

0963 Biblical Principles from Old Testament Dreams

In this lesson we will look at examples of visions in the Old Testament to see what principles they may reveal. At least fifty six times the words “vision” or “visions” are used in the New King James Version of the Old Testament. This study will be limited to just a few of those instances that lead us to, or reinforce certain specific principles about visions.

God’s Promise in Abraham’s Vision

Genesis 15:1-7

Following his meeting with the king of Sodom, Abraham received a vision in which God spoke to him, telling him *“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”* Then Abraham asked God for an *“offspring.”* God responded by giving Abraham so much more than he could ever expect. God told Abraham he would have an heir who would have descendents as numerous as the stars.

Genesis 15:1-5 (NKJV)

“After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” {2} But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” {3} Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!” {4} And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” {5} Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.””

God has not changed. He still visits us in our visions.

PRINCIPLE 1. Biblical visions show that we can talk to God in them, as we have them. Expect to speak with God in your visions (and also your dreams).

This principle is confirmed again when God chastises Aaron and Miriam for murmuring against Moses.

Numbers 12:5-7 (NKJV)

*“Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out. {5} Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. {6} Then He said, “Hear now My words: **If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak to him in a dream.** {7} Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. {8} I speak with him face to face,”*

God confirmed to Aaron and Miriam, as He chastised them, that He speaks in visions and dreams. (However, Moses was in a special relationship with God as the Lord’s prophet, and God spoke with him *“face to face.”*)

Visions and dreams are a frequent way that God spoke to His appointed prophets. Today, He continues to do so, but under the New Covenant, He also speaks to ordinary people in their visions and dreams. Other places in the Bible have enlarged this principle to include others who do not hold the five-fold ministry of prophet.

How do you recognize the voice of the Lord in your visions?

Once you make the decision that you desire to hear from God in visions (or dreams), ask Him to give you visions and speak to you from within them. (There is no guarantee He will do so, but He always encourages us to ask those things that are pleasing to Him.) Once you experience a vision that you think is from God, how will you be sure that it’s His voice? If I called you on the telephone and you have never spoken to me before, you would not recognize my voice. However, if I (Nancy Abramson) call my husband, he knows my voice right away because he has heard it so many times. It is the same with God. The longer you know Him the easier it is to hear and recognize His voice.

Though it was not spoken specifically in a vision, God called to young Samuel on his bed. He was encouraged by Eli to recognize and respond to God’s voice. Today, God will call to us from within our visions (and dreams, too).

1 Samuel 3:1-9, 16-19 (NKJV)

*“Then the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation. {2} And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, {3} and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, {4} **that the LORD called Samuel.** And he answered, “Here I am!” {5} So he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” And he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” And he went and lay down. {6} **Then the LORD called yet again, “Samuel!”** So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” He answered, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” {7} (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.) {8} **And the LORD called Samuel again the third time.** Then he arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you did call me.” **Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. {9} Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.’”**”*

John 10:27 (NLT)

“My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

Guidelines from Biblical Principles

PRINCIPLE 1. Visions throughout the Bible show that God will speak to us in them.

Expect God speak to you in your visions (and dreams).

PRINCIPLE 2. If you hear God’s voice in a vision, it will always be in agreement with His Word.

By reading the Bible we get to know the Lord’s character, His ways, His promises and His commandments. Then, it’s easy to recognize whether what we heard is really from Him, because His spoken words will always be in agreement with His written Word. God never contradicts Himself. Therefore, the better we know the Bible, the easier it will be to recognize His voice as genuine.

PRINCIPLE 3. The voice of the Lord always invites us to walk closer to Him.

A vision from the Lord will draw you closer to Him.

PRINCIPLE 4. If a vision from the Lord does not bring you closer to God, it means that you have not heard from God or... you have chosen disobedience as your response.

When you walk closer to God, your life is better. It is more fruitful and you begin to act more like Jesus. Young Samuel experienced this firsthand and righteousness became his lifestyle. This is an Old Testament model we can follow today. The Apostle Paul did so following his conversion on the road to Damascus. In his New Testament prayer to the Colossians, Paul revealed God's primary purpose for having conversations with us through visions - fruitfulness through obedience to what God says:

Colossians 1:10

*"that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, **being fruitful in every good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God;"*

Principle 5. The Voice of the Lord in a vision carries the truth to convict us to do what is right.

The Holy Spirit will show us what's right, but we must make the choice to turn away from what's wrong. The choice is normally ours. Will we respond to the voice of the Lord and turn from our sin, as we turn to what's right?

Principle 6. There will be times when people receive a vision in which the Lord commands them to do what's right and He gives them no choice! (This may occur in believers or anyone else who God chooses to speak to. Below is an Old Testament example of how God came to Baalam in a vision.)

Baalam, the Diviner

Baalam was a diviner who lived in Old Testament times. A diviner is an ungodly seer, sorcerer or spiritualist. Often, this person works with and is used by familiar spirits. These are demons that trick people into believing what the seer or spiritualist says is part of a prophetic word from God. Demons cannot prophesy! Only

God knows the future. Diviners practice witchcraft. Baalam professed to believe in Jehovah God, but his activities as a diviner were an abomination to the Lord. Nevertheless, Baalam was surprised when God appeared to him. The Lord came to Baalam at night (in a vision or dream?) and forbade him to curse the Israelites. Baalam disobeyed God and on the way to do Balak's bidding, he encountered a voice speaking from within his donkey. He also encountered the Angel of the Lord (Numbers 22:22-35).

In Numbers 23-24, we read that Balak continued to try to get Baalam to use sorcery to bless God's enemies. However, God put a word in Baalam's mouth, commanding him to speak only blessings on the Israelites. He is unable to speak a curse against God's people. All he can do is bless them. Finally, Baalam begins a long prophetic utterance (an "oracle"). He begins it with a revealing statement that **God's appearances to him have been visions**. He opens his prophetic word by saying the following:

Numbers 24:3b-4 (NKJV)

*"The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
The utterance of the man whose eyes are opened,
{4} The utterance of him who hears the words of God,
**Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who falls down, with eyes wide open:***

Principle 7. Many times, the Lord uses visions to command His will to be done. These times are sovereign acts of God that cannot be challenged. Doing so will have consequences.

Principle 8. The Lord uses visions to give us wisdom and understanding. (It's a pattern from the Old Testament.)

Principle 9. God often speaks from within a vision to bring peace to our hearts and clear up confusion.

The Lord's voice will not cause His children confusion. He desires that we walk in the assurance that our paths are peace-filled as we move ahead within His will. He will speak to us and bring clarity and guidance, if we listen to Him with our hearts open to receive what He says. If what He says in a vision makes no sense then it's not God that you met in your vision.

1 Corinthians 14:33 (NKJV)

*“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace,
as in all the churches of the saints.”*

The Prophet Nathan’s Vision in the Night (The Principle of Prophetic Double Fulfillment)

1 Samuel 7:4-17

In 2 Samuel, Chapter 7, we read about the vision God gave to the Prophet Nathan. The Lord’s purpose in giving it to Nathan was so that he could speak it to David. In the vision, God said that David would not build His temple, but that David’s son would be king and he would build the temple. This was a prophetic word that came true when Solomon built the temple. Then, the second or double fulfillment of the prophecy, which has also come true, is found in these words Nathan spoke to David (Verse 16): *“And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”* God was also speaking of the future throne of Christ, in His eternal kingdom.

1 Samuel 7:12-17 (NKJV)

*“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. {13} He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. {14} I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. {15} But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. {16} And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”” {17} **According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.**” (See also 1 Chronicles 17:15)*

Principle 10. Visions may be prophetically cast by another man’s words, rather than coming directly from God.

Principle 11. Visions can have prophetic meaning beyond the immediate situation (the principle of double fulfillment).

Beware of False Visions from False Prophets.

False prophecy speaks of visions, but they are really controlled by lying spirits with evil intentions, trying to trap God's people with deceit and sorcery. Beware of them. Ask God to give you discerning of spirits when you hear someone claim that what they received in a vision is from God. If you seek the Lord, He will show you whether the vision was true or not. Beware of false prophets. They can use familiar spirits, divination and deceit to drag you into a demonic trap! You can also check the truthfulness of words with the Bible!

Jeremiah 14:14 (NKJV)

*"And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; **they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.**""*

Jeremiah 23:16 (NKJV)

*"Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; **They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the Lord. Beware of false prophets, who use the name of the Lord, But it's really divination and "deceit of their heart."**"*

How Do You Manage a Good Word You Received from a Vision?

Learn to listen carefully. Have an ear open to the voice of the Lord. Meditate on the vision. Here are seven additional ways to do this more effectively.

Seven Additional Principles

1. Develop a love for His voice.
2. Get in the habit of starting conversations with God before you have visions. This will establish a pattern that will take itself into your visions.
3. Make it a daily habit to worship the Lord. Expect that your experiences with Him in your visions will be as meaningful as worship has been for you. God responds to worship.

4. Hunger for and depend on His presence.
5. Just simply love the Lord with your whole heart.
6. Never doubt what you hear from the Lord. Just believe and behave accordingly. Obey what you hear Him say without hesitation. He will help you.
7. Seek God for His timing to do what He's spoken.

There is one more lesson in the series – Old Testament Dreams and Visions. Next, we will look at Daniel's gift to discern and interpret dreams and visions.