

Dreams and Visions

By Dave DeWitt

Dreams and Visions In the Old Testament

Elihu the Buzite told Job,

In a dream, a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls on men, while they slumber in their beds, then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction (Job 33:15-16).

Apparently, it was the belief of most people at the time of Job (about 4000 years ago) that God spoke to individuals *in a dream, a vision of the night*. We find dreams and visions all through history with nearly every religion. Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon had a dream, and it was expected that his own wise men could interpret it (Daniel 2). Pharaoh had a dream in Egypt with the same expectation (Genesis 41). Abimelech was not surprised when God told him in a dream that he had Abraham's wife (Genesis 20). We can, therefore, conclude that Elihu's idea was a common one in all religions from Egypt to Babylon, including Israel. There does seem to be a difference in understanding the dreams. The Babylonians had special *magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners*, whose job included interpreting dreams (Daniel 4:7). The Egyptians had *magicians and wise men* for that purpose. Interestingly, none of them were able to interpret the dream without the presence of a Hebrew prophet. Abimelech was not a Hebrew, but he was in the land of Israel, and his dream was strictly about Abraham and Sarah.

But the Gentiles were not the only ones with dreams. The God of Israel used dreams and visions to communicate with His prophets. There is no biblical evidence that God ever revealed anything to Adam, Noah, Abraham, or Moses in a dream. The first revelation in the form of a *vision* was to Abraham in Genesis 15:1 (*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."*). The first mention of a *dream* is the one in Genesis 20, where God told Abimelech he had Abraham's wife. The next instance is when Jacob, *had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it* (Genesis 28:12). God gave dreams to both Jacob and his father-in-law Laban (Genesis 31:11, 24). As a boy, Joseph had a dream. His brothers already hated him because he was the favorite of his father. Then we are told, *they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words* (Genesis 37:5). This led to Joseph being sold into slavery and the whole clan being in Egypt for 430 years. This is followed by various different instances where people had dreams and visions.

Dreams and Visions In the New Testament

With the New Testament, we continue to hear about people receiving dreams and visions from God. Here is a list of all the dreams and vision in the New Testament:

- Zacharias saw a vision concerning the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:22).
- Joseph was told in a dream to take the Christ child to Egypt and again back from Egypt (Matthew 2:13-21).
- The transfiguration of Jesus before Peter, James and John was called a vision (Matthew 17:9). [There is no mention of Jesus ever having revelation from God in the form of a dream. The only vision is His transfiguration, although that would be an appropriate label for the revelation at His baptism as well.]
- During Jesus' trial, Pilot's wife sent him a message, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19).
- Paul received a vision on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9).

- Ananias had a vision to go to Paul and remove the blindness that accompanied Paul's vision (Acts 9:19-16).
- Cornelius was *a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. He saw in a vision an angel of God who told him to send for Peter* (Acts 10:1-8).
- Peter received a vision that declared all food clean (Acts 10).
- Paul received a couple of visions that directed his missionary journeys (Acts 16:6-10; 18:9-10), and apparently, some of the revelation he received was in the form of a vision (2 Corinthians 12:1).
- The New Testament ends with the book of Revelation, a vision given to the Apostle John (Revelation 9:17).

Dreams and Visions In the Church, Between the 1st and 21st Centuries

Although there are always stories about scattered dreams and visions in all religions (including Christianity), the primary leaders of the church, throughout the history of Christianity, did not report having nor encouraging people to pay attention to dreams and visions. The obvious difference between the New Testament church and church history is that the apostles reported experiencing dreams and visions, the church leaders for the next 1900 years did not.

We hear no reports or exhortations about dreams and visions from Athanasius, Augustine, Benedict, Wycliffe, Hus, Luther, Calvin, Knox, von Zinzendorf, Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Spurgeon, Moody, Darby, Scofield, Lewis, Ryrie, or Graham. There is no encouragement to look for or give credence to dreams and visions from the Moravian Brethren, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Reformed, the Puritans, the Separatists, or the Baptists.

This (leaders promoting dreams and visions) all began again in the 1900s. First in a small way, with the first tongues speaking in 1901, but especially with the charismatic movement of the 1960s and much more with the "New Apostolic Reformation" of the 1990s.

In June of 2012, Pat Robertson said,

Dreaming dreams and seeing visions of Jesus is happening today, not only in Christian countries, but also across the Muslim world, the descendants of the prophet, Abraham the patriarch. Men and women are coming to faith in Jesus Christ because Jesus Himself has appeared to them." [<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/insideisrael/2012/June/Dreams-Visions-Moving-Muslims-to-Christ/>]

Twenty-First Century Muslims Becoming Christians Through Dreams

There are many testimonies of conversions, especially among the Muslims, where people are leaving Islam and becoming Christians, because of dreams. [The following material is quoted without comment from these two sites, <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/insideisrael/2012/June/Dreams-Visions-Moving-Muslims-to-Christ/> and <http://www.amightywind.com/fastfood/dreams/040723muslimdreams.htm>.]

Tom Doyle, with [e3 Ministries](#), said, "They're content Muslims and they're having dreams over and over." The phenomenon of dreams and visions has surfaced throughout the Muslim world, from Indonesia to Morocco.

"In the church if you ask how many people came to Christ, 80 percent will say, 'I saw Him in a dream... Many veteran missionaries to the Muslim world say dreams and visions, along with satellite television, are introducing Muslims to Jesus in unprecedented numbers. They add that more Muslims are coming to Jesus than at any other time in the 1,400-year history of Islam.

For at least ten years, reports have proliferated of Muslims converted to Christianity through dreams. The reports have included villagers in places like Morocco. We first heard about this in the early 1990s.

The examples are multitudinous. A Muslim from Malaysia saw her deceased Christian parents in a dream, celebrating in Heaven. Jesus, in a white robe, told her, "If you want to come to Me, come!" She did.

A man from western Africa saw a religious Muslim in hell, and a poor Christian, who could not even give alms, in heaven. A voice explained that the decisive point was not the alms, but the faith in Jesus.

A missionary working among the Tausugs, the Philippines' largest Muslim group, reports that a number of faithful Muslims "saw Jesus" in their dreams following last Ramadan (this again according to Dawn's Fax). One man dreamed of Jesus killing a huge dragon in a duel and the following day had the same dream again—which opened him to the Gospel.

A member of the Yakan people in Basilan Province dreamed that the Prophet Mohammed could not look Jesus in the eye. When he told his cousin, a Christian, of the dream, his cousin told him that the dream meant that Jesus is greater than Mohammed.

One woman told us that on the night she heard about Jesus, nothing happened until she went to sleep. While she slept, she had a terrible dream, in which a satanic figure told her, 'You will never escape from me.' But now she has also become a Christian.

There are numerous reports that many of the Berbers living in the Algerian Atlas Mountains are coming to Christ through similar dreams and visions, forming mostly underground cell-churches.

An Egyptian Muslim was reading the Gospels according to yet another report and had just reached Luke Chapter 3 when a strong wind swept the room, and a voice said, "I am Jesus Christ, whom you hate. I am the Lord you are seeking." He decided to follow Jesus that day.

A well-informed source, who for obvious reasons remains unnamed, reports that a former Islamic "Imam" or spiritual leader has led 3,000 Muslims to Jesus, coming to his belief in Christ through appearances and dreams in which a white man told him to study the Bible. His method is simple: in conversation, he asks others, "Have you seen a white man in your dreams recently?" If they have not, he tells them, "I was just wondering. Thanks." If they answer positively, he continues by...explaining, "That is Jesus. He wants to speak with you, because He wants you to follow Him."

Some time ago, Bill Bright, director of the mission agency Campus Crusade for Christ, wrote that "we are experiencing an amazing phenomenon. Muslims in particular are having dreams and visions confirming the reality of Christ. After one radio program reported that Jesus had appeared to many Muslims in a dream and said to them, 'I am the way,' the radio station received thousands of letters from Muslims in North Africa and the Middle East, in which the listeners said they had suddenly understood earlier dreams. They then wanted more information about Jesus."

Comparing Recent Muslim Dreams To Biblical Dreams

Two Muslim Dreams

“That night I saw Jesus in a **dream**. First, Jesus touched my forehead with his finger. And after touching me, He said, ‘You belong to me,’ And then He touched me above my heart,” ‘You have been saved, follow me. You belong to me,’ he said. “I decided I’m not going to finish the Hajj, the pilgrimage. Whatever it takes, I’m going to follow that voice.”

[In a **dream**] “I found myself having supper with a man I knew to be Jesus. He had come to visit me in my home and stayed for two days. He sat across the table from me, and in peace and joy, we ate dinner together. Suddenly, the dream changed. Now I was on a mountaintop with another man. He was clothed in a robe and shod with sandals. How was it that I mysteriously knew his name, too? John the Baptist. What a strange name. I found myself telling this John the Baptist about my recent visits with Jesus.”

Two Biblical Dreams

Gen. 41:17 So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, “In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile; and behold, seven cows, fat and sleek came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. Lo, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; and the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows. Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke. (Genesis 41:17-20).

... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a **dream** and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.” ... But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead” (Matthew 2:13; 19-20).

Observations:

1. It is hard to find actual testimonies of Muslim dreams from the Muslims who had the dreams (the above two are repeated in several articles). What you can find are many charismatic Christian leaders telling us about Muslim dreams. One site is actually called “Five Remarkable Testimonies” of Muslim dream conversions. But all five are accounts written by charismatic Christian leaders. They are not testimonies by the Muslim converts themselves. Most of the other “testimonies” are a few words from the Muslim convert, interspersed with many comments of the charismatic missionary. For the most part (not always), these “testimonies” about Muslims being converted to Christianity are being presented by the charismatic elements of Christianity, and are supportive of their views.

2. The Muslim dreams sound like dreams any of us might have. We all have sketchy vague dreams that jump from one scene to another. Often we can, for unknown reasons, identify someone in the dream, a deceased parent or grandparent, a well-known figure, a former teacher, professor, or mentor. Our dreams are vague scenes not connected to one another and without a specific message. This seems to be the case with these Muslim dreams. The Biblical dreams, which were revelations from God, were clear, specific, and with a distinct message. Even in dreams like that of Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh, where they did not know the interpretation, the dream itself was clear and specific. In the case of Mary’s husband Joseph, his instruction about Jesus was precise and clear about what he

was to do. Pharaoh's dream, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and Joseph's dream were not like we usually have.

3. There are over 2,100,000,000 (2.1 billion) Muslims in the world. For the most part they all know about Jesus and Christianity, just like Christians know about Mohammed and Islam. Is it so amazing that some of them, even thousands of them, are having dreams where they see themselves talking with Jesus, or some vague unidentifiable figure some charismatic Christian later tells them is Jesus. I am not questioning their conversion, but can we confidently conclude that the Jesus of the Bible is appearing to them?

4. Muslim dreams are all about individual people and what they are to do for their own benefit (usually their healing or salvation). The biblical dreams were all about what God was doing. Jacob's ladder dream was about God's covenant to Abraham's descendants. Joseph's dream was about what God was doing with the 12 tribes. Pharaoh's dream was about what God would do with the nation of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and Daniel's dreams were about what God would do with the whole course of Gentile history. **Mary's husband Joseph was the only New Testament believer to have dreams.** And they were about God protecting the Christ child. **Nobody in the Bible ever had a dream about his or her own personal healing or salvation.**

5. The Bible never suggests that regular believers should expect dreams or visions from God. The Bible is a record of God's intervention in history to bring about His sovereign plan for the ages and on into eternity, from the Garden of Eden to the heavenly New Jerusalem. God revealed Himself to Moses, but not the other two million plus Israelites who left Egypt. God gave dreams to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar but not to the other Egyptians and Babylonians. God revealed things to the prophets of Israel, but not to the average Israelite. God revealed His message to the apostles and New Testament prophets, but not to every believer in the church.

6. The New Testament model for evangelism was missionaries going to the lost with the Gospel, not people having dreams and visions which led them to the missionaries. Paul asked,

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things" (Romans 10:14-15).

The apostles never said anything about salvation coming through dreams and visions, even in difficult areas where the missionaries had not gone, or where Scripture was unavailable.

7. One thing is clear. Those who follow dreams and visions do not see the Bible as a sufficient revelation from God. Say all you want about people eventually finding their way to Christ through a dream; they do not have a sufficient Bible. Dreams and visions assume that the Bible is an insufficient revelation. That's why the biblical prophets received them. The Bible was not yet finished. It was incomplete and hence insufficient until the Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation. To claim further revelation from God today is to declare that the Bible is still insufficient.

8. When someone has a dream they believe to be a revelation from God, they will make that revelation their most important path to God, if not the most important thing in their lives. As the former Muslim man above said, "Whatever it takes, I'm going to follow that voice." That sounds impressive when the voice is identified as Jesus or an angel. But remember, that's essentially what Mohammed did when he started Islam, and what Joseph Smith did starting Mormonism. That's what cult leaders do all the time. It is also what people do who say that God told them to divorce, remarry,

be at peace with their homosexuality, go into debt, etc. Once a person identifies an experience outside the Bible as being from God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit or an angel, whether it is consistent with the Bible or not, it will likely become their master. Their tendency will be to will follow more instructions from that master.

The Old Testament Evaluates Dreams and Visions

The word *dream* or *dreams* occurs 102 times in the English NASV translation. It is clear that God used dreams and visions to communicate with certain people at certain times. But just because God used dreams did not mean prophetic dreams were always from God. The Mosaic Law says:

*If a prophet or a **dreamer of dreams** arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom 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 find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul... But that prophet or that **dreamer of dreams** shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God ... So you shall purge the evil from among you (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).*

Through Jeremiah, God warned of the use of dreams by false prophets. He wrote:

*"I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a **dream**, I had a **dream**!' ... "The prophet who has a **dream** may relate his **dream**, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the LORD ... For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they **dream**" (Jeremiah 23:25, 28; and 29:8)*

Zechariah confirms,

*...the diviners see **lying visions** and tell **false dreams**; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd (Zechariah 10:2).*

Solomon's advice was:

*For in many **dreams** and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God (Ecclesiastes 5:7).*

God told Moses's sister Miriam,

*Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; **With him I speak mouth to mouth**, Even openly, and not in dark sayings... (Numbers 12:6-8).*

Miriam was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20), so apparently, she thought her revelations were equal to the revelation given to Moses. God said that was not so. Revelation *mouth to mouth* would always trump revelation in visions and dreams. Concerning this *mouth to mouth* verbal revelation, *the LORD said to Moses, "Write this [verbal revelation] in a book as a memorial (Exodus 17:14).* Thus, Moses *mouth to mouth* revelation became the first five books of inspired Scripture. God told Joshua, *This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth (Joshua 1:8).* He did not tell him to look for dreams and visions. The Israelite children were to be taught *to keep all His statutes and His commandments (Deuteronomy 6:2)*, not His dreams and visions. David said, *I love Your law (Psalm 119:97).* He never said, "I love Your dreams and visions." So although God gave prophets dreams and visions, the written Word of God trumped any other form of revelation.

The New Testament Evaluates Dreams and Visions

The New Testament did something not done in the Old Testament. The Old Testament ended looking for revelation from God to be added to it (Malachi 4:5-6). The New Testament predicted that prophecy would be *done away* and told us not to add to it.

- **1 Corinthians 13:8-10** *Love never fails; but if there are gifts of **prophecy**, they **will be done away**; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, **the partial will be done away**.*
- **Revelation 22:18** *I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book.***

The meaning of these passages has been debated (of course), but they cannot just be ignored. Revelation 22 is basically a command to not add any words to the book of Revelation. It's as if I set up a row of bottles and said, "Don't add any bottles to this last bottle." Any addition to the row would be an addition to that bottle, and any addition to that bottle would be an addition to the row. In the same way, any additional revelation to the Bible (the row of bottles) would be an addition to the last one, and any addition to the last one would be an addition to the Bible. But if I have a dream or vision where Jesus spoke to me in words, those words would be words that can be added to the book of Revelation, since they would be new revelation from God. But the book of Revelation expressly forbids that.

First Corinthians 13 is a prophecy. If a biblical prophecy has been fulfilled, then the best way to determine the meaning is (obviously) to see how it was fulfilled. That's how we come to the conclusion that prophecy should be interpreted literally, because that's how past biblical prophecy was fulfilled. Prophecy given to Abraham, Daniel, Ezekiel, and all the prophets, that has already been fulfilled, has been fulfilled literally. It may be given in many different forms (dreams, visions, metaphors, poems, parables, etc.), but it is always fulfilled literally. So we should assume that is the case when it comes to the predictions: *prophecy will be done away, tongues will cease, and knowledge will be done away*. [Obviously, this last reference is not about doing away with general knowledge, but (contextually) about supernatural *knowledge*.]

So how was this prophecy fulfilled in the church, when it comes to dreams and visions? As previously mentioned, the last believer in the Bible to have a dream was Joseph (of Joseph and Mary). For sure, the apostles had visions (2 Corinthians 12:1). But (except for John receiving the book of Revelation), the last mention of a vision is in Acts 26, where Paul reviewed his earlier vision of chapter 9 to King Agrippa (Acts 26:19). So the apostles never mention dreams, and somewhere in the middle of the New Testament, before it was finished being revealed, all mention of visions ended. There is no exhortation by Christ to look for dreams or visions. Early on, the apostles expected some people to speak with prophecy and tongues (1 Corinthians 14). But they are not mentioned after the Corinthian letters, where they are prophesied to cease. Actually, Paul said, *Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, **taking his stand on visions he has seen**, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind* (Colossians 2:18).

But What About Joel 2, Quoted by Peter in Acts 2?

In June of 2012, Pat Robertson said this.

"The Bible tells us (in the book of Joel) that 'In the later days I'm going to pour out my Spirit on all flesh and your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams.'

Well, dreaming dreams and seeing visions of Jesus is happening today.”

[<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/insideisrael/2012/June/Dreams-Visions-Moving-Muslims-to-Christ/>]

The point of Pat Robertson, and most charismatic leaders, is that, even though dreams and visions did not happen throughout church history, they are happening today because we are approaching the *last days*.

Here is what Peter told the crowd in Jerusalem.

For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: “And it shall be in the last days,” God says, “That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2:15-18).

Notice that both Joel and Peter were using the clause, *And it shall be in the last days*, in reference to days **after** the Messiah has come, not about the last days before the Messiah comes. Let’s first go back to Joel. In the verse before this passage, Joel is talking about the Millennial Kingdom, after Christ returns.

Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame (Joel 2:27).

The next verse says,

*It will come about **after** this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams.*

In other words, the dreams and visions will take place after Christ returns and sets up the future Millennial Kingdom. The dreams and visions will confirm that the Messiah has already come. And, even though there were no dreams recorded for anyone in the church, that’s how Peter is using this passage, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and He had already come. Peter went on to quote things that will only happen after the Second Coming, but he uses it here as confirmation that Jesus was the Christ and He had already come.

As you can see, Robertson makes the classic mistake of ignoring the context. Notice, he is not developing an interpretation of this passage and applying it to today. Rather, he is looking at the experiences people are having today and applying them back into this passage.

Let’s Write Down What We Know about Dreams and Visions

1. God is sovereign and might do anything He pleases, including using dreams and visions today. One should never determine that we completely understand God, or what God can do or will do, or will not do.
2. God definitely used dreams and visions as a form of revelation at various times in history. They are recorded in both the Old and New Testaments.
3. Many religious people, from many different religions, experienced dreams and visions, and have all through history. Those dreams and visions lead to people’s allegiance to various different religions and cults. Therefore, some dreams and visions are clearly not from God.
4. Written revelation (inspired Scripture) is always superior to dreams and visions (Number 12:1-8; Deuteronomy 6:1-6; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:97-105; Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
5. In general, Judeo-Christian leadership received and held to visions until the end of the New Testament, but not throughout history until the mid-1900s. Even in recent times, the closer

leaders are to the Bible, the less likely they are to support the validity of dreams and visions. [For example, you are more likely to get support for following dreams and visions from Pat Robertson or Joel Osteen, than from J. Vernon McGee or John MacArthur.]

6. The problem comes in determining if any particular dream or vision is from God. Most will say something like, “*test the spirits* to see if it is consistent with the Bible.” Here’s the problem with that.
 - A. The command to *test the spirits* (1 John 4:1) was given by the Apostle John to test the whole message of false teachers and false prophets. It was not to evaluate some particular dream or vision, which usually has vague, short, or unrelated statements disconnected from a context.
 - B. The whole point of a new revelation is that it not only adds to, but may change, a former one. So how can new revelation be tested by old revelation? Adam was to be a vegetarian, Noah could eat meat if he drained the blood, Moses could only eat “clean” animals, and Peter could eat anything. How could, say, Peter’s vision of the sheet of all food to eat, be tested with the previous revelation to Moses? New revelation adds to, and often changes the specific directives of, previous revelation. That’s the point of false prophets like Mohammed and Joseph Smith.
 - C. Most people do not know enough about the Bible to be able to test a dream or vision if they had one. And there is usually not enough context in today’s dreams or visions to even understand it.
 - D. Most visions and dreams today tend to confirm what the recipient already believes, or wants to hear: “God told me I don’t have to live with this spouse anymore.” “God told me to be at peace with homosexuality.” “God told me to buy this bigger house.” You don’t tend to hear about a vision from God that says: “Stay with your hateful spouse.” “Your homosexuality is an abomination.” or “Deny yourself.” Vision recipients usually seem to be *wanting to have their ears tickled* (2 Timothy 4:3).
 - E. When people look at their dreams or visions as revelation from God, then the Bible is no longer **sufficient** as a source of revelation from God. Their focus for spiritual direction is now off the Bible and on their experience. Experience has become the new authority.

For example, I recently heard of a sick and dying preacher who said he saw Jesus standing at the foot of his bed, and Jesus said, “I am coming soon.” Notice: This “Jesus” was not an earthly prophet or teacher whose message could be known, evaluated and tested. There was no context to tell if “Jesus” meant He was “coming soon” for the preacher, or “coming soon” for all of us. The vision confirmed what the preacher wanted to hear. This preacher is now focused on the vision, not the Bible. And if this is Jesus speaking, we can add His words to the Bible because then these are inerrant words from God. But the Bible expressly forbids our doing that (Revelation 22:18).

Therefore, for us to **declare**, “I have received a dream or vision from God” or **use it for decision-making**, is fraught with problems.