

CESSATION OF VISIONS AND DREAMS

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I. DEFINITION

- a. Visions and dreams are vehicles through which God used to reveal His Holy Word.
- b. Some Bible verses to support this truth include: Numbers 12:6-8, “And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” Also in Hebrews 1:1-2, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”
- c. These biblical visions and dreams are not to be confused with our visions and dreams. Our use of the word “visions” means “to have foresight and plans and goal for the future.” Our “dreams” are defined as “a series of pictures or events in the minds of one who is sleeping.” They are for private consumption unlike the visions and dreams in the Bible which are recorded for our learning and study.
- d. What is recorded in the Bible as visions and dreams are in fact the very Word of God.

II. IMPLICATIONS

- a. Today, in some Charismatic circles it is portrayed that a person who receives visions and dreams is one who is close to God. He has been divinely endowed with a great privilege. He is honoured and placed on a pedestal.
- b. At times we, who are outside of the Charismatic circles, are confused and do not know how to react. Should we be intimidated? Dare we say categorically from the Bible that these are false? And even if these are true does it indicate anything special or spiritual about that person?
- c. What does the Bible teach concerning the recipient of such visions and dreams?
- d. An example for study and consideration -- Genesis 20:1-7, “And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. **But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night**, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But

Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. **And God said unto him in a dream,** Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.” [emphasis added]

- e. Abimelech was a Philistine king. He took Abraham’s wife in ignorance. If he had slept with Sarah then God’s plan for the salvation of mankind would have been jeopardized. Sarah was then with child, Isaac was his name. God appeared to Abimelech in a dream to stop him from sinning against God.
- f. The dream Abimelech received from God was real. It was given to him by God to stop him from sinning. This dream that Abimelech received from God was real and is recorded for our learning and understanding.
- g. Just because Abimelech received a real dream from God does it mean that he was born again? Does it mean that he was a spiritual person? Does it mean that he now has a special relationship with God? The answer to all these questions is an emphatic NO! God did not and will not reveal Himself to Abimelech again. Abimelech cannot call God Jehovah the way Abraham did. If Abimelech had been given a special relationship with God then he would not have to offer his offerings to God through Abraham. He had to do it through Abraham. What Abraham received from him were not gifts for telling a lie. They were offerings given to god through the hands of God’s prophet, Abraham.
- h. There are many more examples in the Bible such as the chief baker and butler (Genesis 40), Pharaoh (Genesis 41), Balaam’s ass (Numbers 22), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2), etc. who received dreams and visions from God. They did were not given any special relationship by God in any personal way when they received their respective dreams or visions. They were all unbelievers when God spoke to them through the dreams and visions.
- i. We should not be intimidated by the claims of the Charismatics today that they have received dreams and visions as if they are more spiritual than those who do not. The measure of true spirituality is never by the external experiences. The true measure is by one’s obedience to God’s Holy Word.
- j. The Christian’s walk with God is always the measure of a person’s spirituality. The nature of the believer’s gifts and the exercise of it is not a measure. It is not measured by his wealth or how successful he is in the world. His promotion to high positions is not a measure.

III. PROOF TEXT EXPLAINED

- a. The proof text used by many Charismatics to support their claim of present day visions and dreams is Acts 2:16-21.
- b. Acts 2:16-21, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 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: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- c. Peter’s quotation is taken from Joel 2:28-32, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”
- d. When Peter quoted from Joel, he deliberately omitted the word “afterward” in Joel 2:28. This is significant. From Joel’s perspective it was “afterward” because it was in the future. From Peter’s perspective it was the present, his present. What happened in Jerusalem at the time of the Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.
- e. Based upon Peter’s message, we see that Pentecost was the beginning of the “last days.” It begins with Acts 2:17 and 18. The fulfillment of these signs mentioned in Acts 2 where Israelites will receive visions and dreams begins the period known as “the last days.” This was precisely what the apostles received from God when they wrote the New Testament. His prophecy was fulfilled in the lives of the apostles.
- f. In biblical prophecy there is no multiple fulfillment. There is only ONE fulfillment. To teach that there are multiple fulfillments in biblical prophecies is wrong. You do not find it in the bible. All the prophecies in the Bible have only one fulfillment. To teach that there are multiple fulfillment will open a Pandora box that can never be closed. The Bible will become a book with no authority. Imagine the frequent fulfillment of the virgin birth of Christ or the resurrection and

death of Christ! All the biblical prophecies in the Bible have been fulfilled once and once only without repetition.

- g. As in prophecies, the emphasis is primarily on the events themselves. The certainty of the fulfillment of these prophetic events is the emphasis. This is faith. Therefore in some cases there are large gaps of time in between verses. Daniel 2 for example describes the kingdoms of Babylon (gold), Medes and Persians (silver), Greeks (bronze), Romans (iron), antichrist (clay and iron), and Millennium (stone not cut with the hands of man). The first four impacts the first coming of Christ and they occurred consecutively, one after the other. But there is a gap of more than 2,000 years between the Roman Empire and the empire of the antichrist which is still in the future. This antichrist empire is then immediately replaced by the Kingdom of Christ, the millennium.
- h. This gap is also found in Acts 2:17-20. Verses 17-18 describe the beginning of the last days. The end of the last days is verses 19-20. This interpretation is affirmed by the use of the singular “day” in the phrase, “before the great and notable day of the Lord come” of verse 20b.
- i. The end of the period of the last days describes the Second coming of Christ. This is confirmed in Matthew 24:29-31, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” The similarity of the description of the last few moments before the last day described in Acts 2:19-20 and Matthew 24:29-30 is startling. The detail description is revealed in the book of Revelation in the seven Trumpet Judgments and the Seven Vial Judgments.
- j. During this period of the last days anyone who call on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ will definitely be saved. The entire local church scene is in the last days. We are living in the last of the last days. Many of the signs mentioned in the bible preceding the Coming of our Lord have already been fulfilled. One of these signs is that of Matthew 24:24, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” It says here that great signs and wonders will be done before the end comes. The alternate name of the Charismatic Movement given by their leaders is The Sign and Wonders Movement.
- k. There is therefore no basis for the Charismatics to claim that Acts 2:17-20 continues on today and what they are experiencing is a

continuation of Acts 2. The inaugural beginning of the “last days” period was the once off Pentecostal event which will never be repeated again.

IV. VISIONS AND DREAMS TODAY?

- a. Are there still visions and dreams today where God still use these vehicles to speak to someone?
- b. Dr John Sung in his book did testify of receiving visions and dreams in his personal life. These dreams revealed to him his life’s ministry. He was told by God in his vision that he will serve God within a period of fifteen years. This period is divided into five equal periods of three years each. All these came to pass in Dr John Sung’s life.
- c. There is no reason to believe that a man of God like Dr John Sung would lie. What Dr Sung received was for him and him alone. His vision was not added to the Bible as THE Word of God.
- d. In this sense, the difference between a personal experience today and that of the Bible is very clear. The visions and dreams in the Bible are personal but they are also recorded for our learning and application. But not that of Dr Sung’s.
- e. God can still choose to use visions and dreams to call one of His children to do a great work for Him like what Dr Sing did. But they are very rare. Even when these visions and dreams are true, they must be evaluated very carefully against God’s Holy Word.
- f. They are for the person’s own consumption and benefit and must be attested by the leaders of the church, using the Word of God. If the person’s “calling” or claim based upon the dream is against the teaching in the Word of God then that person will be called a false dreamer or prophet. The Bible text to support this action is Deu. 13.

CONCLUSION

The warning from God’s Holy Word is that there must be no addition and no subtraction from God’s Holy Word. When the apostle John wrote Revelation, Revelation 22:18-19 says, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Claims of visions and dreams are on the increase, particularly within the Charismatic Movement. They will not stop. With the restoration of the prophetic and apostolic ministries in the Charismatic churches claims of visions and dreams will only increase. May God give to His people the discernment and courage to not only know what is right according to Scriptures but also to speak wisely and for the glory of God to help some loved ones out of this global Charismatic deception. AMEN.