

Sermon Notes

What To Do With Dreams?

WHAT ARE DREAMS?

Most answers through history fall into one of the following six categories:

1. Symbolic Messages.
2. Mind Windows.
3. Spiritual Worlds
4. Brain Randomness.
5. Memory Sorting.
6. Basically Nothing.

There were many ancient Egyptian and Babylonian dream books, explaining what each thing in your dream means. One ancient one mentions the following things - can you guess if each is good or bad?

- If you dream drinking warm beer...
- If you dream of eating figs...
- If you dream of having a bow in you hand...
- If a man dreams of his manhood becoming large...

Dream Encyclopedias are wrong and bad for your spiritual and mental health. They can range from what seems like harmless fun to very destructive, psychologically harmful, and spiritually misleading. On the surface the Bible might seem to support the idea that dreams generally have symbols to interpret. But it does not. This is a form of what was called 'divination' and rejected by Biblical faith.

Have you ever seen a dog dream? Part of dreaming is simply normal brain randomness and memory sorting! As your brain cells fire randomly during sleep all sorts of weird connections happen. Don't get too obsessed about it. This view is offered by King Solomon in the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes when he calls a dream 'much business' and compared dreams to a 'fool's voice'...

Ecclesiastes 5:4 "A dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words."

DREAMS ARE SOMETHING TO DISCERN

Jeremiah 29:8-9. "Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord."

Be very careful about strange people who claim they had spiritual dreams! Don't jump to conclusion about your dreams. Discern, think, grow wisdom, take time! Dreams are like feelings – something to think through. You don't just act on every feeling you have.

Dreams may have an element of a 'window to the mind' and may reveal much of what's going on inside you. So it's important to take notice, but do it carefully and with discernment. Don't make too much of your dreams or obsess over them!

But God's Spirit is everywhere – and God's Spirit can use anything – even dreams!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT DREAMS?

In the entire book there are only 21 or 22 dreams (some argue about whether Genesis 15 describes a vision or a dream). That's not many for a book bigger than 'Lord Of The Rings.' In fact it's obvious (when you compare to visions or miracles) that the Bible isn't very interested in dreams! You can see every single dream in the Bible on a cool infographic at 'The Overview Bible – Dreams Infographic'

Every Dream In The Bible. Genesis: 10, Judges: 1, First Kings: 1, Daniel: 3, Matthew: 6. Total: 21.

All the ancient people surrounding Israel were obsessed with dreams – especially the Egyptians and Babylonians. But not Israel – not the people who believed in the One God who made the world. The lack of interest in the Bible is obvious when you compare to the approach of every other culture around them! In the Bible, the people of God only interpreted dream symbols in Egypt and Babylon. So the Bible is not very interested in dreams.

But, like everywhere else they are a place God can speak. And when the Holy Spirit comes, every part of our lives becomes a place where we can see the love of God.

Acts 2:17. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams."

HOW CAN I KNOW IF MY DREAM COMES FROM GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT?

It will lead to Jesus.

It will affirm God's grace!

It won't contradict the Bible.

It won't contradict common sense – the Spirit won't tell you to harm yourself.

It should be checked (discerned) by others:

2 Corinthians 13:1 "Everything must be established by two or three witnesses."

That means if you think God said something on your own, you need to talk to some wise faithful people and let them test it. But there is an important one to know:

IF IT IS FROM GOD, IT WILL BE CLEAR!

In the Bible we see two different kinds of dreams. In Egypt and Babylon, people who did not believe in God had strange symbolic dreams that they did not understand. They turned to those who knew God, Joseph and Daniel to interpret them. But when people who were seeking God had a dream from God, it was totally clear. When people of faith dreamed they knew exactly what it meant. In fact, the meaning was always given simply and obviously. I'm not saying that if you have faith dreams will always be clear, but that if God speaks or directs you in a dream it certainly will be clear!

1 Corinthians 14:33 "God is not a God of confusion but of peace."

If you have weird dreams that don't make sense. If you have to puzzle over their meaning. They are not God talking. God does not bring confusion but peace.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING?

Hebrews 1:1,3 "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... The Son radiates God's own glory and is the very character of God..."

In Daniel 7:13 in a dream or vision – he sees JESUS! You may have dreams or visions, wonderful things, knowledge from God. But the clearest message of God is Jesus. Jesus is God in the flesh. God's love in a body. God in person. Don't rely on your feelings, or your thoughts, or your wisdom, or even your fancy dreams. Rely on Jesus. Because he is the proof of God's love!

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