolic Center

JANE HAMON is a gifted teacher and storyteller and the author of several books. She is a senior leader of Vision Church at Christian International in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, together with her husband, Tom. The Hamons have three children and a growing number of grandchildren.

 **Chosen**
a division of Baker Publishing Group