

GOD'S ORDER IN THE CHURCH CONCERNING DREAMS AND VISIONS

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There are some things that I would like to address concerning the matter of dreams and visions. I personally have now heard that a certain dream has come forth in the midst of the Body, and it is with respect to one of the elders in the Body. It has been going around and there has been no interpretation, but rather a multitude of interpretations.

The Bible says that there are three ways that dreams come. Some dreams are from God. The Word says in Matthew that God gave a dream to Joseph that he should take his son to Egypt. He did not need a whole lot of interpretation. God spoke and made it clear to Joseph that he should take Jesus into Egypt, that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled, "I called my son out of Egypt." I mean, God has a reason for all these things.

In Chapter 2 of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, but the dream troubled him. What did he need that he did not have? An interpreter. It says (in Daniel 1:17) that God had given to Daniel the ability to perceive and interpret dreams. This tells me that it is not everybody who perceives and interprets dreams. As a matter of fact, my personal testimony is to my own inability to perceive and interpret dreams. I have very prolific dreamers in my house, and I have not been able. I just have not been able. I have needed someone outside of myself to bring clarity.

Now the problem is there is a dream that has been shared in our midst that could be interpreted this way or that way. When I heard the dream, I thought, "This could be trouble," and it is going around amongst the brethren and it is causing no small uproar.

I would ask you, if you have heard about this—I am not going to tell you the dream. I believe that if you have a dream concerning something that is

outside of your parameters of influence, you should bring it to the elders of the church. God has established in the midst of the church, government that is called elders, and I am going to show you this from the Word exactly, so that you do not think that I am moving in some arena where I want to exert an undue amount of influence in your life.

Turn with me to 1 Timothy 5:17. It says: "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine.*" [Notice that it said, "rule."] That means that there is a place of rulership that God has given to men in the midst of the church.

Now, we could look up the word "rule," and I will leave that to you so that you have a precise and an exact definition of what it means for a man to rule. However, I will tell you that the first order of business is that a man rule by his example. When you look at what the Bible says are the qualifications for an elder, it says that he must be the husband of one wife, and his children must be subject to him in all gravity. There is then, the place where his position is to be an "example" to the flock. Moreover, it says in Acts 20, where Paul was speaking to the elders in Ephesus, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers....*"

So, we have some of these problems, but the Bible did say that in the last days God is going to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and that we were going to see visions and dream dreams. There are going to be dreamers in the midst of us.

We are going to have dreams, some of which will be very clear. When God appeared to Laban in a dream, He said, "See that you speak neither good nor evil to Jacob" (Genesis 31:24). He was warning Laban not to be messing with Jacob. When God came to Abimelech, He rebuked him in a dream, and it was very clear (Genesis 20:3), but there are some things that we hear and see that we do not understand. Joseph went to his brethren and said, "Hey, we were all in the field, and I had my sheaf—it was the big sheaf as a matter of fact—and all your little sheaves were bowing down in front of me...and the sun and the moon and the stars." You know, Joseph had some idea about the dream as to what it was saying, but he did not really perceive or understand the fullness of the dream. Now, Jacob his father interpreted the dream, and He said, "Shall your mother and I and your brethren bow down to you?" And he rebuked him. But, do you know what? Joseph did not forget the dream. He remembered it.

There is, therefore, the place for dreams and there is the place for visions in the midst of the Church. God has said it. Now, there is an order in which things are to be handled. Do you know that if you have a dream, and it is speaking of certain things, there is a prophetic unction on the dream? Therefore, you have to handle it the same way that you handle prophecy.

Do you know that private prophecy has no place in the midst of the Church of Jesus Christ? Do you know that?

If somebody comes to you and they speak to you private prophecy, unless it is of the most sensitive nature, there ought to be a prophetic witness.

**The Bible says this concerning prophecy over in 1 Corinthians,
and it is the same thing about dreams and visions—
they need to be brought before the elders.
They need to be interpreted properly.
There needs to be prayer and fasting
until God brings an answer.**

Otherwise, I am telling you, the intellect of man is slick enough that he can contrive an answer that is born in hell, and that does not do the thing that God intended to be done on the basis of the dream.

Gosh, you are quiet! Somebody say, "Amen"!

Let us hear from the Word. Let us read, starting at 1 Corinthians 12:4, where it is talking about the gifts. *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operation, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the **interpretation** of tongues." Alleluiah! "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. So by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

Now, he is talking in this chapter all the way through about the function of the body, and if one has a dream and one interprets a dream, there is a proper manner in which the thing must be handled. I am telling you, the Bible talks about our talking, because if we speak of things that we do not understand, we have the potential of bringing schism, division, contention, backbiting—all of those things, where we begin to work in that carnal man. Do you remember the word last night, when we were talking about carnality? What was it that we said was the evidence of the carnal man? Yes. His rude behavior.

Let us go to Verse 24, and begin where it says that God has so ordered it that there should be no schism in the body but that the members should have

the same care one for another. Verse 24, *"For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, **GOVERNMENTS**, and diversities of tongues."* God is ordaining His rulership, His leadership, in the midst of His Church, and it comes by way of His anointing. It says here in Verses 29-30:

**"Are all apostles?
are all prophets?
are all teachers?
are all workers of miracles?
have all the gifts of healing?
do all speak in tongues?
do all interpret?"**

These are what are called rhetorical questions—the answer is implied in the question. God expects that we understand the Word as He brings it to us.

"...have all the gifts of healing?" Well, I will just add, "Do YOU have the gift of healing?" And if you do not, then obviously the answer is no, because you don't and you are part of the all. On the other hand, maybe you do, and your neighbor does not.

"...do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

Alleluiah! Now, we all know the more excellent way is agape love. It is a love that does not demand a response, or gratification, or any of that. It is a love that just expends itself.

Now, we come into Chapter 14, Verse 1, where it says, *"Follow after charity..."* It says "charity" here in the King James Version, but that word is "agape" in the original Greek. *"Follow after charity (agape love), and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him, howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to **EDIFICATION, to EXHORTATION and COMFORT.**"*

Prophecy, prophetic dreams—the Word says here that they are spoken to men for the purpose of edifying, exhorting, or comforting. Moreover, do you

know that if you are in an arena that is improper, you can be comforted when God sends a word of correction? What if I am heading in a direction that is wrong. It is a direction that is contrary to the mind and the will of God, and yet my perception is that I think it is God? If somebody comes to me with the word of prophecy and says, "Thus and thus, and thus, saith the Lord, God," and the word begins to rebuke my perception, then there ought to be some sort of comfort in my soul, in spite of whatever I am after. Because, if I want God more than I want anything else, the Word of God is meant to bring God to the forefront. Amen!

I mean, I have heard men that have been given a word of correction from God where the word of the Lord was so clear. "Thus saith the Lord, God, the way you are going is not correct! Stop doing what you are doing right now!" There ought to be a comfort to know that there is someone greater than you that is watching over your business. Alleluiah!

I am not offended, and I do not know about you, but I believe if you have the word of the Lord, then you deliver the word of the Lord! You know, if you say, "I feel," or "I believe," it is like a little escape hatch. You do not ever read in the Bible where Elijah or Elisha said, "I believe" or "I feel," nor is it ever written in Zechariah or in Daniel, "I feel." When they came to the kings, they said, "Thus saith the Lord God...."

In 1 Kings 14, when Ahijah the prophet brought the word to the wife of Jeroboam, he said, "I know that you are coming to see about the child, and I am telling you that when you go back and enter the city and cross the threshold of your house, the child is going to die" He did not say, "I feel..." or "I believe..." He said, "*Thus saith the Lord...*"

Now, when we are handling dreams, visions, and prophecy, they ought to be handled in a manner that is different than casual common conversation. If God is talking to you in a dream, then it is the word of the Lord, and it ought to be brought in proper order that we might pray and fast, and do whatever it takes that the interpretation might come. Do you know when Nebuchadnezzar had the dream, he wanted to know what the dream was because he forgot it. They said, "Why don't you just tell us the dream and we will interpret." Well, easy for you to say. I mean anybody can finagle some sort of an interpretation.

You know, not all prophecy is from the Lord. When Jehoshaphat was with Ahab, after the four hundred prophets that Ahab had gathered had spoken, Jehoshaphat said, "Don't you have a prophet of the Lord here. We have heard all these other guys talking their own 'yes man' business." And they called in Micaiah.

It is a serious business when we are handling dreams and visions. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 5:3 that dreams come from a "*multitude of business*."

Alleluiah. We need to be sensitive about how we handle them. Now, if you know the dream that I have been talking about, hold it. Take it to God. We are going to deal with the dream in the midst of the elders, but we are trying to put out the fire that it is causing amongst the Fellowship.

Let me tell you something, in Genesis 37 there is the dream that Joseph had, and do you see how much trouble it caused for him? It caused a lot of trouble for Joseph! It stained the hands of his brothers. Do you know that in the time when they were in the midst of prison, [Joseph's brethren] were lamenting, and they said, "God has requited us of the evil that we have done against our brother." On the basis of a dream, they became bitter and jealous, because they did not understand the mind of God or the will of God with respect to the thing that was being spoken. Alleluiah!

We are a people that are very privileged. He said, "I am going to pour out My spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters are going to prophesy...." There is a gift in the midst of the Church that has not always been there, and it ought to be handled with a little bit more care and reverence. For the Bible says here that the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet.

You know, when a man prophesies, God does not just start working his lips, and he is just taken along like somebody hauling a donkey along. It is not so. **He prophesies by faith! God begins to speak to him, and he opens his mouth and he begins to speak by faith. We ought to be more careful as to the manner and fashion in which we have handled the gift of God, because it is not given to you for you. It is placed in you for the purpose of bringing edification, exhortation, or comfort to someone more than just you.**

Do you know that it is a fail-safe mechanism that God has instituted in the government of the Church? Let us read the Word. I mean, He tells us in the Word how it ought to be handled. Brethren, if we believe that we are of the company of the New Testament churches, then things ought to be handled in the manner that is proper before God and that is according to the ordinance of God.

In 1 Corinthians 14, he said, beginning in Verse 18, *"I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit it malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the law, it is written, WITH MEN OF OTHER TONGUES AND OTHER LIPS WILL I SPEAK UNTO THIS PEOPLE; AND YET FOR ALL THAT WILL THEY NOT HEAR ME, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: and prophesying serveth not them that believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole church be come together into*

*one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad. But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. **Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that by course; and let one interpret.***"

It means that not everybody that is speaking in an unknown tongue is going to be followed by someone who will interpret what they are saying. Do you understand? It is a fail-safe mechanism that God has put in the Church. Verse 28, **"But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."** You know, there is an implication there, that if you have the Holy Ghost, you should also know whether or not there is an interpreter. As a matter of fact, He says you should know, and you ought to know, because if there isn't one, then you are not to speak.

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. *If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*"

He is saying right here that private prophecy and private interpretation are not proper. It needs to be spoken out in the midst of the church so that it can be judged, and if in this place somebody brings a dream, and they come to the elders, believe you me the thing will be handled appropriately.

It says in 1 Timothy 5:17, *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of **double honour**, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."* You know, there is a little word within that word. It means that God has intended that these brethren operate in that manner, and that it is the responsibility of the body. Do you know what he is talking about when he says, "*honour*"? It does not mean that two people get up and one says, "Amen, Brother. Excellent word!" (That's one!) And then he goes and sits down, and the second brother (which makes double) says, "Excellent word, Brother!" If a man comes to speak and gets an honorarium, do you know what that is? Cash! It means that the responsibility is in the midst of the body for the finances—remuneration, as it were, for the elders that function in the Word and in doctrine.

It does not mean that you have a pastor and you give him a salary, a house, and a car. It means that you listen to the Holy Ghost, and there is an

expectation that God has. Do you know that the Levites had no inheritance in the land? Did you know that? They did not get land; they did not get any of that business. They were not given a concrete definable inheritance, because God said, "I will be their inheritance." However, He also instructed that each one of the tribes had an obligation to make a provision for the Levites, that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Because God takes care of His own.

So, I want to encourage you, you do not need to be afraid of prophecy or dreams, but you need to understand that if you are a dreamer of dreams and you have dreams that are spiritual, then you have a responsibility. God sometimes gives you a dream that the message might come forth to somebody in the midst of the church that is dull. Do you know, if I am in degradation, and I am in sin, and I am going in the wrong direction, and God gives you a dream, it is because I am not hearing anything.

There is an order, a manner, and a fashion in which the things have to be approached, and it cannot be haphazard. Let me take you back into 1 Timothy 5 where we were just reading. There is a verse in this chapter that says that you should not receive an accusation against an elder. It says in Verse 18, "*For the scripture saith, THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE THE OX THAT TREADETH OUT THE CORN. And, THE LABORER IS WORTHY OF HIS REWARD.*" (We already read where he was talking about "double honor" in the verse before that.) Verse 19, "**Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.** *Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*"

In the first verse of this chapter, the Word says, "*Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father...*" It says that you should entreat an elder as a father, and it means there is a place of reverence that you ought to have. Sad to say, sometimes we do not have that. Everything has become common in the house of God. Well, believe you me, before God, it is not common! God's business is not common in God's hands, I am telling you! If we think otherwise, we ought to look very closely at Uzzah [See 2 Samuel 6]. You know, they were tromping in and on, and they had all this business going on, but when Uzzah put his hand in the place where God said he should not put his hand ("Only the priest is going to come here!"), God smote him.

In the tenth chapter of Leviticus, Nadab and Abihu brought their own fire, when the commandment was that the only fire that was going to be used in the Tabernacle was the fire that came off of the altar. That was not altar fire. It was Nadab and Abihu fire. They kindled the wrong fire. They did their own business, and the fire that they kindled smote them! It is serious business, and if we have not thought that it was serious, we are very mistaken!

Sometimes dreamers have so many dreams that they become complacent about them. It is not right. We do not have the license to become complacent with the gift that God has placed in us, for the purpose of edification,

exhortation, and comfort in the Body. The gift is not you. It is not yours; and it cannot be handled as if it is you or your's.

Let me ask you a question. If God has called me to preach the word, how often do you think I preach in the mirror? Not at all! I may sing in the shower, and I may dance in the hallway, but I do not preach in the mirror! Why? It is not mine! Although I am hearing the words while it is coming out, and it is touching my own soul, the gift is for the Body, not the individual. And it ought to be handled appropriately in the fear of God, with proper reverence.

I tell you what, some of you people are dreaming dreams, and you are handling them inappropriately, and you think they are nothing, and you let them fall on the ground. God will come to you. They are not nothing!

He said in Joel 2:28, that in the last days, *"I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions...."* He is talking about speaking the prophetic word.

He said in Amos 3:7, *"Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."*

In Amos 8:11, He said that in the last days that there is going to be a famine in the land, *"...not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD."*

There are lots of dreams in this place, brethren. You may not know it, but I am telling you that there are lots of dreams, and God is talking to a lot of people.

The prophet does not have license to say, "Oh, my goodness, did you hear what God told me about this guy? He has problems. He had better repent!" When the prophetic word comes, it comes out, and there are no secrets, there is no reproach; and the word can be judged.

Do you know that not everything that somebody says as, "Thus saith the Lord..." is the Lord? In Jeremiah 23, he talked about dreamers of dreams, and those saying *"the burden of the Lord,"* when He had not given them the burden. It means that some people are dreaming out of their own soul some sort of satanic vision that is not God, thereby necessitating the need for the interpretation. The Bible says that some people have been given the gift of interpretation. I can attest to it, because some of the dreams mean absolutely nothing to me. In terms of spiritual value, I do not understand them; but I know who knows, and I go to them. I go to God. I go to men that I know have the gift.

Now, that is just about me, personally—when there are dreams about me. When somebody says that they had a dream, the first question I ask them is, "Was I in it?" The second question is, "Was it good or bad?" (I mean if they affirm the first one.) "Yes, you were in it. It wasn't good, brother?" "Okay, lay it out. Let me have it."

God has placed this gift within the body, and if you have it, do not pretend that you do not have it. Do not get religious about it. It is what it is. We are talking about when you have a dream that is spiritual, and it is not like when Brother Campbell used to say, "Well, it is probably because they ate too much pizza." You know, I remember that the man had a dream, and he shared it in the midst of the congregation because he did not know what it meant. **I am telling you, if we begin to comfort ourselves in our own ability to interpret our own dreams, we are going to be in trouble. You are not objective in your assessment of your own matters, and that is the reason that God says, "Let one speak in tongues and another interpret." Do you know why? The interpretation validates the tongue.**

Do you understand what I am saying? Somebody gets up and begins to speak out in tongues, and your first question is, "I wonder if that is God, or is it just this person trying to edify himself?" And I am sitting there wondering, and all of a sudden somebody stands up and says, "Thus saith the Most High..." and the word of the Lord comes, and there is a witness inside that it is God. **And both the tongue speaker and the interpreter have been validated by the Holy Ghost that we heard the voice of God that is done in public!** Nothing is done secretly, covertly, and covered up, because God does not want people to be able to manipulate people by way of secret things. Alleluiah!

I am telling you, when Elijah came to the prophets of Baal, he did not do anything secretly. He said, "Where is your god at? On vacation?" "Is he sleeping? Come on, if your god's God, let's get down to business!"

And do you know what? That is the place we are at. If you are hearing God and the word of the Lord is out of your mouth, do not tell me "I believe...." Do not tell me, "I feel...." Say, "Thus saith the most High...."

Now, you may not say, "The most High," but if you are delivering the word of the Lord, there cannot be any namby-pamby business about it. It is either God, it is you, or it is the devil! If you do not believe it is God, zip it! Do not give it! Because you have to prophesy by faith, and you cannot be afraid.

I mean, God has let these things come forth in the midst of the Body that we might [learn]. He said, "Let one or two speak, that we all might learn." Do you understand what He is saying? He is saying that some of us are going to

say, "This is God," and it is not God. And they can be entreated and encouraged, and corrected.

I am not afraid of dreams. I am not afraid of the prophetic word. I am afraid of God, and I do not want to miss it, and I do not want to be caught up in some little petty backbiting, "Because I think..."

Listen! A man has to know his limitations. I have not been able to interpret many dreams. I heard a dream one time, and as soon as I heard it, I knew exactly what it meant. I said, "This is what the dream means..." and do you know, it changed people. They had a person in the dream and I said, "That person is not really that person, but it's that person." And they brought it in front of more than just Peter, you understand?

So, if you have heard about this dream, please bring it to the elders. If you have the word, bring it to us that we might handle it properly; that it might be handled appropriately; that the devil has no manner by which he can bring a schism. You know, the devil is going to try to use the gift of God to divide God's people. So I want to encourage you in that respect, so we can kind of nip it in the bud, as it were. (The question was just asked as to whether we can write them down, and bring it to the elders that way. Absolutely!) But, it is a mechanism by which God has given us the ability to assess the things that are going on in our midst, not only on an individual level but on a corporate level; because though we function as individuals, there is a corporate expression.

I am telling you, if something begins to come up, and one of the elders or one of the brethren is being vilified, or demeaned, or whatever—it has an outward affect. Do you know that if you put an apple that is bruised among a bunch of apples that are not bruised, that bruise has the power to spread? I do not know why, I just know that it does. If you stick an old nasty banana on top of some real nice yellow ones, you can come out the next morning, and the yellow ones will be brown spotted, and in two days *they will be just as nasty as the other one*.

The Bible says let everything be done decently and in order. That means there is an order to the prophetic. There is an order in the service. There is an order in worship. There is an order in the manner and fashion in which we approach God, and the fact that we do not necessarily know the order does not alleviate our responsibility.

So now, I am imploring you and entreating you by the grace of God, if you are a dreamer and if you have been prone to chat your dream from one to another, and assess them on a personal level, and to talk about them, and to handle them as though they are yours—please stop it. Write them down. Deliver them. Bring the things to the elders; bring them to

someone in whom you have confidence that the Spirit of God is there, and they are able by the Spirit to understand.

That king knew that Daniel could understand dreams. So he wasted a little bit of time with the Chaldeans and the astrologers, threatened them, and then brought in Daniel. Daniel did what the king believed he could do, because God had given him that gift. The king said, "I know that the Spirit of the living God is in you..." which is the key. Amen. Praise God.

