

**Christian View of Dream Interpretations in  
Comparison to Jung's Theories**

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### Abstract

Christians have a very particular view on dreams. That they are primarily ways communication between humans and God. These dreams can come in various forms such as a direct command from God, or a warning. These dreams are believed to come in the form of images, or even a storyline that may not make sense in the natural. We also have Carl Jung and his theories on dreams. Jung saw dreams as a way for our psyche to make direct communication of things of importance to a person or individual. Dreams for Jung was somewhat of an importance. He held them in high regard. The name he used to be a Reappraisal. There are a few similarities with his thought process with dreams with the Christian views and the connection with God that one may not realize without looking at both closely. In this paper we will be making a comparison between the way Christians view dreams as opposed to how Jung views dreams based on his theories.

*Keywords:* Dreams, Christianity, Interpretation, Jung's Theories

Dreams, the brain, our psyche, the spiritual realm, they all have a connection to a deeper role to be played. People for centuries have been trying to understand them or give them meaning to things we may not fully be able to understand. Different cultures and religions have given them meanings stating that are ways of communication that connects us to what they believe to be between this world and the next. Some have used them as interpretations for things to come or things that are already at hand. Dreams are defined in the Oxford dictionary as a series of thoughts, images, and sensations occurring in a person's mind while they are sleeping. There is a well know psychotherapist named Carl Jung, that takes an interesting take on what we call dreams. With his theories and ideas, you can see how the role of dreams have been interpreted over the course of the years. In one take dreams are being interpreted as having a spiritual connection or aspect to it and then in another thought process there are those that say that there is a type of science behind it. Overall, everyone can say that they have an interesting story about a dream of theirs where they have made connections to their current life.

“Jung hypothesized that dreams are first and foremost a natural and normally occurring event, not a neurotic compromise formation based on wish fulfillment, a censor, and inhibition.” (Beebe, 2001). He believed that dreams presented themselves in the language of the unconscious, but that it was the assignment of the therapist and patient to translate them in a way that makes sense to the conscious. The idea of association is often used when people speak about Jung and dreams. Associations were linked to the dreams themselves, helping to bring together the different dream elements to make up a complete story. Jung researched comparative symbolism to understand clinical material. His study sometimes focused on mythology, religion, anthropology, and various others so that he could get a understand the specific symbols better.

His interpretation and conclusion of it all was that a dream required both sides of the psyche, the conscious and unconscious mind to be taken into consideration. Jung called the force behind the unconscious Transcendent Function. “It meant the spontaneous psychic process where our ego confronts and converses with a counter position in the unconscious, represented by a symbol.” (Roesler, 2022).

Through Christianity dreams are known to come in the form of instructions from God. We see in various occasions in the scriptures with Jacob for example, Solomon and in the New Testament Joseph. In one instance Jacob was visited by an angel sent by God that informed him the “the God of Bethel” was aware of Laban’s treatment of him and instructed him to “arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth.” (Genesis 31:10-13). In the New Testament Joseph received an instruction in his second dream. In the dream an angel of the Lord informed Joseph that King Herod was searching for Jesus and commanded Joseph to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt and wait there for further instructions. (Matthew 2:13). These two examples are out of many dreams where God has given a direct instruction and warning through a dream. For Christians God sends dream with a purpose in mind, a way in which he wants to deliver a message to us. All throughout scripture you can find that God used dreams as a form of information, instructions, predictions, warning and sometimes a combination.

There was a study done where children interpreted auditory voices in their dreams as messages from God. The study had a mix of children who were comprised Christians a total of thirty-five, marginal Christians a total of nine, Muslim a total of twenty-six and a set who were of no religion and their total was twenty-four. In total, sixty-three out of the ninety-four children

that were interviewed stated that their dream contained a message in different forms. The total number of auditory messages in the dreams were twenty-two children. “Whether the children’s dreams were coded as message dreams was dependent on the children’s understanding of the dream.” (Adams, 2005). The different ideas of dreams have been under research for those that just do not understand it and want to make sense of it. Another way in scripture where God did not speak directly to the person in a dream but gave the gift of prophesy through dreams was Joseph from the Old Testament. In Josephs dreams God is basically revealing to him what is to come through what Jung would call symbols that represented something else. An example would be from Josephs second dream where he saw the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing down to him. God also gifted Joseph with the interpretation of said dreams along with others dreams he would be asked to interpret in his near future. (Genesis 37:1-44:9). Another dream of Joseph was that he saw eleven bundles of grains along with his bundle of grain. In that dream the eleven bundles were bowing down to his bundle. Although different dreams and symbols the interpretations and means were all the same. In Josephs second dream the sun and the moon represented his mother and father, and the eleven stars were his eleven brothers. In his first dream the eleven bundles of grain again represented his eleven bundles. Years ahead everything came in fruition just as he saw it and as God had revealed to him.

There is also an article that speaks about a specific Christian martyr that had historically significant dreams while in prison up until the day she died. “Her first dream went on to speak about her experience as a breast-feeding mother weaning her child which was then used as a metaphor for Christian spiritual growth and martyrdom.” (Davis, 2005). In early Christian teachings, a child’s weaning from milk to solid food was used as a metaphor for spiritual

maturation. “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.” (1Peter 2:2). Of course, there were those who had Freudian views and correlated it to be sexual of some kind. Through this dream Perpetua knew that she would face suffering to death.

In another study we see an application of dream practices taken from a few Native American cultural groups who are also known culturally for their take on the interpretations of dreams. For example, Native Americans used the appearance of various animals and birds in dreams often as a specific meaning. They often dreamt about community activities like hunting, harvesting, fighting, worshiping as their dream language. Simply showing that dreams did not always have to have a symbolic or metaphorical meaning behind it as the psychoanalysts all conveyed. (Krippner, 1996). Within this study dreams were defined as narrative reports of imagery, thoughts, and or feelings occurring during sleep.

With society over the years, we are now trying to give meaning to dreams based on what we think based on our man-made knowledge or even looking into avenues that are leading to dark ends. What I have learned from Jung was that he was a scientist that did not understand something as complexed as dreams and so gave different names to things he did not understand but still knew to make Christian correlations to the interpretations of dreams. The Christians belief in the interpretations of dreams through God seems to be the foundation on which a lot of different cultures and even scientists have based their views, studies, and practices on. How much can we really identify from dreams with our own knowledge or is this just something we should leave as another unexplainable wonder of God? Would scientists be ok with that thought

process, probably not because everything in science seems to always have a fact behind it to explain it. When we are trying to explain anything pertaining to God or understanding, there are no guarantees of an answer at least know to man. But of course, this is just an opinion from a fellow Christian.

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