

Commentary — From the Margins

What Does a Vision Mean?

A vision differs from a dream by greater intensity and by infrequent occurrence. The prophet Daniel had five recorded visions. The Apostle Peter had one. The Apostle Paul had two or three. The Apostle John had one that he recorded [modern scholarship doubts that John the Revelator was also John, the disciple Jesus loved]. So visions from God occur, but not often. And when they occur, they happen for a reason.

Yesterday, a young woman contacted me and asked if I knew what the vision she just had meant. She said what she was doing was very uncharacteristic of her, that she wasn't sure she shouldn't be dismissed as mentally unstable. She found me through a *Yahoo* internet search of an image within the vision, and she was seeking understanding.

The vision began while she was praying with an oral utterance of some personal information followed by what seemed like a slide show, with one image following another, five images all together. The first image was of the word "rosary" carved in ornate letters on a wood book cover. Next was the Star of David, two triangles, one upright and one upside down. The third image was of a menorah. The fourth was of a dove descending in bright light. The fifth was of the phrase "Son of Man" carved boldly in block letters on a wood book cover.

Any number of conmen [and women] can assign meaning to these images, selling soft words and an easy grace as if selling the emperor new clothes. The person offering an interpretation, if trained, will tell the young woman exactly what she wants to hear. But the images do not suggest an interpretation that simplifies life, but an interpretation that will complicate an already complicated life; for the images suggest movement from the fancy lettering of the word *rosary* through a mirror image that represents Israel, with one triangle down and one up as there is a physically-circumcised nation of Israel and a spiritually circumcised nation of Israel, both of which are represented in the Star of David. The movement continues through the menorah, the physical light within the physical sanctuary of the temple of God [this light also representing the rest of God on the seventh day], to the dove descending in bright light, a recognizable symbol for Christ Jesus and for Him receiving the Holy Spirit ["Πνευμα Ἅγιον" or Breath Holy]. The last image is the wood book cover with the boldly carved letters in plain, unadorned characters spelling out **Son of Man**. The movement is from fancy to plain, from the recognized means for praying the liturgy of the Universal Church to the governing hierarchy that will receive the kingdom of this world halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation, from the Christendom of this world to the concealed Christianity of Christ Jesus. This movement is described by the Apostle Paul in his phrase, "the righteousness that is of faith—ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη" (Rom 10:6). Therefore, what Paul means when he writes of this righteousness that comes by faith needs to be examined, for in this

righteousness is the second covenant made with Israel, initially mediated by Moses, now the covenant of which Christ Jesus is mediator (Heb 8:6).

A little background first: Moses was a child of his parents' faith, hidden for three months, raised in the household of Pharaoh as Pharaoh's daughter's son; then when forty years old he slew an Egyptian that was abusing a Hebrew—by faith, Moses identified with his people rather than continue the masquerade of life as Egyptian royalty. But for his murder of the Egyptian, he had to flee Egypt. The Pharaoh wanted him dead. And Moses fled north to the land of Midian, the land of Ishmael, the firstborn natural son of Abraham, the son of bondage, the son of Hagar to whom the Apostle Paul likened the Sinai Covenant.

In Midian, Moses married and herded the sheep of his father-in-law, a life every different from that of Egyptian royalty, the life of a sojourner in a foreign land (Exod 2:22). As Abraham before Moses had dwelt as a sojourner in the Promised Land, owning no more than the cave in which he buried Sarah, Moses for the next two parts of his life dwelt as a sojourner, with no inheritance but that which would be promised by God. And after forty years of dwelling in Midian, Moses was on the mountain of Horeb [Sinai], the mountain of God, where he saw a burning bush that was not consumed by fire. He turned aside to see this wonder, and there he spoke with the God of his father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He received a commission to lead Israel from Egypt, the geographical landscape representing sin. But the exodus was not to be accomplished through armed rebellion; rather, God would cause Pharaoh to let His firstborn natural son (Exod 4:22) go by devastating the nation of Egypt.

Where was God during the years of Egyptian enslavement of the Hebrews and abuse of these slaves? Where was God when Pharaoh ordered Hebrew male babies thrown into the Nile? Moses was “thrown” into the Nile as commanded, but he was delivered into the river in an ark of bulrushes made waterproof by tar and pitch. And it is this ark, created by faith that saved Moses' life. It was a type of the Ark of the Covenant that preceded Israel into the Jordan, causing its flooding waters to back up. And every disciple is a spiritual ark of the covenant that lives when immersed in the waters of baptism as Noah lived when water covered the earth. And a person should note that those who are or who will be commissioned by God to do a job for Him will live while others around them perish ... is God fair, saving one but leaving many to die? Is a farmer fair when he or she plows under wild flowers to plant the field in wheat? The Apostle Paul when addressing this question quotes from Moses, “I [God] will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom 9:15). Fairness is an attribute of human thought, influenced by the prince of the power of the air. God has consigned all of humankind to disobedience so that He can have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). When God displays mercy is His prerogative, as it is the prerogative of the farmer of whether to plow or not to plow a field.

God brought Israel out from Egypt 430 years to the day from when the nation entered as 70 descendants of the patriarch Israel (Exod 12:41). The time of Israel's dwelling in Egypt was not coincidental, but a fixed period that was not to

be foreshortened by liberating Israel earlier from Egyptian bondage. So where was God when Israel cried out to Him a decade earlier, two decades earlier, three, four, eight, ten decades earlier? He was watching, waiting, remembering: Egypt gave an account in blood for every abuse of a Hebrew. Likewise, where is God today when evil happens? And evil truly does occur in the lives of those whom He draws from this world (John 6:44) before He draws them.

God is where He was when Israel cried out to Him: He then waited until He would bring about the first Passover. He now waits the time until He will bring about a [second Passover](#) liberation of Israel, a specific moment in the course of the affairs of humankind, the time when the fullness of the Gentiles [the nations] has come to Him, a time not far in the future. Then He will repay this world in blood for its oppression of Israel, the spiritually circumcised nation that is strewn throughout visible Christendom, the otherwise lifeless Body of Christ.

Is watching, waiting the behavior of a loving God? It would not seem to be. It would, to human beings, seem more loving to immediately intervene to end suffering, to stop abuse, to free captives. But it must be understood: the flesh of every person is destined to die. It isn't the flesh that most concerns God, for the flesh is merely the tent or tabernacle in which born-of-Spirit sons of God dwell while spiritually maturing in a manner foreshadowed by the tents of flesh themselves having physically matured. However, if Satan can inflict harm to the flesh, directly or indirectly, before the person is born-of-Spirit, this harm might be great enough to cause the person, from anger or from bitterness, to rebel against God even after being born from above. Satan would then have destroyed what he really had no power to destroy. He would kill the infant son of God in the same way that his servants, disguised ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15), kill through teaching disciples to transgress the commandments of God, thereby causing the disciple over whom sin has no dominion (Rom 6:14) to become again the bondservant of sin by this disciple willingly presenting his [or her] members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness (*vv.* 11-13); for a person is the servant of whom the person obeys, "either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to life" (*v.* 16) . Understand this! When a person is born-of-Spirit, there is no condemnation of the "new self," the infant son of God (Rom 8:2), for God does through spiritual birth what the law could never do (*v.* 3). This new self is born free. This new self, unlike the "old man," is not born consigned to disobedience, but is free to keep the commandments of God. The "old man" was, from birth, consigned to disobedience (again, Rom 11:32), and was utterly unable to keep the commandments. And every person descended from the first Adam however many times removed—prior to the birth of the man Jesus whose father was the *Theos* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and not the first Adam—was born in bondage to the prince of this world. This is why Jesus told the Pharisees that none of them kept the law (John 7:19): none of them could keep the law, for they were all still bondservants of Satan. Only when a person is born-of-Spirit [i.e., receives a second birth that is not of this world] can the person escape disobedience. Only when a person is born of the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45) can this person be truly free to keep the commandments. But if Satan can cause this

person to return to disobedience, then this son of God, like the angels that followed Satan into rebellion against God, will perish in the lake of fire; for inside of time, even Satan will perish (Ezek 28:18-19). And no person will escape from this physical realm until Jesus gives life to the person as the Father gave life to the person (John 5:21). Both must give life, for all judgment has been given to the Son.

Moses probably wondered where God was during those forty years he herded sheep for his father-in-law, but when it was “time,” God showed Himself as He does now. And after protests by Moses saying that he really did not want to go, with Moses telling God to send someone else, Moses goes to Pharaoh, with Aaron his brother as his spokesman as a type and copy of the *Logos* delivering the words of the Most High to Israel.

The Pharaoh isn't about to let Israel leave: the economic worth of Israel was too great for the Pharaoh to allow the nation's emancipation. And God knows that Pharaoh won't let Israel leave; God doesn't intend that Pharaoh lets Israel leave until He is finished punishing Egypt. He hardens Pharaoh's heart so Pharaoh will not let Israel go. Thus, once Moses arrives back in Egypt, conditions become worse for Israel. When God starts to intervene, Israel suffers even more; their lot doesn't get better ... if you were an Israelite in Egypt, what would you have thought when Moses came and angered the Pharaoh, causing him to quit supplying straw without reducing the required workload? Would you have wanted Moses to just go away, leave you and the others alone before conditions get even worse? Probably. So what about now? Do you want God to go away, leave you alone; let you take care of your own problems? You have enough problems without someone adding to them by stirring up the world around you, causing you job problems, babysitting problems, relationship problems. How many additional problems do you suppose God can cause you? More than you initially imagined?

But God's ways are not human ways: after a series of disasters that terminate in the death of the firstborns of Egypt, man and beast, Pharaoh wants Israel out of Egypt. The Egyptians are happy to give to the Israelites whatever they ask, and Israel spoiled Egypt, taking with the nation centuries of back wages.

God, however, was not done with Pharaoh. He again hardens Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh changes his mind about letting Israel leave, and brings his army after Moses and Israel and the mixed multitude that was with Israel, two to three million refugees headed north.

Although modern scholarship doubts the numbers given (600,000+ male Israelites about twenty years of age – Exod 12:37), the reasons given for doubt also cause the entire exodus story to be labeled as myth. So if a person believes the exodus occurred, then the person might as well believe the numbers, for Israel was half or thereabouts of Egypt's population (Exod 5:5).

The Sea of Reeds parts and Israel crosses on dry land, but the sea comes back together on Pharaoh's army, swallowing these heavily armored soldiers as the earth will swallow the endtime armies of the man of perdition. And it is now, in the wilderness of Midian—the wilderness of Sin—that problems for Moses begin

to occur, for Israel really did not want to leave Egypt. The nation only wanted out from under Egyptian taskmasters. It wanted the pleasures of sin/Egypt, but without the cost of these pleasures. It wanted the perks without the price. And when Israel was only days away from entering the hill country of the Promised Land, spies were sent out to survey the land. Twelve spies, one for every tribe but Levi. These spies were gone forty days, forty being a number of significance in Scripture, the number of completion. And when these spies returned, ten of the spies convinced Israel that the nation should turn around and return to Egypt, now a devastated land, for in the land ahead of them were giants.

Joshua remained silent. Caleb urged Israel to immediately proceed into the Promised Land. And God had enough: He condemned every man counted in the census of the second year to death in the wilderness, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.

Israel repented: “Here we are [God]. We will go up to the place that the Lord has promised, for we have sinned” (Num 14:40). But the promise of entering into God’s rest had closed (Heb 4:1 – read Heb 3:16-4:11). No one can enter into God’s rest on the following day, which for disciples of Christ Jesus is the 8th day, the 1st day of the following week. And the Amalekites routed Israel, defeating them, pursuing them even to Hormah.

Israel wandered around the same mountain for the next thirty-nine years. Israel went around in a circle until the adult nation that left Egypt was dead. Then in the fortieth year, God made a second covenant with Israel (Deu 29:1), a covenant unlike the first covenant made at Horeb; for this second covenant requires an act of faith on the part of Israel—

And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and you return to the Lord your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today [the day when this second covenant is made], with all your heart and with all your soul, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. ... And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deu 30:1-3, 6)

The assumption is that Israel will not obey God, nor listen to His voice, but will chase after idols and detestable things (Deu 29:17), and that God will send Israel into exile in far lands and among people who are not of Israel. The nations will ask why has God treated Israel so badly (*v.* 24), and Israel will say that it is because Israel abandoned the covenant of the Lord and worshiped and served other Gods (*vv.* 25-26). And this acknowledgement of sin is the first step in turning to God, by faith, when in far lands.

If Israel will turn to God and will love God, keeping His commandments and all that is written in “this book of the law,” Deuteronomy (Deu 30:9-10), then God

will bring Israel back to the land of His rest, and will give the nation circumcised hearts, a euphemistic expression for the equally euphemistic expression of writing the laws of God on the hearts and minds of Israel (*cf.* Heb 8:10; Jer 31:33). Thus, the sequence is Israel rebels against God, finds itself cursed in a far land, turns to God [this is now an act of faith] and returns to its covenant relationship with God, and God will give to Israel His Holy Spirit upon Israel's demonstrated obedience. And through possession of His Holy Spirit in the form of a spiritually circumcised heart (Rom 2:29), Israel will live spiritually.

This second covenant [Moab covenant] is made with the mixed circumcised [those natural Israelites who were less than 20 years of age in the census of Numbers chapter one] and uncircumcised [the children born in the wilderness to Israel and the mixed multitude and their children] nation of Israel. The second covenant is made with one Israel, which either is circumcised or will be circumcised immediately after crossing into the Promised Land (Josh 5:2-7). And this second covenant is cited by the Apostle Paul when he references the righteousness that comes by faith (*cf.* Rom 10:6-8; Deu 30:11-14). This is the covenant that is not too hard for Israel to keep, nor far from Israel.

Now, let's return to the vision of the young woman:

- The spiritual far land into which God has exiled Israel, the spiritually circumcised nation, is contained in the book with the wood cover on which is inscribed "rosary" in fancy, ornate lettering. This is a mental landscape, not geographical lands.
- Returning to God by faith when in this far land requires Israel to keep His commandments and statutes that are written in Deuteronomy (again Deu 30:1-2; 9-10).
- The Star of David represents an Israel below and one above, with the base of the one pointing below being the holiness of the natural nation (Exod 19:5-6) which had made Israel the human cultivar of God, while the base of the one pointing above was initially lower than natural Israel (Rom 9:30-32), as this second Israel that is now the holy nation of God was not before a people (1 Pet 2:9-10) but became a people through spiritual circumcision (Deu 30:6).
- Upon returning by faith to God, He will bring Israel back into "His rest" (Ps 95:10-11; Gen 2:1-3), represented by the Sabbath, the "light" or sign that reveals who is of God (Exod 31:13, 17), with the seven candlesticks of the menorah representing the light of the former temple. Disciples are now the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17)
- The dove descending in bright light is the light of the present temple of God, this light being the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9) and the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 8:11), the Holy Spirit that descended upon Christ Jesus (Matt 3:16) and remained on Him.
- The destination that is represented by God's rest for endtime disciples of Christ Jesus is spiritual Judea, which isn't a physical land as it was for the natural nation of Israel, but is the mental topography of God's

rest where disciples become the Body of the Son of Man, revealed (Luke 17:30) for all the world to see at the second Passover.

- The journey every disciple must make (until the Body of Christ is empowered by the Holy Spirit) begins with demonstrated love to God through the return to obedience by faith in a far land—and upon demonstrated obedience, God circumcises hearts through the Holy Spirit and causes the person's name to be written in the Book of Life, which contains the names of all who will constitute the Son of Man, Head and Body.

The model for salvation is modified by God at preset times, with the model changing on that day of Pentecost following Calvary; then changing again with the baptism of Cornelius; and about to change again at the second Passover. It will change one more time after that before Christ Jesus returns. When the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh, every person will be born of Spirit and will have the mind and nature of Christ Jesus. Thus, for the last three and a half years before Jesus returns, all any person will have to do to be saved is endure to the end (Matt 24:13), which means not taking the mark of the beast [*chi xi stigma*].

But God is not a respecter of persons. Enduring during those last three and a half years when Satan is cast into time and comes as a roaring lion to devour whomever he can, will be much more difficult than now enduring for thirty years in the faith, when the Body of the Son of Man is concealed by the garment of Grace.

What message does the young woman's vision convey? A rescue message, the necessity of leaving the mental richness of the Universal Church's pomp and ceremony and journeying as a sojourner into the fellowship of Israel, a spiritually circumcised nation, where the Holy Spirit will empower disciples of Christ Jesus, thereby causing their names to be boldly written in the Book of Life.

Is this the message the young woman will take from her visions? I don't know. She asked what I thought they meant, and I have just given her what I know must happen even if her visions are read differently. But I don't believe her visions can be read without returning to Scripture, where the word of God resides mostly ignored by Christendom.

As humankind approaches the end of this age, many more people will see visions. Some visions will be of God. Some will be of the Adversary. Can disciples tell which are of whom? This will be a question that remains to be seen, but those who receive visions and fall backwards when doing so might well question whether their vision is of God; for in Scripture, all who have received visions of God fell forward, onto their face if they moved at all. And Scripture records the sending of lying spirits (1 Kings 22:19-23). There will be more lying spirits and many false prophets before the end of this age.

What about the young woman's vision? It comes just after I completed a book length manuscript e-published as [Water & Fire, Vol. 3](#), in which the argument is made that the Body of Christ is presently dead and will not be resurrected until the second Passover. Jesus' statement that the gates of hell will not prevail over the Church should not be taken to mean that the Church, crucified with Christ

Jesus, will not also die with Christ Jesus, be buried with Christ Jesus, and be resurrected with Christ Jesus. The gates of hell will not prevail because the Body will not remain dead, but will live again as Jesus lived again. So the model for those who would now receive spiritually circumcised hearts is that found in the second covenant, initially made at Moab with the mixed nation of circumcised and uncircumcised Israel, and now made with the Christian who by faith demonstrates obedience by keeping the precepts of the Law (Rom 2:26), and made with the Observant Jew who by faith professes that Jesus is Lord and believes that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:6-9). The young woman's vision seems to confirm what has come more slowly through the discovery process of writing. Those who will be the resurrected Body of the Son of Man must break down the wall separating them from God.

The danger involved with receiving a vision—the danger now facing this young woman—is disbelief of the sort the prophet Jonah displayed. If God has chosen a person for a task, and if this person does not perform the task, then the person is either cut off from God, or the person is “made” to perform not through receiving other visions but through circumstances over which the person should have control but does not. Usually, the latter occurs, with the hand of God resting very heavy upon the person who runs as Jonah did or protests as Moses did.

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