

David A. Castro



Understanding Supernatural

VISIONS

According to the Bible

UNDERSTANDING SUPERNATURAL VISIONS ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

Understanding Supernatural Visions According to the Bible

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UNDERSTANDING SUPERNATURAL VISIONS ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

- ✚ How many different kinds of visions do we find in the Bible? Are there more kinds than the Bible lists? Can the supernatural things of God be taught, explained, stirred, and made practical?
- ✚ Can small visions lead to greater ones? If we sense a distinct presence of the Lord, might He be getting ready to give us a supernatural revelation? Can yielding to a simple manifestation of the Lord result in a greater manifestation of Him?
- ✚ What is the involvement of our will in visions? Does it always have to be God's will, superiorly to our own, initiating a supernatural experience? Do the angels have a special ministry with regard to visions?
- ✚ How should we respond to a spiritual presence in our room when we can't tell for sure if it's of God? If it is a dark, subtle, silent spirit, does that automatically mean that it cannot be of God?
- ✚ Can we really fly in the spiritual dimension by the Spirit of the Lord? Can we see in the spirit and discern where a person is really coming from, what he really has up his sleeves, and whether or not he is really on the Lord's side?
- ✚ Why does God like to visit us with a wave of fire flowing up and down our bodies, with an arresting presence, with an astounding vision, with an angelic song, and with a great variety of other supernatural experiences?
- ✚ As in the current move of God in the earth, as well as all throughout revival history, why is the dynamic of visions always a major feature in outpourings of the Spirit of God? Is God beginning to open our spiritual eyes now more than ever before so that every eye can behold Him at His Second Coming (Revelation 1:7), which is near at hand?

In this, his second book, Brother David goes on to exploring a variety of different kinds of visions. As he teaches from a strictly biblical perspective, he answers the questions above and clarifies many issues involved in the various realms of supernatural revelations. He encourages Christians to seek those things which are Above (Colossians 3:1), while at the same time challenges us to gain a foundation in the Word of God, to check the motives of our own hearts, and to walk in the Spirit with Jesus.

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DEDICATION

To the Body of Christ—Christians who desire spiritual gifts, who would seek the things which are Above, and who would come to visions and revelations of the Lord—I cordially dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank and praise my personal Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for giving me an understanding of visions. As I sought Him, I found Him. As I set my affection on things Above, He disclosed them unto me. As I have studied to show myself approved unto Him, He has approved, and has led me in the publication of this book. ("Thank You, Lord.")

I also want to thank my editor and friend, Eddie-Joe Irish, Chairman of *Heart of America Ministries*, Shawnee Mission, Kansas. He has added a great blessing to this work by his prayerfulness, professionalism, and expertise. May God bless him very much.

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DISCLAIMER

In this book is found knowledge and wisdom which can be a blessing and helpful to the reader. However, it is to be understood by the reader that medical, psychoanalytical, or other professional counsel is not intended here. The author is not licensed to give such counsel and does not claim to be an expert on the subject matter contained herein, but shares his observations from the Holy Bible in hopes that they may inspire one's faith in God and increase his/her understanding of the Word of God.

If professional or expert counsel is desired or required, the services of competent professionals are to be sought. The principles in this book are generalized guidelines, and should be viewed as nothing more than just that. The prayers and suggestions are the author's own, and may or may not prove to affect, influence, or otherwise improve another person's life and well being. There may also be mistakes, as this is not the final word on the subject of visions and the supernatural realm. Therefore, this book should be read as a source of information and inspiration, not as a source of salvation, healing, or spiritual power.

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FOREWORD BY JAMES W. GOLL

In the times in which we live, many believers in Jesus are being freshly introduced into the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the supernatural ways of God, new prophetic dimensions, and power encounters with the Lord. While many are being impacted by these wonderful experiences, it is also necessary that there be teachers and balanced biblical writings in place to help ground these gifted people so that they do not become isolated, alone in their journey, or, due to the enemy's pressures, talked out of their encounters, which God has given for their good and for the good of others. This is where I have found the writings of David A. Castro to be so helpful!

Brother David is a personal friend of mine seeking to walk the tightrope of present day revelation and biblical truth. David's teachings combine the two edges of the sword of experience and the Holy Scripture. What a combination! You can't miss with that. Nor can you miss benefiting from this book, *Understanding Supernatural Visions According to the Bible*.

I have used David's books over the past few years to fill in some of the gaps in my own writings and add content where I have lacked. May you do the same. With this view in mind, I recommend this practical, visionary material to you and trust that it will be as helpful to you as it has been in my life and ministry.

James W. Goll, Author Founder of *Encounters Network* Franklin, Tennessee

INTRODUCTION

2Corinthians 12:1 I will come to visions... of the Lord.

The Apostle Paul, the Patriarch Moses, the Prophet Ezekiel, Samuel the Seer, Joseph the Dreamer, St. John the Divine, and many other servants of God in the Bible were shown supernatural visions by the Lord. Maria Woodworth-Etter, William Branham, Ellen G. White, John G. Lake, and a host of other powerful handmaidens and servants of God throughout history, also experienced many supernatural signs and wonders of the Holy Ghost throughout their ministries. They also saw many marvelous visions of God.

Today we esteem them highly and are fascinated by what they saw and experienced. Yet God has promised us, His Endtime Body, greater manifestations of His Spirit in all His diverse demonstrations than any other generation has ever seen, on a wider scale than ever before.

Acts 2:16-21 But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter, in explaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that day, declared, "This is *the beginning* of that which was prophesied by the Prophet Joel," according to the sense of the original wording.

After nearly two thousand years of maturity in ministry, in the Word of God, in walking with God in the earth, and in experiencing a great variety of manifestations of the Spirit, visitations of God with signs and wonders are now documented realities. Many revivals, miracles, visions, and other supernatural demonstrations of the Holy Spirit have occurred over the centuries as Jesus Christ has magnified Himself and brought glory to His Name.

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With such a beginning of power as they experienced in the Early Church and throughout church history, surely the end of Joel's prophecy should culminate in an entire smorgasbord, a full display of all demonstrations of the Spirit as God continues to confirm His Word with signs and wonders following, as Jesus promised, (Mark 16:20).

An added feature today is that God is also disclosing a practical understanding of the things of His Spirit, and of the spiritual realm as well, with technical detail. At an explosive rate, schools of ministry, schools of signs and wonders, schools of the Holy Spirit, prayer schools, and healing schools—all with advanced curricula in specialized format—are increasingly being raised up. The Lord is preparing His people with power, and with knowledge, for a great outpouring of His Spirit.

The Prophet Samuel raised up and oversaw a true prophetic institute, (1Samuel 19:20). In it, he would help discern which way the Holy Spirit was moving, direct the flow of prophecy, interpret parables, visions, and dreams of young prophets who were not yet seasoned, and correct unwise administrations of prophetic revelations.

Such kinds of schools existed under the Old Covenant, but only on a minor scale. Daniel said that knowledge shall be increased in the time of the end, (Daniel 12:4). Since prophetic and revelatory manifestations are also increasing in the Endtime Body of Christ, knowledge and wisdom about these things are certainly needed as never before.

It is my hope that the knowledge in this book will increase in the hearts and minds of the Body of Christ in this endtime. As we approach the Second Coming of the Lord, the heavens are beginning to open. Our eyes should also begin to open so that we can see the things that are happening, and the things that shall be.

Acts 2:17 (amp) And it shall come to pass in the last days, God declares, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all mankind, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy—telling forth the divine counsels—and your young men shall see visions (that is, divinely granted appearances), and your old men shall dream [divinely suggested] dreams.

We are living in the last days, the time to which this verse refers. An abundance of supernatural prophecies, visions and dreams, is being divinely granted by the Holy Ghost as never before. God is releasing upon the Body of Christ at large an anointing to receive supernatural visions.

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With such an anointing, knowledge about supernatural revelations is automatically made available to us. Power without knowledge and wisdom is dangerous. Yet this knowledge must be searched out. Along with powerful visions of the Holy Ghost, God is disclosing insights about how they manifest, different kinds of manifestations, how to judge them, how to interpret them, and a lot of other important information.

With a degree of understanding in these areas, we can more easily apprehend the things from above, and more easily approach them. After the Apostle Paul had experienced visions and revelations of the Lord, he was able to say with confidence, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord," (2Corinthians 12:1). We, too, can learn to enter easily and confidently into realms of supernatural revelation.

The realm of the spirit, though invisible, is not imperceptible or incomprehensible. Things that must be worked at and penetrated are often left alone, and it is largely so in this area. But because the spiritual realm is real, it can, therefore, be inquired into, discovered, and employed in the service of the Lord.

By faith in what God's Word teaches us about dreams, visions, and revelations, we can see that there is an orderly arrangement of them. By faith we can become familiar with that order. By faith we can walk in the realm of the spirit and use the revelations that are there.

By faith I have sought this invisible order. By faith I have found and become familiar with it. By faith I encourage and invite whosoever will to seek the things which are Above, to learn about visions and revelations from God, and to walk and enjoy converse in the realms of the spirit.

A lot of visions have been shown me over the years, including many of the kinds found in this book. Though I believe that God has chosen me from a child, and I, therefore, have had a predisposition to spiritual things since then, the anointing was not given me before I prepared the way for it with sound biblical teaching. For having apprehended spiritual experiences without a good foundation in the Word of God, many people have gone into error and foolishness, Christians and non-Christians alike, and have troubled themselves and others with their experiences.

The Bible doesn't disdain supernatural visions. Rather it endorses and encourages them. The biblical writers from Moses to John experienced supernatural visions and revelations of a great diversity. When they were *moved upon* by the Holy Ghost to write the inspired Scripture, it was by prophetic revelation, *revelings* of the Lord.

The life cycle of a vision can be described as:

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the message: the actual revelation that the Lord is disclosing; it can come by any kind of vision; discernment is the vital element here because if we can discern that a revelation was not of God, we need to bind it in the Name of Jesus—we don't want to remember it, we don't need to understand it, and we certainly don't want to respond to it by applying it in our lives; knowing the Word of God and knowing the Spirit of God personally is the key to accurate spiritual discernment.

the memory: we need to remember the revelation if we're going to understand it; visions may come so quickly, at times, that we forget them; dreams, though they normally last longer, are more difficult to remember than waking visions because the subconscious is involved; even when God is the One who reveals a message, our own desire to remember it, and our ability to do so, is largely responsible for our memorizing it.

the meaning: the correct interpretation of the message; most visions feature symbols, personal (subjective), universal or biblical ones, wherein are found the keys to the meanings; occasionally the meaning of a vision is all at once clear, particularly if it has no symbols, then we can almost instantly determine how it is that we ought to respond to it.

the response: what God wants us to do with the new knowledge of His will as it was revealed in the message, how we are to apply it in our lives in a practical way; timing is a vital element in the response because it may be several years before the revelation gets translated into natural reality; patience, discretion, and secrecy are all elements of wisdom required for the appropriate response to the message because God may not want us to speak of—or to walk in—what He has revealed, at least not right away.

The importance of gaining a strong foundation in God's Word and in our personal relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit cannot be overemphasized. Jesus, the Living Word of God, has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that can: reveal a message in a vision, bring the revelation to our remembrance, help us understand its correct meaning, show us how—and when—to respond to it with His wisdom.

What would we do without the Word of God? Trouble ourselves with visions, trouble others, or do without them altogether. Though it is unfolded to us one day at a time, God's Word will establish in us the Mind of Christ, wherewith the Holy Spirit will be able to teach us all things and guide us into all the truths pertaining to the visions and revelations we receive.

When the Word of God talks about visions, dreams, trances, and other kinds of revelations, it does not always indicate exactly the type of revelation being referred to. Sometimes it does, but

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often the reader cannot clearly define the specific kind of revelation it is. This may be because many kinds are often involved in one manifestation of the Spirit. As we shall see, visions and revelations often border between two otherwise distinct kinds, and more often overlap each other.

On the other hand, revelations are often generalized in the Bible because God is not overly concerned with strict definitions and categorizations. So if He's not, we're not. But we will list a variety of visions that are found in the Bible. By providing a basic list, we separate them in order to discriminate between and analyze the component parts of each, and we excite faith to experience the various kinds.

Generally, the list begins with the more common, least spectacular kinds of visions, and gradually examines the more spectacular and powerful. However, a profound manifestation of a lesser kind of vision can be more supernatural than a simple manifestation of a greater kind. Therefore, again, our observations are not inflexible.

Chapter 1

SPIRITUAL VISION

John 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with My Father.

In this type of vision, a person sees something in his spirit, but his mind sees no image. This is like a sort of "invisible vision." Inwardly you know you are seeing something, but it's not clear enough to your "mind's eye." The Holy Spirit often shows us things (persons, places, objects, circumstances or events—past, present, or future) in our spirits by an unction, (1John 2:20). Yet we might not be able to describe those things pictorially. The Apostle Paul said that we are to walk by faith, and not by sight (2Corinthians 5:7), because without faith it is impossible to please God, (Hebrews 11:6).

Jesus of Nazareth pleased the Heavenly Father always (John 8:29) because He always walked by faith. When He was on earth, He walked in the spirit and was always led by the Holy Spirit, and He talked with God. He saw the Father's acts, and He knew (perceived) all men,

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(John 2:24-25); He was able to discern where a person is coming from. However, He did not constantly see [pictorial] visions.

Where the Bible says that Jesus spoke that which He had *seen* with the Father (John 8:38), it really means what He had “discerned” from Him, (from the Greek word *horao*). It doesn't mean that God showed Him a vision each time He wanted to speak, it means that His spiritual eye was able to see some things which His mind did not always visualize. Such *spiritual visions* may be the operation of the gift of *the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, or the discerning of spirits*. Although they may not be pictorial, the thoughts, impressions, feelings, or ideas they incite, may suffice to inform us of what God is saying.

Often a hunch, a prompting, or a “gut-feeling” we have is due to a perception in our inner man. This spirit man is a real person and is able to see, hear, and perceive things which may or may not be clear to the natural mind. “Spiritual eyesight” (Greek: *idein*) generally is operating almost all the time, just as is “natural eyesight” (Greek: *blepo*). But a *spiritual vision* specifically is when a significant view catches the spiritual eye. Inwardly you are seeing something which the Lord wants you to acknowledge. This is usually the first type of vision which the Lord uses to get our attention so He can show us more. Yielding to this first wooing of the Lord can result in a greater revelation from Him.

Jesus had to walk by faith just as we do if He was going to show us how to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit and yield to His wooings by faith. In His human form, He had to test the spirits whether they were of God just the same as we do. He pleased God by faith by trying to interpret the thoughts, promptings, impressions, hunches, and gut-feelings which He experienced *invisibly*—that is, by not-so-visible *spiritual* visions.

Every Christian has a measure of *spiritual eyesight* because the Lord is in each one helping us to discern His will for our lives. But a *spiritual vision*, specifically, occurs when a significant view catches the spiritual eye, a view which one can begin to describe as a revelation from the Lord even though it has no distinct image and cannot be described *pictorially* as our second type of vision can be.

When prophesying, a person may be seeing relevant images in his spirit, though he may not be seeing pictures in his mind. Therefore, the *gift of prophecy* and the *spiritual vision* are co-operant. The more supernatural kinds of prophecies may involve and proceed from the more supernatural kinds of visions.

When we are praying for someone or prophesying to them we often say, “I don't know what it

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is, but I'm getting a sense of..." or, "I seem to be almost seeing..." or, "I'm vaguely perceiving..." Such vague descriptions may indicate that the person so ministering is seeing with his spiritual eye alone. The appropriate response is to translate into his own understanding and words the message he believes the Lord is revealing. When the person is led by the Holy Spirit, and his understanding is biblically based, his prophecy or prayer will prove to be a blessing to the hearer.

Chapter 2

PICTORIAL VISION

Numbers 12:6 I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision.

In this kind of vision, an image is revealed to the mind and can be identified and described in terms of pictures. Symbols may or may not be involved. This is a step up from the *spiritual vision* because here an image does indeed begin to show up in the mind of the one who sees it, and he can begin to describe its various symbols and features with more clarity and confidence.

The *revelation gifts* of the Spirit often come more clearly through a pictorial vision. When praying for the sick, a Christian may see an image of an organ, a bone, or another body part, flash in his mind. God may show him that part to indicate that he should pray for it because He wants to heal it.

This is usually the type of vision being manifested when a Christian is praying for a person and the Holy Spirit starts showing him things. He may say, "The Lord is showing me..." or "I'm seeing..." or "I see a vision of..." because pictorial visions are presenting distinct pictures in his mind, and not only in his spirit (as is the case with spiritual visions). When he is actively and consciously ministering to people, rapid molecular vibrations running throughout his body—which are characteristic of and peculiar to trances—do not usually accompany the pictures. When they do, it places them on the level of trances, and can be monitored by EEG (electroencephalogram) tracings.

The most common and least spectacular type of *pictorial vision* is one in which no special

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tangible anointing is in manifestation. The person who receives it is not entranced or overpowered by the presence of God, and no profound symbolic features are involved. Instead, it is characterized by a sort of simplified picture, symbolic or not, which appears for a short moment, in a flash, with no motion, as a photograph.

A more profound manifestation of this type of vision may occur when one is in the spirit, under a special anointing of the Holy Spirit, and he begins to see such pictures, perhaps one right after another, as if being shown a series of photographs. And each of these "photographs" may or may not be related. This type of revealing to the mind occurs rather instantly, as, for example, when a minister declares from the platform, "The Lord is giving me a revelation (a *word of knowledge*, a *word of wisdom*, or the *discerning of spirits*; 1Corinthians 12:8, 10), that someone in the congregation has a particular condition, and He wants to heal you right now." Then the minister proceeds to disclose another such "word" to the congregation, one which is unrelated and also instant in coming and leaving. It is in our next type of vision (a *panoramic vision*) that such an image lingers for a moment or two with an intent to show motion or progression of some kind.

These kinds of visions, for the most part, can occur whether our eyes are open or closed. This is true of most visions. It doesn't really matter except for the fact that natural sights can distract us from spiritual sights, so it can be helpful to close our eyes when we are yielding to the Holy Spirit to see visions.

During my childhood, I experienced a recurring pictorial vision in which I would be standing alone and encased in a metal safe just large enough to keep me. Outside of it were all kinds of violence and danger, as though the whole earth was burning up and all the people in it were in turmoil. But it could not affect me because I was "safe" from it all.

Only after I got saved did I come to understand that it meant God was protecting me from my environment as I was growing up. I was born and raised in New York City, in a violent neighbourhood, under unfavourable conditions. And although the devil tried much evil to do me harm, a supernatural shield surrounded me all the time, without my conscious awareness of it, and it has kept me hidden from harm. We may not always understand such kinds of pictures in our minds, but when God inspires them, He fulfills them.

The pictorial vision can also come in a *picture superimposed over the subject*. The subject can be a person, place, or thing, even an invisible thing. Words, sounds, music, the "atmosphere" in a particular place, and other things which have no physical appearance, can be located and

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colored by the Holy Spirit in a flash, for a fraction of a second, so that a spiritual eye can perceive and test it. God can see everything, even molecules, and He can relate anything to us that He wants to, in just the way we can understand it.

Chapter 3

PANORAMIC VISION

Hosea 12:10 I have multiplied visions.

Here a person sees a *pictorial vision in motion* in his mind; a series of events is “unrolled” before his eyes, again in terms of pictures, with or without symbolism, and can last a few moments. He might also hear words or sounds in the realm of the spirit.

This type of vision is similar to the *pictorial vision* except that it is more like a strip of video film instead of just one exposure or one frame showing a still picture. *Panoramic visions* occurred with both Ananias and Saul of Tarsus (who later is called Paul) on the occasion of Saul's conversion:

Acts 9:10-16 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy Name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.

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Here, Ananias sees a *panoramic "motion picture" vision* (Greek: *pan, horama*, "an entire visible sight") of the Lord instructing him to minister unto Saul. In it, he not only hears from the Lord, but also speaks to Him. Though a spiritually-minded Christian, he was not unaware of the events happening in his community. He had heard by many of Saul's evils against the Church. Yet he was yielded enough to the Lord to receive the new report concerning him, and emboldened to brave the walk.

In verse 12, Jesus tells Ananias that Saul saw him coming over and ministering to him in a vision, though he was blind at the time, (Acts 9:8-9). This, too, was a panoramic vision because it showed a progression of events—Ananias coming in, and then putting his hand on him for healing. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "panorama" as "a picture unrolled before the spectator in such a way as to give the impression of a continuous view."

For many years, my grandfather was the pastor of a small Pentecostal church. My mother has told me that in their meetings it would often occur during testimony time that people would go up to the front and declare that they had seen "a vision from the Lord." Often such visions came "in the night." Most dreams are *panoramic night visions*. When we are asleep, we are less distracted from seeing such "movies" and, therefore, God uses the opportunity to show us more, (Job 33:14-16).

In one such testimony during testimony time, a certain lady got up and said she had just had a dream that morning that the airplane which my grandfather was scheduled to be on later that week would be in a terrible crash. So she warned him to reschedule his missionary trip to Puerto Rico. Well, he did so. And the airplane did crash. And, although there was mourning for the victims of that tragedy, there was gladness that my grandfather's life was saved. Salvation in any form can result from any form of vision when we take heed to it.

Chapter 4

DREAM (NIGHT VISION)

Daniel 7:1 Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed.

Here a person receives a message from God while asleep, and it may come during any level of sleep: *light rest* (Hebrew: *shakab*; 1Samuel 3:3-4); *regular sleep* (Hebrew: *shenah*; Genesis 28:16); *deep sleep* (Hebrew: *tardemah*; Job 33:15); or *trance* (Hebrew: *radam*; Daniel 8:18).

Any one or any combination of the *revelation gifts* may manifest in a dream, with or without symbols, and possibly an entire scenario of a given situation may be shown. Possibly several entire scenarios may be seen, one right after another, in one sleep/dream experience. They are usually more lengthy and complicated and contain more symbolism than other visions.

Visions of the night are the most common types of visions because the sleeping state can be more spiritual than the waking state, and everyone sleeps. God wants to speak to men, but often during the day He can hardly get a word in edgewise because of their natural mindedness. But while men slumber in sleep, their souls, voluntarily or involuntarily, may become more inclined to Him. Then He can open their ears and seal His instructions in them.

Job 33:14-16 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then He openeth the ears of men, and sealetH their instruction.

Interestingly, God is not the only one who speaks and instructs us in the visions of the night. Our own human spirit which has been reborn and renewed to the Word of God can also instruct and give us counsel in the night seasons, (Psalms 16:7; 77:6). Certainly the Lord is there with us, and His Spirit is there guiding us into truth. But our own heart and mind and spirit can also be awake diligently communing within us as our bodies rest in sleep. Even the unconverted who lack God's wisdom may be able to instruct themselves in dreams just as they do in waking thoughts.

Dreams often reflect our lifestyles, our relationship with God, and our diligence to obey His Word (or lack thereof). The thoughts, motives, and intentions of our hearts can speak loudly to

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us in dreams. They seem to be repeated back to us in the night seasons in revised versions—versions which depict a more root-of-the matter kind of perspective on ourselves. In a sense, we might say that people may, subconsciously and involuntarily, preach the truth to themselves via dreams. We can also say that God, too, may preach the truth to us via dreams.

Dreams from the Lord are always supernatural inasmuch as they are from above and beyond our natural minds. Yet they are not always amazing, spectacular, or glorious. There are many kinds and levels of dreams through which God may speak. An angelic or trance-like presence obviously makes a dream more supernatural. But regular natural dreams can contain insights from God also. These may contain more symbolism, and may be more difficult to recall or interpret, yet their information can be just as helpful and invaluable as that found in more spectacular revelations.

Whereas we don't always know when we're going to have other kinds of visions, we can be sure we will have visions of the night. When we don't remember our dreams we usually think we didn't dream, but the fact is that everyone dreams every night to some degree. The dreaming process is essentially a thinking process. So dreaming—on one level of thought or another—can occur as regularly and normally as does our daily thinking processes.

Now we know that what we perceive, study, and otherwise give ourselves to during the day, influences our way of thinking. Well, since dreams are a part of the thinking process, they, too, can be influenced by what we give ourselves unto during the day. When we are fully given unto the things of God, our daily thoughts—and our nightly ones—will more fully disclose unto us the mind, the will, and the leadings of the Lord.

Not all dreams are from God, just as not all visions are from God. But just as we should study about visions and learn how to discern whether they are from God, we should also study about dreams (which is a full-course study in itself), and so much the more as we see the time is here for dreaming divinely suggested dreams.

For a more complete study of supernatural dreams, please refer to my book entitled *Understanding Supernatural Dreams According to the Bible, A Living Classic*.

Chapter 5

AUDIBLE MESSAGE

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from Heaven.

Often visions include a voice speaking a message along with a visual image. And sometimes a message comes without pictures. We may simply hear a message from God without seeing anything. Audible messages in the spiritual realm can involve people speaking words, or objects making sounds.

By any of a great variety of voices or sounds, the Lord can disclose a message. Such a message can possibly be perceived in an audible way in the literal sense that the physical, external ear can hear it, but usually it is only audible to the spiritual, internal ear. That's why when someone says that God just spoke distinctly to them, others nearby usually didn't hear Him.

Voices or sounds which we hear in internal messages to the mind can indeed be messages from the Lord, but they tend to be more subjective than the externally audible ones. That which we hear outside of us—a message from above, and beyond the internal mind and ears—is a supernatural *audible message* in the strictest sense of the term.

As far as I can remember, the first time I heard the clear audible voice of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was in October, 1970. At that time, I had only a month earlier become a new student at Lincoln Hall, in Lincolndale, New York, which is like a Boy's Town. I was fourteen years of age, and it was the first time in my life that I was sent away from home, so I was very troubled within myself. I did not want to participate in school or in sports activities, and was picked on by some of the bullies at the Lincoln Hall campus. I ran away a few times, but was always brought back and disciplined.

At church services there each Sunday, the boys were encouraged to trust in the Lord to help us endure our eighteen-month stay at the school. During the week, I would meditate on what I'd heard the previous Sunday, and began asking the Lord, "But how can I be encouraged? How can I endure my stay here for a whole year and a half? How can I trust You? Oh, I am so troubled."

Then one day, while alone in the dormitory folding my clothes, Jesus told me, "My peace I give

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to you.” In my heart I knew it could be the Lord, but it was too real, it was audible—I *heard* Him. But I must admit it had to be *internally* audible at best—no one else would have heard Him if they were there with me—because I have learned to tell the difference between internal and external manifestations. Besides, it was a personal message just for me.

As soon as I heard the Voice, I started to look under all the beds, and in some of the closets. I even went into the adjoining dormitory and looked under all the beds there as well. While walking back to my own bed and seeing no one nearby, I realized it had to be Jesus Himself who spoke to me, and I made a point of it never to forget what He said. I felt a great joy and peace, and felt like going to the recreation rooms where all the other boys and teachers were, and telling them, “God spoke to me! God spoke to me!”

How do I know it was Jesus? There is something uniquely special about the voice of the Good Shepherd that you know it when you hear it. When I finished folding my clothes and went into the recreation area, one boy asked me if I would like to play with him. I felt this was a good idea, so I did, and we became friends. And from that day on, I made other friends, didn’t get into fights much more, and excelled in my classes. I received awards in sports, and in academics, and was cited as being one of the best students that school ever had. Plus, I was able to leave in my seventeenth month! The Word of the Lord prospers whereto He sends it.

Isaiah 55:11-12 So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

There are many voices in the world. Ultimately each is either of God or of Satan, and there are many ways to discern them. But we are confined here, for our purpose, to those which are of God.

Firstly, there is the voice of our own born-again spirit, which is a new creation in Christ and fights against the world, the flesh and the devil. This inward man constantly follows and delights in the law of God, (Romans 7:22). When he speaks to the mind he sounds like the natural voice of the individual because it is the spiritual voice of that individual. That’s why when he speaks and tries to lead us, it’s hard to tell whether it is our spirit man, which is led by the Holy Spirit if

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we are born-again, or just our imagination. However, God's Word (Greek: *logos*) helps us to separate between the mind and the spirit and detect the source of a message, (Hebrews 4:12).

When the Holy Spirit speaks to us in a direct way, His unctions and promptings are more impressive and distinct than those of our own inward man. Paul said he had been "forbidden by the Holy Ghost," (Acts 16:6); he had been "grieved," (Acts 16:18); his "spirit was stirred," (Acts 17:16); he was "pressed in the spirit," (Acts 18:5); he was "bound in the spirit," (Acts 20:22); he was "compelled by the Spirit," (Acts 20:22 niv); "the Holy Ghost witnesseth" to him, (Acts 20:23); "the Holy Spirit clearly and emphatically affirms" to him, (Acts 20:23 amp); and he said that "the Spirit itself (Himself) 'beareth witness' with our spirit," (Romans 8:16).

The Holy Spirit has been called the "Shy Person of the Godhead" because of His peculiarly gentle, calm, sensitive, almost undetectable leadings. He often speaks to us by a subtle thought, feeling, or urging influence in us. And He may also speak by a distinct desire, inclination, emotion, mood, or an almost driving force. The Apostle Peter said that holy men of God were "moved (Greek: *phero*, "borne, carried, driven") by the Holy Ghost," (2Peter 1:21). Such are various promptings of the Spirit by which the children of God are to be led, (Romans 8:14).

More impressive still is the voice of Jesus in our hearts. He said that we can hear His voice and follow Him, (John 10:27). His voice carries a more authoritative and undeniable sound than does the Holy Spirit, and is clearly different from our own. At times, Jesus Himself may speak to us directly, as by an [internal or external] audible voice, and when He does there is an "above-natural" presence evident. But most of God's communications to us are by the inner leadings of His Spirit—not so much above the natural realm—and not by supernatural voices.

Now the *audible voice* of Jesus can have an overwhelming, overpowering effect on the one who hears it. There are degrees of the supernatural, and a super experience may involve the whole spirit and soul and body of a person. The Apostle John, while he was imprisoned on the island of Patmos for preaching the Word of God, heard the audible voice of Jesus *behind him* as of a great trumpet, (Revelation 1:10). So he *turned around to see* the Voice that spake with him, and then began to see a great vision, (Revelation 1:12). This supernatural experience so overwhelmed John, spiritually and physically, that he fell down as if dead, (Revelation 1:17).

The Apostle Paul, too, when he got saved on the road to Damascus, heard the audible voice of Jesus *from the sky* and talked with Him. Even the men who were with him were able to hear the Lord's audible voice with their external, physical ears:

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Acts 9:3-7 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

The highest kind of audible message is that of the audible voice of God Himself. The Heavenly Father is God, The Son Jesus Christ is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. They are One Being in essence, and Three Persons in distinct offices. From the highest to the lowest kind of messages, from the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, each is a message from God. But the higher kinds of supernatural messages from God, especially those which are spoken directly by the Father, are more rare, more reserved for the higher purposes of God.

The Father spoke audibly when the crowds witnessed Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist:

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

He later repeated this message to the disciples, again audibly, when Jesus was *transfigured* before them.

Mark 9:2-3 And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, the word "transfigured" is translated from the Greek word *metamorphoo*, which means "change, transform, and fashion."

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Luke 9:28-36 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him. And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Beloved Son: hear Him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

These instances of the Heavenly Father's audible voice being heard were occasioned by the need He saw to exalt Christ above Moses, Elias, and all other people. If whatever else God has revealed is unclear, if whatever else God spoke of Christ is not enough, if there would ever be any doubt whatsoever about anything in the Bible, let this most important truth be understood: Jesus is the Beloved Son of God Whom we must hear—the Father Himself said it, and repeated it.

That natural men could hear the audible voice of Almighty God, the Apostle Peter boldly attests. Referring forty years later to the experience of Jesus' transfiguration on the mount, he says:

2Peter 1:17-18 For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

This vision which Peter, James, and John saw, was one of the most supernatural experiences recorded in the entire Bible. As many visions do, this one involved a combination of several kinds. It was a *divine sight* because they saw Jesus in His divine nature, gloriously glistening as

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He was transfigured before them. It was a *trance (deep sleep from the Lord)*, because they became *heavy with sleep*. Again it was a *divine sight* when they saw the *cloud of God* which overshadowed them. It was an *out-of-body experience* because they *entered* that cloud *in the spirit*. And it was an *audible message*, because the Father spoke to them from the cloud.

In this vision, supernatural revelation was involved because in it the disciples discerned that it was Moses and Elias standing with Jesus, they learned of His crucifixion which was yet to be accomplished at Jerusalem, and learned that He was the greatest One of the three, the Beloved One of the Father, and the One Whom they must hear.

Angels of God can also speak unto us audibly, without necessarily appearing to us visually. That we hear the voice of an angel leading or instructing us can be more important than seeing him. When the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip (Acts 8:26), he may have remained invisible.

Angels' voices, as wonderful and marvelous as they may be, differ from Jesus' compassionate voice, and from the Father's authoritative voice. The voices of angels are also more difficult to identify than those of the Godhead. We may know our Lord Jesus and His voice very well, but familiarity and confidence with angels is less common. If the devil wants to deceive us, he might transform himself into an angel of light (2Corinthians 11:14), but less often as the Lord our Light—we might know Him too well to be deceived by an imposter of Him.

Jesus said that His sheep know *His* voice (John 10:1-5), but not necessarily the voices of angels: though it may be possible, with some uniquely anointed individuals, to become familiar with some of them. Many times when God's angels speak audibly to us they may become visible to some extent so that we can discern them more easily.

Audible voices which are unfamiliar to us and have no visible form may bring doubt and confusion, or even fear. Deceiving or seducing spirits are usually the ones who behave mysteriously, as though they have something to hide (something "up their sleeves"). God is not the author of doubt, confusion or fear, and when He sends His angels to talk to us we sense a holiness, a reverence to the Lord, and an openness, because they have nothing to hide.

When we hear Jesus speaking distinctly to us in our hearts, it may be by His own revelation directly to us. But most of the time He sends His Holy Spirit to testify of Him, (John 15:26). Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will receive [messages] of Him and shall show them unto us (John 16:14); the Spirit shall hear Jesus speaking, and then He will speak that unto us, (John 16:13).

Now whereas the voice of Jesus is more clear and discernible, the voice of the Holy Spirit seems to take on many different sounds and forms and tones and moods. He may sound like

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the voice of a person that you know, or like your own voice; He may even sound like an inanimate object (a car, a door, a machine, a musical instrument). Such are the various kinds of voices, noises, and sounds which the Spirit may use symbolically in order to speak a certain thing unto us, in just such a way that we can get what He's trying to say.

For a more thorough study on spiritual voices, please refer to my third book, *Understanding Voices, Noises and Presences in the Spiritual Realm*.

Our own spirit, too, has a variety of ways of speaking to us; he knows what's in us, what our makeup is, and how to preach in just such a way that we'll get the message. Often the difficult thing is to be able to determine whether it is our own born-again godly spirit speaking to us, or our carnal-minded thoughts. This is why we need the Word of God, to help us make a clear distinction between natural, selfish thoughts, hunches, impressions and ideas, and those which are spiritual (Christ-like) and for our benefit. Only God's Word can give us wisdom and discernment in these areas.

Hebrews 4:12 (amp) For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power—making it active, operative, energizing and effective; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [that is, of the deepest parts of our nature] exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.

Chapter 6

APPARITION

Luke 1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord.

Here a person sees a being who literally appears to him seemingly "out of thin air." The appearance may be seen with the natural eyes open or closed, and it may be a tangible experience. It may be perceived physically—the being's presence may be felt—without being visibly seen. It is an *appearing*, a *visiting*, but not necessarily a *sighting*.

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An *apparition* is different from a *pictorial vision* in that it is an actual—perhaps tangible and audible—visitation occurring outside of the person, whereas pictorial visions, by themselves, are not actual experiences but only revelations with images shown to the mind by the Holy Spirit. In a pictorial vision, any person, place, object, circumstance or event (or any combination of these) can be shown to the mind. In an apparition, an object or place cannot actually appear to a person, but a person, or an angel, or Jesus can.

In a very rare exception of this, an object did literally appear and physically materialize “out of thin air” unto a person. God gave a pastor, Rev. Roland Buck, a sheet of paper listing many prophecies that foretold future events, and then disintegrated it supernaturally. This was an *appearing* of the highest kind because of the fact that the pastor literally experienced this while fully awake. It was also a *divine sight* because of the divine nature of the manifestation—he didn’t simply see a vision of that paper in some sleep or trance state.

Some might say, “Yes, but, what about all that holy oil, feathers, gold dust, diamonds and other glory stones, that has been supernaturally *appearing* “out of thin air” in some of our churches around the world in recent years? Do they also fall into this category of *appearings* out of thin air?” They do appear out of thin air, but they are called supernatural *manifestations*, and not *apparitions*, because they are inanimate objects that remain with us. Those manifestations, and many others that are not addressed here, are described in my fifth book, *Understanding Supernatural Experiences According to the Bible*.

In several other kinds of visions, a person may see an individual who has died and gone either to Heaven or to hell. Even in a *heavenly visitation* (an actual visit to the Third Heaven, the Paradise of God) one might see the saints who have gone to be with the Lord. Now, in an apparition, (according to our definition) those who have died are not involved: they cannot literally leave their eternal abode and plainly appear unto us, but may only be seen symbolically, as in a *pictorial vision, dream, or trance*.

In an *audible message* also, we will not literally hear the actual voice of someone who has died, but we might hear a symbolic representation of their voice. People who are no longer on earth cannot plainly speak to us in an actual, literal way. Therefore, if we hear their voice in any kind of vision, it can only be a symbolic voice, used by God strictly because of our relational perception of the person represented by that voice. The stuff of symbols (their essential nature) is mostly found in its ability to appeal to human emotions and perceptions.

For not understanding this, many people, throughout the six millennia of man’s existence, have

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thought that they can really communicate with the dead. Today there are any number of beliefs concerning the state of the dead and whether or not we can communicate with them. But the Bible is clear on this issue and strictly forbids the consulting of the spirits of those who have died and gone on to their eternal abode—be it Heaven, or be it hell. God calls divination (witchcraft), necromancy (consulting the dead), and all sorts of spiritism, an abomination unto Him. For committing such sins, He has overthrown whole nations:

Deuteronomy 18:9-14 When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

When a person is convinced that he has made some sort of contact with a person who was dead, such as his late uncle Fred, there are a number of explanations that can be offered. Either an evil spirit (a *familiar spirit*) is disguising himself as Fred in order to deceive that person. Or the person's subconscious is producing messages involving Fred, which he feels compelled to believe are supernatural because of the emotions they incite, and he wants to cherish them because of the memories they recall.

Even if the vision involving Fred contains a good message that honours Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible, accurately confirms real events in the person's life, and encourages him to serve the Lord, it is still not an actual apparition. It may even be a trance, but the part of it involving Fred is only a visual symbol at best. Remember, *visual revelations* such as *words of wisdom* and *words of knowledge* are often found in *actual experiences* such as *trances* and *apparitions*, while remaining distinct from them.

Why would God give someone a vision with a symbol of his dead uncle Fred knowing that he may think it was much more than just symbolic? Because God is more concerned with the

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message that can encourage that person in the things of God than He is with the means by which He may have to appeal to his natural emotional disposition.

Rarely does a revelation come with an explanatory teaching that qualifies it, even though it may cause wrong thinking on the part of the one who receives it. Many good people think God permits communication with the dead because Joan of Arc, a saint who lived long ago, heard audible voices of departed saints which inspired her to do mighty exploits for God. At the expense of their wrong thinking, God used the best means He saw fit to communicate to Joan because in His usage of symbols, there is a dynamic in which wisdom is justified of her fruit.

Apparitions of the Lord can occur in a number of ways. A person may see an apparition while he is in the presence of other people, without them seeing it. Or a few people may see it at the same time, with others present not seeing it. The person may see the apparition externally and visibly with his natural eyes open. Or with his natural eyes closed his spiritual eyes may see a being that is actually there.

With his eyes open, Joshua saw Jesus, the Captain of the Lord's Army, Who had appeared to him, (Joshua 5:13-15). Cornelius saw in a vision "evidently" (Greek: *phaneros*, "plainly, openly") an angel of God coming in to him with a message, (Acts 10:1-6). The Patriarch Jacob literally (physically) wrestled with an angel, (Genesis 32:24-31). All of these experiences were apparitions, *actual appearances* of supernatural beings unto natural beings.

Zacharias saw the archangel Gabriel, who literally appeared to him standing on the right side of the altar of incense in the Temple, (Luke 1:11). The Virgin Mary also saw Gabriel, and also communicated with him, (Luke 1:26-38). The 120 disciples in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost saw an apparition of the Holy Ghost when He appeared unto them as cloven tongues of fire, (Acts 2:3). These experiences were also supernatural apparitions.

The angel of the Lord touched the Prophet Elijah and supernaturally provided him food and drink, which he went on the strength of for forty days, (1Kings 19:5-8). This was an apparition because it involved a tangible manifestation with physical evidence. Possibly, though, the prophet did not see the angel, for the context says that the angel "awakened, fed, and instructed" him.

After His resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ on several occasions appeared to His disciples in His glorified physical body. When He appeared to Mary Magdalene and other women, they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him, (Matthew 28:9). When He again appeared to Mary Magdalene later (John 20:17), she "took hold of Him," (Greek: *haptomai*, "to

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cling or attach oneself to”).

When Jesus told Miss Magdalene, “Touch Me not” (“Do not hold on to Me”), He meant that she should not think He was now returned to stay. He must ascend to Heaven and present Himself to the Father in the Heavenly Holy of Holies. He was not intending to say that His physical body had some mystical, seraphical, or otherwise untouchable form. The fact is that He was so natural-looking that Mary thought He was a gardener when she first beheld Him, (John 20:15).

On another occasion He appeared in another form to two other disciples, (Mark 16:12). Of this *other form*, Luke informs us it was that their *eyes were holden* that they should not know Him: “they were kept from recognizing Him,” (Luke 24:16 niv). Jesus walked and talked with them for awhile. After expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, He broke bread with them, then their *eyes were opened* and they knew Him. Then He vanished out of their sight, (Luke 24:13-31). Jesus was known of them—their eyes were opened—in the “breaking of bread” (verse 35), meaning that we can perceive Jesus when we rightly discern His Body on earth, (1Corinthians 11:23-34).

These two disciples went and told the others that they had seen “the *risen* Lord” (Luke 24:34), and not a *vision* of the Lord. Then Jesus appeared again in their midst:

Luke 24:36-39 And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.

Jesus then showed them His scars to prove it was really Him, and then they were glad, (John 20:20). He also ate some food with them, (Luke 24:41-43). He then commissioned them and breathed upon them anointing them with the Holy Ghost, (John 20:21-22). A few days later, Jesus dined with His disciples on Galilee Beach, Himself doing the cooking, (John 21:9).

These tangible apparitions of the Lord, with all their various details, show us He is not just a vision or phantom. The “Man Christ Jesus” (1Timothy 2:5) has a glorified flesh-and-bone body. He can travel between Heaven and earth, and materialize at His own will, as He did in the midst of His disciples after His resurrection. All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth, that is, in all celestial and terrestrial spheres, (Matthew 28:18).

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Jesus, or an angel, can be seen in a visual image, and can also appear in an actual, tangible form. With many other signs—many infallible proofs—Jesus of Nazareth shows Himself to be alive in the presence of His disciples: then, and still now.

Acts 1:3 To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 7

DIVINE SIGHT

Exodus 3:3 I will now turn aside, and see this great sight.

More than just a spiritual vision, a *divine sight* is an actual disclosing of a supernatural event. It is like an apparition in that it is an actual occurrence outside of the person or persons experiencing it. Only here it is not a being, but an object or activity in the spiritual realm being disclosed to the natural realm.

When Moses was near Mount Sinai in his days as a shepherd, he actually saw a bush burning without being consumed:

Exodus 3:2-5 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

This very great sight which Moses saw, and this great voice he heard, was God in divine

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manifestation. He conversed with Moses on this holy ground, and commissioned and anointed him to deliver His people Israel from Egyptian bondage. Many signs and wonders were wrought in Moses' ministry to this end.

Notice how Moses' own will, at his own level of faith, figured in this divine revelation. He had said, "I will now... see." Had he willed earlier, he might have seen the sight earlier. Had he waited longer, he would have seen it later. He saw it when he said, "I will see *now*."

Notice that when he yielded ("turned aside") it was to see something which God was in fact disclosing. We can yield ourselves to supernatural visions by an act of our own free will, but only when God is in fact disclosing something. When He isn't, we can't cause Him to. But when He is, our own faith, at its own level, will figure in the amount of revelation we receive. Eliphaz became afraid when an angel of God came to him with a message, so he only received *a little* thereof, (Job 4:12-16). Many times, however, the *gift of special faith* is given us so that we will believe to receive the revelation God would disclose. Divinely initiated faith is often necessary to receive divinely imparted manifestations.

Now this *divine sight* was visible to everyone:

Exodus 14:19-20 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

As the Egyptians pursued the Israelites to destroy them, God's angel came between their two camps to protect His people. This angel had been guiding Israel all throughout their deliverance. He was constantly in their sight as a pillar of cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night, (Exodus 13:21-22). But now in the presence of their enemies, the angel of God becomes a cloud of darkness to the Egyptian camp, while remaining a light to Israel.

The subsequent parting of the Red Sea was not a *divine sight*—that was a *divine act*. The former involves some supernatural revelations or activity being shown in the natural realm, as the "burning bush" mentioned above; the latter involves natural activity in the earth supernaturally incited. The receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai involved both a divine sight and a divine act. Moses and all Israel saw divine activity on the Mountain of God

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(Exodus 20:18), and also received, by a supernatural *act*, the two stone Tables of Testimony, which were physically written with the Finger of God, (Exodus 31:18).

When Evangelist Oral Roberts was praying about a building project for the City of Faith Campus, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he saw a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ as being nearly a thousand feet tall. As he was praying on the ministry grounds and asking God to provide the funds that he needed to complete his building project, he saw this vision of Jesus lifting the buildings and instructing him what to do.

This was a *divine sight* because His extra-normal size and particular actions demonstrated the *divine presence* on that property. It would have been an *apparition* if Jesus had appeared physically and in His normal form and size, as when He appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary after His resurrection. And it was more than just a simple *spiritual vision* or *pictorial vision* because several profound manifestations were seen, heard, and felt in it.

This experience involved a number of different kinds of visions. It included an *audible message*, because Brother Roberts clearly heard the voice of Jesus speaking specific messages as he exchanged conversation with Him. It was also a *trance*, because he *trembled* under the power of the Holy Ghost and felt the Spirit *whipping through him like a wind, a fire, a glory, a great faith, a deep obedience*. And it was an *open heaven*, because he saw past the first and second heavens and saw Paradise and the saints up There observing him and rooting him on to continue in the work God has given him, (according to his written testimony of the event, in *Oral Roberts' Daily Guide to Miracles*).

Although some revelations are conditional and may not come to pass, one of the evidences that a revelation is of God is that it does come to pass, such as this one of Jesus undergirding the City of Faith ministry property. It was confirmed in the fact that the building project was completed after the revelation occurred, just as Jesus promised. A vision, dream, or revelation that has a *prophetic element* (a message of things yet to come), when it comes to pass, then shall it be known that the Lord has truly inspired it, (Jeremiah 28:9). The *prophetic word of the Lord* shall prosper whereto He sends it, (Isaiah 55:11).

There are many ways to determine if a supernatural manifestation has been inspired by God. All throughout history, signs and wonders have often been disclosed by the Holy Spirit in order to bring glory to Jesus. But now they are increasing in frequency and intensity, so the need to be able to test the spirits behind such signs and wonders is also increasing, (1John 4:1).

In the 20th century alone, and into the 21st, there have been countless manifestations of God

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that can be classified as *divine sights*. Even today, divine sightings are being reported the world over as God is revealing Himself through a glorious array of apparitions of heavenly beings, lights, oil, fire anointings of the Holy Spirit, and the Shekinah Glory Cloud, (also referred to as “vapour of smoke”).

The sacred Blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), is also showing up in visible ways—both through people in stigmata, and inanimate objects. God uses these kinds of signs and wonders as supernatural points of contact for our faith, that by our believing in them, we might believe in Him that sends them, receive a special blessing from Him, be drawn nearer to Him, call upon His Name and be made whole.

Acts 2:19, 21 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke... that whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.

Other accounts of *divine sights* are:

1) When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai in the form of thunders and lightnings and fire and smoke:

Exodus 19:16-18 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

2) When Moses and the elders of Israel saw God upon Mount Sinai with a paved work of a sapphire stone under His feet:

Exodus 24:9-11 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And

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upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

3) When the glory cloud of the Lord filled the Temple at its dedication:

2Chronicles 5:13-14 Then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; So that the Priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.

4) When a light from the sky, disclosed in the *first heaven*, shone round about Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus at his conversion. When Paul testified of this supernatural experience he called it "the heavenly vision," and it was accompanied by an *audible message*:

Acts 26:13-19 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Chapter 8

OPEN HEAVEN

Ezekiel 1:1 The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

In this type of vision, a hole appears in the immediate sky, the celestial realm is disclosed, and heavenly sights of God become seeable. This may occur while we are fully awake, or in a dream/trance state.

Ezekiel 1:1-4 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The Word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

In the verses that follow, the Priest/Prophet Ezekiel goes on to share one of the most detailed visions described in the Bible. He first sees a great cloud, sent by God to protect him from His brightness (as with Moses and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai), then he sees flashing lightning ("fire infolding itself"), brilliant light, angels, and other details.

Notice also, just how carefully Ezekiel documented the exact date and place where these visions occurred. He even noted that it was during the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity in Babylon, that he was among the Hebrew captives there, and that he was by the Chebar River. As did the prophets Jeremiah, Daniel, and many others, Ezekiel kept a special journal of his visions for the sake of prayer, study, and future reference.

We, too, can benefit from keeping a journal of the visions, dreams, and other kinds of revelations which God discloses to us. This way we can have it ready at hand to consult and pray about. We can also use it as a confirmation of God's will when we compare it to what He has revealed unto others. And we can refer to it as we watch it come to pass in natural

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circumstances.

Acts 7:55-56 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Here Stephen, an anointed Christian worker, was being stoned to death for preaching the Gospel. He was the first Christian martyr. As he looked heavenward, being about to go upward, he saw the *sky loosened*, and the *clouds rolled back*, and Jesus standing to receive him.

The Bible says that Jesus, after He had offered Himself as the Sacrifice for our sin, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool, (Hebrews 10:12-13). Since the time of His ascension to the Father, and still now, He is sitting and resting from His finished work. But on this occasion He stood up in honour of His servant Stephen who had been faithful in his ministry to the very end, obedient even unto death.

Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne.

The Apostle John at this time is over eighty years of age. He has known Jesus since his youth, (he was the youngest of Jesus' original twelve disciples). He knew Jesus in the flesh and in the spirit, and received the Word of God directly from the Master.

Now imprisoned for preaching the Gospel, he has plenty of time to review in his spirit and mind all he has gained hitherto of the teachings, revelations, and prophecies of the Lord. Evidently, John had been seeking the "things which are Above" (Colossians 3:1), during his imprisonment, and he could find them because he could meditate deeply without interruptions, being in solitude.

I observe that perhaps he sought to understand the *end* of those things which Jesus *began* both to do and teach, for the end of all things was not yet written. They were now going to be written (in the Book of Revelation) partly to answer John's questions.

John knew the Beginning, Alpha, but not the End, Omega. When, on the Lord's Day, Jesus

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speaks to him, He first says something with which he can bear witness in his spirit: "I am Alpha," then He takes him further: "and Omega": the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending, (Revelation 1:11).

Jesus went on, in chapters 2-3, speaking to John about the seven churches, their present state, and the mind of God concerning them. These supernatural revelations brought great confirmation and illumination to John, and great comfort. Consequently, he was able to receive more easily Jesus' greater message, namely that of the future, in His "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter," (Revelation 4:1).

Matthew 3:16-17 And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon Him: And lo a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

At Jesus' baptism, the *heavens were opened*, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father spoke audibly. Although this occurred in public, it is debatable whether the entire multitude of people present actually saw and clearly heard this full revelation to the extent that Jesus did. Even John might not have heard the voice of God.

God had told John, "Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." And that's what John saw, (John 1:32-34). The accounts in the Gospels of Mark and Luke show the Father addressing Jesus, ("Thou art My Beloved Son"). Only Matthew's account of this event seems to indicate that other people who were present were also being addressed and, therefore, heard and saw as well.

It is unclear to us from the pertinent contexts just how much the people actually saw or heard, if anything at all. It may have been equally unclear to those present at the time. Perhaps God wanted them to perceive enough of His grace upon Jesus so that they would receive His soon coming ministry, but not too much so because their natural tendency would be to apprehend Him and make Him their King by force.

When the hour was come for Jesus to be glorified, then the Father spoke audibly for the people's sake, (John 12:28-30). Even then, however, they couldn't comprehend the revelation fully. Some thought it thundered, some believed it was an angel, and some didn't hear anything. God was speaking a mystery, the hidden wisdom from Above, among the spiritually mature,

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which none of the evil principalities of this lower world can know, (1Corinthians 2:6-8).

In a more general kind of way, we might say that an *open heaven* is a sort of special grace that is resting on a certain individual or group of individuals. In a supernatural open heaven vision, one does actually see the heavens opened, as in the foregoing accounts, and the vision is ephemeral. In the case of a special grace upon a person, however, a supernatural vision is not necessarily involved, and it is a more or less permanent impartation of the heavenly favour.

We can see this type of divine favour operating in the lives of anyone with a special anointing of the Holy Spirit. Whether individuals in the Old Testament, the New Testament, in church history, or living today, they are persons *walking under an open heaven* who have been given special gifts, extraordinary powers, usually respecting a specific area of ministry.

1Corinthians 12:4-6 (amp) Now there are distinctive varieties and distributions of endowments [extraordinary powers distinguishing certain Christians, due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit] and they vary, but the (Holy) Spirit remains the same. And there are distinctive varieties of service and ministration, but it is the same Lord [Who is served]. And there are distinctive varieties of operation—of working to accomplish things—but it is the same God Who inspires and energizes them all in all.

Pastor Benny Hinn, of Orlando, Florida, is walking under an open heaven in that he has a special anointing in the area of healings and miracles. Wherever he goes to minister, extraordinary miracles and instantaneous healings occur among the people, almost automatically. Prophet/Teacher Kenneth Copeland, of Fort Worth, Texas, is walking under an open heaven in that he has a special anointing in the area of financial prosperity. As he shares what God has taught him about Heaven's laws and principles of economics, many people are anointed and enabled to prosper, sometimes miraculously.

Evangelist Billy Graham walks under an open heaven in that he has been especially anointed and enabled to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ virtually anywhere in the world and win souls for Jesus by the tens of thousands at every invitation. By a divine grace operating in his life, he has favour with presidents, kings and rulers of nations, as well as with religious leaders, and is treated royally as he evangelizes, even where the Gospel is usually prohibited.

Pastor John Arnott, of Toronto, Canada, is walking under an open heaven in the area of revival

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and refreshing in the Holy Ghost. Since the initial visitation of the Holy Spirit occurred in his church, Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, in January, 1994, millions of people, including myself, have been touched by the Lord in a distinct way and blessed by this "Toronto Blessing." Many, from different denominations, have come from around the world to this church and have been impacted with a distinctive presence of the Lord which is residing under this *open heaven*.

In a manner of speaking, each and every Christian walks under an open heaven in the sense that we all have access with boldness in prayer to come before the very Throne of Grace by the Blood of Jesus, even to the presence of the Father in the Heavenly Holy of Holies. In other words, we each have our very own "hotline to Heaven" simply because we are His children. And in each and every instance in which God imparts unto us a gift of the Spirit, a new unction or a fresh anointing, a degree of Heaven is opened unto us and a divine favour imparted.

Chapter 9

TRANCE

Acts 22:17 Even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance.

A *trance* is a more or less stunned state. In it the person's body is overwhelmed by the Spirit of God, and his mind can be arrested and subjected to the visions or revelations He would impart.

The New Testament Greek word for *trance* is *ekstasis*, from which we derive our English word *ecstasy*. It is basically "a supernaturally incited excitement of the physical body; a being stupefied, held, arrested, and placed in a supernormal (above-normal, other-than-normal) state of mind." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines a *trance* as "a condition in which ordinary consciousness and the perception of natural circumstances were withheld, and the soul was susceptible only to the vision imparted by God."

In the New Testament, *trance* is usually translated as "amazement" (Mark 16:8), or "astonishment" (Mark 5:42), according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. It is also called "falling as if dead," (Revelation 1:17). In the Old Testament, it is called "a great quaking" (Daniel 10:7), "a trembling or shaking" (Job 4:14), "a sudden power" (Ezekiel 8:1 tev),

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and "the hand of the Lord," (Ezekiel 1:3). It is also translated as "a deep sleep from the Lord" from the Hebrew words *tardemah* (Job 33:15) and *radam*, (Daniel 8:18).

The Greek word *existemi*, from which stems *ekstasis*, is akin to it, and is further translated "to be beside oneself." Well, here we see that it is biblical to be beside oneself. The Lord even helps us at times to be beside ourselves, to leave our "selves" and come aside with Him. Sometimes it is necessary for special purposes for Him to get ahold of us, to stun us, and to take us out of our normal selves and give us "entrance" into another state.

Those who never leave the natural plane and enter the higher realms find it difficult to comprehend or associate with those who do. They call them "emotional, overzealous, and out of their minds." They don't know how right they are, for our spiritual experiences with the Lord seem to have these qualities (without the negative connotations, of course).

Such an extreme attitude against the supernatural is unspiritual and unwarranted. God's people should have faith for the supernatural and not be so "devil conscious." The Priest Eli was more inclined to believe that the supernatural voice which young Samuel was hearing was of God than to doubt it, (1Samuel 3:8-10). We should also be so inclined. He was not an "anything goes" person, and neither should we be. But neither was he quick to quench the Spirit of the Lord with undue doubt.

God's normal route of moving upon us and bringing us into high spiritual realms is by our faithfulness to Him in normal Christian activities such as prayer, Bible study, obedience to His Spirit, and regular daily devotions. These very important activities are essential to being yielded to God, and should be our main emphasis in life. However, supernatural experiences are another route by which He often chooses to move upon us, and they may or may not proceed from the former.

In the Greek language, *Theos* means "God" and *pathos* means "the experience of physical sensation." These two words form our English word "theopathy," which *Webster's Dictionary* defines as "religious emotion or passion; mystical ecstasy."

A *theopathy* is "an ecstatic experience from God which overtakes the flesh, the mind, and the emotions," and as such it is synonymous to a *trance*. God is willing to incite it when He wants to bring us "up hither" to another state of being, through another route. It is, therefore, a sort of gateway to the realm of the supernaturals.

Sometimes our ways are not in line with His, therefore in a theopathy or trance God stuns the natural sensations of the body and orders them in His path. This doesn't mean that God only

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entrances a person when he is out of His will and needs to be put on the right track. When someone is already in the path of God he can physically experience the amazing, exciting, and stupefying presence of God which is there.

There are different kinds and levels of trances, and different purposes and ways for God to manifest them. On the lower levels, a person may see one of the first four types of visions on our list, or he might not see anything at all. He may simply become surprised at a miracle (Acts 3:10), afraid or in awe (Mark 16:8), or he may ecstatically glorify God, (Luke 5:26).

In the higher level trances, a person may hear the audible voice of Jesus, behold marvelous sights, see angels, or have an out-of-body experience. Any kind and any number of visions may be experienced in a high-level trance.

Acts 22:17-21 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: And when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

That Jesus visited Paul in a trance, supernaturally appearing and speaking to him, is a direct fulfillment of a personal prophecy. When Ananias ministered to Paul, he prophesied that Paul would see that Just One and hear the voice of His mouth, (Acts 9:17; 22:12-16). Doubtless Paul had prepared his heart for such a visitation. I have received such kinds of prophecies also, and such kinds of visitations—but only after preparing my heart and my understanding for them by seeking the Lord in prayer and studying His Word.

In this trance, the Lord came with a simple message: "Leave Jerusalem, now! They won't receive your testimony!" Paul had a very powerful testimony. His upbringing, conversion, apostolic ministry, and visions and revelations, made him a man to be respected. He felt that such a testimony as his would get a lot of attention at Jerusalem and would convince the Jews of the reality of the Gospel. But Jesus knew better. He knows the hearts of all men, and knew they would reject Paul's testimony. Yet that's exactly what he defends before the Lord in the trance, proving that's what he was planning to share with the Jews.

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In coming to Paul here, Jesus probably did not intend to tell him that He was planning to send him to the Gentiles. Of course He would have in time because his ministry was to be to them. But He did so now in order to get Paul's mind, and his will, off the Jews and in the right direction.

From this account, we can see that it is possible to converse in the spirit while in a trance. When God gives us a message supernaturally, it is not necessarily ministered in a strict, inflexible manner. He may manifest with a specific purpose in mind, but He may relate it to us with openness, so that we may enter into spiritual converse with Him. The things of the Spirit are alive and real, and can be engaged and interacted with. God is flexible.

Even so, we should not be too quick to speak in the divine presence of God. Try the Spirit, see how the waters are moving—discern His mood, motive, and tone. See if it is a time to speak, or a time to keep silent. Speaking out of turn can grieve God's Spirit and cause a supernatural presence to lift off us, as often occurs in our church services.

I have entered into heavenly converse with God on several occasions. At times He spoke and I listened; at other times I spoke and He listened; at other times we both conversed; on more than one occasion, I grieved Him by speaking out of turn, and His presence lifted. A word out of season can easily disturb the sensitive Spirit of God.

Further, we should be quick to check the attitude of our inner man when we experience a supernatural visitation. A mood out of season, an undue tone or attitude, can grieve God more easily than an undue word. We might innocently speak in ignorance, but the motives and thoughts of the heart are less innocent, and that's what He weighs.

Experiences such as trances, appearances of Jesus, visitations of angels, and others, may allow us to have conversations in the spirit, but not always. If we will be swift to hear and slow to speak in a divine presence, we will receive exactly what the Lord has come to us with.

Trances usually involve the physical body vibrating to some degree in a supernormal way while the vision is occurring. Yet they are not all alike. With Paul, there was clear thinking and conversation along with the theopathy. In another case of *ekstasis*, people were in shock and speechless; others glorified God; others shook and became as dead men, (Matthew 28:2-4).

Revelation 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last.

The great Apostle John didn't even shake; he just fell as dead. The Lord had to lay His hand

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upon him to strengthen him, as He did to Daniel, (Daniel 10:9-10).

These experiences are very sobering, to say the least. We should think on them with reverence and holy fear. They are not to be lightly esteemed or inquired into with a casual or presumptuous attitude.

Some trances, the more common ones, occur in our praises, (Luke 5:26); others in our being surprised or in awe, (Acts 3:10); others in our being excited to preach, prophesy, or pray, (Jeremiah 20:9; Acts 4:31).

Some supernatural experiences, such as trances, may manifest only in a certain part of the physical body. An angel touched the hollow of Jacob's *thigh*, (Genesis 32:24-25). The Lord anointed Ezekiel's *face* and *forehead* to be strong as a stone against his enemies, (Ezekiel 3:8-9). He touched Jeremiah's *mouth*, (Jeremiah 1:9); and Isaiah's, (Isaiah 6:7). He anoints the *feet* of the preacher, (Romans 10:15; Isaiah 52:7). In the Gospels, Jesus touched *eyes*, *ears*, and *hands*, when ministering the anointing to various ones.

In supernatural experiences, my *feet* have been stunned by the power of God, and my *hands*. In intercession, my *loins* would become aflame. Fire has descended on my *tongue* alone, and on my *head* alone. Angels' wings have brushed my *face* alone.

In November, 1986, an angel with a hammer visited me and hammered all around my head sealing a new anointing upon me as I laid on the floor on my back. He stood above me looking down at my face, so at first I only heard and felt this hammering on my head. When I looked straight up over me to see what was happening, I saw the angel, upside down, and we smiled at each other. I felt a great peace and discerned that this was of God, so I just let him go on working.

In public or in privacy, when we are engaged in spiritual activity or in natural, the Holy Spirit may demonstrate Himself within us, around us, or upon our bodies. His manifestation may be visible and/or audible and/or tangible. And in it, He may reveal His favour, or disfavour; may or may not speak a specific message; and may disclose fire, wind, oil, or some other form.

Such experiences may come by an angel, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, by the hand of Jesus, by a word from Heaven, by a trance, etc. They may be made manifest unto a collective group of people, or to an individual, or to a specific part of the body. In any case, howsoever He is pleased to visit us, it is always His doing, in His way, and for His glory.

Acts 11:5 I was praying, and in a trance I saw a vision.

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In a trance, the Holy Spirit “comes over” a person and, in the greater cases, stupefies or paralyzes him temporarily. In such a state, a great many kinds of visions may be seen. Many people receive visions and revelations of the Lord via trances. Many of the visions recorded in the Bible occurred during some form of trance. This can be verified when one reads the contexts in which they are shown and the definitions of the original words used.

Now some trances are not so much visual experiences as they are demonstrations of God’s power over the physical body. There are trances without visions which God gives for purposes other than to reveal things.

Acts 2:17 I will pour out of My Spirit upon... flesh.

This word “flesh” is translated from the Greek word *sarx*, which means “fleshly meat, carnal, animal, physical body.” This indicates that it shall come to pass in the last days that God shall pour out of His Spirit upon physical bodies in tangible ways—again, not always to disclose visions. The trance, which is a sort of mystical ecstasy, can be incited by the Holy Spirit so as to give us entrance to a variety of manifestations. I believe that when the Lord’s power is demonstrated in stigmata, levitation, translation and bilocation, as well as in the following ways, the gateway to these experiences is, more often than not, some form of *ekstasis*.

Manifestations of the Holy Spirit upon flesh:

Peter “fell” into a trance, (Acts 10:10)
John was “carried away” in the spirit, (Revelation 17:3)
the Spirit “entered” into Ezekiel, (Ezekiel 3:24)
the hand of God “fell” upon Ezekiel, (Ezekiel 8:1)
the Lord “touched” Jeremiah’s mouth, (Jeremiah 1:9)
an angel “touched” Isaiah’s mouth, (Isaiah 6:5-7)
Philip “disappeared into thin air,” (Acts 8:39)
Elijah “flew” to heaven, (2Kings 2:11)
Saul “turned into another man” and prophesied, (1Samuel 10:6)
suddenly “fire fell” on the disciples, (Acts 2:1-4)
soldiers “slain in the spirit,” (John 18:6)

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"inability" to stand, (2Chronicles 5:14)

"inability" to walk, (2Chronicles 7:2)

"shaking, quaking, shivering, quivering," (Job 4:14)

Trances may also be described in these words:

a deep sleep from the Lord, (Daniel 10:9)

corruption and no strength, (Daniel 10:8)

a great quaking fell, (Daniel 10:7)

the power of the Sovereign Lord, (Ezekiel 8:1 tev)

fear, trembling, bones shaking, hairs bristled, (Job 4:14)

falling as if dead, (Revelation 1:17)

suddenly, immediately in the spirit, (Revelation 4:2)

astonishment, (Mark 5:42)

amazement, (Mark 16:8)

amazed, surprised, stupefied, (Luke 5:26)

A variety of experiences can occur in a trance:

audible voice of God, (1Samuel 3:3-4)

apparition, (1Kings 3:5)

translation, (Acts 8:39)

out-of-body experience, (Ezekiel 3:14)

heavenly visitation, (2Corinthians 12:1-4)

impartment of mantle for ministry, (Acts 13:2)

prophetic utterance, (2Peter 1:21)

miraculous healing, (Luke 5:17)

deliverance from yokes, (Isaiah 10:27)

groaning and travail in prayer, (Galatians 4:19)

God does not always disclose supernaturals, much less trances. And the foregoing experiences are not always characterized by trances. But we do want to acknowledge that God does

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demonstrate His power as He wills, that He does so in many different ways, and that the trance can be the initial manifestation of the Spirit whereby He may give us more. If we would recognize the purpose of the trance, for it is not an end in itself, we will learn how to yield to the presence of the Lord from one step to the next when it comes.

Many supernatural experiences come slowly and gradually, they begin with a simple, gentle presence which will increase only if we would yield to it by faith. Faith does not become ineffectual in a trance; in fact, it may be required. We need to have faith for the supernatural because often the revelation will be disclosed unto us *according to our faith*, (Matthew 9:29). Additionally, the special gift of faith, faith "from Above," is often given us so that we may indeed apprehend the things from Above when God would disclose them unto us. Jesus said, "Said I not unto thee, that, *if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?*" (John 11:40).

Chapter 10

OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE

Ezekiel 8:3 The Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven.

This is an actual projecting forth of the human spirit and going out of the body. When God inspires this, He puts a special faith and anointing in the person's spirit so that he can perform what the Lord is leading him into. At the same time, the Lord places a special anointing over the physical body to watch over it throughout the experience. Without His special unction to leave the body, a person does not have His protective covering, so he may be open to demonic attack or deception in the spiritual realm if he enters it on his own initiative.

When spiritists, sorcerers, psychics, and yogis practise this without the Holy Ghost and seem to prosper by it, it is because they are not a threat to Satan, and they are already deceived. Whether or not they realize it, they are in league with him, and are not his enemy. But the Holy Ghost-filled Christian and his supernatural experiences do threaten Satan's kingdom because Jesus is the source of our power.

When an *out-of-body experience* occurs, the person's spirit literally leaves his physical body,

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and he begins to travel in the spiritual dimension by the Spirit of the Lord. Once he is out there, the surrounding environment does not appear the same as it does naturally because now the spiritual eyes are seeing, and not the natural eyes. The Lord directs our eyes to see what He wants us to, in just the way He wants us to.

He also, as a rule, directs us to go where He wants us to go, and not where we may want to go. Out-of-body, Ezekiel went where the Lord told him to go, and saw what the Lord told him to see: "The Lord said, 'Go in, and see...' So I went in, and saw," (Ezekiel 8:9-10).

In a low level out-of-body experience, a person's spirit only slightly leaves his body. In a high level one, his spirit becomes more anointed to further go out and see, hear, or partake in the situations he encounters out there in the spiritual dimension. He may also intervene in, interrupt, or even establish some things there. There are many things which we can do in supernatural experiences, depending upon the type of anointing and instructions God gives us.

Colossians 2:5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

The Apostle Paul was rejoicing with the Christians at Colosse as he beheld their order and stedfast faith. He was not speaking figuratively when he said, "I am with you." His spirit was literally present, though his physical body was absent.

1Corinthians 5:3-5 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

At the Corinthian church, Paul judged an adulterer (apostles do that) and turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Again absent in body (he was in prison at the time), he was present in spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ (that is, with an unction from the Lord to do what he did).

2Kings 5:25-27 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him,

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Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

The Prophet Elisha knew that his servant Gehazi had received money and goods through deception and was lying to his master about it. He didn't find this out by a simple *spiritual vision* or simple discernment. He partly went out of his body and actually went with Gehazi, beholding his order and unstedfast behaviour. *Today's English Version* says, "Wasn't I there in spirit when the man got out of his chariot to meet you?" The *New International Version* says, "Was not my spirit with you?"

In this account, it is possible that Elisha's body was not in a trance or otherwise overpowered by the Spirit of God while his spirit was out of the body. On the lower levels of out-of-body experiences, the person's spirit is not fully given to the situation in the spiritual realm but is only partly given to it.

Elisha may have been busy in his home or office with his mind and body functioning normally (or just slightly abated) when his spirit observed his servant's actions. And it is also possible that he did not know it when it was happening but only realized it consciously when Gehazi stood before him.

It is often difficult to locate and identify exactly what happens in the realm of the spirit in visions and supernatural experiences. Almost anything or any number of things can happen there in any number of ways.

The Prophet Ezekiel was probably more acquainted with out-of-body experiences than any other individual in the Bible. Repeatedly throughout the Book of Ezekiel we find him testifying of such:

Ezekiel 3:12-14 Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place. I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing. So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me

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away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.

Ezekiel was extremely perceptive and sharp in spiritual matters. He heard the noise of angels' wings (living creatures), the noise of wheels (angelic vehicles), and the noise of a great rushing (atmospheric turbulence in the spiritual realm). The *chariots of God* (Hebrew: *rekeb*, "vehicles, wagons," Psalms 68:17) are often used to carry His servants in the realm of the spirit.

Ezekiel 8:1-3 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of His loins even downward, fire; and from His loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber. And He put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

Here the prophet first goes into a trance (God "fell" there), then he sees a vision (an *apparition*, a *divine sight*, or an *open heaven*, or any combination of these) of the Lord as fire and brightness, and then he is taken above the earth (in an *out-of-body experience*), though not as far as the Third Heaven.

Interestingly, all this took place right in front of people (the elders of Judah), as Ezekiel was simply sitting in his own house and talking with them. The presence of their spiritual wisdom, rank and anointing, may have assisted in the prophet's yieldedness to this experience—then, and perhaps on other occasions as well.

Our fellowship or association with doubters, unbelievers, or uneducated people, will greatly hinder our flow in any area, including in supernatural experiences, even though God may desire and attempt to disclose those kinds of things. Both, the spirit of faith and the spirit of unbelief, can be transferred by association. Conversely, the presence of God's anointed, learned, and believing servants, will greatly enhance our ability to yield to supernatural experiences when the Lord discloses them, and will indeed inspire Him to disclose them. My greatest times in church

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services occur when I'm sitting next to friends of like precious faith.

Ezekiel 11:1-2 Moreover the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. then said He unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city.

In this out-of-body experience, Ezekiel is brought specifically to the "east gate of the Lord's house," (he knew exactly where he was). There he recognizes the princes of the people at the door, and he counts an exact 25 of them. He did not become oblivious to natural facts just because he was "in the spirit." Notice that God told him that these counsellors are the wicked ones of the city (though they held prominent posts and were respected by the people), and He told him to prophesy against them. We should not be surprised at whom the Lord would have us to prophesy against.

Ezekiel 37:1-4 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, Thou knowest. Again He said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Not only can we discern, recognize, and know things in the spiritual realm, we might also actively participate in something there. In this vision, Ezekiel first experiences a trance—the *hand of the Lord was upon him*, (verse 1). Then He *carries him out in the Spirit of the Lord*, sets *him down on his feet* in this valley which is full of bones, and causes him to walk around these bones and check them out, (*pass by them round about*).

Notice the clarity and perception of the prophet's "eagle eyes." He plainly saw the location of the bones (that they were "in the valley"), the exact area within the valley (the middle, "the midst"), the amount of these bones (that there were "very many"), and he also determined their condition, (they were "very dry"). Ezekiel was able to give a detailed report of this vision because

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of his careful analysis and keen spiritual eyesight. Having experienced many extraordinary visions and revelations of the Lord, the prophet had learned how to spot details in the spiritual realm and retain them.

As I share in my first book, *Understanding Supernatural Dreams According to the Bible, A Living Classic*, we can train ourselves—while actually inside the dream/vision realm—to make a special note of distinct symbols and details and retrieve them as we return to normal conscious thinking. “While dreaming, you may be able to note some highlights or distinct features and retain them, carrying them with you until you awaken. As you begin to wake up, you can pull those dream-thoughts along with you into full consciousness,” (page 120). Once recalled, those symbols gotten in the spiritual realm can then begin to be interpreted.

Retrieving items from a hidden place, be it the subconscious mind or the spiritual arena, may be possible in any form of vision state because visions are akin to dreams and interrelate with them. Visions of the Lord often appear in our dreams (*night visions*), so they largely operate by the same kinds of principles and rules.

There are times when the Lord may show us something in a vision or dream, and then prevent us from recalling that thing. It may be He wants us to get enough of a glimpse of His mind on something, but not too much that we will try and walk in it “in the flesh.” At such times we should be at peace—after we’ve tried unsuccessfully to recall a special feature of a vision or dream—trusting in His wisdom and lordship over our minds and over the revelations we receive.

It is appropriate that the Lord permitted Ezekiel as much insight as He did because it was needful for him to apprehend the burden of the word of the Lord. As he beheld the bones (which symbolically represented the spiritual dryness of the children of Israel, Ezekiel’s own people), he, no doubt, agreed with the heart of God that his people needed a revival. Conversing with God in this supernatural place further established this need, and prophesying new life unto them was the next step toward that.

Ezekiel actually talked with the Lord in this high-level out-of-body experience (as did Paul while in a trance), and was in this way made conducive to the high-level prophetic word of the Lord. The highest kinds of prophecies proceed from the highest kinds of visions, and they proceed from God’s greatest concerns.

Ezekiel 43:5-6 So the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard Him speaking unto me out of the

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house; and the man stood by me.

The *audible voice* of God often spoke through the cloud of His glory. Without the cloud interposing, His majestic presence would consume us, (Hebrews 12:29). Now if it was the Father's voice which Ezekiel heard here, then Jesus, our Mediator before the Heavenly Father (1Timothy 2:5), was probably the "Man" that stood by him. If Jesus was the One speaking out of the house, then that "man" was Ezekiel's angel, who was yielding to the voice of the Lord and also learning alongside the prophet, (Ephesians 3:10).

Notice again Ezekiel's keen perception. He discerns a "going up," a "being taken up," a "being brought" by the Spirit of the Lord. He never indicates a going up in the spirit of his own wish or volition, but always acknowledges the Lord's doing it and the Spirit's doing it. It would not be inappropriate for him to acknowledge the ministry of angels in his visions because they are undoubtedly involved in them. But the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures to emphasize that the Lord is the One Who initiates supernatural experiences. This way, when we experience a supernatural manifestation from God, we will be able to declare boldly that it is indeed the work of "The Spirit of the Lord!"

Chapter 11

TRANSLATION

Acts 8:39 The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.

The experience of *supernatural translation* is the literal dematerializing of a person's physical body and his rematerializing in another place. It is also known as *supernatural translocation* or *supernatural transportation*. (There is also what is called *supernatural bi-location*, wherein one is able to be in two different places at the same time). When this occurs, it is an actual physical *experience*, and not a *vision*. But I list it along with our kinds of visions and make a short comment about it here because it can, in some cases, involve visions; it usually begins with and depends on some kind of vision or revelation from the Lord. Visions, voices, angels and spiritual

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presences are akin to and cooperate with translation experiences.

The most popular biblical account of this occurrence relates **Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch, (Acts 8:26-40)**. This encounter began both with the voice of the angel of the Lord and the voice of the Spirit of the Lord. The angel *audibly spake* unto Philip instructing him to "Go down to Gaza," (verse 26); and then the Holy Spirit *said* unto Philip, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot," (verse 29).

The Spirit of the Lord *caught away* Philip! He "enraptured, snatched, seized, plucked up, pulled, took him by force" (according to the Greek word *harpazo*) so that his physical molecules vibrated not only near but at the very speed of light (186,272 miles per second), and he disappeared into "thin air." Some versions of the Bible read: "The Spirit... snatched Philip away"; "The Spirit... suddenly took Philip away"; and "The Spirit...hurriedly transported Philip," (Acts 8:39).

The eunuch and his servants didn't see him anymore. Where did he go? He was found at Azotus, twenty miles northward. Different versions have it: "Philip...found himself at Azotus"; "...appeared at Azotus"; and "...was discovered at Azotus," (Acts 8:40). And once at Azotus, he continued passing through preaching in all the cities, until he came to Caesarea, which was another fifty miles away! It may be that, as Philip continued passing through all these cities preaching the Gospel, he "passed through them" by *translation*, perhaps incited by the voice and revelation of the Holy Spirit and by angelic assistance.

Acts 12:8-9 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

Peter was *translated* out of prison but while it was happening he did not realize it. As far as he was concerned, he was having a vision or a dream. He had been asleep in prison, resting in the confidence that the Lord could deliver him as He had done before, (Acts 5:18-23). He probably recalled that event before falling asleep, and went on dreaming about it, thereby being prepared for the angelic visitation.

As it was occurring, Peter thought it was just another part of his *dream*, or *night vision*. Even though dreams can come true, this one seemed too good to be true. Only when he was "come

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to himself" after the fact, did he know for sure that it had really happened. He had been set free from prison supernaturally. Evidently, the experience of translation is not only related to visions, but might begin with them.

When Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, He first saw an *apparition* of him (Matthew 4:3), and afterward His body was transported, (verse 5). In this case, *transportation* may or may not have been by disappearance. The Greek word for "taketh Him up" (verses 5, 8) is *paralambano* which denotes "taking a person with one" (according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*), so it seems to be more of an instance of *levitation* in this context.

Whether or not supernatural transportation involves disappearing, it certainly seems to involve some sort of vision or revelation in just about every instance. The devil *appeared* and *spoke* with Jesus when he came to tempt Him; and the angels also may have communicated with Him when they came and ministered to Him by helping Him come down from the exceeding high mountain where the devil had left Him, (Matthew 4:11).

Sometimes translation only partly occurs. A part of the person's spirit, mind, and body leave and go somewhere, and then return. In a *full translation* there is no need for him to return to his place of departure because he has all of "himself" with him. In a *partial translation* he may partly appear to another person, and perhaps give them a message also. The other person will see this as an *apparition* (appearance), may hear his voice, and might be able to touch him as well. Apparitions, audible voices, dreams, and other vision experiences are often found in translation.

On Christmas Eve, 1950, our Lord Jesus physically appeared at a special session of the United Nations Political Committee in Lake Success, New York. This *apparition* (full appearing) was no less supernatural than when He appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, (John 20:19). In a windowless room surrounded by security guards, Jesus instantly showed up, visibly, and addressed the chief delegates from many nations.

He chastised the nations for their selfishness, deceptions, and greed. He preached of righteousness and faith, quoted many Scriptures, and warned of coming judgments. Then, leaving through a door which opened by itself, He walked out and vanished from their sight. The guards outside never saw Him.

In this experience, Jesus didn't disappear in the presence of the delegates or guards (that is, within their view) because, had He done so, the sight of Him disappearing "into thin air" would have *astonished* them. That would have taken away from His message to them, which was the

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sole purpose of the visitation. He didn't want them in a trance state either, because He didn't want to overpower their minds and control their policy-making. Even so, it is likely the exhortation from the Lord alone brought conviction upon them and influenced them.

This event was announced over the radio that same evening by reporter Paul Harvey, but it was immediately censured by the government. I share it here to show that several terms can be used to define this kind of experience, depending upon one's point of view. If you were to ask the witnesses (the U.N. delegates) what type of supernatural experience this was, they would say it was a *vision*—more specifically, an *apparition*—because this Being actually appeared to them. However, if you were to ask Jesus, He would say it was a *translation* because, from His perspective, He transcended natural laws to travel from one location to another.

Prophet Kenneth Copeland testifies that his presence was perceived by certain individuals so strongly that they thought he was present. His ministry outreach staff in Australia thought that he had flown in from America without notifying them and was somewhere in their building. They asked around for him for awhile, until they finally realized he was not physically there.

Brother Copeland's father was in the hospital one night and sensed Kenneth's presence so strongly that he got healed and went home. He didn't see or hear Kenneth but was greatly ministered to and comforted by this special presence alone.

On both these occasions, Brother Copeland didn't know that his presence was visiting his brethren, therefore these were not *full translations* or *out-of-body experiences*. But I think these were the beginnings of them. Remember, translation often involves, and can begin with, visions, voices, and presences.

I have heard ministers testifying that when they were under the anointing of the Spirit of God, their own spirit would occasionally feel "fat." In the Old Testament, "fat" symbolically represented the anointing of the Holy Spirit, (Isaiah 10:27). Within this "fatness," the person's spirit would then proceed out of the body and fill every inch, every corner, every bit of space within the confines of the church building, auditorium, or other place where they were at the moment.

In intercessory prayer one may similarly become "fat" and proceed out of the body to fill a void, make up an hedge, and cover someone, or a community, or a city, even as a hen covers her chicks under her wings, (Matthew 23:37). This is particularly true when one has indeed given birth to those things and is, therefore, their rightful *spiritual mother*. What you have created and birthed, you will have authority over, protect and defend, and spend sleepless nights watching over, even as a mother does over her children.

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Of the twelve kinds of vision experiences listed in this book, translation is the one most restricted by the laws of time. Whereas in all the other kinds of visions (even in out-of-body experiences and heavenly visitations) we can see into the past, present, and future, the experience of translation (in the strictest sense of the term) cannot involve the past or the future because they do not literally exist in the present.

Unlike in fantastic stories about time travel, where people are able to visit another period of time, we can only transcend time with our minds and with our spiritual beings. When translation involves revelations of the past or future, it is because other kinds of visions are accompanying it, not because we have been translated there. Remember, most supernatural experiences involve a combination of a few otherwise distinct kinds.

Whether it is an *out-of-body experience* (when the spirit leaves the body and travels while the body stays in place), or *translation* (when the body travels, invisibly, together with the spirit), it usually involves some sort of revelation from the Lord leading and guiding the person throughout. These kinds of experiences need to be directly initiated and strictly monitored by God, so there is almost no doubt He will clearly speak and show us things when translation occurs. This way we will only travel where He wants us to go and not necessarily where we may want to go. In spiritual travel, Ezekiel went where the Lord told him to go, and saw what the Lord told him to see: "The Lord said, 'Go in, and see...' So I went in, and saw," (Ezekiel 8:9-10).

Chapter 12

HEAVENLY VISITATION

2Corinthians 12:2 Such an one caught up to the Third Heaven.

There are *three heavens* identified in the Bible. The first, lowest heaven, is the *atmospheric sky* which encircles the earth, (Matthew 16:1-3). The second, stellar heaven, is what we call *outer space*, where the sun, moon, stars, and other planets reside, (Genesis 1:16-17). The Third Heaven, which is the highest one and the center around which all realms revolve, is *Paradise*, the Abode of God and His angels and saints, (Psalms 11:4). Any one of the visions which we

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are examining in this book may involve any heaven.

A *heavenly visitation* is an *out-of-body experience* (just as we defined earlier, in Chapter 10), but here the person's spirit leaves the earth realm, passes through the second heaven, and goes to the Third Heaven. This can occur while the person is praying, while he is in a trance or deep sleep from the Lord, or when he dies.

When a Christian dies, his spirit leaves his body and travels through the first and second heavens and arrives at the Third Heaven, where the Kingdom of God is. "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," (2Corinthians 5:8). However, at times they return to earth, reenter their body, and are revived.

A Christian can pray for a person who has just recently died to come back into his body, and the Lord may answer that prayer. The Lord Himself might instruct the person who has just arrived in Heaven to go back to earth: "You must go back. You are needed there. Your work is not yet finished." Or the person might return to earth from Heaven without being told to do so, with no specific explanation but just by a knowing that he should.

Whatever conditions under which a person's spirit goes out of his body, he may experience a variety of supernatural visions (audible voice, open heaven, or other kinds) before ascending to Paradise, if he goes that far up. Also on his return trip he may experience these things before making a full descent back into his body. Unless his journey to or from Heaven occurs in a twinkling of an eye, it is likely the traveller will observe some things between the earth and Heaven.

Revelation 1:17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I Am the First and the Last.

Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a Throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the Throne.

Here John first went into a *trance*, (he *fell as if dead*). While in the spirit, he received Jesus' audible messages for the seven churches, (Revelation 2-3). Then he was taken up to Heaven, where he saw God's Throne and many other divine things. This was a *heavenly visitation*, but it

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began with some lesser kinds of visions (*audible voice*, 1:10; *open heaven* and *divine sight*, 1:12; *trance*, 1:17); then it boosted in supernature and led to an *out-of-body experience* and *heavenly visitation*, (4:1).

As it is with most visions, the *heavenly visitation* can be preceded by a word of wisdom or word of knowledge in a simpler vision. When John visited Heaven during his captivity on Patmos Island, it was after he had yielded himself to the prevenient visions. Without his faith yielding and cooperating with them, it is likely he would not have yielded to the Lord's summons, "Come up Hither, and I will show you things..."

As we get to really know the Lord, it becomes easier for us to discern His presence and trust His leadings. John recognized Jesus' voice and easily yielded to Him in the spiritual realm because He had been walking with Him for a very long time. A not-so-spectacular disclosing will, more often than not, precede a spectacular disclosing, but the more we know and trust God, the easier it will be to yield to that disclosing.

The Apostle Paul, on the other hand, in his heavenly visitation, did not first behold other visions. Some supernatural experiences occur "suddenly," depending both on the mood of the Holy Spirit at the time, and the mood of our own spirit, as on the Day of Pentecost, (Acts 2:1-2). It seems that when Paul had been stoned to death for preaching the Gospel (Acts 14:19-20), he was *immediately caught up to Paradise*.

2Corinthians 12:2-4 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the Third Heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

It seems this experience was exclusively paradisaical. Paul heard only "unspeakable words" (inexpressible mysteries too sacred to utter in the earth), and may have also seen unspeakable marvels. He didn't receive any messages which were utterable or which involved earthly matters on this occasion, so it is likely he didn't see or hear anything on his way to or from Paradise.

In addition, it may not have been determined at that point whether or not Paul would come back to earth. So if he had not returned, there would be no need for him to see visions of earthly things. God knew that he would return, but probably left it up to Paul to decide his destiny from

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then on (Philippians 1:21-24), and would not influence his decision with earthly cares.

In the same way that a person can visit the Third Heaven in an out-of-body experience, he can also visit the various regions of hell. If he is an unbeliever, he approaches hell by descending—in death or a near-death experience, or in a supernatural vision—and is shown whereto he is destined to spend eternity unless he accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. Then he is brought back up to earth and into his earthly body by the mercy of God, and it is more likely he will become a believer after such an experience.

If a person is a Christian, the Spirit of the Lord may bring him to hell in an out-of-body experience, not to suffer its torments, but in order to show him what it is like before returning to earth. Many Christians who have visited one or more regions of hell in supernatural out-of-body experiences (or in other kinds of visions), have returned with a greater understanding of that place, and with a greater burden to preach the Gospel and rescue people who are on their way to that horrible place of torment “where their worm dieth not, and the fire never shall be quenched,” (Mark 9:44).

The Patriarch Moses had many supernatural experiences. He also saw Heaven, but we cannot be certain by what type of vision it was disclosed to him. He may have seen the *heavens opened* and heard the *audible voice* of God, or he may have had an *out-of-body experience* and visited Heaven in the spirit. But I'm inclined to believe he was partly *translated* to the True Tabernacle of God, when he was shown its design. He was in such an anointing during that event that his body was not bound by natural laws.

Exodus 24:18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 25:1, 8-9 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying... And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the Instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

When Moses was on Mount Sinai fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was admonished of God, “See that you make all things according to the pattern showed to you in the mount,” (Hebrews 8:5). God showed Moses the True Tabernacle in the Third Heaven—which the Lord

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Himself had pitched in eternity past—and the True Instruments thereof.

What we know as the “Tabernacle of Moses” and the services thereof was only the shadow of a real structure. That earthly “shadow” resulted from Moses’ acquaintance with the True Tabernacle in the Abode of God: an acquaintance gotten by close contact and intimate communion. I think that during those forty days and nights of fasting he didn’t eat because he wasn’t there.

The highest type of heavenly visitation is a complete catching away of the person’s spirit, mind, and body, to Heaven. Just as an *out-of-body experience* can involve the first, second, or Third Heaven, so the experience of *translation* can also go as far as Paradise.

In 1972, Brother Kwame, a high school student in Uganda, East Africa, experienced a full translation to the Third Heaven. He testifies:

“During the night I was awakened by a great noise that sounded to me like a tremendous thunderstorm with very heavy wind and rain. When I looked outside, I saw that the sky was crystal clear and the trees were perfectly still. The next thing I realized, I was actually standing outside the dormitory. I noticed a fairly large, crate-sized box. It was absolutely white and dazzling and full of a brightness that I had never seen before. I felt drawn to stand on it.”

(This shows us that the inner witness, or impressions of the Spirit, or the still, small voice of the Lord in us, can be involved and even play a key role in supernatural experiences as well as in natural ones. If he had not followed this slight leading which he *felt* to stand on the “box,” Kwame might’ve missed this trip to Heaven. Though the Lord may have waited until he yielded, or may have imparted to him a *special faith* to help him yield, He will not always strive with us or force us to yield. For not yielding quickly enough to a wooing of the Spirit, many have grieved Him and missed a special manifestation of Him.)

“Immediately it started to rise and I realized that I was being lifted up into the air and right into space. The box, that seemed like a chariot, dazzling white on the inside, began to gather speed, accelerating at a tremendous velocity. I saw the stars in space travelling past me at a very, very fast speed ahead. I saw what seemed to be a long golden line stretching from one end of space to the other. I realized that this was the shore of a certain place. As we drew closer, I could see buildings and hills and valleys and mountains. It was a beautiful sight.”

“Eventually, the chariot brought me to the shore and I got off. I was totally secure and felt totally surrounded by a great sense of love. When I looked around, I saw that two other people had come with me from the school. We saw three people coming toward us. The first one came

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up to me and put his arms around me and hugged me and said to me, 'Welcome to the Kingdom of Heaven. Welcome to the joy that the Lord has made for those who love Him.' And he introduced himself as John, the Beloved Disciple."

"The other two persons who were with John said that they were the Apostles Peter and James. They were very glad to see us, expressing great joy, and invited us to accompany them to see and meet the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot fully describe the excitement that filled us. But we realized that God had actually brought us to the Kingdom of Heaven!"

Heaven is a real place! The saints who have gone before us are really There! The apostles Peter, John, and James are really alive and have their being There, and can communicate with visitors as literally as when we on earth entertain our visitors.

Any type of vision involving heavenly revelations can be considered supernatural, but Kwame's experience was a full translation—a complete catching away of his spirit, mind, and body. His schoolmate which slept near him in their dormitory awakened during the night and found Kwame's bed empty!

The next day, the two schoolmates which accompanied him in the chariot to Heaven confirmed that the experience had actually occurred. Even a fourth schoolmate, a sinner whom the Lord took to Heaven at the same time but by another route (and who got saved as a result), also confirmed in detail the reality of the experience.

Not surprisingly, the fruit of this heavenly visitation is that many souls are blessed, encouraged, and won to the Lord by the anointing on the preaching and on the testimony of these four Christians. We know we are to preach the Word of Faith, by faith, but the Bible also tells us that we can come to visions and revelations of the Lord; and not only *visual* experiences, but also *actual*, literal ones. Kwame and his friends "went" to Heaven in the most literal sense of the word.

Paradise is a very great and large place. When summoned up Thither by the Lord, any amount of revelation can be disclosed, and any amount of scenery can be seen, depending on what the Lord would enable us to behold. Beautiful, wondrous sights have been reported by those who have been There—the Throne of God, the Sea of Glass, the River of Life, the Book of Life, the Tree of Life with all its delicious fruit, the Streets of Gold with Mansions on either side, and so much more—and great joy has come to the visitors as they saw their departed loved ones, all perfect and whole, and spoke with them, even babies which had been aborted.

Some people who have had a heavenly visitation have only partially approached the Gates of

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that Great City before they were drawn back down to earth, sometimes in only a matter of moments. Others have been invited to come in and enter those gates and enjoy converse and fellowship with some of the saints and angels which are There, and to meet Jesus. Some are shown much, some are shown little. Most, however, return with a ringing testimony of the glories which await God's people who are faithful to Him. Many people who have visited Heaven, like Kwame and his friends, have returned with new anointings and powerful messages attesting to the reality of the Kingdom of God.

I believe that many people—in the Bible, and throughout history—have had similar experiences, but only a few are recorded. I also believe that there are people today experiencing translation of some kind, but most people never hear about them. All kinds of visions are being multiplied in this last days' revival because the Word of the Lord is increasingly being preached, (1Samuel 3:1b; Joel 2:28). God confirms the Gospel preached with signs and wonders following, (Mark 16:20).

Visits to Heaven—whether in the body, or out of the body—should be reachable to us because that's where we're getting ready to go. Going to and fro throughout the earth by the Spirit of the Lord should also be possible to us because this is where we live and work right now. I think it'll be easier to translate to the Third Heaven after having gone around the first and second.

Elijah was translated to Heaven (2Kings 2:11), but he had first been translated to other places on earth, (2Kings 2:16). Enoch was translated to Heaven as well, (Hebrews 11:5). Might he have been translated to other places on earth also?

The Body of Christ is going up to Heaven by translation, by the "Rapture," (1Corinthians 15:51-53; 1Thessalonians 4:15-18). Might we first experience translations to other places on earth, too?

Chapter 13

WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING

Daniel 1:17 God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom:
and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Proverbs 4:5-7 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of My mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Proverbs 4:11-12 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

Wisdom is the understanding of how to use knowledge for benefit. Many people have a lot of knowledge but lack the wisdom on how to properly apply it. Doctors, lawyers, politicians and businessmen gain knowledge through study, and they gain wisdom by using it—that is, through practical “hands on” experience.

Christians, too, should gain knowledge by studying the Word of God to show ourselves approved unto Him, (2Timothy 2:15). Then when the Holy Spirit discloses something supernatural unto us we will know how to handle it and benefit from it, and God will approve of us in that thing. At times, God’s supernatural doings manifest in a sovereign way, above and beyond our own knowledge, faith, and cooperation. However, when He is not moving in a sovereign way, His doings will require our knowledge, faith, and cooperation.

We should gain knowledge about supernatural things (as that found in this study) and use it in a practical way as we walk with Jesus in spiritual realms. After awhile we will gain some wisdom and won’t easily stumble or be hindered by spiritual obstacles when we step out and go into those realms. God wants us to make progress in spiritual things as we do in natural things. He wants us to easily see His doings so we can work together with Him in a wise and skillful way in those things.

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A lot of time and effort has been wasted in some of our church functions and projects, and in our personal lives as well, simply because we failed to get the mind of Christ on those things. We don't come to certain visions and revelations which the Lord desires to disclose because we're often so naturally-minded that we're of no earthly good. Whereas we need to be more spiritually-minded so we can be of some earthly good.

Isaiah 55:8-9 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Our natural intelligence alone is simply not good enough when it comes to doing the work of the Lord. We need to understand His higher ways and know His higher thoughts. Too many people are doing their own thing, leaning onto their own understanding, believing the lies of men (wolves in sheep's clothing; Matthew 7:15), and trusting in the works of the flesh. They're getting ready to stumble because they're walking in darkness and can't see.

But since the end of all things is near at hand, God is more directly ordering all our doings by binding and loosing, blessing and cursing, favouring and disfavouring, and smiling and frowning on the various projects we present before Him. By speaking and revealing His thoughts on those projects, He is saving us a lot of time and effort. By leading us to become spiritually-minded, He is giving us life and peace, and He is causing His Word to prosper whereto He sends it.

Since God is doing a quick work in the earth in this hour—in individual lives, in ministries, and in national and international affairs—He is strategically positioning us just where He wants us. He is largely directing us through visions because they lead us into His right paths more quickly than our own understanding.

Without His mind, our own thinking would get us off track from His will—possibly for several years, or perhaps irreparably—and there's no time left for us to make major mistakes in the things we choose to do. This is true for individuals, churches, businesses, and governments.

Not all visions are from God. But as Christians filled with the Holy Ghost and power, we can learn how to discern spiritual manifestations, bind evil ones, and enter into visions and

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revelations which are of the Lord. Some things can be revealed in no other way but by a supernatural disclosing of God's Spirit. We should renew our minds to the Word of God, (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23-24). This way we can become more conducive to spiritual revelations when they are disclosed, and can more easily see those which have already been disclosed.

We should learn how to yield to the manifestations of the Spirit from one phase to the next. Often a great vision or supernatural experience begins with a lesser kind which we must permit if we are going to get to the greater. Too often we quit yielding too soon and limit God from going further. We grieve Him when we discern not the time of His visitation unto us. It happens in our church services, in our prayers, in our personal lives, and also in visions.

As we saw in Chapter 7, the Patriarch Moses saw the great sight of the angel of the Lord as a flame of fire when he turned aside (yielded) to see it. When the Lord saw that he yielded to see, then God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, (Exodus 3:4). Moses had first said, "I will see *now*," *then* he received a greater revelation of the Lord, communicated clearly with Him, received a new anointing, and was sent forth into fulltime ministry.

The beginnings of a great move of God will usually be preceded by a gentle, subtle, indistinct moving of His Spirit. This may occur in the Church at large, or in our individual lives. A *spiritual* or *pictorial vision*, a *still*, *small voice*, an *inner witness* or *impression*, a *glimpse* or *touch* from an angel, or some other not-so-spectacular vision, often comes with a hint that more can possibly be seen.

Even so, a spectacular disclosing may not result from a lesser kind. Either a manifestation of the Lord is a not-so-spectacular revelation, and nothing more. Or a spectacular disclosing occurs *suddenly*, without a hint of its coming. Even then, however, there may be a variety of experiences which the Lord would give us if we would embrace the first portion and just hold on for anything else He might send our way.

On the Day of Pentecost, the 120 disciples in the Upper Room yielded fully to the supernatural visitation from on High. They yielded to the *sudden sound* from Heaven as of a rushing mighty *wind*. Then they received an *apparition* of the Holy Ghost as cloven tongues of Fire and allowed Him to rest on them. Then they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with other tongues as He gave them utterance, (Acts 2:1-4).

Those early Christians didn't draw back from that supernatural experience because they had been seeking and preparing for just such a visitation, even though they didn't know exactly how

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or when He would come. It's the same way with us today. We seek God's anointing with as much faith as is within us, but we don't always know just how or when He will come. Yet we, too, must yield by faith and concert with His doings—in simple, natural things, and in supernatural things.

Habakkuk 2:1-3 I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

The Prophet Habakkuk stood upon his watch by faith. He set himself upon the tower and *watched*, to see what God would reveal unto him. He was determined to hear from God: "*I will watch, to see...*" Then the Lord answered him.

We, too, can *watch*, to see what God would reveal. We, too, can yield by faith and come to visions and revelations of the Lord. We, too, can seek and find the Holy Spirit in a variety of manifestations, just as Jesus promised our Heavenly Father would give to them that ask Him, (Luke 11:9-13).

In a vision of the night, Jesus was telling me about a young man that I would soon meet. The Lord told me he would need special attention and instructions from God's servants because he is a sovereign vessel chosen of God for a special ministry in the last days. He also indicated that I would become one of his instructors. As He spoke this to me, I could see the back of this young man's head as he was walking away from me, and it seemed this vision was about to end.

Of my own volition, I decided to speak to the Lord and ask Him if I could see what the young man's face looked like so that I would recognize him when he showed up in my life. I could trust that the Lord would let me know who he is at another time, in some other way, perhaps at the time I would meet him. But out of my present interest and desire to be ready for his appearing, I asked to see his face now.

Still in this vision, I focused my eyes on the back of his head, while praying, "Please turn him around, Jesus, so I can see what he looks like. Please, Lord, turn him around." After a moment or two, the young man turned around and started walking toward me, and I saw his face very

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clearly. Then I said, "Thank You, Jesus," and then I woke up with full remembrance and understanding of the vision.

This is a clear example of how God may welcome the cooperation of our faith and will in supernatural experiences. If we are willing to communicate with God in the realm of the spirit, ever careful to observe the borders which He would allow us, we may find the Lord hearing and answering our prayer, and communicating with us right there in that realm.

The late William Branham was a twentieth century prophet who saw many astounding visions inspired of the Lord. He explained that many times it seemed as though his inward man would lift himself up and look over a wall to see what was on the other side with his spiritual eyes. In this way, he often saw into the realm of the spirit and received insights about people and situations which the Lord wanted him to respond to with the prayer of faith. This, too, is a clear example of how our own faith and will can cooperate with the Spirit of God in supernatural experiences.

Noteworthy here is the fact that Brother Branham would pierce his eyes into the spiritual realm that way when God was indeed disclosing visions. He was anointed to see, but it was the anointing of the Holy Spirit that permitted him to see. The Prophet Habakkuk stood upon his *watch*, and set himself upon the *tower* because, being in the prophetic/revelatory ministry, he was anointed of God to watch and to see in the realm of the spirit, and he was appointed to a watchtower. When he watched to see *by faith*, the Lord was pleased to disclose some things unto him because of his pure motive—to pray, (Habakkuk 1:1-4).

Now there will be times when the Holy Spirit impresses us not to "break through unto the Lord to gaze" (not to press our eyes in to see a vision at a certain time) lest He *break forth upon us* in some way. When the Israelites approached Mount Sinai at the time God was giving them the Ten Commandments, He clearly warned them "not to *break through to come up unto the Lord*," otherwise many of them would perish, (Exodus 19:21). And when the Bethshemites *looked into* the Ark of the Lord (which was forbidden them to do), God's anger was kindled and He destroyed over fifty thousand of His own people, (1Samuel 6:19). So He can be grieved in this area, even by His own people today.

If we would approach Him one step at a time, we will be able to discern where to draw the line and not pierce our eyes further. We have got to know how to stay within the borders which the Lord would allow us. This is why it is so important to really know our Lord Jesus, His ways and His moods, and how to concert with them.

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When the Lord initiates a supernatural experience or vision, He provides in a supernatural way the armour, the angels, and the anointing we need to cover us within that experience. When He is not initiating such an experience, that supernatural covering is not provided. So if we insist on having an experience anyway, we will grieve God and may instead receive an evil disclosing in that realm. We may still have on our normal Christian armour (Ephesians 6:10-18), but in supernormal experiences we also need a supernormal covering to protect us.

There are different kinds of armour and weapons we can use in spiritual warfare, different kinds of faith needed to implement them, and different kinds of experiences which may require them. When an experience in the supernatural realm is initiated by the Lord, then the *gift of special faith (faith for the supernatural)* is imparted, and the armour for the supernatural realm is provided.

When a supernatural experience is self-induced, then the God-kind of faith and armour needed for that realm are not provided. It is then—and only then—that familiar spirits, deceiving spirits, and other kinds of demonic spirits, can influence that experience and control it. It is not uncommon for such self-induced experiences to lead to control by demons because, again, our normal faith, knowledge, and will, without God's supernatural kinds, are not powerful enough to cover us in supernormal experiences. Jesus said, "For without Me ye can do nothing," (John 15:5).

Our hearts are to always be seeking to walk with God in all our regular daily activities. Our heart's commitment is to always be to agree with Him in all His doings—normal and supernormal. Let the prayer of our hearts always be, "Not my will, but Thine be done," (Luke 22:42).

An important part of coming into concert with the supernatural doings of God is the music ministry. This is very evident in that it is used to uplift the church service from the beginning to the end: before the preaching, during the offering, during the altar call, during the prayer ministry time when the gifts of the Spirit are in operation, and at times even during the teaching and preaching.

Music inspired by the Lord serves to align the thoughts and intents of our hearts with the thoughts and intents of His heart because, as opposed to other kinds of prayer, worship gets our minds off our own lives and focuses on Him: "So forget about yourself, concentrate on Him, and worship Him." In fact, the psalmist's ministry is so vital that by it sinners can be moved to weeping and repentance, believers can more easily receive the Holy Spirit baptism and speak

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with other tongues, dance, and praise the Lord, and the prophetic anointing can be stirred.

Further, since visions often feature divine music, they may also result from the divinely inspired music of the psalmist. God may inspire the music and song that it may inspire us to behold Him, in simple ways, or in supernatural ways.

2Kings 3:15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.

As the minstrel (psalmist) played anointed music in the presence of the Prophet Elisha, it assisted and inspired his spirit to yield to the supernatural realm and prophesy. That anointed music also assisted and inspired the hand of the Lord to come upon His prophet with that prophetic word. God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalms 22:3), and often discloses Himself unto us in response to those praises.

At times, the Spirit of God is somehow hindered from manifesting on our behalf. But worship, praise, thanksgiving, and playing our instruments before the Lord can be the device that impacts the spiritual dimension and discloses our breakthroughs. Simply stated, when nothing else releases your miracle, praising God will get it!

If the psalmist's anointing can assist in prophetic manifestations, certainly it can assist in visions and trances which are akin to and cooperant with the prophetic. But how many psalmists are there today entrancing their audiences or the prophets of God?

There must come in the Body of Christ such an anointing in the music and in the song of the Lord that heavenly portals would open and divine presences will manifest and get ahold of the ministers, the congregation, and the unconverted. This happens sometimes, but it must happen more often and in greater intensity. Certainly it must be the Lord's doing. But His Spirit, more often than not, is willing. It is we who are flesh that are weak to flow with Him in these things.

Besides yielding to and receiving the visions and revelations which God would give us, we also need to learn how to handle them. Discernment, interpretation, application, timing and tact, all of which we learn as we grow, need to be considered with wisdom and discretion if we are going to do God's will and cause His Word to prosper. It is very easy to do more harm than good when ministering spiritual things carelessly, even though they may be God-inspired.

Intimacy with the Lord in a very personal way, a foundation in sound teaching, and a pure heart motive are prerequisite to wisely handling supernatural revelations (though not necessarily to

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receiving them). The Apostle Paul exhorts us to follow after love first, and then to desire spiritual gifts, (1Corinthians 14:1). Yet, without these Christ-like characteristics, some people have received visions anyway. God is not quick to repent and remove the spiritual gifts and anointings with which He has graced us:

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

God does not automatically take back the gifts, talents, abilities and anointings He has distributed to people when they do not serve Him wholeheartedly, although those things are limited then. Since the Spirit of God is being poured out upon all people, spiritual revelations may be gotten, at times, by whosoever will have eyes to see them, by whosoever will have ears to hear what God would speak, (Revelation 3:22). Whosoever will, howsoever unworthy he may indeed be to partake of divine things, can, at times, come to the waters of God's Spirit and drink from them freely, (Isaiah 55:1; John 7:37; Revelation 22:17).

Some people are receiving spiritual things from the Lord without paying a price, without a personal consecration, without presenting themselves as a living sacrifice unto the Lord. The Prophet Balaam, who did not serve God purely and wholeheartedly, heard the words of God audibly and saw visions of the Almighty supernaturally, having his spiritual eyes open, (Numbers 24:4). He even prophesied the accurate Word of the Lord and actually edified God's people.

Though Balaam's life and heart attitudes were not pleasing to God, his testimony shows us that the spiritual realm is accessible to men and is not difficult to enter. However, his end was a dreadful and cursed one, showing that the supernatural is not something to be trifled with. Balaam was slain with those he chose as friends. The Bible ends the account of Balaam with this sad commentary: "Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword," (Numbers 31:8).

Oh! that our testimony on that Great Judgment Day will not be as Balaam's and many others who did indeed see valid visions, who prophesied true words, who wrought miracles among the people, who set captives free of devils, and who did many other wonderful works in the Name of Jesus, and yet were never truly known of Him, (Matthew 7:22-23). May we instead be found on Paul's side on that Day—visions or no visions—and be able to say together with him that we know God (Philippians 3:10), and are known of Him, (1Corinthians 8:3).

Some visions are easy to receive because they are already "in the air." They have been disclosed by the Holy Spirit and those with keen spiritual perception may be able to pick them

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up. It's a lot like when there's a prophetic word in the air during a church service. Unless the Holy Spirit specifically prompts a particular individual to speak it forth, it may be that anyone who perceives it can prophesy it.

The greater kinds of visions cannot be perceived by our own *simple faith* but must be directly inspired by God and require more of His *special faith*, as His Spirit wills, (1Corinthians 12:11). It is this more supernatural realm of experience which we must not enter unless God Himself invites us by imparting a special anointing for the event.

The voice of your own conscience may occasionally bring about a simple vision, but that does not necessarily mean that God is not in it. He may indirectly order your thoughts aright by His convictions in your inner man (your own born-again spirit) and he, in turn, may speak to your mind. This is kinda like preaching to yourself. Without a supernatural vision, this alone can help you discern what God is saying. If you have committed your thoughts unto the Lord, you should trust that the thoughts you get are of Him, (Proverbs 16:3).

The more supernatural kinds of visions come more directly from God and reveal His thoughts on issues and matters in a more distinct and clear way. Unlike the simple *spiritual vision*, the high-level *trance* arrests the whole mind, withholds ordinary consciousness, and captivates the soul to make it susceptible only to the revelation which God would impart.

With regard to *faith visions*, *mental visions*, and our *imaginations*, the Bible teaches us that when our minds are committed to God we may *see by faith* the things that He has promised us:

Hebrews 11:13-14 **These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.**

These saints of God of old (in this "Hall of Fame of Faith" Chapter) received many great promises from God. *By faith, they saw* those promises afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them. They were continually *mindful* of those promises as they thought on them, meditated and visualized them, and occasionally received revelations about them in supernatural ways.

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision (goal, revelation, or sight), the people perish," (Proverbs 29:18). Hence, visions are necessary if we are going to prosper. However, every God-

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given vision is not inspired supernaturally. If they were, then everyone who “perishes” can rightfully blame God for their failures because He didn’t give them visions.

If I never see myself preaching in supernatural visions, I can still imagine myself doing so. Mentally, by faith, I can visualize for myself anything God has promised me in His Word (including healing, prosperity, anointing for ministry, and other blessings), and I can visualize the promises of God for others as well.

Here is an excellent example of this. When a sick person who wants God to heal them begins to “see by faith, visualize, and imagine” Christ’s sufferings on their behalf (“By His stripes, we are healed”; Isaiah 53:5), he will school himself into faith, and be healed according to that faith. Speaking and declaring Christ’s work for him further empowers his faith and hastens the manifestation of healing.

God honours, yes requires, this type of meditation because our thinking and speaking His Word schools us into faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God, (Hebrews 11:6). Occasionally God will directly reveal a vision of what His Word has already promised us, but if He doesn’t, we have the privilege to put Him in remembrance of His Word:

Psalms 119:49 Remember the Word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope.

If God gives us a supernatural vision, He may either correct or confirm these mental sights as may be necessary. But many of our thoughts unto Him are responded to by simple, subtle thoughts from Him—not so spectacularly—and His simple thoughts give us the mind of Christ more regularly than His supernatural visions. We should trust that the Word of God which is renewing our minds is building our faith, and that He will respond to that faith.

In the greater purposes of God, greater faith is needed, therefore greater faith is disclosed. Apostles, prophets, and other servants of God are involved in the greatest kinds of works for the Lord, therefore, they receive the greatest kinds of supernatural visions and revelations from the Lord. This way, they will believe God for His greater purposes.

Special anointings of the Holy Spirit are for those called to more peculiar ministries. Prophets, seers and intercessors who are more especially gifted in the area of visions will see the greater kinds of visions with more precision and continuity. They will also experience more spiritual warfare as a result. Other Christians may also have visions and dreams. Many do. But they do

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not experience as many difficulties as do those who are called to operate in those things more powerfully.

Now there are some people who try to communicate with the spiritual realm foolishly. They inquire into visions and other spiritual experiences by using crystal balls, gazing stones, ouija boards, objects used in hypnosis, candles, plants, cards, religious artifacts, magic spells, enchanting rhymes, and other “special items” intended as points by which to make contact with the supernatural realm. Any spiritual experiences gotten by such means—howsoever real they may be—issue from familiar (demonic) spirits, and not from God.

Supernatural experiences resulting from occultic practises are unbiblical and are strictly forbidden by God. Even if a person practising such things professes to be a Christian, those things are an abomination to God. If such things were permitted, then the Mosaic Law, the Early Church, and contemporary Christianity would not condemn them. But we do. Those who endorse and use such things (witches, psychics, astrologers, and other practitioners of spiritism of whatever form) are condemned by the Holy Bible, (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

The use of drugs (legally or illegally) has also been known to result in some forms of visions. Before overdosing and waking up in hell, some people have clearly seen the demonic spirits which had them bound. A preacher friend of mine told me he was dancing in a nightclub before he was saved, and while he was “high on drugs” he could see the demons in the people around him. (Seeing demons in people can make a preacher out of you!)

A lot of people have gotten saved as a result of having experienced some form of revelation from the Lord while they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In His mercy, Jesus visited and showed them that He loved and wanted to save them, and gave them the opportunity to repent of their sins and accept Him as their Lord. Yet He greatly disdains the use of drugs for the purpose of attaining an altered state of consciousness.

The human brain is a biochemical factory and certain hallucinatory chemicals can expose it to certain dimensions otherwise unaccessible by the natural mind. Even so, most drug-induced “hallucinations” are nothing more than just that; and drug abuse (Greek: *pharmakeia*, “sorcery, magic, witchcraft”) is also condemned by the Word of God, (Revelation 9:21; 21:8).

Some natural visions are thought to be of God, and some which are from Him are missed, discarded as being natural. One of the main reasons why God’s visual messages are missed is because they often contain many symbols. God knows what spiritual level we are on and what we can and cannot understand. But He may use symbols in visions (at times, symbols which are

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new to us) because He wants us to search out their meanings by faith.

If God always spoke clearly and incontrovertibly, we would be forced to acknowledge and obey Him with no room for doubt, and no room for faith. Through His usage of symbols, He partially leaves the door open for doubt, and for faith, and leaves it up to us to decide where we will walk. This way, if we are going to obey the vision, it will have to be by faith, (2Corinthians 5:7).

If we would study the Word of God and get an understanding of His scriptural symbol-language, He can use those preferred symbols more freely, and we can discern and interpret His messages more easily. If we are not familiar with His usage of symbols, we will not understand them when they appear in visions. And if He uses natural symbols which we are familiar with, we might think the vision itself is natural and of our own making.

God's Word provides the mediating language between Heaven and earth, between God and man. By it, men can learn how to approach God most properly, and God can communicate unto men most perfectly.

We should seek to understand the things of the Holy Spirit sobermindedly, and not giddily. The spiritual realm should be inquired into with confidence, but also with wisdom. Wisdom must be the principal thing, especially when seeking the things which are above this plane.

Without a foundation in the Word of God, and a surrendered life unto the Lord, we should not inquire too much into these areas. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10), and it should also be at the beginning of our supernatural experiences. When we live a Holy Spirit-filled life and have a working knowledge of the Word of God, our faith and our wisdom are high, and it is more likely we might experience some marvelous spiritual things.

Supernatural visitations of the Holy Ghost come as He wills, not as we please, (1Corinthians 12:11). We should not try to force ourselves to go into supernatural visions, and we should not "claim them by faith." But we may will to yield to them when they are coming. We may choose to experience them when that's the way He's moving. We should seek to agree with God.

In addition, we must realize that the way we prepare our minds and hearts in the things of God will show up in and influence our supernatural experiences. If you study a great deal about the angels of God and get a good understanding of their several ministries, it will be easier for them to visit you, and it will be easier for you to yield well to their visitation. If you have a good grasp of the realm of visions, you will be able to see easily what the Lord wants to show you there.

You see, without faith it is impossible to please God (Romans 4:20), and this is true in all realms. To be approved of God in every realm (able to please Him in every area), we should

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study the whole Word of God, because that's where faith comes from, (Romans 10:17).

Not only does our knowledge of God's Word determine our responses to supernatural experiences, but so do our attitudes. No matter what we may know about a realm, if we don't want to yield, we won't enter it when it is disclosed to us, even though we may understand what's happening when it is disclosed to us.

A person may know a lot about the healing anointing, the healing gifts, and God's will to heal. But any one of a great many kinds of fears, thoughts, or attitudes can keep him ill, even in the midst of a powerful healing service. In the realm of visions, this has happened to me several times. I'll share an experience.

After having begun to receive visions from the Lord, and after hearing about people experiencing heavenly visitations, I realized that the Lord might give me such an experience, too. I knew it would be great to visit Heaven, but began to fear I would not come back to fulfill my calling down here. I knew Jesus would want me to come back, but I have heard people who have gone to Heaven and returned say that the human will is still involved up There, and many times people that could have and should have returned did not.

So one day I told my pastor, "God forbid, but if I ever die, bring me back, raise me from the dead, don't let me stay in Heaven. Or if I go into a lengthy out-of-body experience, bring me back. I want to finish my ministry down here on earth first. Heaven can wait." I always knew I'd want to come back if I ever went to Heaven, but I was afraid that I might change my mind once I got up There because it is so beautiful.

Then one night in November, 1989, as I lay down to sleep, I went into a trance and out-of-body experience. My spirit went out of my body and began to fly upward by the Spirit of the Lord. I saw thousands of words written across the skies as I left the earth realm. I saw all kinds of earthly languages, hieroglyphics, codes, and mathematical calculations. The further up I went, the more I saw heavenly kinds of these—perfect languages, mathematical equations, and other writings of higher orders which men know not of. I believe scientists can only occasionally tap into some of the simpler elements of these, as did Albert Einstein.

When I realized that I kept ascending, I became afraid, and by an act of my own free will I forced myself back down to the earth (much as when a person forces himself to awaken from a dream), and reentered my body. Upon returning, I said to the Lord, "Forgive me, Jesus, but I was afraid I might not return."

Five months after that, again in a trance and going upward in the spirit, I again began to leave

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earth. I was completely at peace and aware of what was happening, as I had knowledge about these things. The vehicle on which I travelled was a heavenly locomotive, which sped from earth toward Heaven at a tremendous velocity (as Kwame's "box," in Chapter 12). This locomotive train was also hearable—it sounded "toot... toooooot..." with increasing loudness as it increased in speed.

At first I thought the Lord was going to show me some things on earth from the *second heaven*. But I realized I was passing our Solar System and was headed toward the *Third Heaven*. I did not see Jesus, or Paradise, but by faith I told the Lord, "But I've got to preach the Gospel!" and willed myself to return to earth and reenter my body. I instantly came back (without a "train ride"), and I apologized to the Lord for grieving Him.

I did not fear being in the spirit, going to Heaven, or seeing Jesus. I only feared that I might decide to stay up There, and that He might permit me to.

I share these experiences because it is very important for us to understand that our attitudes (fears, doubts, doctrinal beliefs, or sins) can influence our experiences—natural, and supernatural. Many people who have knowledge of God's will to heal remain ill because they can't forgive themselves of their sins—"guilty" still rings loudly in them and hinders the flow of healing. Even though God is sovereign and can and does often initiate supernatural experiences (healings, visions, etc.) regardless of a person's disposition to it (or lack thereof), He desires our cooperation with Him in those things.

Our attitudes can also be positive. We can be determined to learn sound teaching, to serve God in spirit and in truth, to be free of the feeling of guilt, to have fearless faith, and to trust Him always and in all realms of the spirit. Such a healthy spiritual disposition will have a positive effect in every area of our lives.

At present, I am confident that I will soon have greater supernatural visions than I've ever had before. I've had many experiences in the spiritual realm, including some of those described in the foregoing Chapters. But I believe that as I walk closer and closer with Jesus, and continue to learn about these things, they will manifest more and more. My understanding is conducive to them. My faith is yielded to them. My heart is ready for them. Most important of all, Jesus desires to initiate them. He's being trying to for awhile now. I think I can say with confidence, "I will come to divine visions and revelations of the Lord."

I will not continue to grieve and limit the Lord any more in this area as I have in times past because His great purposes must be fulfilled in my life if they will be fulfilled in my ministry to

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others. I am assured of God that He is going to disclose some divine things in the earth, and that His messengers will be privileged to deliver those things.

I'm learning to trust God completely in my natural life, my spiritual walk, and in my supernatural experiences. He is Lord of all, and in all things I confidently declare, "I shall not fear."

Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1Peter 2:25), and He will never leave or forsake us, (Hebrews 13:5). Even in unfamiliar dimensions, higher spiritual heights, new ground He wants us to cover, He is right there with us. His Word and Spirit are right there comforting us so we should fear no evil. Our attitude should always be one of complete abandonment unto the Lord and to all His doings—natural and supernatural.

As we are gaining a foundation in the Word of God regarding visions, we are also gaining momentum in their frequency and intensity. Supernatural wisdom, insight, and revelation, make us ready for supernatural manifestations, if and when God will give them. Great knowledge is being increased in these last days, and great supernatural manifestations will follow it.

The Body of Christ is being clothed with God's whole armour, will be fully victorious in spiritual warfare, and will be completely yielded at the Lord's summons to "Come up Hither!"

CONCLUSION

Matthew 9:29 Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

I have attempted, in this study of visions, to identify and define the various kinds found in the Bible. The Word of God may not use the specific terminology which I do but may use more general terms. A *pictorial vision*, a *panoramic vision*, or an *out-of-body experience*, may simply be called "a vision" in the Bible.

However, my analyses coincide with the biblical experiences, and are intended to bring further clarity to them. By using the terminology that I do, I hope to relate the biblical examples to the reader with wording which more exactly locates and defines the dynamics of each experience. This way, the reader can more easily see and appreciate the great diversity of experiences which can be found in visions.

I have also attempted to limit the use of modern testimonies of visions and use more of those

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which are found in the Bible. By doing so, the visions of the Bible become clearer and more understandable to us, and a greater foundation for our faith is established.

Other testimonies can also inspire our faith, but the Word of God is more sure, more pure, more impactful, and lists experiences which, when properly discriminated, will teach us secrets about the supernatural realm. It was by studying the Bible that I learned that great visions can begin with smaller ones, and that our level of faith can determine the amount of revelation we will receive, (Matthew 9:29).

I have not listed a series of safeguards by which we can determine whether a vision we receive is of God. I have provided such a list in my first book, *Understanding Supernatural Dreams According to the Bible*, in Chapter 6, *Try the Dreams Whether they are of God*. Our purpose here, for the most part, is to concentrate on God-given visions, to gain a practical and practicable understanding of them, and to inspire our faith to receive them.

It is vitally important to have spiritual discernment in the realm of visions and to know how to apply the safeguards with which God's Word equips us. But there is a lot of teaching in the Body of Christ on how to try the spirits whether they are of God. I do not desire to again cover ground which is widely covered elsewhere when the main purpose here is to go on and seize those higher things for which we have been so equipped.

Therefore, assuming we have a foundation in the Word of God, a degree of spiritual discernment, a close relationship with Jesus, and, most important of all, a right heart motive, let us go on to experience supernatural visions and revelations of the Lord. Let us use what we have received and march forward, onward and upward, reclaiming every step of the way the spiritual dimension which Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), has tried to lay claim to.

Jesus Christ created all realms for His glory, (Colossians 1:16). All authority is given unto Him in the heavens and in the earth, (Matthew 28:18). He is before all things, and by Him do all things consist, (Colossians 1:17). All angels and authorities and powers are subject unto Him, (1Peter 3:22). As He desires, He discloses His Spirit unto men in visions and in other ways, (1Corinthians 12:11). Therefore, we should not fear.

Psalms 23:1, 4 The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

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Shadows, darkneses, and strange presences may at times characterize supernatural experiences. Even in experiences inspired by God, there may be activity which will look like it's from the devil.

When it is not of God we can rebuke it in the Name of Jesus. But if we will trust God and not be too quick to resist a peculiar, unfamiliar manifestation, we might find a wonderful revelation of the Lord hiding behind the seeming darkness. He often makes darkness His secret hiding place, (Psalms 18:11).

Jesus Christ is faithful to never leave or forsake us. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, and taketh them, and beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone will lead us, (Deuteronomy 32:11-12).

Even in the oftentimes strange spiritual dimensions where profound visions may be found, the Lord prepares a table before us in the presence of our invisible enemies, (Psalms 23:5). Oppressions, terrors, and strange spirits shall remain far from us (Isaiah 54:14), and no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper, (Isaiah 54:17). The whole armour of God which Paul teaches us about covers the whole spectrum of the Christian walk, whatever realm it may involve, (Ephesians 6:10-18).

As the Lord makes us to ride upon the high places of the earth and heavens in high experiences (Deuteronomy 32:13), He will watch over us so we won't be deceived by evil spirits. We will instead be drawn nearer to Him. We will be led about only by Him and be instructed only by Him, for He will keep us as the apple of His eye, (Deuteronomy 32:10). And as we ask for the things of His Spirit, He will give them to us, and not something else, (Luke 11:11-13).

James 1:16-17 Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

As the Lord watches over us in spirit, soul, and body, our eyes will occasionally become opened so that we will behold wondrous things at times. When God anoints our eyes to be able to see in the realm of the Spirit, marvelous heavenly things may become more seeable, supernatural things clearer, the ministry of angels more familiar, and our beloved King Jesus more glorious. Profound prophetic utterances often proceed from profound spiritual sights.

So let us go on to higher heights in the Lord and in the manifestations of His Spirit. Let us seek

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those things which are Above and set our affection on them, (Colossians 3:1). Let us enjoy visions and revelations of the Lord.

God is revealing Himself in the spiritual realm and can be seen by those who with eyes of faith will see Him there. And at times He gives us special faith as it is needed (1Corinthians 12:9), so that we will see Him there. With faith it is possible to please God.

Not everyone is anointed to see visions. Blessed are they who do not see visions of the Lord and yet believe in Him, (John 20:29). And blessed are they, too, who believe and do see visions inspired of Him.

As we obey His promptings—either to stay and not see a vision, or to go and see a vision—we will be blessed when we stay, and we will be blessed when we go. Obedience to His every leading is evidence of our abandonment unto Him.

So we want to know Jesus. We want to know His heart, discern His doings, and follow His leadings. We want His will to be done in all things, we want to please Him by faith in all things, and we don't want to limit Him in any way. We want to receive the fullness of God's anointings which He desires to impart to us, including those which involve visions.

There are *seeing gifts* of the Holy Spirit (*the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits*); *speaking gifts* (*prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues*); and *power gifts* (*faith, healing, and the working of miracles*):

1Corinthians 12:8-10 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.

Of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit which the Apostle Paul lists here, I consider the *seeing gifts* the most important of all because if I do not *speak* the words of the Lord as much as I should, or if I do not *do* the works of the Lord as much as I should, yet I certainly need to clearly *see* some things which are largely dim to my natural eyesight. Jesus associated *speaking* with *doing* (John 8:28, 38), and said that He did neither unless He first *saw* it with the Heavenly Father.

In his listing of the nine spiritual gifts, as noted above, Paul lists the *seeing gifts* before the others because seeing in the spirit assists us in speaking and working for the Lord. Without

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spiritual eyesight, the other gifts may be limited because they often begin with and depend on it. Each spiritual gift may operate independently of the others. But most of the time they operate interdependently. And when they do, they usually begin with one of the seeing gifts.

When the *prophetic word of the Lord came unto* God's servants in the Bible, it was often through some sort of *vision*. When the disciple Ananias prophesied to Saul (Paul), it was because he had first seen a vision of him, (Acts 9:10-17; 22:12-15). So a vision may be the reason for a prophecy. When the *gift of healing* manifests, it is often the result of a *word of knowledge* vision. Paul first *perceived* that a certain crippled man had faith to walk, and then declared his *healing*, (Acts 14:8-10). So a vision may also be the reason for the manifestation of the gifts of healings.

Since seeing into the realm of the spirit plays such a key role in the operation of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is often one of the first supernatural manifestations which Christians experience when they follow on to apprehend the gifts. As a matter of fact, visions are often seen at the very commencement of the enduement of power from on high, when one receives the initial baptism in the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance. A vision of the Lord may accompany, or incite, that initial experience.

Both Jesus and Paul, each of whom operated in all the nine gifts of the Spirit and taught about them, placed the seeing gifts before the others. They both knew that the other gifts usually begin with, proceed from, and depend on these; they realized that the other gifts may be limited without them. A person can pray the "prayer of faith" by faith alone (without a vision), and that may prove effective. But when he prays the prayer of faith as a result of having seen a vision from the Lord, His own *special faith from Above* takes hold together with him, and that prayer will prosper.

Seeing in the spirit empowers us to speak and work for the Lord. Most ministers who preach with fervency and urgency do so because they received the burden of the Word of the Lord via a vision of some sort. Supernatural revelations from God may impart anointings for service. Therefore, we should ask the Lord for spiritual eyesight so that we can be better equipped to serve Him in other areas. Having received revelations of the Lord, we can then speak His Word more clearly, and apply ourselves to the Gospel work more confidently.

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A Prayer

“Dear Heavenly Father, We want to know You, we want to see You, we want to serve You with all our hearts. We realize, O Lord God, that we need Your supernatural power and divine enabling if we’re going to fulfill Your Great Commission unto us—especially in these last days. Do it for us, Lord. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit right now and distribute to each reader the anointings of Your Spirit which we need for the tasks You would appoint us.

“Most of all, open our eyes so that we can see in the realm of the spirit as You would disclose it. We need to discern who’s who and what’s what. We need to know who is on the Lord’s side, and who is not. We need to see with Your eyes, Jesus.

“Also, if You desire to disclose some heavenly visions unto us, we don’t want to miss them. We don’t want to grieve You at the time of Your visitation unto us. We want to behold Your glory. We thank You for the ‘seeing eye,’ the ‘hearing ear,’ and the ‘discerning heart’ of Jesus. We pray in the mighty and precious Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

GLOSSARY

angels a class of supernatural beings created by God to serve Him in many ways. Many of them function as messengers of righteousness to men on earth. They are powerful, good, and usually remain unseen. They help us in every area of our lives, mostly behind the scenes, and always point us to Jesus, and to His will for our lives.

apparition a supernatural appearing of a spiritual being (such as Jesus or an angel) unto a person on earth.

audible message words or sounds in the spiritual realm which are clearly heard by the external, physical ear, or by the internal, spiritual ear. It is more supernatural than the “still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in us” in that it is louder, more distinct, and more vibrant.

body the physical body with all its senses and functions. The “earth suit” we were born into this

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world in and shall put off when we die. It is often involved in visions in a significant way.

chariots of God a class of supernatural vehicles which angels and humans may use in their transportation between the heavens and the earth.

Church when used with initial capitalization, it speaks of the collective body of Christ, all Christian believers worldwide; otherwise, it refers to a local Christian church congregation.

discernment, spiritual sensitivity and ability to perceive spiritual beings, presences, activities, dispositions, and other things which are hidden from the natural perception. The supernatural ability to see into the realm of the spirit.

divine sight a supernatural vision which discloses activity in the spiritual realm which is actually occurring at the time and place where it is seen, as when the Shekinah Glory Cloud of God is manifested.

dream (regular, natural) also known as a vision of the night, this is a message produced in the mind while the person is sleeping. Good or evil thoughts or ideas—intelligible or unintelligible ones—arise from the subconscious repository, or memory banks. The more God inspires a dream to come forth, the more supernatural (above the natural plane) it is. A *supernatural dream* may occur in a *deep sleep from the Lord* and, then, it is synonymous to a *trance*.

familiar spirits the class of evil spirits employed by spiritist mediums to reveal information about people. Such information may or may not be true or valid, but since it involves these kinds of spirits, God forbids us to inquire of them or speak for them.

gifts of the Spirit these are special enduements of the Holy Spirit which manifest as He wills. There are nine specific gifts, such as the gift of healing or the gift of prophecy, and they can operate only in Christians, (1Corinthians 12:1-12).

God's Word the Holy Bible, God's written Word, which has 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. In this study we refer to the Word of God in 4 different versions: the *King*

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James Version, the New International Version, Today's English Version, and the Amplified New Testament.

Heaven when used with initial capitalization, it speaks of the Kingdom of God in the Third Heaven, Paradise, where Christians go to be present with the Lord after their earthly life ends. Otherwise, "heaven" refers to the stellar or atmospheric skies.

heavenly visitation a supernatural vision involving a temporary visit to the Third Heaven; an out-of-body experience in which one travels heavenward to the Paradise of God. Simpler visions of Heaven, such as dreams or pictorial visions, may also be valid, but they are not supernatural visitations in the literal sense.

hell the place of eternal torment under the earth where sinners go to be punished for rejecting Jesus Christ, after their earthly life ends.

Holy Spirit the Spirit of God, also called the Holy Ghost. God is the Heavenly Father, and God is the Son (Jesus Christ), and God is the Holy Spirit: and these Three are One.

imagination natural thinking which occurs in the mind. Our natural thoughts are not supernatural, but they may be insightful, helpful, and good, and they may lead to the mind of Christ. Supernatural revelations can begin with and depend on godly imaginations and thoughts that have been renewed to the Word of God.

impression a perception in the inner man of the heart. A feeling, prompting, hunch, thought, or idea, which the Lord impresses upon the spiritual senses. It is the most common and basic form of communication which the Holy Spirit uses in His speaking to us. Impressions require spiritual sensitivity and discernment in order to be accurately perceived, and are, therefore, often misinterpreted or missed.

interpretation the understood meaning of a message which has been revealed in a dream or other kind of vision. Most spiritual revelations contain symbols, and can be interpreted only as the symbols are properly understood.

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inward man the human spirit, which is the true person one really is, whether or not he is a born-again Christian. The Apostle Paul also calls him the “inner man” and the “spiritual man.”

open heaven a supernatural vision seen either by the spiritual or the natural eyes, or both, in which there is an opening in the sky and celestial sights become seeable.

out-of-body experience a supernatural experience in which a person’s spirit leaves his body and travels in the spiritual realm. He may stay within the borders of the earth’s atmosphere (the first heaven), or go into outer space (the second heaven), or even go to the Paradise of God (the Third Heaven). All this should be directly initiated by the Lord, and not self-induced.

panoramic vision a motion picture vision showing a moving progression of events. A picture vision gradually unrolled and showing a continuous view in the mind. Most dreams are panoramic visions.

pictorial vision a singular image vision in which a single picture is shown to the mind, like a still photograph, in a quick flash; it may also be a slideshow of still pictures.

presence a distinct sense that a spiritual being (a good one or an evil one) is near us, even though we may not see or hear him. At times we can literally feel a presence on the physical body and locate exactly where he is and what he is doing, as when the Prophet Jeremiah felt the Lord’s hand touch his mouth, (Jeremiah 1:9).

prophecy a supernaturally inspired message from the Lord. It may be inspired by an inner leading or unction of the Holy Spirit in the inner man, and is often spontaneous and unpremeditated. It may also be inspired by any kind or combination of visions described in our study, and can be either a foretelling of future events, or a forthtelling of what’s currently on God’s mind, or both. The “gift of prophecy” by itself does not involve visions but is simply a speaking forth of utterances by the Spirit’s unction.

revelation a message from the Lord in a dream, vision, or prophecy. The thing revealed by the Lord. It contains truth inspired supernaturally, and it can affect the person who receives it in

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potentially powerful ways. By study and prayer, we may also have simpler revelations.

sleep a normal, regularly recurring state of unconsciousness in which the physical body is at rest. The average person sleeps about eight hours each day, and it is then that he may dream.

spirit this is the true essence of a being, the person he is inwardly. God is a "Spirit" (in this book, always capitalized), man is a spirit, angels are spirits, and demons are spirits. The inner character of a human being involves the fruit of their spirit, which the Apostle Paul speaks of, (Galatians 5:19-23). A born-again Christian has the Christ-like nature in his spirit, and a non-Christian has the sinful nature in his spirit.

spiritual realm this is the invisible dimension where all spirits operate and all supernatural experiences and visions originate. Everybody has contact with this realm all the time, whether or not they realize or believe in it. This is why the supernatural (the things above the natural plane) should not be distant and unfamiliar to us—they may only be slightly above us. God is a Spirit and the Father of all spirits, (Hebrews 12:9). We all live and move and have our being in Him, (Acts 17:28).

spiritual vision in this simplest, vaguest kind of vision, only the inner man sees what God is revealing. The mind hardly gets a glimpse, and the person can barely describe it. It's almost like a "non-vision" vision.

supernatural the Greek word *pneumatikos* means "spiritual, celestial, above-the-natural, and supernatural." A supernatural experience is one inspired by a power other than a natural one.

symbol this is a specific detail representing something else in a dream or vision. For example, "bread" can be a symbol of the Word of God, unless it is intended as literal bread.

tangible a quality of experience involving the physical senses. The emotions can affect the body in a physical way in response to any type of vision. However, the greater kinds of visions can more greatly affect the physical body in a tangible way—irrespective of the person's emotional response or lack thereof. High-level trances can manifest tangibly so that not only a

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person's spiritual and mental awareness of their environment is altered, but also their breathing, pulse rate, body rigidity, and facial appearance can be affected during the experience, as a direct result of it.

trance a supernatural state of ecstasy in which the Holy Spirit tangibly comes upon a person in lesser or greater degrees. This can involve the person's body, mind, or spirit, or any combination of these. In a high-level trance, the perceptions are arrested and fully subjected to the will of God. In a low-level trance, they may retain a degree of normalcy. In the Bible, and still today, the trance is largely used by the Lord as a gateway to many other supernatural manifestations, such as out-of-body experiences, audible voices, angelic apparitions, divine sights, and other kinds of visions.

transfiguration the process of changing from one form into another. A supernatural *metamorphosis*. The glorifying of the outer, physical body when it is clothed upon by the inner man (the born-again, spiritual person we really are, which is a partaker of Christ's divine nature). This happened temporarily to Jesus (Luke 9:2-3), and will happen permanently to all Christian believers at the glorification of the Body of Christ, so that mortality will be swallowed up of life, (2Corinthians 5:4).

translation the experience of being supernaturally transported or translocated by the Spirit of the Lord. It is literally disappearing "into thin air" and reappearing "out of thin air," dematerializing in one location and rematerializing in another.

trembling shaking and quaking (as the Christian Shakers and Quakers of old often experienced) under the power of the Holy Ghost. Shivering or quivering resulting from a supernatural manifestation upon the physical body.

visualization the intentional and conscious use of the normal imagination and thinking ability to agree with God's Word and thoughts. When the Spirit of God desires, this visualization may lead to visions and revelations. When He is not disclosing such, we should only visualize (imagine and meditate) general biblical and spiritual thoughts. Visualization which is not God-inspired, not God-centered, selfish, and associated with "new age" spiritism, mental telepathy, or

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manipulation, is unbiblical, sinful and dangerous.

voices, spiritual in any form of supernatural audible message, we may hear any of a great variety of voices or sounds in the spiritual realm. They may be heavenly, or earthly; divine, angelic, demonic, or human; and they may or may not accompany a vision.

will the power of the mind to make choices. Every person has a free will and can of his own volition choose to accept Jesus Christ as his own personal Lord and Saviour, to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, to obey God's will, and to yield to the visions and revelations which the Lord would disclose, (Colossians 3:1).

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Vision Journal

Date and time of vision (the place and situation when it was received may also be helpful):

Kind of vision (note whether it was a trance, audible voice, simple dream, etc., if you can identify it):

Mood before (were you in the spirit?, feeling discouraged?, or happy at the time?):

Mood afterward or sense it produced in you (did it encourage, excite and bless you?, or did it depress and disturb you?):

Message (the main idea or theme of the vision/dream):

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Main symbols and most outstanding features (people, words, images, objects, colors):

Meaning (list both what you think it may mean and what you're sure it means; also record any input you get from spiritually-minded Ministers and friends):

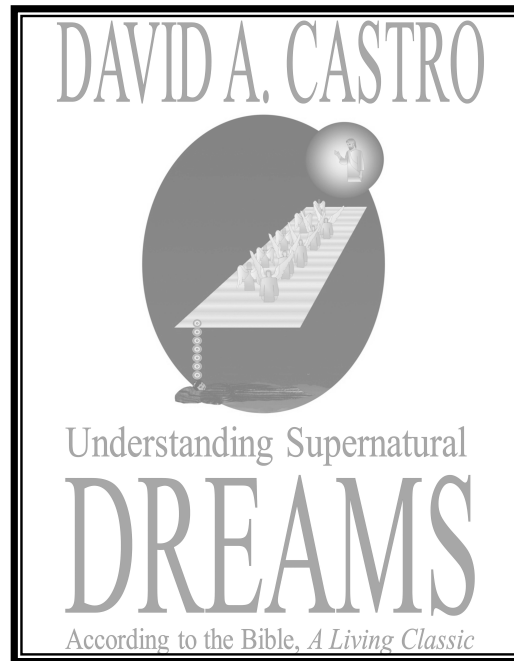
Response (if you believe the message was from God, and understand its meaning, there may or may not be some sort of response He desires of you; if there is, make a note of it, and write whether it is an inward, spiritual response, or an outward, literal act):

Make a sincere, prayerful effort to understand what God is revealing to you, if indeed He is speaking to you. Then, whether or not you understand, just rest in Him. God loves you and wants you at peace. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," says Jesus, (John 14:27).

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Books by David A. Castro

Understanding Supernatural Dreams According to the Bible
A Living Classic, \$24.95



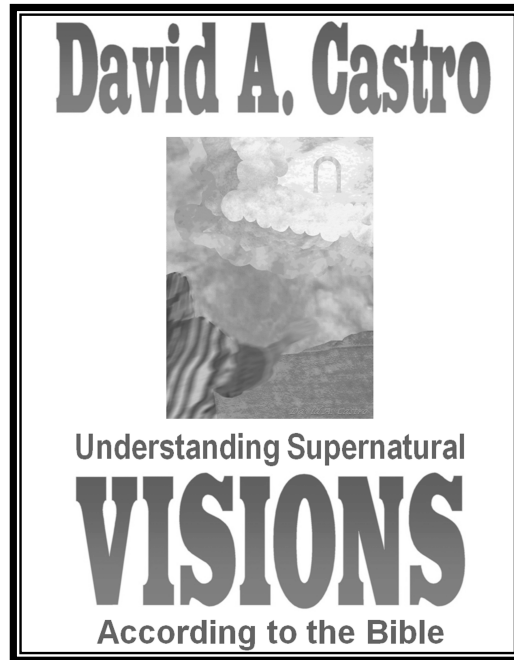
A profoundly spiritual, strictly biblical work, this expository reference book may be considered "required reading" for students of the Spirit. It takes the reader on into the spiritual realm and examines dreams therefrom. A classic in its field, it offers to help the reader understand the broad spectrum of dreams and dreaming, and may assist in healing and deliverance from sleep/dream problems. It provides many practical guidelines on trances, audible voices, out-of-body experiences, and other kinds of visions, and encourages the Body of Christ to yield to the Holy Spirit for supernatural experiences along these lines. Highly Recommended.

Chapters include: What is a Dream?; Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Dream Life; Sleep in Heavenly Peace; Adventures in the Night Seasons; Dream Recall and Interpretation; Try the Dreams Whether they are of God; Some Experiences; Supernatural Dreams and Trances; Endtime Dreamers; Glossary; 254 pages; 8¼ x 10½"

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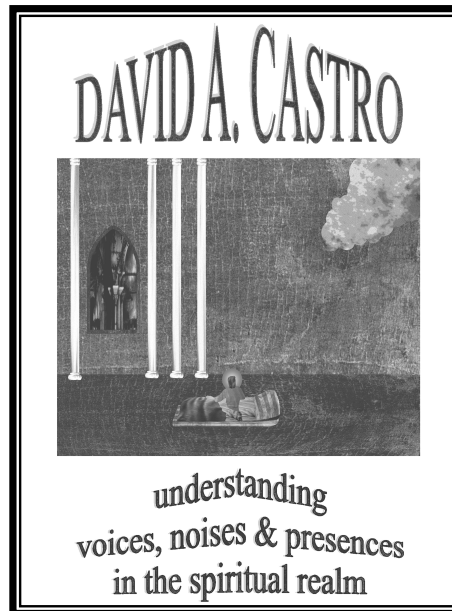


Explores a variety of different kinds of visions and clarifies many issues involved in the various realms of supernatural revelations. It encourages Christians to seek those things which are Above (Colossians 3:1), while at the same time challenges us to gain a foundation in the Word of God, to check the motives of our own hearts, and to walk in the anointing of the Holy Spirit with Jesus. It is profoundly insightful and helpful to prophets, intercessors, and others who receive visions and revelations of the Lord.

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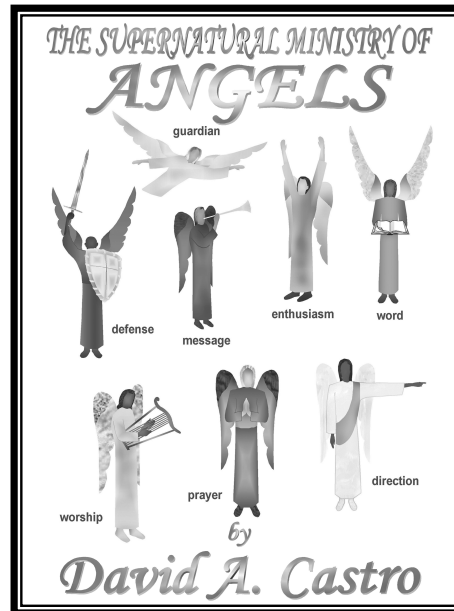
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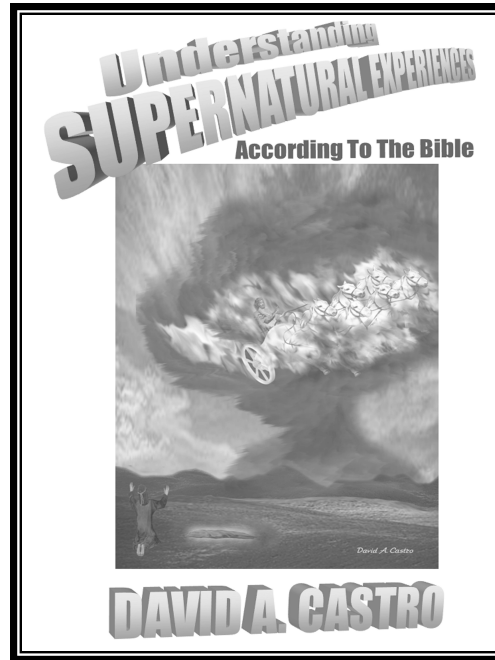
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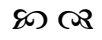
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