

Dreams in ancient Hebrew literature

John C. Stephens

San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, Ca, USA

Summary. Dreams contain a mixture of imagery derived from waking consciousness and other images that have little connection to waking awareness. Although research on the continuity hypothesis has concentrated on the dreams of contemporary individuals, not much attention has been given to the dreams of historical individuals. The current article focuses how this continuity hypothesis is applicable to the dream narratives appearing in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Pseudepigraphic literature.

Keywords: Dreams in the Hebrew Bible, prophetic dreams, dreams in pseudepigraphic literature

The Dreams of the Hebrew Prophets

Recently, dream researchers have been interested in exploring the relationship between waking consciousness and dream states (Hobson and Schredl, 2011). One area of their research has focused upon the continuity hypothesis. The continuity hypothesis asserts that there is a strong connection between an individual's waking life and the contents of their dreams. Dreams contain a mixture of imagery derived from waking consciousness and other images that have little connection to waking awareness. In short, dreams are neither entirely continuous nor discontinuous with waking experience. Some dreams are more continuous and others are less continuous with waking experience. Dreams are comprised of a blend of bizarre, surrealistic dream images and other dream images which appear to be connected to our conscious waking life. Although much of the research done on the continuity hypothesis has focused upon the dreams of contemporary individuals, the dream reports of individuals living in past historical eras have not been significantly taken into account (Stephens, 2013). The current article focuses upon the question about whether this continuity hypothesis plays out upon the dreams of historical individuals. In order to further investigate the historical applicability of the continuity hypothesis, several dream narratives appearing in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Pseudepigraphic literature will be examined.

In contrast to what many biblical critics have argued, biblical dream narratives are more than just literary fabrications (Noegel, 2000)(Gunkel, 2006). On the contrary, there is evidence that several of these dream narratives are likely based upon the actual dreams of the prophets. Despite what many biblical critics believe, many biblical dream narratives are based upon actual dream experiences. Many of these biblical dream narratives contain a mixture of dream images that are either continuous or discontinuous with waking experience. This synthesis of dream imagery lends support to the

idea that these dream narratives are genuinely based upon actual dream experiences and are not just literary fabrications.

Just like many others living in the ancient world, the prophets of the Bible paid a great deal of attention to their dreams. In antiquity, many people believed that their dreams were a source for learning about the future. As a result, in antiquity many individuals became devoted to dream interpretation and spent inordinate amounts of energy recalling their dreams and became fairly good at it, or at least better than most modern people. Given this interest in dreams, it is plausible that the prophets were fairly adept at recalling their dreams. Many of these biblical dream narratives have images that are not easy to forget.

Despite being lengthy, many of the dreams and visions in the Bible exemplify the attributes of the lucid dream which are easy to recall upon awakening. This notion contradicts the other way of understanding biblical dream narratives as simply literary creations that have no reference to authentic dream experience. Although some secondary elaboration and theological overlay are involved from time to time in the process of recording these dreams, it is likely that a large percentage of these narratives provide fairly accurate descriptions of actual dreams. Lucid dreams differ significantly from the average dream because in a lucid dream the dreamer is fully aware that they are dreaming. Hence, such dreams are not difficult to remember. Although people usually are fully aware that they are awake, when they are asleep and dreaming they are usually unaware that they are having a dream. Likewise, when they wake up, they can barely recall the details of their dreams. In distinction to the average dream experience, lucid dreams are filled with vivid images and symbols that can be effortlessly recalled upon awakening. Since consciousness oscillates between greater and lesser degrees of awareness, depending upon whether one is asleep and dreaming or awake and aware, a person experiencing a lucid dream may be even more aware than when they are awake (Tart, 2001, pp1-2).

The willingness to recall and record revelatory dreams is among the most important charismatic powers of a prophet. All the major prophets of the Hebrew Bible were children of the Axial Age. In his book entitled *The Origin and Goal of History*, German philosopher Karl Jaspers coined the term "Axial Age" to make reference to these monumental global spiritual developments occurring during the first millennium BCE (Jaspers, 1949). According to sociologist Max Weber,

Corresponding address:

John C. Stephens, PhD., San Joaquin Delta College 5151
Pacific Ave, Stockton, Ca 95207, USA.
Email: johnstephens100@hotmail.com

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the personal call is the decisive element distinguishing the prophet from a priest. Priests gain their authority by virtue of their service to a sacred tradition while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma (Weber, 1964, p.46).

Many of the Hebrew prophets received their call to become a prophet in a dream sent to them by God. Amos and Joel lived a little before the others, in the 8th and 7th century BCE. Daniel lived between the end of the 6th century BCE to the beginning of the 5th century BCE. Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah lived in the sixth century BCE. The central message preached by each of these prophets was that the people of Israel must stay true to God's ethical demands. If they did, they would be rewarded, but if they did not, they would face judgement and punishment would follow. Those ethical demands and God's warnings were communicated directly to the prophets primarily through visions and dreams.

Isaiah's call

The prophet Isaiah's invitation to become God's mouthpiece contains a mixture of a few otherworldly dream images and other images derived from his waking experience.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each of which had six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; The whole earth is filled with his glory (Isaiah 6:1-4).

Isaiah watched as the sound of the angels' voices caused the entire earth to rumble. Then, Isaiah exclaimed that he was ruined because he had seen God despite having unclean lips and living among others who had unclean lips. Then, in order to take away Isaiah's guilt and atone for his sin, one of the angels touched Isaiah's mouth with a burning coal. After that, Isaiah heard the voice of God say,

"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? And I said, "Here I am. Send me." (Isaiah 6:8).

Several unusual things happen during Isaiah's prophetic calling, which indicate that he was the recipient of a lucid dream. The vision begins with Isaiah seeing a rather stereotypical portrayal of God seated on his majestic throne. Then, something unexpected happens. The angels nearby speak in incredibly loud voices causing the earth to inexplicably rumble. Next, an angel flies over to greet him and touch his mouth with a red-hot burning coal. A burning coal is an image that is continuous with waking consciousness, but it serves a peculiarly unusual purpose in the dream of burning away his sin. Isaiah felt a sense of relief because he felt that all of his sins had been forgiven. Having been forgiven, he was ready to become God's mouthpiece. During Isaiah's dream vision, he experienced an extraordinary heightening of his visual and auditory sensations as well as his sense of forgiveness which suggests his dream was of the lucid variety.

Jeremiah's Calling

Following Isaiah's divine summoning, Jeremiah received his prophetic calling around the time of the Babylonian Exile.

Jeremiah heard a voice telling him to become God's mouthpiece.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you Before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nation." (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

In the passage where Jeremiah is chosen to be God's prophetic spokesperson, an auditory message and a symbolic vision are combined. The narrative begins with God's voice being heard, followed by His hand reaching out to touch Jeremiah's mouth;

"Ah, Sovereign Lord", I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say to me, "I am only a child. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth...." The word of the Lord came to me again: "What do you see, Jeremiah?" "I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied. The Lord said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled." The word of the Lord came to me again: "What do you see?" "I see a boiling pot tilting away from the north," I answered. The Lord said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land". (Jeremiah 1:4-14)

Jeremiah's prophetic vision is filled with familiar images of his waking life, including an almond tree branch and a boiling pot that was tilting sideways. It is in this context that God orders Jeremiah to warn the people of Israel of the impending disaster awaiting them if certain things do not happen;

"Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified of them or I will terrify you before them." (Jeremiah 1:17)

One way to interpret the symbol of the tilting boiling pot and the almond tree branch is to view them as purely literary creations used for conveying the notion that divine punishment was about to descend upon Israel for its failure to abide by the terms of the Covenant. Perhaps Jeremiah did not have any sort of prophetic vision at all. From this perspective, the idea that Jeremiah actually had a dream vision is dismissed in favor of the idea that the passage was merely a literary creation of scribes. The other option is to interpret the passage as a genuine dream vision that Jeremiah actually had.

There is nothing particularly dream-like about some of the images in Jeremiah's vision and yet they are profoundly significant. The events described in Genesis 2 shed light upon the symbolic importance of the almond tree branch for Jeremiah's psyche as well as the collective psyche of the Jewish people. After God creates the first man and woman and places them in the Garden of Eden, He issues an important commandment to Adam: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17). After failing to withstand Satan's temptations, Adam and Eve are kicked out of the Garden of Eden. The image of the tilting boiling pot and

almond tree branch both symbolize the imminent dangers lying ahead for Israel. Although dream images are often chaotic and incoherent, some of them have correlations to waking life. Jeremiah's vision of the almond tree branch and the boiling pot are probably more than just literary creations. Although each image seems a bit incoherent and baffling, their meaning is rooted in Jeremiah's waking consciousness. The symbol of the almond tree branch delves into Jeremiah's religious roots as well as the social world in which he lived. The boiling tilting pot is a symbol of what was about to happen to Israel for breaking God's commandments.

Ezekiel's Calling

Whereas Jeremiah's prophetic dreams were concerned with events occurring prior to the Babylonian exile, his contemporary Ezekiel spoke at length to those who had already been exiled in Babylonia. Ezekiel's prophetic calling is filled with an abundance of complex symbolism. Some of the images appear to have a certain degree of continuity with his waking life, such as the images of the wind storm and the cloud of flashing light, but other aspects of the dream are an amalgamation of surrealistic images that are entirely discontinuous from his waking life, such as a great fire with four winged creatures inside. The vivid nature of Ezekiel's dream suggests that it resembles a lucid dream. Rather than being nothing more than an imaginative piece of creative writing that has little correspondence to reality, the events described in Ezekiel's visionary calling really happened to him and allow the reader to enter into the world of altered states of consciousness (ASCs).

While I was among the exiles by the Keber River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.... I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north-an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, but their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved (Ezekiel 1:1-9).

Ezekiel continues his animated description by providing additional details about the four strange creatures. Each of them had the face of a man, but on the right side there was the face of a lion and on the left side there was the face of an ox. Each also had the face of an eagle. The unearthly creatures appeared very much like "burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright and lightning flashed out of it." (Ezekiel 1:14). On the ground next to the creatures was a wheel that "sparkled like chrysolite" (Ezekiel 1:16) and was unlike anything he had ever seen in his waking life. Whenever the creatures moved, the wheel moved with them and the spirit of the creatures was in the wheel. Above the heads of the creatures was a great expanse and suddenly from up above there appeared a great throne of sapphire. Suddenly, the voice of a man could be heard. The man looked as if he was on fire and he was surrounded by brilliant light. Around the man there was a radiance that resembled "a rainbow in the

clouds on a rainy day" (Ezekiel 1:28). Then, Ezekiel fell to his knees and heard the voice of the man who had "the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezekiel 1:28) speak to him;

"Son of Man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you... Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me.... you must speak my words to them, whether they listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like the rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you..." (Ezekiel 2:1-8)

What follows next in Ezekiel's vision is entirely discontinuous from his waking experience. The man reached his hand out to Ezekiel. In the man's hand was a scroll with the words "lament" and mourning and woe" written on it. The man ordered Ezekiel to eat the scroll and then go and speak to the house of Israel. When Ezekiel complied and ate the scroll, it tasted as sweet as honey. Afterwards, the Spirit came upon Ezekiel and lifted him up and took him to the exiles living in Babylonia near the Keber River. This last part of Ezekiel's calling is strictly tied to his theological agenda, but this does not undermine the psychological authenticity of his dream experience. Dreams are able to incorporate material from one's waking life, including strongly held spiritual beliefs. From that point on, the Book of Ezekiel has less to do with dream visions and more to do with prophetic warnings of imminent doom and gloom to be levelled against the House of Israel in the coming days for failing to follow God's law.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Disaster! An unheard-of disaster is coming. The end has come! It has roused itself against you. It has come. The end has come. Doom has come upon you who dwell in the land (Ezekiel 7:5-7).

The Dream Visions of Daniel

The Book of Daniel 7:1-12 describes an extended dream vision of the prophet Daniel after he was thrown into jail by the Babylonian authorities. Similar to many other prophetic dreams of the Bible, Daniel's dreams are a mixture of images that are either continuous or discontinuous with his waking experience. In the following dream vision the churning sea and the four winds emerging from out of the water are continuous dream images, but the surrealistic creatures and the white-haired man emerging from the sea are quite discontinuous from waking experience.

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of the dream. Daniel said, "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea." (Daniel 7:1-3).

In the next part of the vision, Daniel witnesses the bizarre image of four animals hovering near him along with a lion with wings of an eagle, a bear, and leopard with a bird with four heads on its back and a terrifying beast with iron teeth and ten horns. One horn emerged that had eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke arrogantly. Suddenly, an odd white-haired ghostly figure called "Ancient of Days" appeared seated on a fiery throne. Daniel watched as the beast with horns was slain and thrown into a fire. The vision concludes dramatically with the ambiguous proclamation about "one like a

son of man coming with the clouds of heaven”(Daniel 7:13). In the dream Daniel asks for an interpretation of the dream and is told that the dream presents an apocalyptic prophetic vision of the end times. The four great beasts represent four kingdoms “that will rise from the earth”. The fourth beast with the dreadful horns and iron teeth represents the fourth kingdom that will wage war on all the saints, but in the end, this heinous nation which may perhaps represent Babylonia or Persia will ultimately be destroyed and “the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints”(Daniel 7:27). The vision of Daniel 7 combines images of waking consciousness and pre-consciousness to express an apocalyptic view of the cosmos.

Daniel 8 begins with a vision in which Daniel finds himself in a geographical location that is quite familiar to his waking experience, namely, inside the Citadel of Susa. What ensues is a very strange and surrealistic episode. Suddenly, he witnesses a ram with two horns standing by the canal. The ram violently charges other animals nearby and none of them can defeat it. Suddenly, a strange image of a flying goat appears with a horn in the middle of its head. High up in the sky the goat proceeds to make its way across the earth without ever touching the ground. Finally, when the goat lands on the ground, it gets into a fierce battle with the ram and defeats it. During the battle, the largest of his horns was broken off. Then, another strange event transpires in the dream. Four new horns miraculously grow out of the broken horn. Another horn magically begins to grow out of one of the new horns. This new horn is so incredibly immense that it reaches up to the heavens. This horn causes all kinds of destruction and havoc in the world. Then, an angelic figure appears out of nowhere named Gabriel who provides Daniel with a brief interpretation of his vision. The two-horned ram represented the kings of Media and Persia. The goat represented the king of Greece. The large horn in the middle of the goat’s head is the first king of Greece and the other four horns represent the four nations that will come after the first king.

The dream vision recorded in Daniel 10 mixes images associated with waking consciousness and other more surreal imagery derived from pre-consciousness. Daniel finds himself standing in another familiar geographical location, that is, on the banks of the Tigris River. Suddenly, as he looks up into the sky, he sees an odd-looking man surrounded in shimmering light and dressed in white linen with a golden belt around his waist.

His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightening, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. I, Daniel was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at the great visions; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, and my face to the ground (Daniel 10:7-9).

The dream figure dressed in white linen tells Daniel about a great battle that is going to take place in the future between the three kings of Persia and a mighty king from the north. The king of the north will defeat the other three kings and afterwards the triumphant king’s empire will be divided into new kingdoms which will wage war upon each other. Even-

tually the kingdom of the north will triumph and soon the end times will arrive.

Many of the prophecies mentioned in the Book of Daniel actually came to fruition many years after the time of Daniel. Because of their reference to specific historic events surrounding the conquests of Alexander the Great that transpired centuries after the time of Daniel, it is likely that these prophecies were editorially inserted into the biblical narrative by scribes in the second century BCE or later. Although it may be hard to believe that the accuracy of Daniel’s prophecies are due to his clairvoyant powers, nevertheless the ability to see into the future either by means of visions or premonitions has been scientifically proven in a laboratory setting. Back in the 1930s, noted parapsychologist Dr. Joseph Rhine developed a series of scientific experiments at Duke University over a period of approximately four years, the results of which were published in the Scientific American. Rhine found that,

many normal people possess capacities to perceive objects not present to the recognized senses, and to perceive the thought impressions of others without sensory cues. These modes of Extra Sensory Perception (E.S.P.) are called respectively Clairvoyance and Telepathy (Rhine, 1935).

Although it may be difficult to accept the idea that the accuracy of Daniel’s predictions was purely the result of his clairvoyance, nevertheless, it remains in the realm of possibility. It is much easier to believe that the interpolations of scribes of later times were the ultimate source for these oracular premonitions. However, once one accepts the reality of clairvoyance, then one can easily become more comfortable with the idea that it was not the scribes who conspired to make the narrative seem divinely inspired and prophetic. After all, many of the prophetic events of Daniel’s visions, including continual foreign domination, are entirely contiguous with his waking experience. Daniel lived at a time when Israel was already under foreign domination and had been fighting with its neighbors on and off ever since Abraham arrived in Canaan. Daniel could have easily foreseen a time in the future when other kingdoms of the world would line up one after the other to take control of Israel after the Babylonians lost control.

The Visions of Zechariah

The visions recorded in the Book of Zechariah revolve around the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem after the Babylonian Exile. Many of the people, objects and events that appear in Zechariah’s visions appear in his day-to-day life. Some of these images include items such as lampshades, horses, baskets, olives, myrtle trees and men carrying measuring instruments. However, the dream scenes in which these images appear are sometimes strange and discontinuous from his waking experience. For example, the sudden appearance out of nowhere of four horns, or inexplicable shifts from one dream scene to another is different from waking experience. Also the unexpected appearance of strange dream images such as verbose angels that enjoy talking, the high priest Joshua dressed in dirty clothing, and four chariots emerging from two bronze mountains are strange and dissimilar from waking experience.

The dream narrative begins with the voice of God telling His prophet Zechariah. “Return to me, declares the Lord

Almighty and I will return to you.”(Zechariah 1:3). Then, months later Zechariah has a series of visions concerning the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Without any warning, an angel suddenly appears out of the blue and is standing in a ravine near some myrtle trees and horses. The angel speaks to Zechariah, telling him that God will return to Jerusalem to oversee the re-building of His temple. The unexpected appearance of a talkative angel seems somewhat odd from what one might expect of an angel of God even though the belief in angels themselves was commonly accepted by many people in antiquity. Then, Zechariah turns his head upward to the heavens and sees four horns and is told that these horns represented the forces responsible for scattering Judah, Israel and Jerusalem from the homeland. The sudden appearance out of nowhere of four horns is quite out of the ordinary and nothing like what one might expect except in a dream. A man with a measuring instrument is busy measuring the length and width of Jerusalem’s boundaries. Then, another angel suddenly appears who tells Zechariah that a time will come when Jerusalem will be prosperous and the city will not have any walls. After that, another odd dream scene unfolds in which out of nowhere the high priest Joshua suddenly appears dressed in dirty clothes. Satan is there too and is about to accuse Joshua of wrongdoing, but God orders Satan to go away and leave Joshua alone because He has rescued Judah from destruction, “Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” (Zechariah 3:2). Afterwards, Joshua is given some clean clothes to wear and this change of clothing which is interpreted as symbolizing God’s forgiveness.

A series of odd events are described in the remaining visions of Zechariah. Zechariah 4 states that Zechariah was awakened from sleep by an angel who showed him a solid gold lampshade with a bowl on top of it made out of seven lights. An olive tree is standing on each side of the bowl. The angel explains that this vision symbolizes the reconstruction of the temple. Then, in Zechariah 5, Zechariah has another vision of a flying scroll. The incredibly large scroll represents a curse extending over the entire land of Israel that will bring about the banishment of every thief. Next, Zechariah sees a basket, an object that is familiar to his waking awareness, but oddly enough, the basket is located high up in the sky and inside the basket is an evil woman who represents sin. The evil lady was trapped inside the basket because there was a lead cover over the top of the basket. Suddenly two female angels appear who grab the basket and fly off with it to Babylonia. The angel explained that this removal of the basket represented the banishment of all evil from the land. Once again, Zechariah looked up to the sky and saw four chariots drawn by horses emerging between two bronze mountains. The chariots represented “the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world” (Zechariah 6:5).

Visions in Selected Jewish Pseudepigraphic Writings

Just as dreams and visions play a key role in the Hebrew Bible, they also play an important role in several noteworthy Jewish Pseudepigraphic narratives, including 1st Enoch, (*The Book of Enoch*), 4 Ezra (*The Apocalypse of Ezra*) and 2 Baruch (*The Apocalypse of Baruch*). The majority of the extant Jewish Apocalypses were written in the first and second century BCE. Dream images that are continuous and

discontinuous with waking life are interspersed throughout these narratives, making them appear to be more than literary fabrications. Often there are sudden, inexplicable changes in scenery or other baffling events that defy the laws of time and space. In short, the authors were familiar on a very personal level with dream experiences, even though many images are heavily overlain with religious interpretations. Generally speaking, the central intent of Jewish Apocalyptic literature is to provide a basic overview of all the events that will occur in the “End Times”, including the final judgement of humanity. This theological viewpoint should not hinder one from understanding that actual dreams were involved in the transmission of the message. It was by means of dream visions that the events of the End-Times would gradually become clarified by the prophets.

The Book of Enoch (1st Enoch)

Dream visions provide the framework for much of the material recorded in 1st Enoch. Of course, the prediluvian Patriarch Enoch did not actually write the book of Enoch. The actual person or persons who wrote the Book of Enoch are unknown, but most scholars believe that it was written by individuals living in Palestine in the second century BCE. Authorship is attributed in the narrative to Enoch because he is a very prestigious ancient Hebrew patriarch who is mentioned in the book of Genesis; “Enoch walked with God” (Genesis 5:24). Besides Enoch, the only other Biblical figure who walked with God was Noah. Enoch lived 365 years and was taken up to heaven without dying. The Biblical account makes the figure of Enoch an obvious choice to be the pseudonymous author of a book of revelations and dreams such as the 1st Book of Enoch. Within Jewish lore, Enoch was thought to be someone who was very familiar on a personal level with heavenly journeys. The Book of Enoch begins by Enoch stating that he experienced a series of heavenly visions:

Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens, [which] the angels showed me, and from them I heard everything, and from them I understood as I saw, but not for this generation, but for a remote one which is to come... The Holy Great One will come forth from His dwelling. And the eternal God will tread upon the earth, (even) on Mount Sinai...And all shall be smitten with fear And the Watchers shall quake...This vision was shown to me. The vision clouds invited me and a mist summoned me, the course of the stars and lightning sped me, and the winds in the vision caused me to fly, lifting me upward and bearing me into heaven ... (1st Enoch 1: .2-5,8-25).

A series of fantastic, dream images are presented one after the other. Upon arriving in heaven, Enoch is confronted with a very strange sight: he finds himself standing next to an unearthly crystal wall. The wall is similar to an earthly wall except for the fact that it is surrounded by many tongues of fire. Somehow, Enoch is able to miraculously walk through the tongues of fire into a crystal house. Once inside the house, Enoch is filled with intense fear and he falls down on his face. Then, suddenly Enoch has another vision. The image of a second flaming house suddenly appears that was even larger than the first one. The image of the house seems quite ordinary except for the fact that it is a “flaming house” and very beautiful. Enoch felt that words could

not express just how beautiful it was. The floor and ceiling were made from fire and up above Enoch saw lightning and stars. Enoch saw a lofty crystal throne. Underneath it there were streams of flaming fire that were so bright it hurt his eyes to look at it. God sat on this throne and His raiment was so bright one could not look at it. A great flaming fire surrounded God. He was surrounded by thousands of holy ones who never would leave him whether it was day or night. Suddenly, God spoke; "Come hither Enoch, and hear my word" (1st Enoch 15:1).

2 Baruch

2 Baruch was written towards the end of the first century CE after the Temple of Jerusalem had been destroyed a second time by the Romans in 70 CE. In the Hebrew Bible, Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe but in 2 Baruch he is a prophet. In the first part of the text, Baruch laments over Israel's situation and the destruction of the temple. Then, Baruch's incredible dream vision is a mixture of surrealistic dream-like imagery and other images that are more continuous with waking life. Some of the dream images that are more like Baruch's waking experience include a forest, a vine, a fountain and a cedar tree (2 Baruch 11:1-7). However, the image of a talking tree that preaches an apocalyptic message is distinctly different from what is normally experienced while awake. In the dream, Baruch sees a vine growing among the trees and a water fountain at the bottom of the vine. Oddly enough, powerful waves were overflowing out of the fountain onto the ground and destroying everything nearby except for a large cedar tree. An odd sounding voice inside the tree could be heard saying that the cedar tree needed to die since it was source of so much evil in the world. When Baruch woke up, he was deeply puzzled by the dream and so he asked God to explain the meaning of the dream. God said that the forest represented God's word and the fountain and vine symbolized the Messiah who soon will appear to establish God's reign. Although this last portion of the text where a theological interpretation of the dream is given reflects the conscious literary intentions of the author, the mixture of dream imagery that is continuous and discontinuous with waking experience is consistent to what is typically found in dreams.

4 Ezra (The Apocalypse of Ezra)

4 Ezra is filled with numerous apocalyptic predictions about the End-Times. In Chapter Thirteen, an amazing vision entitled, "The Man From the Sea" is introduced. Like other ancient Jewish pseudepigraphic texts, images of waking consciousness and preconsciousness are interspersed throughout the narrative. The dream vision begins with a surrealistic image of a man flying out of the depths of the ocean to the sky above. Whenever this man looked at something, the object began to tremble. Whoever heard his voice melted away like wax when it is near fire. Suddenly, a great number of men gathered together to attack the man. The man escaped by retreating to a nearby mountain. When the evil attackers were about to attack again, the man of the sea turned them into ash by blasting them with his fiery breath and a fiery stream poured out of his mouth. An apocalyptic message is delivered at the end of the dream narrative. God tells Ezra that the "Man of the Sea" is the Messiah. Just as no one can see what is down in the depths of the ocean, no

one will know about God's Son until he arrives on earth at the End-Times.

Beyond the Mainstream: Dream Visions Among The Essenes

Religious diversity characterizes ancient Judaism in the centuries leading up to the Common Era. The Sadducees were members of the upper classes of Jewish culture who were in charge of the Jerusalem temple. They believed in the absolute authority of Torah and refused to accept many of the new religious ideas circulating in Hellenistic times such as the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees were another Jewish group who were open to new ways of interpreting the Bible. On the fringes of Jewish culture there were other groups as well. The Essenes, who are sometimes referred to as the Qumran Community, were a Jewish religious sect that lived around the area of the Dead Sea in the first and second centuries BCE. They were interested in doing something more than just studying the Bible and worshipping God in the Temple. They committed their entire life to God. In many respects the Essenes represent an early prototype for monastic communities in the western world. Members of this religious sect firmly believed that the Seleucid rulers who had taken political control of Israel had corrupted mainstream Judaism in Jerusalem by introducing a variety of polytheistic religious practices. As a result, they fled to the desert and established a settlement near Qumran near the Dead Sea to await the coming of the Reign of God. Many of their apocalyptic views are expressed in a set of manuscripts called the *Dead Sea Scrolls* which were discovered by accident in caves near the Dead Sea in 1947.

The *Dead Sea Scrolls* contain a number of prophetic dream narratives regarding the End-Times. The Qumran community was exclusively an all-male community that lived a life of abstinence and solitude. Such a lifestyle would be conducive to receiving visions and revelations and other kinds of numinous experiences. In one section of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is a description of God and His glorious chariot. This passage in the Dead Sea Scrolls is reminiscent of Ezekiel's dream vision of a divine chariot and the prophet Elijah's heavenly ascension (Ezekiel 1:4-28; 2 Kings 11). Chariots were fairly common in antiquity, but the divine chariot described in this passage has little resemblance to an ordinary chariot. Hence, it is a dream image that is discontinuous from waking experience.

[His glorious chariot. When they go...they do not turn aside...but advance straight...Praise the God of ...w]onder, and exalt Him...of glory in the te[n]t of the God of knowledge. The [cheru]bim prostrate themselves before Him and bless. As they rise, a whispered divine voice [is heard], and there is a roar of praise. When they drop their wings, there is a [whisper]d divine voice. The cherubim bless the image of the throne- chariot above the firmament, [and] they praise [the majes]ty of the luminous firmament beneath His seat of glory. When the wheels advance, the angels of holiness come and go. From between His glorious wheels, there is as it were a fiery vision of most holy spirits. About them, the appearance of rivulets of fire in the likeness of gleaming brass, and a work of ...radiance in many-coloured glory, marvelous pigments, clearly mingled. The spirit of the living 'gods' move perpetually with the glory of the marvellous chariot(s). The whispered voice of the blessing accom-

Table 1. Continuous dream narratives in the ancient Jewish literature

Continuous Dream Scenes/Images	Continuous Dream Figures
The image of a burning coal (Isa. 6:1-4).	God, dressed in a robe and seated on a throne (Isa. 6:1).
A plumb line, locust, fire (Amos 7:7-8).	A ram standing by a canal that fights a goat (Dan.8:6-8).
An almond tree, tilting pot of boiling water (Jer. 1:17).	The prophet Daniel standing by the Citadel of Susa (Dan.8:1).
Keber River (Ez. 1:1-9).	The prophet Daniel standing on the banks of the Tigris River (Dan.10:4).
Wind storms and a cloud of flashing light (Ez.1:1-4).	Men carrying measuring instruments (Zech. 2:2-13).
Citadel of Susa (Dan.8:1).	A man riding a red horse (Zech.1:7).
Clouds and wind (1 st Enoch 1)	Four horses and chariots (Zech. 6:1-8).
Storms, forests and vines (Baruch 11:1-7).	

panies the roar of the advance, and they praise the Holy One on their way of return. When they ascend, they ascend marvellously and when they settle, they stand still. The sound of joyful praise is silenced and there is a whispered blessing of the 'gods' in all the camps of God. And the sound of praisefrom among all the divisions and all their numbered ones praise, each in his turn (Songs For the Holocaust of the Sabbath, 4 Q 405 20 ii,21-220 ii,21-2).

The two Tables 1 and 2 classify the dreams discussed in this article into two categories: those which are continuous and those which are discontinuous with waking experience. The first table presents dream images which are continuous with waking life. The second table presents dream images which are discontinuous with waking life. Each table is further divided into two sub-groups. On the left side are dream scenes and images and on the right side are dream figures. It should be noted that dreams containing religious images, or figures such as God, heaven or angels are not automatically classified as discontinuous since these images play a dominant role in the waking experience of the prophets. These images are classified based upon the context in which they appear in the dream. For example, most of the time the appearance of certain theological dream images

such as angels, Satan or God walking in a garden in a dream are continuous with waking experience. On the other hand, other strange theological imagery such as flying scrolls or angels holding burning coals are classified as discontinuous with waking life.

These two tables demonstrate that ancient Jewish religious literature has an abundance of dream narratives. Some images in these biblical and pseudepigraphic narratives conform to what is regularly experienced while awake and aware, but other dream images seem strange and more dream-like. This dichotomy is consistent with what modern dream researchers have learned about the nature of dreams, namely, that the world of nocturnal dreams is a mixture of imagery originating from waking consciousness and from the deep recesses of the unconscious mind. Once one goes beneath the theological overlay present in these narratives, there is nothing "fake" or inauthentic about these dream visions.

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Table 2. Discontinuous dream narratives in the ancient Jewish literature

Discontinuous Dream Scenes/Images	Discontinuous Dream Figures
Jacob's heavenly ladder with angels ascending and descending upon it (Gen. 28:12).	Isaiah's lips are burned by an angel using a hot coal (Isa. 6:8).
A sapphire throne of God in the sky (Ez. 1:14)	Angels speaking loudly causing the earth to rumble (Isa.6:4).
Four horns in the sky (Zech. 1:18-21).	Ezekiel eating a scroll (Ez.3:1-2).
A gold lampstand that pours out gold oil (Zech 4:1-12).	An angel using hot coals to burn Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6:6).
A crystal wall surrounded by tongues of fire and a flaming house (1st Enoch 15)	Creatures with a human face and the face of a lion or ox (Ez.1:10).
A talking tree and an overflowing fountain destroying everything in its path (2 Baruch 11:1-7).	A heavenly man that appears to be on fire (Ez.1:26).
The Divine Chariot: <i>Dead Sea Scrolls: Songs For the Holocaust of the Sabbath</i> .	A heavenly man dressed in white linen with a golden belt around his waist (Dan.10:7-9).
	Four -headed birds, winged lions and a beast with iron teeth (Dan.7: 1-8).
	The ghostly figure called "Ancient of Days"(Dan. 7:13).
	Joshua wearing dirty clothing (Zech. 1:1-7).
	A flying scroll (Zech.5:1-4).
	A flying goat with miraculous horns (Dan. 8:5).
	Four chariots coming out of bronze mountains (Zech. 6:1-4).
	A woman flying in the sky with a measuring basket (Zech.5:5-11).
	The Man of the Sea who possesses fiery breath (4 Ezra 13:1-13).

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