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Dreams

By Pastor Doug Winne

"...An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream..." – Matthew 2:13

Dreams, and often the content of those dreams, are mentioned many times in the Bible. Besides the very famous dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh (recorded in Genesis), we have the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar (recorded in Daniel) and the dreams of Joseph, Mary's husband (recorded in Matthew). Indeed, in Matthew chapter 2 we have 5 dreams mentioned. All of these dreams are referenced as being a means by which divine truth was conveyed.

The Old Testament prophet Joel prophesied, *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh: you sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions"* (2:28). It was this passage that Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) in support of what the Holy Spirit was doing that day.

Have you ever had a dream that impacted your life? I have. In the summer of 1982 Ruth and I were in the midst of making plans to leave our jobs and dwelling in Philadelphia and move to Lancaster. We had found a church we liked (LEFC), obtained job offers and were now looking for housing. We had found an old stone house for rent and agreed to rent it. It was big and unfortunately had been altered such that to heat one room of the house required the heating of the entire house. During one Saturday night of sleep, I had a dream – a nightmare really – of the financial disaster that would come our way if we rented that house. I awoke in a cold sweat; I was shaken to the core of my being. To make a long story short, it was that dream that ultimately resulted in us pursuing an entirely different stone house (that had not been altered as the first) – the house that we ultimately ended up buying and in which we still live.

Years ago I met a couple who had inherited a farm in the Lititz area. Neither of them really knew farming and so they wondered what they should do with the land. One night the wife had a dream in which but two words kept being repeated: PLANT FLOWERS. In the morning she told her husband of her dream. He said that if she truly believed that was a message from the Lord that they should obey it. They did and the end result was a huge success with the establishment of a dried flower business.

When I was in seminary, I recall a professor challenging us to pray, each night before going to sleep, that God would grant us "good dreams."

Jeremiah 23:28-29 warns against trying to put dreams on the same level as the revealed word of God. That is a great passage and a great warning. Yet there are times when God clearly does direct us through our dreams.

So I want to challenge you to dream. Maybe you are at a crossroads wondering if you should turn to the right or to the left. God can guide you (Isaiah 30:21) and has in fact promised to do so (Proverbs 3:5-6). *"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will"* (Proverbs 21:1). Yes, indeed, may God direct you even if it is through a dream.