

EXPLORING  
~ AND ~  
INTERPRETING  
DREAMS



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INTERPRETING  
DREAMS

BENNY THOMAS



WHITAKER  
HOUSE

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## **EXPLORING AND INTERPRETING DREAMS**

(Previously published as *Exploring the World of Dreams*.)

Benny Thomas  
5355 Concord Road  
Beaumont, TX 77708

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# PREFACE

**T**his is not a New Age book!

It has nothing to do with the occult.

This book is in no way associated with psychology.

Many people see a book on this subject and automatically assume it fits one of the above categories. That's understandable. New Agers, occult devotees, and psychologists have delved into the area of dreams—and they're not shy about sharing their beliefs.

This book is written to help Bible-believing Christians hear from God in the night season—a very scriptural experience. Allow me to escort you on an introductory tour into a world that has often been misunderstood and misrepresented, a place whose terrain has been mapped in Scripture—the God-given world of dreams.

# INTRODUCTION

When I was a very young Christian, I attended a church service where a woman testified that God had spoken to her in a dream. What? My ears perked up. Did I hear her right? Does God really speak to people in dreams? As soon as I got home that night, I knelt beside my bed and talked to God.

“Lord,” I asked, “is it really true that You talk to people in dreams? If so, please talk to me in a dream tonight.”

That simple prayer launched me on an exciting adventure in hearing from God. Upon waking up the next morning, I recalled a very vivid, significant dream. Enthusiasm about hearing from God in this way flooded me. I could hardly wait to explore this new frontier! And explore it I did!

From that time on, God began to teach me how to receive and interpret dreams. Since I knew no Christians who had experience in this field, I slowly and painstakingly walked through the learning process myself. Over a period of years, God taught me many truths about this relevant means of communication.

Step by step, experience by experience, scripture by scripture, He gradually built my knowledge in this field. Patterns began to emerge. Principles began to form. Pieces began to fit together. By carefully recording and analyzing my dreams, I gleaned knowledge,

wisdom, and skill in hearing from God in the night season. Proof after convincing proof assured me that God was speaking to me and that He will speak to you through dreams—continually and regularly.

It's really true!

You're about to benefit from wisdom that took me years to accumulate. I'll do my best to lead you step by step through the different facets of this exciting frontier. As your tour guide in the world of dreams, I'll be as thorough and comprehensive as possible. We'll move carefully so you receive a complete, detailed orientation. Join me as we explore the world that Daniel and Joseph obviously pioneered centuries ago—the world of dreams.

# 1

## THE WORLD OF DREAMS

**W**elcome to a world within our world! This world is fresh, new, and exciting because it's part of the prophetic move of God in our generation. This world is also as old as recorded history. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, reveals some of its territory. Its challenging terrain is as old as events written in Genesis and as new as events prophesied in the book of Revelation.

This virgin world is virtually unexplored, yet it bears the signs of having been walked through many times in history. Some pioneers have examined it carefully during regular expeditions; others have captured only glimpses of it during brief encounters.

Superstitions and rumors abound about the inner recesses of this world. Thinking this world is a place of immense danger, many have shied away from crossing its borders. Some think demons control this world. Still others have dismissed it as a place where only fantasies and products of vivid, wild imaginations occupy its territories.

You may sense some apprehension about venturing across the threshold into this unfamiliar world. You may have been warned against it! Perhaps for a good reason, too!

Normal, intelligent people don't just plunge head first into unknown waters. Yet I have three questions for you:

1. Do you want to hear God's voice with clarity?
2. Do you want to walk in the fullness of God's Spirit?
3. Do you want to be on the cutting edge of all that God is doing in the end times?

Listen, friend. Don't throw caution to the wind because of your desire to grow in God. Consider the apostle Paul's wise counsel about evaluating doctrine. "*Test all things; hold fast what is good*" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Don't you agree? Why not heed this counsel while hearing my story? God led me to venture into this world I've been describing. He directed me to enter it again and again. He commissioned me to explore it carefully, cautiously, and thoroughly. He spent—and I invested—years developing my knowledge of its inner terrain, its content, and its territories. As an experienced guide, I'm qualified to lead you on an exploratory trip into its innermost realm.

Before you join me, however, why not read what I've learned about making such a trip? You don't have to jump into this before considering the benefits and risks of such a journey. After taking this exploratory trip, you can make your own judgments about entering this world. At least, you'll act on a well thought out decision, not a spur-of-the-moment whim. I'm sure you realize that the world I've been describing is the world of dreams.

## You Can Receive Dreams from God

Does God speak to people in dreams? Will He speak to *you* in *your* dreams? If so, how can you tell when God speaks to you through a dream and when He doesn't? If God gives you a dream, how will you know the interpretation?

Christians have many questions about this intriguing subject, but they've found little teaching available to answer their questions.

Using the foundation of Scripture and personal experience, this book will answer many of your questions concerning dreams.

Man has been dreaming since his creation. Throughout history, God has used dreams to communicate to men. The numerous dreams in the Bible confirm that this is a valid channel through which God speaks to His people. This unusual avenue of receiving God-inspired direction is just beginning to come into its prime. God is accelerating the use of this communication vehicle in an unprecedented manner as we enter the end times!

Dreams will play a vital role in imparting God's guidance to His people in the coming days. In these last days, we shall "dream dreams." (See Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17.)

God is a God of many voices. Let's look at Scripture to find out how God communicates to men.

*God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.* (Hebrews 1:1–2, emphasis added)

God speaks in many ways. He wants His people to be skillful in hearing Him in all of the ways that He speaks. Dreams are one form of communication between God and man. In fact, dreams will be one of the common ways through which He will speak to believers in days to come.

Please consider the following statement with an open mind. Remember the apostle Paul's encouragement to "test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). I challenge you to heed this scriptural admonition as you consider this statement:

*You can learn to receive dreams from God. You can receive them regularly, and you can develop skill in interpreting dreams. Dreams and their interpretations can become a key method of receiving direction from God in all your affairs.*

This book presents a solid, scriptural basis from which you can develop this ability in your own life. The principles you're about to read can be invaluable to you as God begins to speak to you through dreams. These teachings have sparked dramatic, life-changing experiences for countless others, and they can do the same for you.

Come with me and let's explore the fascinating world of dreams. After showing you where this territory is mapped in Scripture, I'll add my personal experience and insight to help you travel in this land.

## What Are Dreams?

Dreams are a series of thoughts, images, or emotions that occur during sleep. I haven't ever met a person who did not remember having a dream of some kind during his lifetime. Daniel called dreams "*visions of his head upon his bed*" (Daniel 7:1, KJV).

The Bible generally teaches truth through a direct statement or through a demonstration, example, or pattern. Dreams are presented in the Bible in both of these ways as a valid means for God to communicate to man. Let's look at two direct statements about dreams.

*In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then [God] opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction.* (Job 33:15–16)

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.* (Acts 2:17)

The Bible also demonstrates that God talked to men in this manner throughout history. In fact, God does not limit Himself

to speaking to just His people in dreams. Remember the scheme that Abram pulled?

*And it came to pass, when [Abram] was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." (Genesis 12:11–13)*

Pharaoh took Sarai into his household and was struck with plagues. Recognizing God's judgment, he sent the couple away. A few chapters later, however, Abraham relied on the same trickery. This time Abimelech, king of Gerar, took Abraham's "sister" into his household. What did God do?

*But God came to Abimelech **in a dream by night**, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." And God said to him **in a dream**, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her." (Genesis 20:3–6, emphasis added)*

Starting with this example, God establishes dreams as a scriptural way for Him to communicate to men. God used dreams to speak to people in the Old and New Testaments, including Joseph, Pharaoh, Jacob, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, and others.

## Saved from Starvation

God also preserved His people during a severe famine by using Joseph to interpret a dream given to Pharaoh, the Egyptian ruler. The Hebrew youth, sold into slavery by his brothers, was unjustly accused by Potiphar's wife and imprisoned. Even in the dungeon, however, Joseph distinguished himself by his conduct and ability to interpret dreams.

Angered with his chief butler and chief baker, Pharaoh imprisoned them with Joseph. The two officers had dreams on the same night and were saddened at not understanding them. Joseph listened to the dreams, gave the interpretations, and requested that the butler remember him when Pharaoh restored him to his position. Two years later, when Pharaoh had a puzzling dream that no one could interpret, the butler finally remembered Joseph's amazing ability.

*Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. Also I saw in*

*my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.” Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one: God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine....“Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.”* (Genesis 41:14–32)

God used a dream to warn Pharaoh about an upcoming famine. Pharaoh heeded the warning and set Joseph over the land as an administrator. The famine affected the whole world, but Egypt had planned ahead for the crisis. They even sold grain to other nations, which resulted in saving Joseph’s family from starvation.

## Confidence in Battle

Despite conquering the king of Canaan and enjoying forty years of rest, Israel sinned and incurred God’s judgment. The Midianites destroyed their land, plundered their livestock, and terrorized the people.

While Gideon timidly threshed wheat in his father's wine-press, an angel appeared to him. "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" he greeted him. "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" (Judges 6:14).

This reluctant deliverer asked, "O my LORD, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15). Gideon needed confirmation that God would use him to deliver Israel. Several miraculous signs from God bolstered Gideon's confidence.

Approximately 32,000 Israelites rallied behind Gideon, but God pared down his fighting forces to three hundred men. His small band carried pitchers, torches, and trumpets against a vast army. Knowing Gideon's apprehension, God gave him the following instructions:

*Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.* (Judges 7:9–11)

Gideon and his servant traveled to the outpost of the enemy camp where he heard a conversation that injected him with courage.

*And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have just had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand God has delivered*

*Midian and the whole camp.” And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, “Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.”* (Judges 7:13–15)

Upon hearing the dream and its interpretation, Gideon obtained the confidence he needed to conquer the Midianites. Knowing that he had heard from God, Gideon led three hundred men against a vast army and defeated them.

## Warning and Direction

God also uses dreams to give guidance, direction, and warning. Those who obeyed these timely messages from God averted misunderstanding, mishaps, and even death. Let’s look at a few examples.

Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, discovered some disconcerting news from his bride-to-be. Before they were married, Mary had conceived a child. Being a just man, Joseph didn’t want to humiliate her publicly. As he considered putting her away secretly, he received specific instructions in a dream.

*But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him **in a dream**, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”*

(Matthew 1:20–21, emphasis added)

After the birth of Christ, wise men from the east came to worship the newborn King. Herod was also interested in discovering

the location of this prophesied ruler. His motive, however, was to eliminate his competition for the throne.

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him....Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."*

(Matthew 2:1-3, 7-8)

The star that the wise men had followed from the East also led them to Jesus. After worshiping and presenting their gifts, did they inform Herod of His whereabouts? No!

*Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph **in a dream**, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."* (Matthew 2:12-13, emphasis added)

When he arose, Joseph took his family by night and traveled to Egypt. Angered that the wise men had deceived him by not returning, Herod commissioned soldiers to slay all the male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and younger. Jesus escaped certain death because of Joseph's obedience to his dream. God also used a dream to tell Joseph when to return to Israel.

*But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. (Matthew 2:19–23, emphasis added)*

Joseph received divine guidance in his dreams on several occasions. God led him at key points by communicating His will during the night seasons.

## Are Dreams Valid Today?

These Bible passages prove that dreams have played a significant role in our Christian heritage. But what about the times in which we live? Christians are living in what many believe is the last generation before the return of Christ. Are dreams relevant to us today? Dear Christian friend, the answer is unequivocally "Yes!" Dreams are more pertinent today than they have been since the beginning of history. God wants to speak to you in a variety of ways. Dreams are certainly one of those ways.

God revealed His nature when He said, "*For I am the LORD, I do not change*" (Malachi 3:6). God created man and gave him the ability to dream. God has demonstrated His use of dreams as a way to speak to man throughout the Bible. Has He suddenly changed so that He no longer does this?

No, of course not! God still speaks to men in dreams. Receiving dreams is an indication that the Holy Spirit has been poured out in these last days!

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.* (Acts 2:17)

Do you see it?

Dreams are scriptural!

Dreams are for today!

And dreams are for you!

God is raising up a church that will move in signs and wonders. He wants His people to be knowledgeable in the ways of the Holy Spirit. God is raising up Josephs and Daniels who will understand the language of the Holy Spirit, including receiving and interpreting dreams.

## Spared through a Dream

While teaching a seminar on how to hear the voice of God, I covered a section on dreams. Most dreams need to be interpreted, but sometimes a message spoken by a character in a dream can be literal. Soon after I left town, a woman who had attended the seminar experienced a dream in which her pastor gave her a scripture. After she awakened, she opened her Bible and looked up the verse. The scripture referred to bearing children.

How could this be? Her doctor had told her she could have no more children.

That very day doctors diagnosed her daughter as having parasites in her digestive tract. This contagious condition often spread to other family members. The doctor gave the entire family a prescription to eradicate the parasites from their systems. Just as the woman was about to take the medication, she noticed a warning

on the container: *Warning. Not to be taken if pregnant. Medication could result in death or miscarriage of unborn child. If you suspect pregnancy, please consult a physician.*

The woman had no reason to suspect pregnancy. As a matter of fact, she had been assured by physicians that she could not get pregnant. But she remembered her dream. Just to be safe, she abstained from taking the medicine and took a pregnancy test. Amazingly, she tested positive! The next time I traveled through that area, she showed me her miracle baby. Jesus was not the only baby whose life was saved through a dream!

## Striking a Winning Blow

A young pastor came to me for help. He had heard that God often gave me interpretations of dreams. This man and his family had experienced some rough times as they sought God's direction during a period of transition.

The pastor had dreamed he was fighting a man in a boxing ring. After sparring with his opponent for a few rounds, he drew back his fist and landed a knockout blow, ending the fight. As he related the dream, I questioned him about different parts of it.

"Did you know the man you were fighting?" I asked. "Who was he?"

"Oh, he was just a man I used to know a long time ago," he said. "I haven't seen him in years."

"Who was the man?" I pressed him for a more specific answer. "What was his relationship with you in the past?"

"To tell you the truth, this man used to buy beer for my friends and me when we were in high school. I wasn't living for the Lord then, and we were too young to buy beer. This man used to buy it for us."

“Have you been having a battle with alcohol?” I asked.

Suddenly, he broke and began to weep. “I never thought it could happen to me, but it did. When everything was at its lowest, a friend and I drank some beer, and now I can’t seem to stop. I’m scared!” he confided.

“Brother,” I told him, “keep fighting. You’re going to conquer that sin and get the victory!”

“Do you really think so?” he asked.

“Yes, I’m sure of it.” As I told him that, his countenance changed as hope entered his spirit. I prayed for him then, and he left with a new faith and determination to win his battle against alcohol. He did just that, too. He’s been back in the ministry for many years with no recurrence of that problem!

These examples of people receiving help through dreams are only two out of hundreds that I know from personal experience. Dreams can be a powerful means through which God gives guidance, hope, and victory to His people.

## What about the Occult?

As I explored the world of dreams, I found a small section of land that contained some strange-looking inhabitants. They were poor, sickly, miserable-looking creatures.

“Who are these people?” I asked the Lord.

“Those are members of the occult. They think this land belongs to them, but they’re wrong! That’s the reason they’re not flourishing here.”

Don’t let occultists put their fence around our God-given territory, bluffing us with their “keep off” signs. We’re the rightful owners of this land in the first place.

Today people often seek astrologers and fortune-tellers to understand their dreams. This is nothing new. King Nebuchadnezzar grew troubled over dreams that he didn't understand, so he sought the astrologers. But the king challenged his court magicians with a more difficult request.

*The king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "Of king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." But the king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."* (Daniel 2:3–6)

Nebuchadnezzar discovered that his magicians, astrologers, and soothsayers couldn't give the dream and its interpretation when they were challenged—even though their lives depended on it. As Daniel sought the Lord, the secret was revealed to him in a night vision. (See Daniel 2 :4–19.)

Today people repeat Nebuchadnezzar's mistake by consulting psychologists or those who delve into the occult to understand their dreams. But the occultists couldn't produce results in Nebuchadnezzar's day, and they'll miss the mark in our day, too. For the sake of this scriptural study, let's forget modern terms such as "psychology" and "subconscious mind" and approach the subject of dreams as a simple, scriptural, and practical way for God to give you direction and guidance in your daily life.

As I explored the vast regions of this new territory, I occasionally found a few straggling, confused people who always seemed to be in pairs or small groups.

“Who are they?” I asked the Lord.

“Those are the fruits, flakes, and nuts,” God told me. “They’ve fallen into error by chasing some dream they didn’t understand. They’ve gotten into a mess by ignoring common sense and scriptural warnings. They’re giving the place a bad name.”

We must not let the fruits, flakes, and nuts intimidate us into withdrawing from our God-given territory. I even know some flakes who have fallen into error by misinterpreting verses of Scripture. Does that keep me from reading the Bible? No! On the contrary, it should cause me to study the Bible even more to ground myself in its truth.

Let’s grow up and launch out in the things of the Spirit that are freely given to us by God. You can safely develop your ability to hear from God without wandering into left field with the fruits, flakes, and nuts. That’s exactly what I’ll show you in this book.

## Ask God to Prove It!

Don’t let prejudices, preconceived ideas, or unscriptural views cause you to limit God as He reveals Himself in dreams in these last days. Consider what I’m teaching and ask God to prove it to you. I believe He will do just that!

While teaching a seminar at a church in northern Alabama, I mentioned dreams. God often wakes a person at the end of a dream to enable him to pull the dream out of his memory while it’s still fresh. The pastor of the church decided to test my teaching, so he prayed before he went to bed that night. He had been perplexed by a situation and wanted God’s guidance. Perhaps God would visit him in the night season and give him the solution he had been seeking.

Sure enough, he awakened from his sleep in the early morning hours. Following my instructions, he immediately searched his

memory. A dream, which otherwise might have been lost, drifted into his memory. As he reflected on it, the dream gave him the answer he had been seeking! Nevertheless, he asked God to confirm the answer in the Word. He went to the den, got his Bible, and promptly opened it up. God spoke to him through Scripture that morning and confirmed the answer.

Yes, God can prove things to us in such a way that we know we're hearing from Him. If you've followed the Lord for any time at all, you know this is true. When hearing from God in an unfamiliar area like dreams, He would expect you to seek His confirmations. God will give convincing proofs that He is speaking to you in the night season.

Let's continue our exploratory journey to find out more about hearing from God in dreams.

We'll proceed slowly, cautiously, and safely.

Let's be careful.

There's no hurry.

There's no need to jump to any conclusions until we've covered more ground, is there?

Shall we look into this world a little further? I would like to begin by telling you about several of my early visits to it as a young Christian.

Come along.