

## Deception 5: False Dreams, Visions and "Miracles"

Many times, individuals have told me about dreams or visions that did not seem to be God-inspired. How do we judge these things? Do not be deceived by dreams, visions, or appealing messages. The Apostle John wrote: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

How do we test these things? By seeing if they conform to God's Word in the Bible. We never add to or subtract from the inspired Word of God as received in Holy Scripture. We should always remember the verse we read responsively in Wednesday evening Services: *"In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets. But now, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son"* (Hebrews 1:1-2). And we should remember that the devil tries to deceive us by whispering into our ears the very things we wish to hear. Think of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6). And pay attention to the warning Jesus gave us in Matthew 24:24 *"For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."*

The occult appeals to many people. Some try to contact their deceased relatives through mediums. Satanic video games are popular. We need to educate ourselves and our children on the dangers of the occult, satanic activities and other demonic influences. God Almighty condemns witchcraft and sorcery. He tells us, *"There shall not be found among you anyone who...practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer <sup>11</sup>or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, <sup>12</sup>for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord"* (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

God has provided us with everything that we need in Holy Scripture. He even gives us the miraculous and supernatural blessings of Baptism and Holy Communion as instituted by Jesus himself. Let these words be your comfort, for in and through them God himself visits us, and abides with us, and dwells in us. Through these gifts, God will always be with you and never forsake you. The best, most certain, and sure ways to get the answers to life's problems is always to seek Him where He promises to be found – in his Word and in his Sacraments. God's Word is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. His Baptism adopts you into His family. His Holy Communion gives you the very body and blood that won for you forgiveness of sins by His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

Can God speak to you or come to you outside of these things? Well, God can do anything. But He **has done** everything that is necessary for you, in Christ Jesus. So, why look elsewhere? May you abide in His gifts of Word and Sacrament unto life everlasting. Amen!

