

Can Christians Have Trances Too?

Trances are not merely the domain of shamans, New Agers and DJs with pumping beats. A trance is not hypnosis, though hypnotized people do experience a trance-like state. Trances are not relegated to the realm of witches and warlocks, though these dark agents do use trances to enter into astral projection, a counterfeit of the biblical concept of being transported in the Spirit.

The enemy always works to counterfeit what God is doing, and because of this many have feared to even learn of the trance realm. The reality is that trances are biblical, and we need to understand what the Bible says about them.

What is a trance? Before we go any further, it's helpful to see various definitions that will lay a foundation for your faith.

Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines trance this way: "An ecstasy; a state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into celestial regions, or to be rapt into visions." A trance is a state of one who is "out of himself," according to *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. The word *trance* comes from the Greek word *ekstasis*, from which the word *ecstasy* is derived.

According to *The King James New Testament Greek Lexicon*, *ekstasis* means "a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind, whether such as makes a lunatic or that of a man who by some sudden emotion is transported as it were out of himself, so that in this rapt condition, although he is awake, his mind is drawn off from all surrounding objects and wholly fixed on things divine that he sees nothing but the forms and images lying within, and thinks that he perceives with his bodily eyes and ears realities shown him by

God.”

I suppose it’s hard to describe it if you’ve not experienced it, but *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* goes a little deeper, saying a trance is: “The ... state in which a man has passed out of the usual order of his life, beyond the usual limits of consciousness and volition, being rapt in causes of this state are to be traced commonly to strong religious impressions. Whatever explanation may be given of it, it is true of many, if not of most, of those who have left the stamp of their own character on the religious history of mankind, that they have been liable to pass at times into this abnormal state.”

The *International Bible Encyclopedia* defines trance this way: “The condition expressed by this word is a mental state in which the person affected is partially or wholly unconscious of objective sensations, but intensely alive to subjective impressions which, however they may be originated, are felt as if they were revelations from without. They may take the form of visual or auditory sensations or else of impressions of taste, smell, heat or cold, and sometimes these conditions precede epileptic seizures constituting what is named the aura epileptica.”

What the Bible Says About Trances

We only see trances mentioned five times in the Bible, but that is more than enough to set a principle of a way God moves on us and speaks to us. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established (see Deut. 19:15). We’ll start with the Old Testament, where we see two mentions of trances and then move to the New Testament, where we see trances mentioned three times. (Find out more about this in my new book, *The Seer Dimensions*).

Balaam, the false prophet who a king tried to hire to curse Israel, went into a trance. We read about that in Numbers 24:1-4:

And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as other times to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling in their tents by their tribes, and the Spirit of God came on him. He took up his proverb and said: "Balaam the son of Beor has said, and the man whose eyes are open has said, he has said, who heard the words of God, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.

Notice when he fell into this trance, his eyes were open. He was not asleep, but it seemed he was in a sleep-like state, not moving.

Peter's Trance

Peter fell into a trance that opened his eyes to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Let's look at the entire account in Acts 10:10-17:

He became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they prepared a meal, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened, and a vessel like a great sheet, tied at the four corners, descending to him, and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth and wild beasts and reptiles and birds of the air. Then a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter said, "Not at all, Lord. For I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice spoke to him a second time: "What God has cleansed, do not call common." This happened three times. And again the vessel was taken up into heaven. Now while Peter wondered what this vision which he had seen might mean, the men who were sent by Cornelius had inquired for Simon's house and stood at the gate.

Notice that Peter saw a vision in the trance. Many people who fall into trances report having seen visions. Some others

can't even describe what they have seen or didn't see anything.

Paul fell into a trance in Acts 22:17-21 in which the Lord gave him a warning and a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles:

"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Him saying to me, 'Hurry! Get out of Jerusalem immediately, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' "I said, 'Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You in every synagogue. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I was standing by consenting to his death, guarding the clothes of those who killed him.' "Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"
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