



Visions and Dreams

Lesson Overview

1. Brain Builder

Can we learn from dreams?

2. Watch a video

Watch *Where Dreams Come From* at bitly.com/DreamsFrom (1min 32sec)

3. Discuss

4. Read

Swedenborg was able to experience dreams flowing into his mind. He saw and talked to spirits who caused dreams and discovered that their thought flowed into his own memories.

5. Tears Make Rainbows

Read about and discuss a healing dream that helped a friend.

New Church Concept The Lord Protects Us While We Sleep

Evil spirits have a strong and burning desire to harm and attack people who are asleep, but at that time people are especially protected by the Lord, for love does not sleep. Spirits who hurt others are severely punished. *Arcana Coelestia* 1983

FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 10 | Eternal Life

Brain Builder

Scientists studying sleep and dreams report that *everyone* dreams, but that people do not all remember their dreams when they wake up.

1. Do you have dreams that you remember when you wake up?
2. Are dreams significant? Can we learn anything from them?

Watch a video

Watch *Where Dreams Come From* (1min 32sec) at bitly.com/DreamsFrom. (Enter bitly link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. What connection is there between the angels and spirits who are with a person, and a person's dreams?
2. Why do people or places we know come into our dreams?
3. What can we know about the kinds of spirits with us by the types of dream we are having? Can we know this for certain?
4. Is there a difference between an a vision and a dream?
5. How were Swedenborg's experiences in the spiritual world different from dreams? *Hint: Swedenborg had experiences in the spiritual world while he was awake in the natural worlds as well.*

Read

Angels and spirits are with us throughout our lives. Most of the time we are not aware of their presence, but dreams are one time when we might become aware of their presence with us.

The Writings say there are three types of dreams.

The first type of dream comes from the Lord through heaven. Prophetic dreams spoken of in the Word were like this. The second type comes by way of angelic spirits, especially those who are situated in front and above, over towards the right where the paradise gardens are. This was the source of the dreams that members of the Most Ancient Church had. They were taught by dreams like this. The third type of dream comes by way of the spirits who are close to a person who is sleeping. These too carry spiritual meanings. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1976

Various people in the Word received prophetic dreams from the Lord. Joseph dreamed about his family bowing down to him. Pharaoh dreamed about a famine that was going to happen. And Nebuchadnezzar saw an image being struck by a rock that told of the future.

Dreams and visions like this flow in from heaven. The difference between visions and dreams is that dreams take place when the body is asleep but visions when it is awake. The manner in which prophetic dreams and those such as are described in the Word flow in—indeed come down from heaven—has been shown to me.... See *Arcana Coelestia* 1975

Swedenborg was to experience dreams flowing in so he could describe what it was like. This is what he reported.

Dreams like the ones I had come from angelic spirits at the entrance to the paradise gardens. They are commissioned to keep watch over certain people who are asleep, to prevent them being hurt during that time by evil spirits. They perform their task with very great delight, so much so that they vie with one another to be there, and they love to fill man with joys and delights such as they see within his affection and disposition. Those who have become angelic spirits are drawn from those who during their lifetime took delight in and loved in every way to make other people's lives delightful. When a person's hearing has been opened far enough he hears as from afar a sweet rhythmic sound like singing coming from these spirits. They declared that they did not know from where such things as these, and representatives so beautiful and delightful, came to them all in a moment; but they were told that they came from heaven. They belong to the province of the cerebellum, for the cerebellum remains awake even during periods of sleep when the cerebrum is sleeping. This was the source of the dreams, together with the perception of what these meant, which members of the Most Ancient Church had. And from those people were derived most of the representatives and meaningful signs of the Ancients, beneath which things deeply hidden were manifested. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1977.

After the dream Swedenborg talked to spirits who made it happen. He discovered that the conversations the spirits were having were represented in his dreams through his own memory. He did not see the spirits themselves talking in his dream, but their conversation came to him in the forms of people and places which were familiar to him.

The things in a person's memory and affection are recipient vessels, in which ideas are varied and are received as representatives according to the variations in form which those ideas take and according to the changes of state which they undergo. *Arcana Coelestia* 1980.

New Church Concept Dreams

Let one further similar experience be related. I once had quite an ordinary dream, and having woken up I related it all from start to finish. The angels said that it coincided exactly with what they had been discussing; not that the things they were discussing appeared in the dream, but instead things completely different, into which the thoughts in their discussion were transformed, yet in such a way that they were representative and correspondent. Not one detail was missing. I also spoke to them about influx, about how such things flow in and are varied. There was a person of whom I had the idea that he was governed by natural truth, an idea which I had gained from the things he had done in life. Among the angels a discussion was taking place concerning natural truth, and therefore that person was represented to me. What he told me in my dream, and the things that he did, as well as the order in which these things came, were representative of and corresponded to their higher source, namely the discussion taking place among the angels. Yet what he told me was not anything like or the same as what the angels were discussing. *Arcana Coelestia* 1981

Visions and Dreams

Although intentional contact with angels or spirits in the spiritual world is dangerous, people sometimes have dreams or visions of angels, or of friends or relatives who have died. These experiences feel like a wonderful gift to those who receive them. Here is one woman's story of how a friend's vision helped her at a difficult time in her life.

Tears Make Rainbows

There was a time when I had been going through quite a bit of internal struggle, feeling lost, sad, and despairing. I hadn't spoken of my heartache to anyone as I did not see a use. One morning a friend called me on the phone to tell me of a dream she had just had about me. I was both amazed and comforted by my friend's dream. It was an assurance of the Lord's tender care in our times of struggle.

My friend told me: You were standing in a clear light, and you were weeping. As they fell your tears turned to crystal, breaking into more crystals and rainbow light. A red bird in flight was circling round your head. Then I saw that it wasn't a bird, for it had the face of an angel, and I perceived that it was an angel.

The angel turned to me and asked, "Doesn't Kathy see me?" But you didn't see the angel, and you didn't know that I was there either.

The angel spoke again. "Doesn't she know that I am here and that everything will be all right?"

Kathy

Taken from *A Dove at the Window*, compiled and edited by Vera P. Glenn © 1999, p. 161. Used by Permission

Ideas for Discussion Times

1. Why does the Lord allow people to have dreams or visions like this?
2. How might these experiences help someone who is grieving for a loved one or experiencing a difficult time in his or her life?
3. Discuss experiences like this that you have heard about.

For Reflection

As you read or hear about such dreams and visions, you may notice that the Lord doesn't let these experiences take away our freedom by telling us something we don't already know about the life after death or about our lives. He is always protecting our spiritual freedom.