

How God Speaks While You're Sleeping

Throughout the pages of Scripture, visual realities erupted and revealed subtle mysteries of God's kingdom. This may seem strange today, but the ancients believed that God would speak to them in the midst of their dreams.

In this nocturnal state of mind, unparalleled insight and understanding were sometimes accessed. Reflecting on this, Job once declared, *"In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears"* (Job 33:15-16).

In one instance, God conveyed the immensity of His covenant with Abraham through the image of a smoking firepot and a blazing torch passing through the sacrifice.

"As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ... When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, 'To your descendants I give this land'" (Genesis 15:12, 17-18).

Many haven't considered this, but Abraham's experience with God took place in his "mind" while he slept. Through visceral images, he began to understand something of who God was and what He intended to do in his life.

The pattern of the Lord speaking through dreams continued to have a lengthy heritage in the Bible; shaping the lives of the Patriarchs (Genesis 28:12; 37:5; 46:2), Prophets (Daniel 7:1-9), and Kings (1 Kings 3:5). It even comes into play in the New Testament with the birth of the Messiah (Matthew 1:20-21; 2:12-13; 2:19) and the expansion of the church (Acts

2:17; 16:9-10; 18:9-10).

Dreams were a form of divine encounter widely accepted in the Middle East (and are still valued by Semitic people today). What was being conveyed during slumber, tended to shape their understanding of the purposes of God. The children of Abraham weighed out every dream; considering what the Lord might be sharing with them.

We obviously place our greatest trust in Scripture. Yet, in the pages of the Bible, men and women were often impacted by intense spiritual encounters. Are modern Christians willing to follow the ancient biblical pattern? Do we truly have an openness to encountering God's purposes in trans-rational ways?

How would you respond if God whispered to you tonight while you were slumbering?

J.D. King, *author and speaker, is the director of the World Revival Network and associate pastor of World Revival Church.*