

Why Doesn't the Church Offer More Teaching on Dreams, Deliverance or Miracles?

Question: Why doesn't my church take dreams seriously? I have lots of dreams.

In the Bible, God gave dreams that provided counsel, guidance, gifts and promises. I want this! Why isn't there more training on it? I don't want to have to go to the New Age movement to learn about the supernatural.

Answer: "Western Christianity" has chosen to reduce Christianity to a reasoned, logical theology about a God who lives "up there." Dreams aren't rational or logical. Dreams constitute a direct encounter with the Living God (Acts 2:17).

Therefore, dreams are ignored. The same goes for working miracles, casting out demons, speaking in tongues, heavenly encounters and every other spiritual experience recorded in Scripture. Why would the church do this, and is there a way out of this mess?

Part 1 – Losing Heart Revelation

1. Where Did This Rational Approach to Christianity Come From?
2. Why Would the Church Strip Spiritual Encounters From Its Experience?
3. Did You Know Satan Has Stolen the Bible From Conservatives as Well as Liberals?

Where Did This Rational Approach to Christianity Come From?

Thomas Aquinas: Even though the Bible says that man's thoughts are not God's thoughts (Is. 55:9), and Jesus rebuked "man's reasoning" every time it showed up in the Gospels (Matt.

16:5-12; Mark 2:5-12, 8:15-18), and James declared man's wisdom comes from below and is natural, sensual and demonic (James 3:13-17), the church has decided to follow the philosophy laid out by Thomas Aquinas: to limit spiritual experiences and replace them with reasoned theology.

True Knowledge! Amazingly, the word "theology" does not even appear in the Bible! "Doctrine" would be the closest word to theology, and the word doctrine only shows up 15 times in the NASB. Half the time, doctrine was rebuked because it was man's doctrine and the other half it was considered good doctrine because it was received as revelation from God. Paul called the truth he received by revelation, "true knowledge" (Col. 3:10; 2:2-23 NASB) as opposed to "knowledge." I don't believe I had ever drawn a distinction in my mind between knowledge and true knowledge. That's interesting.

Truth: A "Who" or a "what." Pilate wanted to know, "*What is truth?*" (John 18:38). The answer is that truth is not a *what*. Truth is not a reasoned set of concepts. Truth is a *Person*. Jesus said, "*I am Truth*" (John 14:6). I experience God's truth every time I have exchanges with Jesus, through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17). This is revelation-based, God-breathed, living truth, applied correctly and directly to the moment I am living. Jesus said, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing*" (John 6:63).

Nothing? Really?

Words or Power? The kingdom of God does *not consist in words but in power* (1 Cor. 4:20). Wow! So truth comes from illumination, empowering and transformation, which we experience every time we take a walk with God in the cool of the garden and He speaks.

Epistemology: The following introduces you to the basics of a Christian philosophy of "knowing." If you have already read my books on this topic, this will serve as a short summary

review, and if not, this will serve as an introductory overview.

Yuck! I guess that because I took a religion-philosophy major while at Roberts Wesleyan College, my head has been geared to think philosophically about learning. While in college, I did not recognize the value of studying philosophy, as philosophers begin with the question, “Do I exist?” and then get into discussions concerning the fact that the miracles in the Bible are myths and not to be believed. I found the entire discussion repugnant, so I figured I would just set philosophy aside.

Maybe not so bad? Now, looking back over my life and seeing that I have written many books on establishing a revelation-based Christian philosophy for knowing, I realize that the philosophy courses in college trained me to ask a question that many people have never bothered to ask, which is, “What is God’s approach for knowing truth?” What I have learned is that God’s approach to discovering truth is completely different from what the Western culture believes, and even from what my Bible college and church taught me.

A Christian philosophy of knowing: May I present to you what God has taught me concerning establishing a biblical epistemology? I like the word epistemology as it is one of the biggest words I learned in college, and it just has such a nice ring to it! It means “system for knowing.” Do you know what your system for discovering truth is?

Why Would the Church Strip Spiritual Encounters From Its Experience?

Plato: Early church fathers had fit Christian thought and experience into Plato’s philosophy. Plato was a well-known philosopher who embraced spiritual encounters as a valid means for discovering truth.

Aristotle: In trying to make Christianity acceptable

to Aristotle's philosophy, (which was sweeping Europe in the 1200s, and which did not accept divine encounter as a way of knowing truth), Thomas Aquinas spent his entire life laying out a logical, rational approach to Christianity.

Scholasticism: When Protestantism was formed, it adopted the scholasticism (i.e. a method of critical thought) of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). He was the author of more than 80 works, including the *Summa Theologica*, which was accorded special honor at the Council of Trent. In adopting scholasticism, Western Christianity adopted a very academic religion, which limited supernatural experiences and was counter to Plato's philosophy and to the Bible's own stated approach for discovering truth.

It's all straw! However, at the end of his life, the Lord granted Thomas Aquinas a triple dream experience (i.e. a spiritual, non-rational, supernatural experience), and it so profoundly affected him that when urged to write about it, he stated, "I cannot, because all that I have written seems like straw to me." He would write no more, and within four months he was dead. Yet today, we have embraced his writings, which he felt were straw and essentially rejected divine encounter, which fills the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

A protest movement: Also, since Martin Luther was embattled with and reacting to the sale of indulgences along with other Papal abuses, the movement was dubbed, "Protest-ant." Admittedly, whenever we are in a protesting mode, we generally push one side of truth, rather than the whole truth. Jon Ruthven has an easy-to-read book, *What's Wrong with Protestant Theology?* in which he explores the fight Protestants were in and why they were forced into creating such a one-sided "gospel."

Spiritual experiences lost! Scripture records over 50 dreams and visions, whose stories and outworkings reflect a full one-third of the Bible. Yet, if you checked out 1000 churches

today, how many do you think would be offering a course on Christian Dream Interpretation? Perhaps none, or maybe one or two! So the question is: What gives our churches the right to reject one-third of the Bible and not even offer a Sunday school class on it?

We ate the straw! How tragic that we have chosen to major on what Thomas Aquinas considered “straw,” (i.e. man’s rational abilities), rather than on the supernatural lifestyle demonstrated throughout Scripture!

Let God be God! I suppose today some pastors would like to keep Christianity rational as they believe it is just “flakes” who hear God’s voice. And then, of course, there is the whole issue of undermining the pastor’s authority. My suggestions are, “If you train and shepherd well on how to hear God’s voice, you will greatly reduce the number of flakes. As far as authority goes, true authority comes from God’s spoken word, and not from any title one might have.” All sheep get to hear His voice (John 10:27).

Did You Know Satan Has Stolen the Bible From Conservatives as Well as Liberals?

Liberals such as Rudolf Bultmann use demythologization to explain that the miracles are simply myths that are not to be believed or sought after. Conservatives rightly reject such a position, but then go on to offer their own justification for a life devoid of the supernatural, using dispensationalism to explain why God no longer has direct encounters with individuals.

Psychotic, really! Some liberal commentaries have gone as far as to say those who have dreams are psychotic! Some conservative groups have gone so far as to not ordain pastors in their denominations if they believe God speaks through dreams! Lord, forgive us!

Good old scorn! As a fundamentalist, I used to scorn the

liberals because they did not believe the Bible was the inerrant Word of God (i.e. my scorning was done before God showed me that I was to *honor* all people: 1 Pet. 2:17). One day in my prayer time, the Lord said, "Mark, you don't believe the Bible is for you either." I objected, but He went on to say, "You believe the book of Acts is transitory and transitional, the Gospels were for and only about Jesus, the Old Testament was just for the nation of Israel, and the book of Revelation is for the future. So all you believe applies directly to you are the Epistles!" I was cut to the quick. I repented, and I began an extended search to restore biblical experience to my life.

Change takes time! It took me many years to: a) break free of the false theologies I had picked up, b) conquer my own unbelief in the flow of the Holy Spirit within me and c) overcome my ignorance of how to have a variety of ongoing spiritual experiences. Every one of these battles and steps has been detailed in books I have written, and listed at the end of part four of this series.

For part 2 of this four-part series, tune in Tuesday. {eo}

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