

Flying Too High?

In Greek mythology exists a strange fable of a man who met his death because he flew too close to the sun. The man's name was Icarus. As the story goes, Icarus and his father were put in prison on the island of Crete. The father, being a master craftsman, designed a way of escape by building them each a set of wings using feathers, wood, and wax. Before the escape, his father gave a set of wings to his son, but warned him that the feathers were attached only by wax. Because of this wax, he warned his son that if he flew too close to the sun, the wax would melt and the feathers would fall off. Starting their escape, the father and son flew easily out of the prison. However, as they flew into the air the son Icarus was so thrilled with the feel of flying that he began to fly higher and higher. Forgetting the warning, Icarus flew too close to the sun and eventually the inevitable happened: under the heat of the direct sun, the wax melted, the feathers fell off, and Icarus plunged to his death in the sea below!

It's an odd story and full of lots of scientific impossibilities. However, this story is often used as a fable to teach us a lesson about the dangers of dreaming too high. The lesson teaches us that if you dream too big, you are going to crash to the ground and be sorry.

To be honest, sometimes I feel a lot like Icarus. I have found it true that dreaming high comes with a price, and often that price means falling flat on my face. Someone once said that, "You are as young as your dreams, and as old as your cynicism." I think there is a lot of truth to that. What is it about a positive, visionary person that is so life-giving? In the same regard, what is it about being around pessimistic, cynical people that is so draining?

So what is the right biblical attitude to the idea of dreaming big? The encouraging truth is that actually "vision" and "dreaming" are part of the inheritance that we received when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church at Pentecost. The book of Acts records:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and **your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:** And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. Acts 2:16-18

If you read this like I do, the book of Acts seems to be saying there are—right along with anointed power and prophe-

sy—the Holy Spirit blessings of dreams and visions. Notice that the book of Acts says that it is the young men that are given "vision," but, interestingly, it goes on to say that it's the "old men" that dream—wow! The Spirit gives us vision as young men, but then He doesn't stop there. Instead of growing pessimistic and cynical as we grow older, the Holy Spirit keeps us dreaming even into old age! What an encouragement this is, and what a contrast to the "retirement" mindset that permeates our American culture today.

With this thought I can imagine two possible scenarios for my future. The typical American scenario would be that as I grow older and more "wise" in the ways of the world, I would see that my youthful ideas were radical and naive. I would realize that my time on this earth was getting short, so I should enjoy the "good things of life" with the remaining time that I have left. With my accumulated bank account, I could spend my time doing something like touring America in a mobile home or taking various overseas vacations. Perhaps I would even chuckle at some of the enthusiastic ideas I had as a youth ... and I would be careful not to waste any more time on wild ideas. Instead, I would be sure to spend my time on *me*.

But this is not the image that the book of Acts gives me as it describes the "older men." In the Pentecost account, the old men, full of the Holy Spirit, keep on dreaming! In this context I get a wonderful picture of an anointed, elderly man of God, who, thinking over his life as a young man, doesn't smirk at his visionary edges. This man rather blesses the Lord for the vision that was given to him by the Holy Spirit when he was young. Furthermore, now that this man is older he keeps on wanting more of God and dreaming of new horizons that he and his younger brethren could accomplish if they would just allow God to have His way in them.

This is the life that I want, but I have to admit that often I feel more like the Greek fable Icarus than I do this anointed, dreaming, elderly man described in the book of Acts. That's when I need to remember that those gifts of "vision" and "dreams" spoken of on the day of Pentecost were not the product of self-help-positive-thinking-good-attitude stuff,



Icarus comes crashing down.

rather they were the product of committed prayer and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

When I feel tempted to pessimism, cynicism, and doubt, I have to remember that those negative attitudes are not the fruit of a Spirit-filled life. There are visions and dreams that are gifts from God and they are promised to anyone who genuinely asks for them. (Luke 11) As a child of God, it is within my inheritance to ask the Holy Spirit for vision and to keep on asking Him for dreams right to the end of my life.

I want to fly. But I want to fly, not with wings of wax and feathers, but by His Spirit. Flying like this is different than what the Greeks spoke of when they talked of flying. The biblical account of flying says that when we fly, we do so because God is lifting us from underneath. Most importantly, He tells us the whole purpose of all of this is to bring us to Himself ... “how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.” Ex. 19:4 I want to fly with God, to dream higher than this world, and do all the things that God wants for me in my life. I know that only by His Spirit do I even have a chance.

In this issue we address this initiation into walking in the Spirit. We must needs be born of the Spirit, or our Christianity is but a mere form. We also take a look at how we handle ourselves with the Canaanite culture all around us, and how to handle that most dangerous part of our American Canaanite culture—money.

May this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* cause you to dream and fly high with Christ in heavenly places.
~Bro. Dean