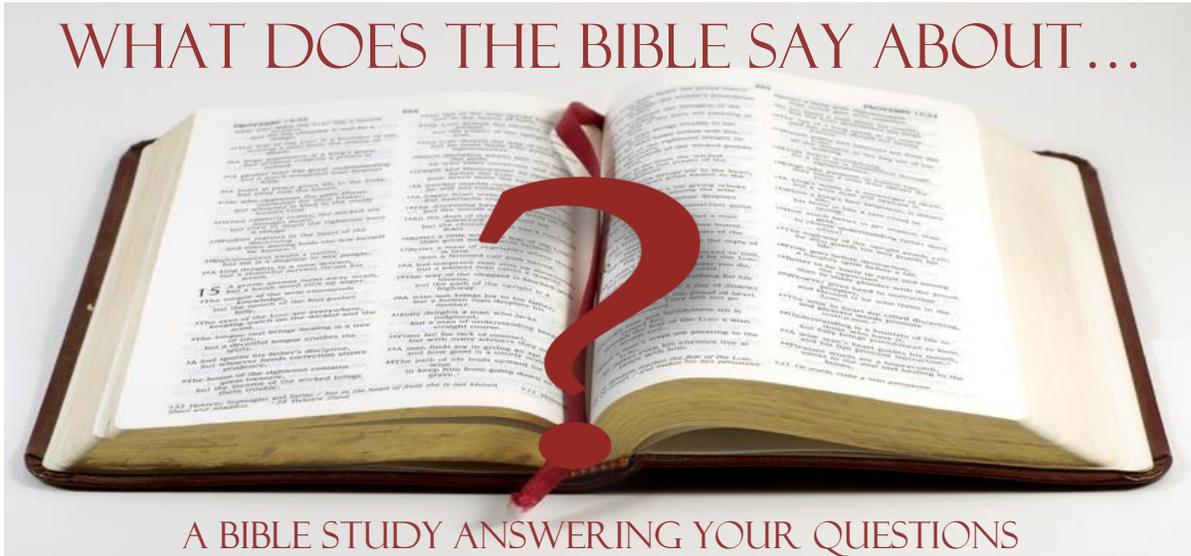


# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT...



## A BIBLE STUDY ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

### Lesson 9

Visions and Dreams?

What is a Pharisee?

#### **Visions and Dreams**

God uses "visions" at times to communicate or share revelations or important information, and sometimes warnings with His people.

I believe visions and dreams are so closely related, I will teach about them as one topic. The only real difference, in my opinion, is one may be while you are asleep and the other, possibly, while you are awake or slumbering, not quite sleeping. Hopefully not while driving...

Several times in the Old Testament and a few times in the New Testament we see God using a vision to speak to His people.

Here are some of those in the Bible that are recorded as seeing visions and or dreams: Abraham, Israel (Jacob), Samuel, Nathan, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Many other OT prophets. As far as I see in the NT: Peter, James, John, Zacharias, Ananias, and Paul. The entire book of Revelation was a "vision or revelation" from God.

Visions and dreams are very real.

Great caution, however, must be used when interpreting and/or applying what may be learned in visions and dreams.

Unfortunately, years in the pastorate and ministry, have caused me to be very skeptical when it comes to dreams and visions. I have had many people come to me and share what they felt or saw...

1. Many visions have been from the Lord and have come true or were true.
2. However, many have been false and could have lead people astray or caused harm to the body of Christ.

Although I remain skeptical, I also know that God does use visions and dreams to talk to us.

**Acts 2:17** 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:

**2 Corinthians 12:1** It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

This was Paul speaking to the Corinthian church; he said he had seen many visions and had many revelations.

I'm not sure God will use these mediums to tell people to buy a particular car, rent a particular apartment, pursue a particular girlfriend/boyfriend etc.

One thing for sure is that God will not speak to anyone in a dream or vision and go against His word.

### **False prophets:**

**Numbers 12:6** 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.

**Matthew 7:15-20** <sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. <sup>16</sup> Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

**Matthew 24:11** And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

**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.

**2 Peter 2:1-2** <sup>1</sup> But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup> And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

**By reason of the fact that the true church is a "spiritual church", and that we believe in God's Spirit moving in our lives and the lives of those around us, we must also recognize that we are also targets for false spirits and false prophets.**

**Jeremiah 14:14-15** <sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. <sup>15</sup> Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

**Jeremiah 23:16** Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, *and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*

For every real and good thing in the church which is encouraging, up-building and empowering, there is a false and deceptive thing lurking, devouring, and destroying.

### **Balance:**

**1 Samuel 3:1** And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was no open vision.*

In the days of Eli, the high priest, the Bible says there was "no open vision".

1. We can be so cautious that we wouldn't be able to see God if He was standing right in front of us.

2. Or, we could be so fascinated with the spiritual, that if someone told us that "God told them: to jump off a bridge", we'd do it.

- If someone tells you to drink the Kool-Aid, don't do it.

3. There needs to be balance.

So, are visions and dreams real? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they all of God? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they all of the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

Should we be cautious? \_\_\_\_\_

How do we tell the difference between good and bad, godly and ungodly, true and false?

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### **Discerning the spirits**

**Malachi 3:18** Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

By their fruit, ye shall know them.

How do you discern the spirits?

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Some of you are new in the church; you may not know much of the Bible yet. What should you do if you don't know whether what you saw or heard, is right or wrong?

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To discern the spirits, the first and foremost weapon you have is the **Word of God**. (If you don't know the Word well enough, please ask someone who does. And, please don't feel embarrassed about it; we are here to help you.)

Secondly, **prayer** is your next weapon.

Thirdly, and you should almost always include this in your defense against false visions and spirits, **pastoral leadership and elders in the church.**

If you rely on these, you will not fall to false visions and teachings.

Important things to know:

**1 Timothy 1:4** Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

**2 Timothy 2:22-23** <sup>22</sup> Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. <sup>23</sup> But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

We can get wrapped up in endless debates, and intricate questions to the point of missing the point.

"Where did Adam's sons get their wives?"

"Is there life on other planets?"

Although the Bible gives us most answers we seek, do not get sidetracked in worthless debates. There are some things we need to just accept by faith.

### **Wrapping it up:**

We most certainly believe in dreams and visions.

God will never, never, never, never give a dream, vision, or revelation that contradicts His word.

Discerning of spirits is needed today.

**We need to allow God to flow through the "gifts of the Spirit" in the church.**

**Galatians 1:8-9** <sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup>As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

BY THE WAY, THAT'S NOT ANY OTHER DOCTRINE THAN THE AVERAGE CHURCH TEACHES, THAT'S ANY OTHER DOCTRINE OTHER THAN THE TRUTH OF **ACTS 2:38.**

## What is a Pharisee?

The word Pharisee means: Separated

The Pharisees multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to such an extent, that the whole life of Israel was hemmed in and burdened on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the law was almost, if not wholly, lost sight of.

**Matthew 23:23-33** <sup>23</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. <sup>24</sup> Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. <sup>25</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. <sup>26</sup> Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. <sup>27</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. <sup>29</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. <sup>31</sup> Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Ok, Jesus, don't water it down.

If we are not careful, we can become like the Pharisees.

Pharisees were people who although their intentions may have been pure, magnified parts of the Word of God that suited their beliefs, and made themselves feel and act superior to others.

We must be careful not to allow ourselves to distort God's Word to meet our convictions or beliefs.

Do we have Bible for what we believe? \_\_\_\_\_ Do We?

Jesus told the Pharisees:

**Matthew 23:23** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

What are the "weightier matters of the law"?

Judgment: Acting according to justice and equity toward all mankind.

Mercy: Merciful to the distressed, forgiveness.

Faith: And faith in God as the fountain of all righteousness, mercy, and truth.

"Doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God"

**"These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"** -- There is no need for one set of duties to be magnified over another.

**Matthew 23:24** Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

In wanting to be pure in doctrine, we can get sidetracked by magnifying parts of the Bible over others, thus becoming Pharisees.

Our preaching and teaching ought to be with mercy and salvation in mind.

Although we cannot ignore sin in favor of mercy, we must understand that the "goal" of the Word of God is salvation. And with salvation comes righteousness and obedience to the Word of God.

Don't get the "cart before the horse".

If we are striving to be God's people, we must have Bible for what we preach.

I've challenged myself to be sure, what I'm preaching, is in fact, backed up by the Bible. If it's not, I don't want to preach human philosophy.

My prayer: Lord, don't let me become a Pharisee...