

Jeremiah 23:9-40

This portion of chapter 23 is a strong condemnation of false prophets. There is a possible tie-in with this rebuke speaking of the last days as the first 8 verses are certainly the last days and verse 20 specifically says people will understand in "the latter days." The emphasis, as we shall see, is that the word of God is infinitely better than dreams.

9 Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

Jeremiah is heart broken over the condition of the nation.

Two things should be the focus of a believer.

1. The Lord

Colossians 3:

- 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
- 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

2. His holiness

1 Peter 1:

- 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;
- 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

קָדוֹשׁ qadosh

This word is frequently translated as "holy," another abstract word. When we use the word holy, as in a holy person, we usually associate this with a righteous or pious person. If we use this concept when interpreting the word holy in the Hebrew Bible, then we are misreading the text, as this is not the meaning of the Hebrew word qadosh. Qadosh literally means "to be set apart for a special purpose". Israel was qadosh because they were separated from the other nations as servants of Elohiym. The furnishings in the tabernacle were also qadosh, as they were not to be used for anything except for the work in the tabernacle. While we may not think of ourselves as "holy," we are in fact set apart from the world to be Elohiym's servants and his representatives.

<https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/definition/holy.htm>

The result of focusing on the Lord and His holiness:

1. Saddened because of false religious teachers.
2. You become as one who is overcome by alcohol (you are overwhelmed by the sinfulness of society)

10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

11 For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

Not just the prophets, but the entire nation was corrupt. The offices of king, prophet, and priest were compromised by the sinfulness of the men in those office.

12 Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

Sin is a slippery slope that brings more sin and ungodliness, leading, ultimately, to their destruction by God.

- 13 And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.**
- 14 I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.**

False prophets:

1. Prophecy (falsely) in the name of Jehovah
2. Cause the people to err
3. Practice immorality
4. Live a life based on lies
5. Strengthen the evildoers in the nation
6. Are set in their walk and practice.

- 15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.**

The (false) prophets will be judged by God because their message has spread throughout the entire land.

- 16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.**
- 17 They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.**
- 18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?**
- 19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.**
- 20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.**
- 21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.**
- 22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.**

Don't listen to the (false) prophets.

Vs. 16 Their message comes from their own mind not God.

Vs. 17 Their message is the opposite of God's prophets

Vs. 18 Contrast the Word of God with the word of the (false) prophets

vs. 19 God will send judgment upon the evildoers.

Vs. 20 God's anger reached a point of no return because of the sin of the nation.

Vs. 21 God did not send or speak through the (false) prophets but they went throughout the land speaking (falsely) in the name of Jehovah.

Vs. 22 If the (false) prophets actually believed God (responded to His words) they would have turned from their sinful ways.

Vs. 20 The condemnation extends to the last days - **"in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly."**

- 23 Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?**
- 24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.**

God is omnipresent and omniscient and no one can hide from Him.

- 25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.**

God is aware of the message of the (false) prophets. They speak in His name claiming authority divine through the dreams they have.

God has used dreams in the past - Genesis 37:41; Numbers 12:6; 1 Samuel 28:6; Daniel 2:7; Joel 2:28; Zechariah 1:7 - 6:8.

But, the contrast in the next verses is between dreams and the word of God. Seeing that **"in the latter days ye shall consider it"** is this actually speaking of the last days? Certainly, it is applicable to the last days.

- 26 **How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;**
- 27 **Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.**

The (false) prophets follow the deceit of their heart prophesying lies. They lead people astray.

- 28 **The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.**
- 29 **Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?**
- 30 **Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.**
- 31 **Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.**
- 32 **Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.**

Dreams are contrasted with the word of God.

Dreams = chaff (not good) and the word of God = wheat (good)

God's word is like a fire and a hammer.

God is against the use of (false) dreams and against the use of tongues to mislead people. These (false) prophets were not sent by God and cannot help the people.

What about today with the introduction and proliferation of dreams and tongues in the early 1900s?

"Dreams" for today?

The following is excerpted from **An Evaluation of Muslim Dreams & Visions of Isa (Jesus)**, Part 1 by Dennis McBride

9. Does Scripture encourage expectations of personal visitations from Jesus?

"Faith based on God's Word (spoken or written), not personal divine visitations, has been the biblical requirement and standard since the birth of the church.[8] In fact, with the exception of Paul on the road to Damascus, there is no biblical record of Jesus appearing to any unbeliever following His ascension. And Scripture nowhere encourages or even suggests praying for divine appearances as an evangelism strategy or a means of comforting persecuted Christians during the church age. That is utterly foreign to Scripture. Yet the challenges to propagate this phenomenon continue: "Missionaries have a choice to either ignore the reality [of Muslim dreams] or dare to believe and ask that God would invade their friends' dreams, too, and reveal the truth of Jesus Christ to them as he has done in the lives of countless individuals" (italics added). [9]

It's important to note that Jesus Himself commended those who believed without seeing Him (John 20:24-29) [10], and He corrected the erroneous thinking that a personal appearance of one who has died is more persuasive than hearing God's Word (Luke 16:19-31). [11] Peter, too, commended believers who loved the Lord without having seen Him (1 Pet. 1:3-9). That's normal Christian faith. Additionally, there are no instructions or regulating principles in the Pastoral Epistles regarding dreams or visions (with the exception of the Col. 2:18-19 warning about false teachers who take their stand on such experiences), whereas there are numerous and detailed instructions for teaching, preaching, and guarding "the sacred writings which are able to give . . . the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15; see also 1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Titus 1:9-11)."

End Notes

[8] Cases such as Paul, Cornelius, and Steven are directly related to the unique Apostolic era, as discussed in section #11 below.

[9] Good News for the Crescent World, Dreams and Visions in the World of Folk Islam : could these be a pathway to Jesus Christ?, http://www.gnfcw.com/images/dreams_and_visions.pdf.

11. Are New Testament visions a pattern for Muslim dreams?

Descriptive or Prescriptive? One task of an interpreter of Scripture is to determine if a passage is descriptive or prescriptive. In other words, does the passage describe what occurred in the past, or does it prescribe what will or should occur in the future, or both? For example, determining if the Acts chapter two account of the Day of Pentecost only describes what did occur as a unique event in the

history of the church, or whether it also prescribes a pattern for what should occur in each believer's life, will determine one's position on Pentecostalism. Determining whether Paul's teachings on the role of women were descriptive of the culture of his day or prescriptive for every culture will determine one's position on the role of women in the church today.

Similarly, determining if the accounts of biblical visions describe what did occur during a unique time in revelatory and/or redemptive history, or whether they also prescribe a pattern for what should occur today will, in large part, determine one's position on the current Muslim phenomenon. So with that in mind, I'll briefly examine the New Testament accounts used in support of the Muslim dreams phenomenon.

Conclusion: In light of their unique contexts I must conclude that the New Testament vision passages do not lend biblical support to contemporary Muslim dreams.

"Tongues" understanding and purpose comes from Isaiah 28:11-12.

- 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.**
- 12 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.**

Vs. 11 - since you consider my (Isaiah's) words un-intelligible, God will speak to you through a foreign power

Vs. 12 - Israel would not receive the rest God offered.

Vs. 13 - Isaiah now mocks the leaders using the same words they used saying God spoke to them as little children.

The last four verbs of verse 13 - fall, broken, snared, taken - are also found in Isaiah 8:15. Isaiah 8:13-15 speaks of Israel's stumbling at the Messiah of Israel. Though judgment is coming from without - Assyria - the bigger issue is Israel's rejection of their God.

PAUL'S APPLICATION OF THIS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 14

First, 1 Corinthians 13:8

- 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

Gift of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will cease.

Fail is *pipto* (*pip'-to*) and means to "pass away" (see Luke 16:17)

Prophecies and knowledge are each associated with the same verb *katargeo* (*kat-arg-eh'-o*), *will fail and will vanish away*, and each is in the passive voice. The passive voice means they are to be rendered inoperative when the *perfect* comes.

Tongues is connected with the verb *pauo* (*pow'-o*), *will cease*, and is in the middle voice. The middle voice means it will cease in and of itself.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

Tongues is a sign to the nation of Israel

- 21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.**
- 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.**

This is the only passage that tells the purpose for the gift of tongues.

There are some basic stipulations for the use of this gift:

1. Jewish people have to be present - "will I speak unto this people"

Acts 2:1-11 (see Acts 2:13-14) Acts 10:44-46 Acts 19:1-6

2. Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers - "tongues are for a sign...to them that believe not"
3. Tongues is a sign of impending judgment for Israel

Isaiah 28:11-12; Deuteronomy 28:45-50; Jeremiah 5:11-17

Jesus prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed as a judgment upon Israel for rejecting Him (Luke 19:41-44).

Tongues were a sign of this coming judgment and thus ceased after the judgment (70 A.D.) happened because there was no longer any need for this sign.

Modern day speakers in tongues claim that it is God speaking through them. Based on the biblical basis for the use of tongues, and the biblical "tongues" were always a known language, today's "gift of tongues" is a counterfeit.

33 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.

When the people ask Jeremiah about God's burden, the response is to be "What burden?" God has already forsaken them.

34 And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

When the people speak in the name of the Lord they will be punished.

35 Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

Jeremiah's message is to ask the people if they know what the Lord has answered and spoken.

36 And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

Jeremiah is told to no longer speak about God's burden because they have perverted God's word and substituted their own words.

37 Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

Jeremiah is to ask the (false) prophet what God answered and spoke.

38 But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD;

39 Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence:

40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

Because the prophets spoke about God falsely, when he commanded them not to speak, they will be destroyed, have an everlasting shame, and the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed.