

IS DREAM INTERPRETATION A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OR NEW AGE OCCULT?

By Paul Christensen

It is important we carefully examine anything that is put forward as a gift of the Holy Spirit. The only reliable source for determining whether something is a gift of the Holy Spirit or not, is written Scripture.

So, is Dream Interpretation listed as one of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12?

"for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by ^[f]the same Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (12:8_10).

So, we see that Dream Interpretation is not listed, therefore there is no Scriptural foundation for it to be described as a Spiritual gift. So, what is it?

Before we get to that, we need to understand that God can communicate through dreams. Pharoah had a dream, which Joseph interpreted for him, and the measures put in place as the result of the interpretation, saved Egypt and the surrounding regions starving through the seven years of famine. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which was interpreted by Daniel. But these were dreams received by godless pagans. The one other dream in the Old Testament was to Jacob, where he saw the ladder leading up to heaven with angels ascending and descending. His dream did not need interpretation by anyone else.

In the New Testament, dreams were direct messages from the Lord, and were not interpreted by any others. Joseph was warned to flee to Egypt to prevent the infant Jesus being killed by Herod, and he received another dream warning him not to go back into the region controlled by Herod the Great's son. The wise men who visited the infant Jesus in Bethlehem were warned in a dream not to go back and report to Herod, so they returned to their land by an alternative route.

There are no instances in the New Testament of dreams that had the nature of "image puzzles" that needed interpretation by "dream interpreters". So, if we are going to be consistent with the written New Testament, a dream from the Lord would be a distinct, clear message from Him, requiring no interpretation.

I have had dreams involving someone I know, and I have taken it as a signal to pray for that person; but I have not attempted to try and interpret the dream in order to ascertain what the person's situation is that needs my intercession.

It is also quite possible to get a Word of Knowledge through a dream, and such a dream has to be handled very carefully, and one needs to ask the Lord for a word of wisdom to know whether to share it with the person, and how to do it wisely; or whether it is for intercession only. But again, it is a clear, distinct messages which does not need interpretation by a dream "interpreter".

So, if Dream Interpretation is not a gift of the Spirit, and has no reference to it in the New Testament, where did it originate from?

The classic text is "*The Interpretation of Dreams*" by Sigmund Freud. These interpretations were of image puzzles. He was rather limited in his research, taking his evidence from his middle-class female patients. But Freud's work was extended by the psychologists who followed him, and a comprehensive list of dream image categories with commensurate interpretations was developed. There are a number of websites which give lists of dream classifications and interpretations.

It is interesting that there is an increasing number of dream “interpreters” offering their services on different websites, and there is one where dream interpretation is combined with “finding your spirit guide”.

So, because Sigmund Freud was an atheist, and those who followed him adopted and extended his atheistic dream interpretation theories. What we are seeing is the many New Age occult websites now offering dream interpretation.

What is really concerning is that there is an increasing number of Christians, especially in the Charismatic movement, purporting to have the “gift” of dream interpretation. There is a prominent Christian forum website that actually promotes and encourages dream interpretation, and suppresses any contribution that alerts to the New Age occult nature of it, by warning a member, and even banning him in order to keep any Scriptural view out of any discussion.

The problem is that, in general, Charismatics view anything supernatural as automatically coming from the Holy Spirit, and many follow the Quaker view that the “light” of the Spirit supersedes the written Word. There is the increasing teaching that the written New Testament is somehow incomplete, and the Holy Spirit is giving some “new” extra-Biblical revelation to give credence for supernatural practices that are nowhere to be found in the New Testament.

My view, then, is that dream interpretation is New Age occult, and is not a gift of the Spirit. It is a form of divination, and we must take careful notice of Jeremiah:

²⁵ “I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ ²⁶ How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart..

³⁰ “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” says the Lord, “who steal My words everyone from his neighbour. ³¹ Behold, I am against the prophets,” says

the Lord, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.' ³² Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the Lord, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the Lord" (23:25-26; 30-32).

This is a very serious warning from the Lord, and needs to be taken very seriously. We all have dreams, some of them very vivid at times, but unless the dream contains a distinct message from the Lord, consistent to what already has been revealed in the written Scriptures, we must automatically conclude that it is something that comes just from our own minds, and is not for interpretation. I believe that anyone who consults a dream interpreter is in great danger of opening themselves up to a spirit of divination. And one must be very careful of anyone offering to interpret a dream or give an uninvited personal prophecy, because an attached spirit of divination can attack both spiritually and physically.