

DREAMS SERIES

THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS

I Cor. 12:7 *To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.* All the nine gifts of the spirit are divided into three categories, the revelation gifts, the power gifts and the vocal gifts. We saw how the revelation gifts and the vocal gifts are some times used by God through the Holy Spirit manifestation to lead and to guide. This morning we want to see about spectacular guidance and we will consider them one by one. Some of these things we have shared during the overnight prayer. So some times when we repeat certain materials those of you who were attending the overnight prayer just bear with me for some time because there are others who didn't attend and get to hear this message. If I just go straight to the substance of the message they may not be able to follow along.

We are talking about how to be led by the Spirit. How the voice of the Holy Spirit is like. And we spoke about how the Holy Spirit can use manifestations. That is the Holy Spirit directly involve in certain activities. It is not only the voice of the human spirit but the voice of the Holy Spirit. This morning we are going to consider dreams as a channel for the Holy Spirit leading and guidance in our lives.

Lets look at Job 33:14-17 *For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while they slumber on their beds, then he opens the ears of me, and terrifies them with warnings, that he may turn man aside from his deed, and cut off pride from man.* He says that the Lord speaks onto each one of us. Bear in mind that what we are teaching is a further

development of what we taught on the gift of discerning of spirits. We classify that there are three types of visions and dreams. There is a parabolic type of visions and dreams, which means that they are symbols. Then the second type where we call the message dream or vision where it only carries a message. And the third type where we call an actual dream and vision which means actually as you see it, it comes to pass. A parabolic one is symbols. Like Daniel saw a symbol of animals that were coming and going, the rams and the goats in the book of Daniel. Those animals represent kingdoms. Pharaoh had a dream. And in his dream he saw seven fat cows and seven thin calves. Those cows represent seven years of prosperity and seven years of famine. Those are symbolic or parabolic dreams. They are like parables.

The second type of dreams or visions is what we call a message type. We don't have any examples of dreams in the bible of that category. But we have a vision like in the book of Acts 16 Paul saw a Macedonian man and it was a message vision. In other words the details of the dreams are not so important as the message it carries. It carries only one message "Come over here to Macedonia". How do we know that dream of Paul was a message dream and not an actual dream? It is because when Paul went over to Macedonia he didn't look for the man. In fact the first people that he met in Acts 16 were women.

The third category of dream is what we call the actual where exactly as you see it, it comes to pass, every details of it. We know that Paul's Macedonian vision cannot be that category. Because if Paul considered it as the third category when he reached Macedonia he should have looked for that man. But he did not. He understood that it is just a message. It is not important whether it's a Macedonian or woman wearing a Macedonian garment calling him. Now the third category of dream is the actual. Like for example Joseph in the gospel of Matthew had a dream of an angel coming to him and telling him to go to Egypt. Then he had a dream to come back. Then he had a dream to tell him where to go and stay. And in the dream he saw an angel. It was an actual vision that came when a person is subconscious. So it was an actual dream; everything came exactly to pass. There is no necessity of an interpretation.

In the category of dream please note the difference between what I call natural

dream and a spiritual dream. The third category of dreams we leave out. See dreams can be caused from your daily activities or they can be caused from the spirit realm. If you are a born again believer you ought not to have any dreams from the enemy. The enemy can give you dreams; we do not call them dreams we call them nightmares. It is very common for people who is half asleep who sense a spiritual force that comes and presses on the top of them. It is not from the Lord. When you are in the Lord the blood of Jesus covers you. If you don't have open doors you ought not to have those kinds of nightmares.

As is mentioned here in the book of Job 33 that God does speak through dreams. And dreams are one of the most primary easy modes for God to operate and lead and guide our life. My life has been led by dreams all along the way. Dreams play the first category and open way where God communicate to us, even to some unbelievers who have not come to know God yet. This is a general statement in Job 33. It's a general statement that says that God in His mercy, God in His compassion does guide and lead believers and unbelievers through dreams. We can classify dreams as one of the leadings of the Holy Spirit. It's the working of the Holy Spirit. Like Pharaoh king of Egypt was led and guided by a dream. He had a dream that was important but he did not understand what it means.

So many times there are people who had dreams that they don't understand what it means. And I know that in the world there are some psychological teachings on interpretation of dreams. I am not ignorant of them; I am aware of them. Some of the interpretations are way out and they are not scriptural. If you are an intellectual and you have gone through Sigmund Freud's theories, you will find that he is a psychoanalyst. The problem with Freud is that he only has a natural interpretation of all dreams. In fact he thinks that all dreams flow from mainly the erotic realm. If we put him to the test in Job 33 he would fail the test because he completely excludes the fact that there is a spirit realm. And God communicate in the spirit realm to us. So that is also another wrong understanding of dreams in this natural world.

The other is what I call the occultist. Dreams can come from the natural realm or the spiritual realm. Now dreams can come from the natural realm tend to be a working

of your human spirit and soul. I am excluding dreams that come from the demonic realm. Its not supposed to be a part of the Christian life. If it is ever in our life then it is easily dealt with by confessing to God and a short prayer and meditation on the Word before you sleep will do. Understand your authority as a believer and the power of the blood of Jesus. Jesus promised His beloved sleep. That's in the book of Proverbs. He gave His beloved sleep Proverbs chapter 3. Prov. 3:24 *When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.* So we rule out the demonic realm if the blood of Jesus covers us. The demonic realm has no interference.

So the only two realms that we have time to deal with is what we call natural dreams and spiritual dreams. Natural dreams come from your daily activities. Everyday when you have activity your subconscious mind and your spirit rearranges it. The microprocessor keeps rearranging and putting it into the right slot. That is what I call a natural activity. In the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 5:3 *For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.* Notice that a dream comes through much activity. Verse 7 says *For when dreams increases, empty words grow many; but do you fear God?* This is by Solomon one of the wisest man in the East in his days. He understood the significance of dreams that they come through much activities. This explains that even if you have had dreams, that won't increase your fear of God. Such dreams come from soulish and physical activity and will have little bearing on your spiritual life. They could not be from God since they do not increase the fear of God in you.

There are dreams that come from our subconscious and spirit man aligning together. The language of the spirit man is in visions and dreams, and both are in picture forms. You arrange that in your life every time you go through activities. That form of dream is more for your private edification. It exposes you. For example, you could put up a front in your conscious life, where outwardly you are very outgoing and very sociable and cheerful and you put on a front; in front of people you wear a mask. We all know how to do that. Our conscious mind is very clever to put our image before people. But you have what I call a dual life. Behind inside your conscience and inside your heart you feel lonely, you feel inferior, and you feel dejected and rejected inside your heart and inside your life your true self is hidden from people.

The interesting thing about your dreams is that you cannot hide your true self from yourself. In your dreams who you really are stands out. If outwardly you look like a brave man, in your dreams you are actually afraid. Every single dream you have is one of your inner fears. If outwardly you look like a very upright person with good social life and no apparent weakness in your life but inwardly you know you have. In your dreams you are exposed - it comes out. You cannot hide from yourself in your dream. Who you really are what you really are comes forth and stands out. That's what I call a natural dream. They are useful to a certain extent. They are not used for leading. They are useful to understand your inner self. We must understand our inner self. We must understand what our main weaknesses and strong points are. Your dreams will expose them to you so that you are aware of them and you could deal with them.

Each time as you grow and your character develops your dreams also improve. So the dreams come through much activity in your life. Every time when you sleep it has to process the whole thing. What you experienced consciously has to be processed everyday. Although some people say they never have dreams, yet they do but they don't remember them. Every person has dreams. And of course unless it is important you would remember them. Otherwise it is not quite so important. So everyone practically has dreams. But there are some who don't remember anything. Those are what I call natural dreams.

Natural dreams are useful for self-analysis. Only the spirit of man will know what is in the man. Even our conscious mind does not know what your true self is. Our conscious mind can be so trained to ignore certain things. But the bible says in I Cor. 2 that the spirit of a man within him knows what is inside the person. So your spirit has the most accurate perception of yourself. Each one of you right now has a perception of yourself in your conscious mind. But the most true and accurate perception is in your spirit man. As we renew our mind what our spirit man perceive is translated into our conscious mind. Then you have a true estimation and judgment of yourself, where you are heading, where you are right now, where you have been. We must live our lives in such a way that what is inside and outside is one and not be a double character.

Having seen what a natural dream and activity is like we want to see what a spiritual dream and activity is like. Those are what we classify as messages from God. The Holy Spirit speaks to us. Its just like in the conscious realm we all have thoughts all the time. Some of our thoughts come from our soul; some of our thoughts come from our spirit man. Other thoughts do some times come from the enemy. But there are some thoughts that are strong and clear with a ring of authority and presence of God which are the thoughts of the Holy Spirit. That's the conscious realm.

In the subconscious realm there are dreams that are the result of the activity of the soul and there are dreams that are the result of the activity of the spirit and both are linked together. But there are some dreams that are very authoritative with a measure of God's presence involved. Usually you will remember those dreams. You may even get right immediately after those dreams for no apparent reason. Only those dreams are classified as leadings of the Holy Spirit. Dreams directly instigated by the Holy Spirit with a message. Why does God speak in dreams? There are many things that God could not convey to our conscious mind while we are awake. As a result God has to wait until we are asleep then He speaks to us in a dream. That is one of the major ways that God communicate. Don't neglect that.

You should keep a dream book where you record important dreams. If you are new in all these you may not be able to differentiate dreams that are from your human spirit and from the Spirit of God. It is just like people having difficulty differentiating their own thoughts and the spirit man thought and the Holy Spirit thought. It's the same progress that you got to go through and grow and learn. Just record dreams that you could remember. Then as you study them as you grow in God you could began to categorize this dream as a natural dream; that dream is from the spirit man; and these dreams are from the Spirit of God. Some are so clear-cut that you cannot miss it. Some you cannot classify them immediately.

So having seen that there are dreams that are from God, lets look at some bible examples of dreams and their interpretations. And how to interpret dreams and what are the major principles. There are these three categories of dreams, the symbolic or parabolic dream, the actual dream and the message dream. The second two categories don't need much teaching. Like the clear-cut actual dreams, they are

just like it is. The clear-cut actual dream or vision does not need interpretation. The message one usually is clear-cut also. There is a very strong message that comes with it. The details of the dream are not important but the major message of the dream is. The interesting thing is that a major portion of most of dreams is in the symbolic realm. In the first category it is called the parabolic dream. And those are the most difficult to deal with and almost 95 percent of the dreams are in that category.

Lets look at the book of Genesis 41:17. Remember that all the wise men and magicians could not interpret this dream. Verse 17 *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile; and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass; and seven other cows came up after them, poor and very gaunt and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the thin and gaunt cows ate up the first seven fat cows, but when they had eaten them no one could have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as gaunt as at the beginning. Then I awoke. I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good; and seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."*

A lot of people are in Pharaoh's dilemma where they have some message from God but they have no interpretations. Notice that Pharaoh was standing on the riverbank. A river always symbolizes life of people in a dream. And suddenly there were these fat cows that come from the river. Not along the river but from the river which is interesting because cows don't swim. But as I said that dreams doesn't quite work in the same realm as our natural realm. I mean you see very odd things. Then these seven lean cows came up and ate the seven fat cows, and still they remained thin as ever. We know that cows don't eat cows. Immediately we realize that Joseph has a tremendous interpretation and he said that the seven cows and the seven stalks of grain are one. This is reasonable easy because the stalks talk about harvest.

You must look at the context of the people in those days. See in those days wealth is measured in cows and grain. If you are rich the way you show that you are rich is

your possession of grain and cows. Understand the context of those people. Today in the natural realm if some one is rich they show their prosperity by the cars they drive, by their dressing and by their usage of things or by the house they live in. This is not important as a Christian. It doesn't matter what kind of house you live in. The most important to remember is that you got a mansion in heaven. But we need to understand our daily context so that we could interpret the dreams. In those days cows and grains symbolize wealth. Today if God is speaking to you about a famine coming, He may not use cows and grains because they don't mean anything to you now. In our days the symbols have changed. And so don't think that when God speaks to you and suppose that you are a person of authority that when God speaks to you about a famine coming, He is going to use cows again. He will use other symbols that we understand today. The first major principle about parabolic dreams and messages from God is the representation of the symbols that are important. What do the symbols in the dream represent today? See each symbol that is used in a dream represents one major principle or point.

Let me give a little illustration. One day there was this brother whom I knew. He has already fulfilled part of his dream. He was praying because God was speaking to him about going to New Zealand to do some ministry work. He prayed very much and he found out all the sources he could to get a visa to enter China. He shared with me how God called him to China to minister. There is no legal way he could get a visa to enter that country from Malaysia. (At that time there were governmental restrictions, which have since been lifted up.) So God spoke to him and impressed upon his heart and life that he has to be a citizen of another country before he could go to China.

So finally he realized that God was speaking to him about New Zealand. As he was praying and contemplating he had this dream. He had a good job drawing a good salary and a high position in the company. He says why doesn't God speak to him through other ways. In his dream he sees himself driving this car and this car went to a certain place. After driving the car for sometime he ended up in this place. He knew it was a different country. Then he got up. He was praying about getting a visa and there is no way in the natural that he seems to be able to get what he wanted. He had done his best. Then he had this dream. In the end this is the interpretation of the dream that he got.

That car he drove was a means of conveyance to and fro. He was praying about a visa, which was his main concern. A visa is a legal mean that allows you to enter in and out of a foreign country. In that particular dream his car meant getting the visa. You see he never had a dream. He never had that kind of car before. And then he got this car in the dream. It was given to him. So in that dream the car represented the visa. The keys that were given to him represented a way that God will reveal to him to get it. I won't go into details today he is in New Zealand. And he is preparing for his next stage. It was not an actual dream because he didn't get any car. In fact he sold his car. But he knew that dream was important because the moment he finished that dream he woke up. He woke up and it was so strong in his life that God says that what He told him will come to pass. He knew that it was a dream from God.

So before we can interpret dreams we need to understand what those symbols are in our life. The reason I point to it is there is such a difference in the meanings of symbols in different people's lives. There is no natural way to say car equals visa. So you got to understand his context and where God is speaking to him from.

So here we have Pharaoh's dreams. Cows and stalks represent money and prosperity. And so you got the first part of the interpretation. You know that God is speaking about prosperity. And Pharaoh was standing at the riverbank pointing to his position of authority. Then the number seven will leave only the other interpretation of years. A river and a mountain in the context of God symbolize in the bible time span. That's how Joseph understood that to be years. If you have dreams about yourself walking through a path or mountain, today modern concept you see yourself standing by the highway. Remember roads and paths and things that flow like a river or perhaps like yourself going up a mountain symbolize time span or a period of time in the Word of God. And that's where the time span is emphasized. The cows came from the river. In that dream the river symbolize time. Some times the river symbolizes the Holy Spirit. So from that time span that Pharaoh was standing by comes these seven cows representing seven years. Seven fat years followed by seven lean years. Joseph has his dream interpreted.

Lets look at the other two dreams he interpreted. In the book of Genesis chapter 40, there was the baker and the butler. Verse 9 *So the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches; as soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's hand.* That was a positive dream. Vine, blossoms, a cup and grapes are all positive representation.

Let me explain a little bit. In the scriptures the winepress can symbolize judgment. One of the laws to interpretation of dreams is consistency with God's Word. Whatever is represented in the Word must be consistent with your dream and interpretation. In other words if in the bible a snake represent evil then however you interpret your dream if you see a snake it is evil; if it's a black snake of course its evil even if it's a white snake it still is evil. It must be consistent. Dogs in the bible are bad symbols. And all the unclean animals in the bible symbolize things that are not good. So your interpretation of symbols must be consistent. But there are a lot of grounds for variations. A winepress some times symbolizes a judgment. Then you must take into context the symbol in his days.

To the butler that cup represents his employment. All the time he was employed as a cupbearer. That was his basic employment. If you were employed in an accountancy firm all the time you are looking at are facts and figures. And that is your expertise. Then you went for some unrelated courses and you resigned from your accountancy profession. Three four years later you came and then you sort of in a dream see those facts and figures and yourself sitting at the table. You know what those represent? Employment. Because to you that is the way God speaks to you in facts and figures that is your field of work. As for the case of the butler that cup was his work. The cup represented his employment.

Then we have the vine symbolizing a time span or something that is growing. And blossoms symbolize something new. We are talking about the vine. Any flowers or things that blossom represent something new. Either it's a resurrection or restoration. And for his case since he is still alive it represented restoration. And interpreting those three branches, it means three days. Why not three years? It is because flowers have a shorter span of time of life. Flowers don't last many years it

come and go in short season. For him he interpreted straight away as three days. He understands that flowers can last only a few days so the measurement is three days.

Now for his interpretations of the second dream that the baker had. Verse 16 *When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream; there were three white (now normally white symbolizes good) baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head."*

Now white normally symbolizes good but it depends on what it is combined with. If it's a white snake it doesn't symbolize something good. It symbolizes deception. But in his context and in his day when somebody dies they are embalmed in white linen. So white is a possible symbol of death in their time. Today funeral services people usually wear black or sack clothes but some times they still wear white. But it's a clear-cut thing in those days in the Judaism custom when somebody dies white was used.

Then those three white baskets with loaves of bread on them since he was a baker. Isn't it interesting the butler dreamt about wine? The baker was baking bread and seeing bread for many years so God use bread in his dream. So you see there is no such thing as a universal context. There are what I call some biblical principles but the symbols God use to speak to your life will be in the context of your profession, your knowledge, your background. And God will use a totally different symbol for you that He uses for me. Because of your background, your education, your natural knowledge, your profession, He will use a totally different background to speak about the same.

But there is a part of the dream where the birds of the air came. Those are bad symbols. Now in the context of those days, when a criminal is judged and the death sentence is pronounced, they would let the birds of the air get on that person. Joseph was familiar with that because he was a prisoner. And there are some prisoners who had the death sentence over their life who have died. He knew what

happened to them - the birds of the air came and picked the flesh off their bodies. So it was related to the symbols of those days. And Joseph understood that it speaks about death.

It is emphasized about three times. The baskets being taken meant something being removed. The whiteness of the baskets points to the white linen cloth that was used in funerals. And the birds that came and picked on those things. When God emphasize a message in a symbolic dream there is always the same recurring theme.

Do you remember when we were teaching about how to study the bible, we said that when we were studying contextually we look for recurring phrases or words? Now if you have a parabolic dream, look for recurring words and recurring symbols. That means the symbols will recur three four times to give you the main message and how to interpret it. In this dream there is always one recurring symbol or message. That means that one message is repeated three four times in various symbols so that it stands out as a stronger key to the interpretation. In the baker's dream the strongest symbol that stood up was death. Those three loaves of bread, how long can loaves of bread last? Bread lasts for a few days and not weeks or months or years. So he took them to represent days. That's how he interpreted those symbols.

Remember that ninety five percent of our dreams is in this category. And that is one of the major ways the Holy Spirit leads us through our dreams. So your interpretation of symbols must be scriptural. Secondly the interpretation of the symbols will be something that is understandable in the culture and the context that we live in. Wealth today is represented differently from in the bible. Then the thirdly the interpretation of the symbols are affected by your individual understanding and profession. God will use whatever that is in your background in the dream. See the Holy Spirit is a master of languages. What He cannot say to this person in a certain symbol He will put symbols that are related to that person because certain symbols may not be present in that person's life. That person is not acquainted with those symbols. He won't take symbols that are strange to that person. You never have a dream where there are symbols that you are not aware of. He chose the limitation of our symbols to illustrate and to give a coded message. Dreams are the coded message of the Holy Spirit. Our conscious mind got to

decode them.