

To Dream & Stop Dreaming (Revelation 1)

Revelation 1:1-20

#2 in our series The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation

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All images by Peter Hiett.

Prayer

Lord God, it's the time in our service to proclaim the Gospel, to preach. It's such a weird thing to be a preacher because I can really do nothing so Lord, we ask that your Holy Spirit would inhabit all of us. Lord God, we pray that you would impart meaning to my heart, our hearts, to everyone who hears or reads this message. You can do things that no person can do so would you open our hearts now. Help us to believe. I'm not sure we can really understand, at least now, but through your Spirit you can help us to believe. In Jesus' name, Amen.

This is our second sermon in The Revelation.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near [at hand].

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of [the] kings on earth. [That's incredible. Is John dreaming?]

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom [or as in some versions "made us kings and priests"], priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds [not "will be," but "is"], and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation [notice John was in the tribulation] and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze,

refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. —Revelation 1:1-20

Do you *actually* believe He had seven stars in His hand?
Do you *actually* believe that a *lampstand* could also be a church, not just *like* a church?
. . . and a sword could *actually* come from a man's mouth
. . . and Jesus *is* the ruler of the kings on earth?

Or is this a metaphor . . . or maybe just a dream?

Is the Revelation a hallucination or just a dream? (John is exiled on a desert island.)
Some would argue that all belief in the supernatural is just that—a dream.

One morning in the paper I read an article on people's belief in the paranormal—that is, belief in things that we can't comprehend and isolate in a lab. They interviewed a professor Baker, who said:

Modern Americans aren't so different than primitive humans who thought that when lightning struck it was God throwing thunderbolts. So many things about the world and nature are absolutely mysterious to them. The desire to find supernatural explanations for natural events is still with us, and will be until more people get good basic scientific educations.

See? The professor thinks that science explains thunder, and lightning, and light, and wonder . . . and me.

The article went on to say how important it was for superstitious people and religious people to get a good basic scientific education. I absolutely love science. And I have a "scientific education." It's the study of what can be learned through the scientific method.

The scientific method verifies hypotheses, related to cause and effect, that can be tested by repetition in a controlled environment. It studies this world of space and time.

Many of you know Mark Reinke. When I was a teenager, he was the older cool guy that would come and speak at the youth group. One day he shared that he had conclusively disproved the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ using the latest, cutting-edge, scientific methodology:

- He obtained several laboratory mice from Colorado State University.

- He then established a controlled environment, which simulated the ancient city of Jerusalem around about 30 AD.
- He then took some of the laboratory mice and swore them into the ancient office of the Roman Praetorian Guard. He designated one of the mice the Herod mouse, another Caiaphus mouse, and another Pontius Pilate the mouse.
- Another group of mice, he carefully circumcised according to the ancient stipulations of the Torah.
- He dressed many of these mice in little robes simulating the garb of Pharisees.
- He took twelve of these mice and fed them a diet of bread and wine.
- And then, He took one very special mouse and nailed it to a tree. This mouse had been previously designated as the “Jesus Mouse.”
- Upon death, he took the Jesus Mouse to a small, paper-mâché tomb, laid the body inside, and rolled a great stone—relative to a mouse—over the entrance to the tomb.

Early on the morning of the third day, Mark returned with great anticipation and some spices. The stone had not been rolled away. And the Jesus Mouse was still dead. I’m sorry to shatter your faith, but there you have it!

Now you may say, “Wait a minute . . . that’s *stupid*.” Well, it is! But it’s no more stupid than any of the “scientific arguments” that have been advanced in the twentieth century against the existence of the supernatural or God. They are stupid, and yet we’ve swallowed them hook, line, and sinker.

Even Christians—have come to believe that the only things that are truly real are things that can be demonstrated with the scientific method that is, hypotheses that can be tested in a controlled environment.

Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple and said, “Let’s run a little test. Let’s test a hypothesis. ‘If you’re the Son God throw yourself down, and we will see if angels come and bear you up.’” And Jesus said, “Thou shalt not put the Lord your God to the test!”

Since the “enlightenment” in the 18th-century folks have argued that the only things you *can* believe are things you can put to the test. Of course, you can’t put that belief to the test and yet people believe that belief. And Satan likes that, for that belief means we cannot believe in God. Deuteronomy 6:16 says, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test!”

Why?

Well, I suppose it’s because it is a wee bit arrogant to assume that God is like a rat. It’s arrogant and rather stupid, for if God were to submit to our test and act like a rat, we wouldn’t believe that God was in fact God.

What would we do? We’d probably crucify Him. And if He rose from the dead, we probably still wouldn’t believe because an empty tomb is no longer a controlled environment.

GK Chesterton wrote:

As an explanation of the world, materialism has a sort of insane simplicity. It has just the quality of the madman's argument; we have at once the sense of it covering everything and the sense of it leaving everything out....[the materialist] understands everything, and everything does not seem worth understanding.

So, we modern people believe in billions of facts, but none have any meaning. That's because meaning, itself, can't be proven by the scientific method. Nothing truly good beautiful reasonable and right can be proved by the scientific method, for Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Reason and Righteousness can't be proven by the scientific method. Each of them is like an uncaused cause—necessary beingness—realities that cannot be proven but only encountered and believed.

Even the scientific method can't be proven by the scientific method but only *believed*. It can't be proven—only believed in—like religion. I think most real scientists know this . . . And if they don't, they haven't been paying attention . . . to science.

In the last century, scientists have said some rather incredible things. They discovered the universe had a beginning—a big bang. They now argue that about fourteen billion years ago the universe just like sprang into existence—fourteen Billion years from our perspective, but six days from another perspective—like the perspective of a Creator.

But even weirder, there is no natural law at the *point* of the Big Bang; all space and time, and likewise all cause and effect, sprang into existence at that *point*, which means that all nature has a supernatural explanation . . . Dr. Baker.

All causes have an uncaused cause. No space, no time, no science, beyond, before, outside of the Big Bang... then what? Well . . . maybe not what, but perhaps, who. And check this out: Science has demonstrated that at the subatomic level the quantum state of *all matter* mysteriously depends, in some strange way, on a person who consciously observes it—not a *what*, but a *who*.

It's as if matter doesn't really matter, but you do.

It's as if matter is the dream, and you're the dreamer.

It's as if you are an imperfect image of the perfect Creator, who creates all things with His logos, His reason, His thoughts, His Word.

It's as if He dreams you into existence, and He's inviting you to dream Him into you're existence too . . .

Well, science itself has shown that space and time are something like a dream. Almost a hundred years ago, Albert Einstein said, "*Reality is an illusion albeit a very persistent one.*" He also said, "*Imagination is more important than knowledge.*" As if, faith is the foundation of all fact.

See? Physicists are saying things like, “Dreams are more solid than matter!” As if all of physics is somehow a dream—this world is your dream.

That’s an enticing thought, and a terrifying thought.

- Enticing, for then you are like God...
- And terrifying, for then there is no God—a very lonely you—and no one else but you . . . a lonely dreamer.

Well just, what if, what if, what if... your world is a dream? You might say, “It doesn’t seem like a dream.” Well, do you remember how you got here? How you and your world started? See? Maybe you’re dreaming.

Clip 1 from *Inception*

Cobb: *When we’re asleep, our mind can do almost anything...*
Ariadne: *Such as?*
Cobb: *Well, imagine you are designing a building. Right? You consciously create each aspect. Time feels like it’s almost creating itself if you know what I mean.*
Ariadne: *Yeah. Yeah. . . like discovering.*
Cobb: *Only one asperation right?*
Cobb: *Now, in a dream, our mind continuously does this. I mean we create and perceive our world simultaneously. [Cobb draws a diagram] Our mind does this so well that we don’t even know it’s happening. Dreams . . . they feel real while we’re in them, right? It’s only when we wake up that we realize something was actually strange. Let me ask you a question: You never really remember the beginning of a dream do you? You always end up right in the middle of what’s going on.*
Ariadne: *I guess . . . Yeah.*
Cobb: *So how did we end up here?*
Ariadne: *Well, we just cam from the . . . uh . . . (confused)*
Cobb: *Think about it Ariadne, how did you get here? Where are you right now?*
Ariadne: *(Looking around bewildered) We’re dreaming?*
Cobb: *You’re actually in the middle of the workshop, right now. This is your first lesson in shared dreaming. [The table that Ariadne and Cobb are sitting at begins to shake. A newstand explodes and then the reality around them begins to crumble to pieces as Ariadne realizes she is in a dream. Ariadne watches in wonder as “reality” crumbles around her.]*
Ariadne: *If it’s just a dream then why are you with...?*
Cobb: *It’s never really “just” a dream is it? A face full of glass hurts like hell when you’re in it. It feels real.*
[Ariadne gasps for air as she recovers from her dream and tries to make sense of what she has just experienced.]

Well, that’s just a movie. But maybe you are dreaming, and if so, I wonder how you could know? And if you *are* dreaming, then waking from *this* dream would be downright

apocalyptic. I mean we don't think of it that way when we're fully awake, for the dream world seems unreal in light of the real, but it does seem rather real while we're still dreaming.

Think about it: The sky rolls up, the stars fall from the sky, everything in the dream world vanishes . . . as you wake from a dream.

If you wake a person too quickly from a dream, you can give them a heart attack.

Did you notice that here at the start of the Revelation, John fell down as though dead until Jesus touched him and said, "Fear not"? So, maybe John wasn't dreaming, but waking up from a dream. Well, the loving thing to do when waking a person from a dream is to wake them up slowly.

In the movie, Leonardo DiCaprio had entered Ellen Page's dreams with some weird new technology... but did you notice: He told her what was coming: "*Stay calm... an apocalypse is coming.*"

You do that for your kids; you whisper in their ear, "Sweetheart . . . Hey, buddy . . . you're having a bad dream. Wake up. It's a bad dream, but I'm not a bad dream."

To the dreamer in his dream, there is a gradual realization that the whisper in his ear can't be explained by the dream. For a while, however, it's like the whisper is a part of the dream—an incongruent part of the dream.

So how do you know that you're dreaming?

Well, have you ever had a dream in which you were dreaming something, and that something that dream in your dream was more real than the dream—something you couldn't dream into submission in your dream? Have you ever dreamed that you had to go to the bathroom, and woken up to realize that you were? It happens . . . especially when you're a kid.

Have you ever dreamt that you were dreaming, but the dream in your dream was actually a person in the waking world trying to wake you up?

"When a man dreams his own dream, he is the sport of his dream; when Another gives it him, that Other is able to fulfil it..." wrote George MacDonald.

When we are awakened from a dream, the thing that wakes us is a reality that won't fit in our dream. My dreams can all be explained by *me*: I'm the *sport* of my dreams; I'm the *center* of my dreams; I'm the *source* of my dreams.

So, yes!—some of them are very *weird*, but they all have their source in me;

they all emanate from me. It's all about *me*. But when someone or something wakes me, my mind can't make that reality from the outside waking world *fit* into the interior reality of my own dream world—I can't make the truth fit into my world of illusion.

So, even though it's truth and reason, at first I experience it as confusion and perhaps . . . even suffering . . . I suffer reality as I'm waking from my illusions.

But if the someone who loves me is waking me from my dreams—like I said—they will first try to enter my dreams like a whisper: "*Peter, it's time to get up. I love you and I made waffles.*"

So this is my question:

Are there things in this world that don't fit in this world?
That can't be explained by this world or by you?
Paradoxes, mysteries, things you can't comprehend?

Maybe they are *real*, and this entire world is the dream.

Maybe it's somebody whispering in your ear: "*Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and I will give you light.*"

That's Ephesians 5:14, and maybe the Word of God whispering in your ear. "*Stay calm. You are about to experience an apocalypse. But, I made waffles, roast lamb, red wine, and a feast you can barely even begin to imagine.*"

About those people who believe God is actually somehow behind thunder, Professor Baker said, "So many things about the world and nature are absolutely mysterious to them."

Maybe that's because *they* are waking up! And Professor Baker is entirely enchanted by his own dreams: No mystery . . . No paradox . . . No meaning . . . No Truth . . . No Beauty . . . No Wonder. No . . . body else . . . but Him. . . because He's asleep.

John records in his gospel that at one point in Jesus' ministry, after He prayed, "Father glorify your name," a voice boomed from the sky: "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again." Some standing there said it thundered. Others said, "That was *more* than a thunder!" So...Who was dreaming . . . and who was awake?

What I am saying is, maybe Jesus really *did* appear to John.

Maybe Jesus really *did* have a sharp, two-edged sword coming out of his mouth.

Maybe this little seemingly inconsequential church of ours really *is* a lampstand.

Maybe the time is at hand and the Kingdom *is* at hand.

Maybe it's not just a metaphor, but this entire world is the metaphor.

Maybe the Revelation is not just a metaphor and the mystery, paradox, and wonder in those statements don't mean that they're less real than this world, but that they're more real than this world.

In 1884 a preacher and schoolmaster named Edwin Abbott published a book called *Flatland: A Romance in Many Dimensions*.

I never read the book, but I did see the movie. Schoolteachers still use it to explain geometry, but Edwin Abbott didn't just write it to help people understand geometry, but believe in God.

The book is about a land called "Flatland," an entirely two-dimensional world. Flatlanders can only perceive and experience two dimensions. But one of the beings in Flatland has a revelation of the third dimension. For a few moments, he is lifted out of Flatland and can see three dimensions! When he goes back to Flatland and tries to explain what he saw, everybody thinks he's just dreaming.

Now, every few years I've included this in a sermon, and I would include it in every sermon if I could. But we especially need it for the Revelation.

So, pay attention.

If we were Flatlanders, our world would look like this [Peter holds up a large poster board with shapes drawn on it]. We would only be able to perceive two dimensions: squares, circles, rectangles—objects in two dimensions.

Now, let's suppose that a three-dimensional object entered our world and passed through it [Peter picks up a basketball and slowly moves it towards the posterboard] like this sphere that's also called a basketball.

If this sphere passed through our world, what would we Flatlanders see?



A circle!

What would we call it? I think we might call it a miracle. Why? Because all at once a point appeared in our world, then it grew into a circle, then it shrunk back to a point, and then it was gone.

But now let's suppose there are three-dimensional objects intersecting and staying in Flatland all the time—spheres, cubes, cylinders . . . Do you see what that would mean? It would mean Flatlanders would be surrounded by miracles all the time. But they wouldn't see it that way . . . except, of course, for the one who had the revelation.

The one that received the revelation would say things like, "*That's not just any old square; that's a cube!* And you're not just a square but a cube." And everyone would say, "You're nuts, You're dreaming."

We might say, "Hey look a church" and he would say, "It's a lampstand."

We might say, "Those worshipers sure are singing loud." And he might say, "*The Great harlot has fallen, and I see the New Jerusalem coming down.*"

We might say, "Hey look Donald Trump is reading the Bible... imagine that." And He would say, "*Behold a white horse, and he that sits upon it, is faithful and true. In righteousness he judges and makes war...His name: the Word of God ... and look birds of the air are coming to eat the flesh of the kings.*" We'd say... "*Um whatever*" and whisper to each other, "*He's nuts. He's dreaming.*"

We might say, "Hey look a poor baby in a manger."
And he would start singing with the angels.

We might say, "Hey look a naked criminal nailed to a tree."
And he would bow in adoration before the Lamb of God standing on his throne.

We might say, "Hey look, Jr. high kids handing our sandwiches to beggars down at the park."
And he'd join them, thrilled that he too, could serve the King of Kings.

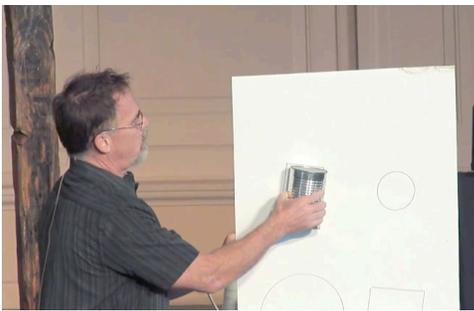
We might say, "I'm dying."
And he would say, "No! No! No! At last, you're waking up."

His world would be full of miracle and meaning.
He couldn't explain it to us, but he would proclaim it to us.
A paradox.

If a cylinder intersects Flatland, this way, what would Flatlanders see? A circle.



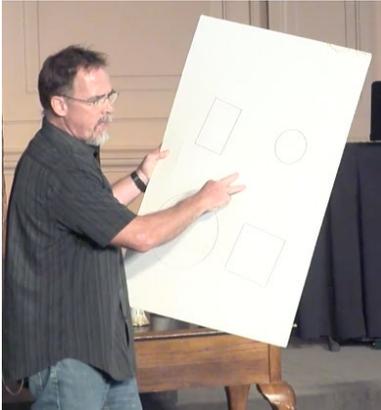
And now, if the same cylinder intersected Flatland this way, what would Flatlanders see?



A rectangle.

What *is* a cylinder? It's an infinite number of circles that are an infinite number of rectangles. Flatlanders would say, "No way! Inconceivable! Incomprehensible!" And the guy who had the revelation would say, "I can't explain it, but it's true!" That's a Paradox.

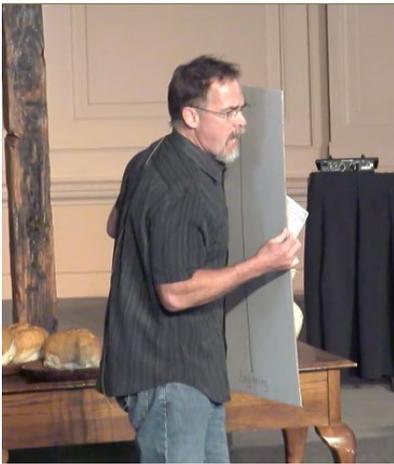
What if I took three fingers and stuck them through Flatland; I spoke to Flatland and said, "Behold, all three are one. And all three are me. I am Trinity."



Flatlanders would say, “No way!”
But I might say something like... *Yahweh*.

Did you know that the Bible says you were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world? And yet you must freely choose, for you’ve been chosen to choose in freedom. That’s a bit of a paradox for the three-and-a-half dimensions of my brain. But it’s *true*.

In fact, let’s suppose that time is one of the dimensions of Flatland. Einstein said we live in spacetime, really four dimensions. I say three-and-a-half because we can only travel in one direction and physicists are confused about that. Well, imagine time is one of the dimensions in Flatland. If I took Flatland and held it just like this . . .



. . . an inch away from my being . . . and I spoke to Flatland saying, “Behold, Flatland! The kingdom of Peter is at hand! My time is near!”

Would that be true? Yes... at every point of time in Flatland.

Imagine if Flatland were a plane that intersected my body and someone said, “In Peter, we live move and have our being. He is not far from each one of us.” That would be true, even though Flatlanders might say, “There’s no such thing as Peter.”

Imagine if I somehow entered Flatland, and along about 33 AD I stood before the Sanhedrin and said, “From this day forward you will see the son of man coming on the clouds of Heaven... and every eye will see me.” And then I slammed myself into Flatland. My coming (*parousia* in Greek) would be *one* event in reality, but experienced at all these separate points in Flatland: 33 AD, 70 AD as Jerusalem falls, Feb. 18th, 1546—the day Martin Luther died, March 8th, 2004—the day my dad died, and some date in the future—the day I die or you die.

Jesus is the End, and He comes for each of us at death, which will be “within one generation of right now—One Apocalypse at a million points in history . . . such that we’ll all be caught up in the air to meet Him together (1 Thess. 4:17).

The Apocalypse: *“He is coming on the clouds of Heaven and all eyes will see him.”*
And you will see him and the sky will roll up and the stars will fall...*“He is coming on the clouds of heaven...”*

But wouldn’t it be nice if He came now—like a whisper in your soul or a kiss on the cheek...Well, maybe He is. Do you ever encounter things in our world that cannot be explained by our world and don’t submit to scientific analysis in these three-and-a-half dimensions?

Paradox, Mystery, Unexplained Phenomenon?
How about, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Life, Love or Reason?
How about your wife?

Jesus said, “I am the Truth.” That means the Truth *is* Jesus.
Perhaps every time you long for Truth, you’re hearing Truth whisper in your soul:
“Wouldn’t you like to wake up?”

Jesus said “God alone is Good.” If your sandwich is good, maybe God is whispering through your sandwich: *“This is just a taste. Wouldn’t you like to wake up... and meet me?”*

God is Love, and so real Love is God. So when your wife gives you a kiss,
God is also giving you a kiss, and beginning to wake you up.

Sometimes we say: Where’s God? I need a sign!
Do you suffer? If you suffer, you suffer the loss of control.
A dream is all under your control.
So when you suffer the loss of control, perhaps someone is waking you up.

I’m trying to say that we need to stop taking these three-and-a-half dimensions so seriously—stop taking this world so seriously.

When I was a child, I had a hard time distinguishing my dream world from my waking world. So, for instance, I once had a dream of a Chinese tornado dressed in a kimono with a pointed hat, and it utterly terrified me.

This week, I dreamed that I was in a North Korean prison and the guard decided to trim my eyebrows because they were just too bushy. I was about to die, but I realized, “This is absurd. It’s just a dream.” And I didn’t take it seriously.

The older I get, and the more I listen to the whispers from the waking world, the more I sense that this world is absurd . . . And so I need to take these three-and-a-half dimensions less seriously. I'm about to wake up.

Ironically, it's Evangelical Christians who often take space and time so *seriously!* We've been so busy trying to make sense of the Bible in three dimensions that we forgot that it testifies to the one who made all the dimensions.

So, we worry about the Great Tribulation and when it will be, and if we're prepared with canned goods and shotguns, but we don't ask "*What does it mean?*" We don't notice that Jesus said, "*In this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.*"

The Suffering Servant has overcome the world—not people with canned goods, shot guns, and strong militants. Love in flesh has overcome the world. The Slaughtered Lamb has overcome the world. The Way, the Truth, and the Life have overcome the three and one-half dimensions of this fallen world. The meaning of God has overcome this meaningless existence.

Jesus is what God means.
Jesus is the Meaning.

Right here in Revelatino chapter one, Jesus reveals the meaning of the stars. And right here in chapter one, Jesus reveals the meaning of the lampstands. "John, I'll tell you what the lampstands are—y'all are a lampstand. Lampstands shine light and I'm the Light."

We are going to have to trust Jesus to reveal His meaning in the rest of the book . . . and in the rest of space and time . . . and in the rest of our space and time—without Him—at best you're just a square. Without Love and Truth living in you, you have no depth.

Jesus is God's dream given to you. You must dream God's dreams, in order to stop dreaming. And one day you'll see they *aren't* just dreams; they're reality.

So, how can we know *anything* is truly real? Only through divine revelation. And when it happens it looks like worship.

Did you notice that John was "in the spirit on the Lord's day"? The Lord's day probably refers to Sunday, the first day of the week. Well, John was in the spirit on the Lord's day *when* he received the revelation—"...*when* he received the revelation" ...he was "in the spirit." So, *receiving* the revelation was not *being* in the spirit. So what *was* being in the spirit? I think it was worship!

Science was born out of worship and I truly love science. But worship is the opposite of the scientific method: It's not conquest; it's submission.

There is an epistemology of technology; it's the scientific method: It's great for knowing things confined to a three-dimensional world.

And there is an epistemology of worship...

You can know things by taking knowledge of Life—like fruit from a tree.

Or you can know because you've been known by Life and Jesus is the Life.

In an experiment, a scientist tests things to comprehend those things.

In worship, God tests us and He comprehends us. He knows us and gives us life.

Worship God in Christ Jesus and surrender to the dreams that He gives you.

Worship is allowing Jesus to be your vision. Worship is the revelation of Jesus.

Have you ever felt love in worship? John wrote, "*He who loves is born of God and knows God.*" That's more than you know and you are far more than you know (not just a square—but a cube).

As we've worshipped, have you hoped for God's glory? Scripture claims that "*Christ in you is the hope of glory.*" So, the hope of Glory—in you—is Christ in you, preparing you, to wake up.

Have you ever sensed a little faith in you? Paul prayed that "*Christ would dwell in our hearts through faith.*" Faith is much, much more than you now know. And unless you have the faith of Christ you can't wake up, for without Faith waking up would give you a heart attack, reduce you to dust and ashes, and God would have to start over again!

Faith, Hope, and Love—you've encountered all three and they are one. And so I hope you see that you don't have to have experiences like John on the island of Patmos. Just worship! And pay attention to what dreams may come.

And God has already given us a dream—the book of Revelation. It only seems like a dream because this world is a dream. I should say this *fallen* world is a dream. And that's what John means in The Revelation when he refers to the world—not the trees, bushes and such, but the systems in which we live. This fallen world is a dream—it's our dream.

I think the devil tempted us with a dream: "*You can take fruit from the tree of knowledge and make yourself in the image of God.*" He tempted us with a dream of control; control is our dream. And so we took the life of the Good from the tree in the Garden of Eden. Just as we took the life of Christ from the tree in the Garden of Calvary.

- We dreamed that we were God, and God was a rat— a lab rat.
- We dreamed that the Good was simply a thing to be taken and consumed.
- We dreamed that the Truth could be twisted and used for our own ends.
- We dreamed that the Life was our own private possession—our Life.
- We dreamed that we were God and crucified God; we crucified the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light, the Love, the Good, the Reason.

We forgot how we got here in the first place . . .
For we dreamed the dream that we are our own creators.
We dreamed an evil dream, crucified Christ, and everything died...
BUT . . . death is just our dream, and now the Life is waking us up.
And this is how He does it...

Communion

[Peter walks to the communion table and begins to prepare the bread and wine.] On that night, He took the bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you. Take and eat. Put it in you. And on that same night, He took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood. Poured out for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it all of you. Put it in you.

Faith, Hope, and Love in you, are Christ rising in you, and gently waking you up.

He has let us dream for a time and for His own reasons, but now He has entered our dreams and He is waking us up. We've each dreamed that we were God and God was dead. But all along God has been dreaming us. We're not the dreamer, but the dream. You are God's dream . . . dreaming your own dreams for a time, for He has let you. . .
But an Apocalypse is coming. From the perspective of our self-centered dreams it looks like this:

Clip 2 from *Inception*

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|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [The "reality" surrounding Ariadne and Cobb crumbles to pieces.] |
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From the perspective of *reality* it looks more like this:

[Image from the movie *Snow White* (The prince awakens Snow White with a kiss)]

And this is Apocalypse Now. [Peter points to the communion table.]

Benediction

So sin is reaming the dream of your own sovereignty—that you are your own creator. And Jesus is God's dream, the dream of *the* Creator. He is the perfected Adam. He is somehow who you most truly are. But we dream to dream that we are our own creator and the dream has turned into a nightmare and so we may ask, "God, why did you let us dream our own dreams?" Well, maybe because He wanted to show us that He is the dreamer and His dreams are better than our dreams, and you, in fact, are His dream. One day all your dreams will agree with His dreams, and that will be reality.

Whatever the case, don't take this world so seriously. Listen for the whispers and remember that you are God's dream.

Believe the Gospel. Amen.

*They tell me, Lord, that when I seem to be in speech with you,
Since but one voice is heard, it's all a dream, one talker aping two.*

*Sometimes it is, yet not as they conceive it. Rather, I
Seek in myself the things I hoped to say, but lo!, my wells are dry.*

*Then, seeing me empty, you forsake the listener's role and through
My dumb lips breathe and into utterance wake the thoughts I never knew.*

*And thus you neither need reply nor can; thus, while we seem
Two talkers, thou art One forever, and I no dreamer, but thy dream.*

- C. S. Lewis

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.