

## Brief on Dreams<sup>1</sup>

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

“And he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it...” (Gen. 28:12)

Gen. 28:12. **He saw in his sleep:** Dreams are either from God, the Devil, or men’s imaginations. Dreams that are not from the true God are not to be observed but are to be rejected:

“Deceitful divinations and lying omens and the dreams of evildoers are vanity.” (Eccus. 34:5)

However, dreams that are from God are to be observed:

“Hear my words: if there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will appear to him in a vision or I will speak to him in a dream.” (Num. 12:6)

God gives dreams not just to believers (such as Jacob, Gen. 28; Joseph, Gen. 37; Judas Machabees, 2 Mac. 5:11; and St. Joseph, Mt. 1:20; 2:12) but also to unbelievers (such as Pharaoh, Gen. 41; Nabuchodonosor, Dan. 2; Laban, Gen. 31:22-24; and Pilate’s wife, Mt. 27:19) in order to warn them against harming his chosen people, to try to convert them, to help them defeat an enemy, to warn them of their sins or future destruction, or for some other reason.

When dreams are from God, the interpretation of them is a gift from God. But most dreams are not of this sort but either proceed from the natural complexions and dispositions of persons, or the roving of their imaginations in the day on such objects as they are much affected with, or from their mind being disturbed with cares and troubles and oppressed with bodily infirmities; or they are suggested by evil spirits to flatter or to terrify minds in order to gain belief and so draw them into error or superstition, or to trouble them in their sleep because they cannot influence them when they are awake. (See Job 7:14.) Most dreams are not from God:

“Where there are many dreams, there are many vanities and words without number.” (Ectes. 5:6)

If dreams that are not from God are not rejected, they will deceive the dreamers and those who give credit to the dreams:

“The hopes of a man that is void of understanding are vain and deceitful, and dreams lift up fools. The man that giveth heed to lying visions is like to him that catcheth at a shadow and followeth after the wind... What can be made clean by the unclean? And what truth can come from that which is false? Deceitful divinations and lying omens and the dreams of evildoers are vanity: And the heart fancieth as that of a woman in travail; except it be a vision sent forth from the most High, set not thy heart upon them. For dreams have deceived many, and they have failed that put their trust in them. The word of the law shall be fulfilled without a lie, and wisdom shall be made plain in the mouth of the faithful.” (Eccus. 34:1-8)

Hence dreams that are against the true God and true faith or immoral are known for certain to not be of God and thus must be rejected. That is one way that false prophets and lying dreamers are exposed and condemned:

“If there rise in the midst of thee a prophet or one that saith he hath dreamed a dream, and he foretell a sign and a wonder, and that come to pass which he spoke, and he say to thee: Let us go and follow strange gods, which thou knowest not, and let us serve them: Thou shalt not hear the words of that prophet or dreamer, for the Lord your God trieth you that it may appear whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul or not.” (Deut. 13:1-3)

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<sup>1</sup> RJMI’s Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.

“I have heard what the prophets said that prophesy lies in my name, and say: I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies and that prophesy the delusions of their own heart? Who seek to make my people forget my name through their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers forgot my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word with truth. What hath the chaff to do with the wheat, saith the Lord?” (Jer. 23:25-28)

*For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men*

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