‘Visions In The Night:’ A Narrative Exposition of Dreams in the Old Testament as Divine and Human Expressions of Hope

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Abstract: Dreams (חלום) are visions or oracles (חזון) expressed or communicated by God in the dark or while its receiver is sleeping. (See Job 33:15 and Isaiah 29:7) In popular language, “dreams” are used to describe individual and collective aspirations amid difficulties and struggles. Darkness, difficulties, and struggles are characteristic modifiers that speak of *hope.* As a theological virtue, *hope,* following Thomas Aquinas, can be described as both a Divine and a human expression that pursues a good “that is difficult but possible to obtain.” (*Summa Theologiae,* II-II, q. 17, a. 1) This essay will argue that “dreams” are expressions of Divine and human aspirations that fit well and, in fact, enrich the traditional understanding of *hope* as a theological virtue.

Keywords: Dreams, Hope, Visions, Old Testament, Biblical Theology

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Introduction

In contemporary and popular expressions, the word "dream," either taken as a noun or as a verb, speaks of aspirations for the future. A cursory online search for a dictionary definition of the word *dream* provides that it as "a strongly desired goal or purpose."[1] Apart from individual persons having their *dreams* for a better future (i.e., a college diploma, a stable livelihood, a loving partner, etc.), "dreams" are used in famous protest anthems that express collective aspirations for social change. One can think of the lyrics of the songs "The Impossible Dream" which has been popularly covered by the likes of Frank Sinatra and Tom Jones or John Lennon's hit "Imagine." Also, one cannot discount the famous 1963 "I have a dream" speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. that famously articulated demands for civil and economic rights and an end to racism in the United States.

Thus, *dreams* are taken synonymously or associated with the word "hope." On the other hand, *hope* is defined by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as a "desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment."[2] Theologically, *hope* is referred to as a theological virtue. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), apparently taking its cue from Thomas Aquinas, defines *hope* as the "theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness… [as it] responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every person."[3] As a *theological virtue*, Aquinas distinguished it from the natural passion "hope" whose mere "object is a future good, difficult but possible to attain" which includes natural goals such as the happiness of passing difficult examinations. "Supernatural" hope, however, speaks of the ontologically difficult pursuit of the Supreme Good that humans seek and are inspired to pursue: God.[4] This understanding of *hope* is effectively demonstrated by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans when he said that amid the difficulties that the early Church are going through, they accordingly "boast of our afflictions, knowing

[1] Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) "Dream" in *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary.* Accessed through https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/dream.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), nos.1817-1818.

[4] In Thomistic/scholastic terms, the word *hope* could be understood in two ways. First, in its natural sense. Second, in its supernatural sense. In its natural sense, hope refers to the human passion that seeks or pursues something that is good despite the difficulty of attaining it. One can think, for example, of the difficulty of attaining a college diploma. On the other hand, in its supernatural sense, hope refers to the Divinely infused virtue which accordingly empowers the human will to pursue God, despite the difficulties of doing so, as God is the ultimate good. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I-II, q. 40; II-II, q. 17.

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that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope and *hope does not disappoint.*" (Rom 5:3-5) The last phrase which is translated in Latin into *Spes non confundit* is adapted as the title of the late Pope Francis' Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025. The said document emphasized the necessity of reiterating the message of *hope* as humanity collectively desires for a better future for the world as it is under the crucible of crises that ranges from violence to poverty to social anxiety.[5]

To dream and *to hope* speak, therefore, of strong desires and the expectation of the fulfillment of said desires. It must be considered, albeit assumptious, that these definitions imply certain hints of difficulty in order to achieve such goals for those who *dream* and *hope*. However, there are apparent distinctions between these words that, for the keen observer, demands bridging and clarity. For instance, "dreams" are literally and psychologically referred to as the "series of thoughts, images or emotions occurring during sleep." Such definition obviously is far from the context implied in the above-mentioned protest battlecries. However, following the semiotic tradition laid by Ludwig Wittgenstein which insinuates that the understanding of a given word is reconstructed by its many potential meanings driven or conditioned by contexts and circumstances,[6] *dreaming* as an act akin to *hope* or *hoping* is justifiable. Igor Tolochin notes that each word has its evaluative potential that is represented by the basic features of human experience that provides a meaning that represents a means of need satisfaction for human beings and is intrinsically evaluative in nature.[7] In other words, words - such as *dreams* - are evolving with meaning such that they are to be understood within the contexts where they are expressed.

Thus, as this essay's title suggests, we ought to turn to the Bible, particularly to the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, dreams (חלום) are visions expressed or communicated by God in the dark or while its receiver is sleeping. Job 33:15 and Isaiah 29:7 calls חלום as "visions in the night." Notably, the phenomenon of dreaming, fascinating as it is, has been a common narrative tool in popular religiosity, such that it can be accordingly considered as "a primal wellspring of religious experience."[8] What is apparent, and we will elaborate this further in

[5] See Francis *Spes non confundit,* nos. 7-15. Accessed through: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html.

[6] See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* translated by G.E.M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, 1953).

[7] Igor Tolochin & Alexandra Yu Smirnova, "Dreams in the Bible and in Modern English Discourse: A Shift in Perspective," *Changing Societies & Personalities* 6/4 (2022): 948.

[8] Kelly Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the world's religions: A comparative history* (New York: NYU Press, 2008), 6.

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this brief essay, is that most biblical dreams occur not merely within a religious framework, but that it is experienced mostly within a context of difficulty or crisis - either historical or existential. As the theological definition of "dreams" implies, they are visions *in the night*. Darkness, difficulties, and struggles - which can be construed as contained figuratively in the word "night" - are characteristic modifiers that speak of *hope* in as much as it is the pursuit of a good "that is difficult but possible to obtain."[9]

Inspired by the theme of the Jubilee Year 2025 - "Pilgrims of Hope" - this theological paper seeks to explore and elaborate the Christian understanding of *hope* by means of turning to Old Testament *dream* narratives. It proposes to consider the following theological positions derived from a narrative examination of the Bible: first, *Dreams* speak of the people's aspirations or *hopes* for the future; second, *Dreams* speak of God's desires for the world, and; as a conclusion, Biblical Dreams are expressions of *hope*. In doing so, the discussion will proceed by considering the following questions: (1) What are *dreams* in the Old Testament? (2) What messages do they convey? and (3) What do these dreams tell us, "pilgrims" of hope today?

Dreams in the Old Testament

The question at hand is "What are dreams in the Old Testament?"

In building our response, we shall make use of the expository narrative approach. Thus, in discussing dream narratives in the Old Testament, we should consider the following: (1) a working theological definition of dreams; (2) a study of dreams' similarities and differences from other visions or revelations in the tradition accounted in the Hebrew Bible, and; (3) classifying dreams in the Old Testament.

The word חָלַם (along with its other derivatives or forms) appears 30 times in the Old Testament. According to *The Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon,* חָלַם can be understood in three senses: (a) ordinary dreams of sleep as in Is 29:8 and Ps 126:1; (b) dreams with prophetic message like that of Jacob in Gn 28:12, or that of Joseph in Gn 37:5-11, etc., and; (c) dreams of false prophets such as that in Dt 13:2-6. For our purposes, I intend to focus on the second proposed sense, such that חָלַם is provided by Is 29:7 and Job 33:15 with a concrete theological definition: חָזוֹן לַיְלָה - "a *vision in the night.*" To understand

[9] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* II-II, q. 17, a. 1.

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these further, let us first look into the manner as to how the authors of Isaiah and Job came with the definition of “dream” as a “vision in the night.”

Isaiah 29:7

וְהָיָה כַּחֲלוֹם חֶזְיוֹן לַיְלָה הֲמוֹן כָּל־ הַגּוֹיִם הַצֹּבְאִים עַל־ אֲרִיאֵל וְכָל־ צֹבֶיהָ וּמְצֻדָתָהּ וְהַמְּצִיקִים לָהּ׃

“Then *like a dream, a vision of the night*, shall be the horde of all the nations who make war against Ariel: All the outposts, the siege works against it, all who distress it.”

Job 33:14-15

כִּי־ בְאַחַת יְדַבֵּר־ אֵל וּבִשְׁתַּיִם לֹא יְשׂוּרֶנָּה׃
בַּחֲלוֹם חֶזְיוֹן לַיְלָה בִּנְפֹל תַּרְדֵּמָה עַל־ אֲנָשִׁים בִּתְנוּמוֹת עֲלֵי מִשְׁכָּב׃

“For God does speak, once, even twice, though you do not see it: In *a dream, in a vision of the night*, when deep sleep falls upon mortals as they slumber in their beds.”

In establishing the claim that “visions in the night” serves as a definition of the word “dream/s,” we shall look into the syntax of the pertinent phrases used and as well into their respective contexts.

In the case of Isaiah, the verse is obviously a compound sentence with “like a dream” as a prepositional phrase and “a vision of the night” as an appositive phrase. Thus, the positioning of “a vision of the night” after the prepositional phrase reveals an appositional relationship as it restates or clarifies what “dream” is. Appositive phrases, in grammar, universally function as reiteration or amplification of its antecedent or referred term/s.

On the other hand, the verse from Job shows that both “in a dream” and “in a vision of the night” function as prepositional phrases so as to elaborate the main clause of the entire verse as articulated in v. 14, “For God speaks…” Hence the relationship of both phrases are described in grammar as appositional parallelism, such that “vision of the night” restates and nuances “dream.”

Based on the contextual positioning of the two selected verses, the one in Isaiah speaks of “dreams” in a mere metaphorical sense so as to describe the fleeting and futile aspirations of Ariel’s[10] enemies. The verse from Job, on the other hand, spells dreams as an actual mode of God’s communication to his people, by reiterating it as a vision in the night.

[10] “Ariel: a poetic name for Jerusalem. It has been variously interpreted to mean ‘lion of God,’ ‘altar hearth of God,’ ‘city of God,’ or ‘foundation of god.’” cf. Footnote on Is 29:1-2 in NABRE.

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Now that this definition - "vision in the night" - is established, both "vision" and its temporal setting "night" deserves further elaboration in the light of theology. *Dreams* as "visions in the night" should imply several things. First, as a *vision* (חָזוֹן), it implies a communication of some sort, the agent of which could either be God or spirits other than God. Second, the element of it being a vision that occurs in the *night* (לַיִל) properly describes the setting as to the time of its being communicated or when it is communicated. It could also, in some instances, be figuratively indicative of adversity.

The noun חָזוֹן literally means "vision." It comes from the verb חָזָה, a primitive root which literally refers to the perception of the eye, that is "to gaze at" or "to behold" or simply "to look." According to Brown-Driver-Briggs, it could be taken in four ways: (1) *vision* as seen in an ecstatic state; (2) *vision* in the night; (3) divine communication in a *vision*, *oracle, prophecy*, and; (4) *vision* as title of book of prophecy. The word חָזוֹן occurs in 35 instances in the Hebrew Bible.

Dreams, חָלַם, apparently are one of the many kinds of חָזוֹן or divine communications in the Bible. There are, of course, different modes of חָזוֹן, that is to say God's manner of revealing himself to people in the Bible. In Numbers 12:6, יהוה said: "If there are prophets among you, in *visions* I reveal myself, in *dreams* I speak to them. We shall briefly classify *visions*, them, as (a) direct pronouncements, (b) theophanies, and (c) dreams.

Direct pronouncements are explicit addresses initiated by God to men who, in turn, are engaged in conversation or colloquy with God and transmit it to people as oracles or prophecies. This can be seen in God's engagements with the likes of Abraham, Moses and the prophets. In the prophetic books, a divine pronouncement given to a prophet is usually indicated with formulas such as יהוה כֹּה אָמַר. While literally, the word חָזוֹן should technically refer to mere seeing or ocular sensations, it must be noted that auditory experiences are already assumed within.[11] True enough, it can be observed that these "visions" or oracles are initiated by the God who speaks.

There are also visible manifestations of the divine glory (theophanies) wherein יהוה makes himself known in a peculiarly magnificent way. An example of a theophany may include the mode of Divine appearance to the people as in a "column of cloud that stand at the entrance of the tent" (Ex 33:10) albeit talking to

[11] Zoltán Dörnyei, *Vision, Mental Imagery and the Christian Life: Insights from Science and Scripture* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 66.

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Moses "face to face, as a person speaks to a friend." (Ex 33:11). Another example of a theophany has to be the manifestation of the Lord in the episode of the call of the prophet Isaiah where the Lord is seen "seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple." (Is 6:1)

While *dreams* are considered as one of the modes of visions, it is unique and distinct when compared to direct pronouncements and theophanies. While the two modes of visions usually manifest explicitly or implicitly in daylight, dreams occur particularly as "visions in the night." A distinction and comparison can be somewhat established between oracles and dreams from Numbers 24:4: "The oracle of one who hears what God says, and knows what the Most High knows, of one who sees in rapture and with *eyes unveiled.*"[12] In other words, while divine utterances and theophanies are manifest before eyes unveiled, dreams are manifestations with eyes closed or, in the words of Job 33:15, "when deep sleep falls upon mortals as they slumber in their beds."

As we shall see in the succeeding paragraphs, Old Testament dreams are to be classified further. Before proceeding to the classifications, there are some issues that have to be addressed. First, there are "visions in the night" that are not usually narrated as dream episodes. Second, "dreams" and "visions" are poised as synonymous to one another, such that they are interchangeably spelled.

It is notable that there are other instances wherein the phrase "visions of the night" - which we are now considering as the Biblical definition of what "dreams" are - occurs in a manner that is not explicitly expressed as dreams. For instance, when God called Israel (Jacob) at Beer-sheba it was a "vision by night." (Gen 46:2) Another instance is in Dan 2:19, when a mystery was revealed to Daniel "during the night… in a vision." Two positions can be taken to resolve this somewhat rigid contention. First, it could be rightly presumed, given the implication of the temporal setting (night), that such episodes are dream narratives. Secondly, it could be reiterated that "visions" and "nights" are associated with one another because prophets often receive visions in the night. For example, the prophet Zechariah "looked out in the night" when he saw the horses sent by God to patrol the earth.[13] Another example can be discerned in Isaiah's prayer for

[12] In the Hebrew of Num 24:4, the word oracle is נְאֻם. The word חָזוֹן does not occur in this verse. In its stead, the word מַחֲזֶה is used. מַחֲזֶה is rarely used (four times) in the Bible [Gen 15:1; Num 24:4, 16, and; Ezek 13:7]. Furthermore, the word "rapture" in the NABRE rendition seems to fail to capture the verb נֹפֵל which literally means "falling." It may figuratively imply a state of trance.

[13] See Zec 1:8-13 (NABRE).

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deliverance: "*My soul yearns for you at night*, yes, my spirit within me seeks you at dawn." (Is 26:9) Accordingly, "[night] is the expected time to hear the voice of God or witness his revelation."[14]

As to the issue of the synonymity and interchangeability of "dream" and "vision," we have already discussed the literary function of appositional parallelisms. Scholars generally agree that waking visions and dreams are merely different forms of receiving similar types of revelatory content.[15] In our discussion above, we have already proposed that *dreams* are one of the three classified modes of *visions*.

Upon defining and understanding what we mean by "dreams" and dream narratives in the Old Testament, we shall now look into classifying such dreams. There have been several attempts to classify dream narratives in the Old Testament which generally belongs to several analyses of other ancient religious texts. Of these classifications, Leo Oppenheim's is considered as the one that is pioneering and is widely accepted.[16] According to him, dream narratives are either *message dreams* or *symbolic dreams.* Message dreams are vocal communications from God containing direct instructions. Symbolic dreams represent sophisticated visual imagery that requires competent interpretation.[17]

Several attempts after Oppenheim have been proposed to improve whatever is deemed to have been lacking. Nonetheless, scholars like Laura Quick noted that the form-critical patterns proposed by Oppenheim's 1956 study can be described as "felicitous" in identifying and categorizing the dreams of the Hebrew Bible as it has accordingly provided certain markers in contextualizing Biblical dreams in relation to a broader Ancient Near Eastern understanding of dreams.[18]

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[14] Dörnyei, *Vision, Mental Imagery and the Christian Life,* 68.

[15] See Gregory Boyd, *Seeing is Believing: Experience Jesus through Imaginative Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 85-86; Corina Körting, "A look behind the scenes: Worldview in dreams and visions in the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament," *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 95/4 (2019): 255-270.

[16] See Leo Oppenheim, "The interpretation of dreams in the ancient Near East: With a translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 46/3 (1956): 179-373; Laura Quick, "Dream accounts in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Jewish literature," *Currents in Biblical Research* 17/1 (2018): 8-32; Körting, *A Look Behind the Scenes,* 257-258.

[17] See Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in ANE,* pp. 184-217; Körting, *A Look Behind the Scenes*, 257; Tolochin & Smirnova, *Dreams in the Bible*, 949-950.

[18] Quick, *Dream Accounts in the Hebrew Bible*, 22.

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Building on the works of Gnuse,[19] Flannery-Dailey[20] and Grossman,[21] which in hindsight were criticisms of Oppenheim's work, Tolochin and Smirnova proposed three contextual patterns of the *dreams* in the Old Testament: (a) *Archetypal* dreams, (b) *Prophetic* dreams, and (c) *Secular* dreams.[22] We shall adapt these contextual patterns and take some of the suggested narratives in the succeeding section of this essay.

Accordingly, the oldest of the three contextual patterns is the archetypal dream. Tolochin and Sminorva noted that an *archetype* is a "word sense common to words with an ambivalent integral category that manifests itself in texts describing irresolvable psychological conflicts related to the experience of interaction with inconceivable supernatural forces."[23] It supposedly represents an ancient "low level" and "primordial" analytical capacity of those who composed the Biblical texts. Two important features are noted. First, the dreamer enters into direct contact with God. Secondly, such a contact with God while asleep is received or experienced ambivalently. The authors suggested 4 episodes to demonstrate the archetypal pattern: Abimelech's dream (Gen 20:1-18), Jacob's dream about the ladder (Gen 28:10–22), Laban's dream (Gen 31:24, 29) and Solomon's dream (1 Kgs 3:5–15).[24]

Prophetic dreams, on the other hand, are dreams that contain a mediated message with specific instructions from God and are received while asleep. Compared to archetypal dreams, prophetic dreams notably lack an explicit direct contact with God. The authors suggest that it occurs in 24 extracts. It notably includes Jacob's dream (Gen 31:10–11), Joseph's dreams (Gen 37:5–11; 42:8–9), the butler and baker's dream (Gen 40:5–11), Pharaoh's dreams (Gen 41), the dream of Gideon's victory (Jgs 7:13–15), Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Dan 2:1–9, 26–47; 4:4–9, 19), Daniel's dream (Dan 7:1–28) and general mentions of dreams (Num 12:5–8; Dt 13:1–1; 1 Sam 1:28–6; Job 7:13–14; 33:14-20; Dan 1:17; 5:12; Joel 3:28–31; Jer 23:25–32, and; Zec 10:2)[25]

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[19] Robert Gnuse, "Redefining the Elohist," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119/2 (2000): 201-220.

[20] Frances Flannery-Dailey, *Dreams, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish dreams in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras* (Boston: Brill, 2004).

[21] Jonathan Grossman, "Different dreams: Two models of interpretation of three pairs of dreams," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135/4 (2016): 717-732.

[22] Tolochin & Smirnova, *Dreams in the Bible*, pp. 950-952.

[23] See ibid, 951.

[24] See ibid, 950.

[25] See ibid, 951-952.

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Lastly, secular dreams are called as such for they are not dreamed within a supernatural context. Usually, these sort of dreams are mentioned in a simile and could even be considered negatively as a symbol of self-deception and is opposed to both types of supernatural dreams that are regarded as a source of truthful knowledge. The authors suggest that there are 7 extracts of this type: Ps 73:16–20; 126:1–3, Job 20:4–8, Eccles 5:2–3,:5–7; Is 29:7–8, and; Jer 29:8–9.[26]

In concluding this section, we shall now respond to the query "What are dreams in the Old Testament?" Dreams in the Old Testament are visions in the night. As visions, dreams are among the many ways or modes of God's revelation or communication to humans. Occurring in the night, dreams are visions usually initiated when a dreamer is asleep or, figuratively speaking, at a time of crisis or difficulty. There are several dream narratives or episodes in the Old Testament. Following Tolochin and Smirnova, 35 dream episodes in the Bible were classified according to three contextual patterns, namely: archetypal dreams, prophetic dreams and secular dreams.

Dream Narratives and their Messages

After delving into what is meant by *dreams* in the Hebrew Bible and upon looking into the contextual patterns of dream narratives, it is logical to ask next: "What messages do they convey?" In responding to this consequent question, we ought to look into some narratives in the Old Testament from which we will exegetically and theologically study or review its contents so as to articulate its message.

While there are several dream narratives or episodes in the Old Testament, we shall only look into three episodes: one example from each of the three classifications proposed by Tolochin and Smirnova. The episode that we shall consider from the archetypal dreams is that of Jacob's dream about the "ladder" (Gen 28:10-22); from the prophetic dreams, that of Daniel's dream (Dan 7:1-28), and; from the secular dreams, that of Jeremiah's warning to the exiles in Babylon (Jer 29:8-9).

As an exegetical work, we shall approach these episodes through an expository manner of a narrative-literary text: a) story—the narrated events; (b) text—the verbal representation of the "story"; (c) discourse—the process of

[26] See ibid, 952.

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producing the “text,” a process of communication, in the course of which the “story” is conveyed as a message from sender to receiver.[27]

Genesis 28:10-22

This episode occurs at a time when Jacob fled Beer-sheba after angering his elder brother Esau whom the former “cheated” in order to gain the blessing of their father Isaac (Gen 27:1-45). Isaac, upon the urging of Rebekah [who was disgusted with Hittite women (Gen 27:46)], instructed Jacob to go to Paddan-aram (the hometown of Jacob’s maternal grandfather) to choose a wife from among the daughters of his uncle Laban (Gen 28:1-2). En route to Haran (which is notably their family patriarch Abraham’s place of origin as recounted in Gen 12:4), Jacob chose to rest for the night and sleep at a place that was yet known to him. It was there that he had a dream wherein he accordingly saw a “ladder” and יהוה who was standing beside him who identified himself, reiterated his promises to Abraham and provided Jacob with an assurance of safety. To these Jacob responded with his own promise, praising יהוה and eventually naming the place בֵּית-אֵל (Bethel) which literally means “house of God.” We shall look into an excerpt of narration, vv. 12-15, which narrates how the dream began and what Jacob saw and heard before waking up in v. 16.

Genesis 28:12-15

12 וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ
מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים
עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ׃
13 וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נִצָּב עָלָיו וַיֹּאמַר אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וֵאלֹהֵי יִצְחָק הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֶךָ׃
14 וְהָיָה זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ וּפָרַצְתָּ יָמָּה
וָקֵדְמָה וְצָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כֹּל־
מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזַרְעֶךָ׃
15 וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ וּשְׁמַרְתִּיךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־
תֵּלֵךְ וַהֲשִׁבֹתִיךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא
אֶעֶזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־עָשִׂיתִי אֵת אֲשֶׁר־
דִּבַּרְתִּי לָךְ׃

12 Then [Jacob] had a dream: a stairway rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God’s angels were going up and down on it. **13** And there was the Lord standing beside him and saying: I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants. **14** Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and through them you will spread to the west and the east, to the north and the south. In you and your descendants all the families of the earth will find blessing. **15** I am with you and will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what I promised you

[27] See Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983), 1-5.

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Belonging to the patriarchal narratives which scholars generally refer to as the second half of the book of Genesis (12-50), the episode is assumed to have happened between the 20th and 17th centuries BC.[28] Prior to its eventual composition as a text, the entire patriarchal history is assumed to have been handed down from generation to generation for about ten centuries as has been the practice by nomadic and semi-nomadic ancient near eastern tribes, the practice of which saw "both adults and children hear the same stories again and again and whenever the narrator omits or adds something, they correct him at once."[29]

The particular text at hand (Gen 28:10-22), according to source-critical scholars who somehow work on Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis, clearly manifests that it could have come from both the Yahwist (J) and Elohist (E) sources.[30] Roland Murphy specified vv. 13 and 16-17 as coming from the J source, and vv. 11-12, 17-19 and 20-22 from the E source. This could be evidenced by the mere usages of אלהים or יהוה throughout the verses. Historically, the texts could have been originally composed between the 10th and centuries BC, that is to say during the monarchic period or the height of the reign of David and Solomon.[31] The instances of using certain Akkadian loanwords, particularly סֻלָּם in v. 12, are also indicative that the text may have been produced before the captivity of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria (721 BC) as well as that of the Southern Kingdom to Babylon (587 BC).[32] The word סֻלָּם, furthermore, is often translated (as seen in ESV) to "ladder," which according to the commentators of NABRE, is an inaccurate translation[33] as the implied reference is accordingly that of the stairway or ramps found in Summerian ziggurats that accordingly serves as a link between heaven and earth.[34] Thus it appears in v. 17, when Jacob has already named the place 'Bethel,' he described it too as "the gateway to heaven." The materials gathered from the J and E sources and eventually redacted into the final form of the Book of Genesis in the 6th or 5th century BC was accordingly composed by postexilic priests for a people lacking political

[28] John Bright, *The History of Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1972), p. 92.

[29] Roland de Vaux OP, *The Early History of Israel: From the Beginnings to the Covenant of Sinai.* Translated by D. Smith (London: Darton Longman & Todd Ltd., 1978), p. 182.

[30] Roland Murphy O.Carm, "Genesis" (25:19-60:26) in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (NJBC). Edited by R. Brown et al. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990), 30.

[31] Dominik Markl SJ, "Introduction to the Pentateuch" in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century* (JBC). Edited by J. Collins et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 189.

[32] Mark Smith, "Genesis" in JBC, 201.

[33] See Footnote on Gen 28:12 NABRE.

[34] Murphy, *Genesis NJBC*, 30.

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independence, such that, according to Mark Smith in his introduction of Genesis in the JBC: "In relating Israel's distant past, Genesis envisions its life and lineage in the land and beyond *going forward*."[35] The narratives in the Torah, therefore, are meant to excite aspirations for the future of the people or, in a word, *hope*.

The source-critical approach to Gen 28:10-22, furthermore, implies the theological motives of its composition. The E motive is etiological and eponymous as the narrative somewhat hints at the explanation of the origin of Bethel.[36] In the JBC, it explained that this Elohist motive is colored by the post-Monarchic and pre-Assyrian dream of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to generate a national identity and a "possible echo or aspiration of northern hegemony over the south."[37] The location where Jacob slept and dreamt which, at first was unknown to him, was actually a sacred site where Abraham, at the beginning of his own sojourn, built an "altar to the LORD and invoked the LORD by name there." (Gen 12:8) The site, which was previously known as Luz, was named by Jacob as Bethel.

On the other hand, the J motive is indicated in the words uttered by the LORD in vv. 13-15. It appears to be a reiteration of the Patriarchal promises to Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:5; 17:4; 18:18), and is also foretelling of the covenantal promises by יהוה to the Hebrew people in the subsequent books of the Torah. For instance, יהוה identifies himself in v. 13 in the same manner as he did to Moses in Mount Horeb (see Ex 3:6). The promises of descendants and land which would eventually be a significant content of Deuteronomistic books is also echoed by יהוה.(see Dt 28:11-12). The personal promise that יהוה uttered to Jacob in v. 15 also echoes the assurance that is repeatedly uttered by יהוה to his people also calls to mind the personal promise uttered by Ruth to Naomi in Ruth 1:16.

There are also interesting points to note in the literary placement of the narrative. One is the literary structure. The literary structure of the story of Jacob is consistent with that of the story of Abraham, that utilized a palistrophic arrangement in which stories are mirrored such that an episode in the first half of the story is balanced in the next. Gordon Wenham provides the following sketch:

[35] Smith, *Genesis JBC,* 202.
[36] Murphy, *Genesis NJBC*, 30.
[37] Smith, *Genesis JBC,* 198.

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Arrangement of the Story of Jacob[38]

25:19-34	First encounters of Jacob and Esau	**A**
26:1-33	Isaac and the Philistines	**B**
26:34-28:9	Jacob cheats Esau	**C**
28:10-22	Jacob meets God at Bethel	**D**
29:1-14	Jacob arrives at Laban's house	**E**
29:15-30	Jacob marries Rachel and Leah	**F**
29:31-30:24	Birth of Jacob's sons	**G**
30:25-31:1	Jacob outwits Laban	**F'**
31:2-55	Jacob leaves laban	**E'**
32:1-2	Jacob meets angels of God	**D'**
32:3-33:20	Jacob returns Esau's blessing	**C'**
34:1-31	Dinah and the Hivites	**B'**
35:1-29	Journey's end for Jacob and Esau	**A'**

From this sketch, we can discern the given dream episode's relationship to the entire story of Jacob or "the Jacob cycle" as some scholars put it, as well as the episode's relationship with 32:1-2. For one, the episode of Jacob's dream is a theophany as it was notably his first engagement with God which he received ambivalently. Furthermore, 32:1-2, Jacob's encounter with the angels at Mahanaim is rendered as a fulfillment of God's promise in 28:15 that he will not be abandoned in his sojourn.

Following our introductory discussion above, Jacob's dream in Gen 28 is truly a "vision in the night." It is a vision in as much as it contains a direct pronouncement from God in the manner of a theophany. The occurrence at night can be taken as a temporal setting as well as in a figurative context. It also is notably an archetypal dream as the two major elements proposed by Tolochin and Smirnova (direct communication from God and an ambivalent response by the dreamer) are manifest in the narrative. Furthermore, in our brief exegetical look into the historical context, sources and literary structure of Jacob's dream in Gen 28, it can be said that the message of the dream is explicitly stated in vv. 13-15. We can also derive the apparent motives as to why the text is presented and structured in such a way: namely, it speaks of the manner how God wants to be known, the community's aspirations for unity, and hope in the promises and fidelity of יהוה to his people.

[38] Gordon Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 46.

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Daniel 7:1-28

The Book of Daniel is one of the peculiarly interesting books in the Old Testament. While it is traditionally considered as belonging to the prophetic tradition, it is now widely accepted as belonging to the distinct *apocalyptic* tradition - a genre that is apparently an offshoot of the prophetic tradition. Furthermore, the namesake of the book, its main protagonist Daniel, accordingly belongs to the first generation of Jews that were exiled in Babylon. This is evidenced in the claim given at the book's very first verse that is dated "[in] the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came and laid siege to Jerusalem." (Dan 1:1)[39]

Nonetheless, while the events that are recorded in the book belong to the period of the Babylonian captivity, it is also widely accepted that much of the book is actually focused on the persecution of the Jews under the Seleucid rule, particularly under Antiochus IV Epiphanes on whose reign the text was composed to accordingly "strengthen and comfort the Jewish people in their ordeal."[40]

Scholars generally categorize the contents of the Book into two major parts:[41] chapters 1-6 are narratives featuring the adventures of Daniel and his companions, whereas chapters 7-12 are series of visions, the first of which (chapter 7) is a dream that is rich in symbols. Dan 7 can be divided in two major parts: The protagonist's dream (vv. 1–14) and its interpretation by an angelic figure (vv. 16–28). In his vision, the dreamer sees four great beasts rising from the sea, each symbolizing a succession of empires, much like the kingdoms previously indicated in chapter, though now portrayed through animal imagery. The characteristics of each beast highlight aspects of these kingdoms, such as strength, speed, and predatory power. Notably, the first beast is given a human mind (v. 4) The fourth beast stands out for its fierceness and its many horns, symbolizing a line of successive kings, from which a "little horn" emerges—a ruler marked by arrogance and defiance. (V. 7) These beasts somewhat anticipates the vision of the coming of "one like a son of man" in vv. 13-14. The contrast between the beastly kingdoms and the human-like figure underscores the theme

[39] The historicity of this claim is widely disputed. If one plainly accepts the author's claim, the beginning of the narrative happened in 606 BC. However, Nebuchadnezzar did not become the king of Babylon until 605 BC as reflected in the account of 2 Kings 24, nor did Babylon begin to control the region until his defeat of Egypt which happened sometime between 598 BC or 597 BC. For further elaboration, see Molly Zahn, "Daniel," *JBC,* p. 1010; J. Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 109.

[40] cf. Introduction to the Book of Daniel in NABRE.

[41] In some versions, there are actually three major parts: the third being the appendix which features the episode of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon in 13:1-14:42. In the BHS, the said episode is not included as there are no chapters 13 and 14 in the said edition.

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that while earthly empires may dominate for a time, ultimate authority belongs to the just and everlasting rule of God. It is worth looking into Daniel's vision during the night regarding "the one like a son of man."

Daniel 7:13-14

13 חֲזֵה הֲוֵית בְּחֶזְוֵי לֵילְיָא וַאֲרוּ עִם־ עֲנָנֵי
שְׁמַיָּא כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ אָתֵה וְהָוָה וְעַד־ עַתִּיק יוֹמַיָּא
מְטָה וּקְדָמוֹהִי הַקְרֵבוּהִי׃
14 וְלֵהּ יְהִיב שָׁלְטָן וְיקָר וּמַלְכוּ וְכָל עַמְמַיָּא
עַלַם דִּי־ לָא יֶעְדֵּה וּמַלְכוּתֵהּ דִּי־ לָא אֶמְעֵא
וְלִשָׁנַיָּא לֵהּ יִפְלְחוּן שָׁלְטָנֵהּ שָׁלְטָן תְּתַחֲבַל׃

13 As the visions during the night continued,
I saw coming with the clouds of heaven
One like a son of man. When he reached the
Ancient of Days and was presented before
him, 14 he received dominion, splendor,
and kingship; all nations, peoples and
tongues will serve him. His dominion is
an everlasting dominion that shall not pass
away, his kingship, one that shall not be
destroyed.

Daniel's dream in vv. 1-14, as we have already insinuated, is rich in symbolisms. For the sake brevity and appropriate demonstration, we shall look into v. 13 that speaks of the כבר אנש, "like a son of man." There are several interpretations as to what the "son of man" is, as it is notably one of the obvious Christological titles attributed to Jesus of Nazareth in the synoptic gospels. In understanding this title, we shall first consider it as a literary construct that has been shaped by a particular historical context so as to discern its theological value.

In literature, characters are constructed according to the design intended by its author or creator. There are several factors that build individual characters, especially with that of the main protagonist. From Homer's *Achilles* to Matt Groening's *Homer Simpson*, from Cervantes's *Don Quixote* to Stan Lee's *Spiderman*, from Rizal's *Crisostomo Ibarra* to Coco Martin's *Batang Quiapo* - these characters are constructs that were designed by their creators' creativity that is shaped and influenced by many factors from personal history, social and physical environment, contemporary political and economic affairs, and other cultural considerations.

However, to put it quite briefly and accurately these factors all boil down to one's *experience*. Edward Schillecbeeckx defines *experience* as the manner of "learning through direct contact with people and things. It is the ability to assimilate perceptions."[42] The word *experience* (especially in its phenomenological nuance)

[42] Edward Schillebeeckx OP, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord.* Translated by John Bowen (New York: Seabury, 1980), 30.

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somewhat summarizes the foundations of Dave Allison's attempt to trace the construction of Jesus as the "Son of Man."[43] Be it a fictional character created imaginatively or even a historical figure in a biographical sketch, the way a particular character is presented will always be a *construct out of experience*. Allison said that "recollection of the personal past is essentially a reconstruction prompted by a person's affective states and ongoing beliefs and goals, and constituted by the sociocultural world of the rememberer… Attention to the features of experience is selective."[44]

Experience, in recent developments in fundamental theology, is given importance. For instance, revelation, whether public or private, is experienced. Hence, on an anthropological level, it can be said that one's faith (or belief) is a response to *experience*. St. Thomas Aquinas' famous dictum *quidquid recipitur ad modum recipitur recipientis*[45] comes to mind. That is why the reception of faith as experienced, in turn, are transformed into doctrines, rituals, or pious practices. Roger Haight SJ said that "[faith] is a universal form of human experience. Religious faith involves a religious experience that entails an awareness of and loyalty to an ultimate or transcendent reality."[46] In other words, *theology* - and perhaps even our human attempts at trying to articulate the ineffably divine - is a set of constructs derived from experiences of people.

Theologically speaking, the "one like a son of man" in Dan 7:13 is not easily identified. Unlike the beasts spoken of in vv. 2-12, it does not occur nor is it mentioned in the angelic interpretation in vv. 17-28. The Aramaic expression translated 'son of man,' כבר אנש, occurs only in this verse, as it is understandable that Aramaic in economically utilized in the Old Testament. A more appropriate Hebrew equivalent, בֶּן-אָדָם, is typically used simply of humans as that in Dan 8:17 and in Ezek 2:1. J. Gordon McConville, suggests that there are two main possibilities in understanding the peculiar identity of the said figure in v. 13: "Either he is a human figure who stands for the people of Israel, and thus the 'holy ones of the Most High' in Dan 7 are human; or both the 'one like a son of man' and the 'holy ones of the Most High' are angelic."[47]

[43] See Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

[44] As cited by Francis Moloney SDB, "Constructing Jesus and the Son of Man," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75 (2013): 720-721.

[45] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* II-II, q. 1, a. 2.

[46] Roger Haight SJ, *Jesus, Symbol of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 16.

[47] McConville, *A Guide to the Prophets*, 121.

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In the Gospels, Jesus adopts the title "Son of Man" and radically deepens its meaning. As Son of Man, he identifies not only with humanity in its lowliness — especially the poor, the suffering, and sinners — but also with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, who bears the sins of many. In his passion and death, Jesus transforms the figure of the Son of Man into one whose suffering is redemptive: through his humiliation, he redeems the world. It is by this path of redemptive suffering that the humble Son of Man becomes the glorified Son of Man, seated at the right hand of the Father (Psalm 110:2), the one who comes again in judgment.

However, early Christians have set aside the title "Son of Man" in their preaching. Its deeply Jewish character and the subtlety of its biblical allusions made it difficult for Gentile audiences to grasp its full meaning. Modern readers of the Gospels face similar challenges, suggesting that Christians today might also consider employing other titles when speaking of Jesus, especially in contexts of evangelization and catechesis. Nonetheless, many are assuming that the "Son of Man" refers solely to Jesus' humanity, while "Son of God" points exclusively to his divinity. In reality, both titles, in their biblical context, carry dimensions of both humanity and divinity, each expressing different aspects of the mystery of Christ.[48]

The interpretation of what the "son of man" is an interesting exegetical and theological discourse. What interests this present study is its placement in a dream narrative. It can be said, then, that the manifestation of such a figure in the narrative, given the historical context, can be generally understood as an assurance for a better future from the part of God to an oppressed people.

The title "Son of Man," then, is an expression of the author's or authors' hope in a heroic figure that will deliver people from the circumstance that they are experiencing. Simply put, a hope for liberation. Furthermore, the said dream narrative fits the category regarding prophetic proposed by Tolochin and Smirnova as this extract notably lacks an explicit direct contact between God and the dreamer.

Jeremiah 29:8-9

Of the extracts that we have selected, this particular warning from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah is not only the shortest, it is also the only extract that speaks negatively of dreams. Contained within a letter supposedly addressed

[48] For a thorough discussion on this subject matter, see Moloney SDB, "Constructing Jesus and the Son of Man," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75 (2013): 719-738.

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by “Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon,” (Jer 29:1), the said warning can be considered as a reiteration against false prophets in Jer 27:8-11, 14-15 and his dispute with Hananiah in Jer 28.

Jeremiah 29:8-9

8 כִּי֩ כֹ֨ה אָמַ֜ר יְהוָ֣ה צְבָא֗וֹת אֱלֹהֵ֤י יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ אַל־ יַשִּׁיאוּ֩ לָכֶ֨ם נְבִיאֵיכֶ֜ם אֲשֶׁר־ בְּקִרְבְּכֶ֗ם וְקֹסְמֵיכֶם֙ וְאַל־ תִּשְׁמְע֔וּ אֶל־ חֲלֹמֹתֵיכֶ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתֶּ֛ם מַחְלְמִֽים׃	8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Do not be deceived by the prophets and diviners who are among you; do not listen to those among you who dream dreams,
9 כִּ֣י בַשֶּׁ֔קֶר הֵ֥ם נִבְּאִ֛ים לָכֶ֖ם בִּשְׁמִ֑י לֹ֣א שְׁלַחְתִּ֗ים נְאֻם־ יְהוָֽה׃	9 for the prophesy lies to you in my name; I did not send them—oracle of the Lord.’

The unit of Jer 26-29 basically dealt with the comparison between true and false prophecies. Chapter 29, according to the JBC, is a unique genre of letter writing to demonstrate the communication between Jerusalem and Babylon.[49] A criticism of so-called false prophets who were in contest with those who are presumed to be genuine, it is a warning against misleading and deceptive dreams that prey on the suffering and oppressed exiled community as they accordingly “approximate the hope that the exile will be brief.”[50] Bulkeley noted that the harshness of Jeremiah’s warning is warranted “because a significant number of his Jewish contemporaries were in fact talking passionately about one another’s dreams as alternative visions of creative action in desperate times.”[51]

Furthermore, in comparison with the two previously discussed Biblical excerpts, the author of Jeremiah somewhat presents חָלַם in a bad light. Elsewhere, he referred to the so-called prophets who kept on saying “I had a dream! I had a dream!” as “lies and deceitful fancies” and that such dreams are supposed to make the people of יהוה forget him in exchange for Baal.[52] Tolochin and Smirnova explained that חָלַם, in secular dreams, stands for “fleeting illusory moment, a deceptive image produced by one’s imagination.”[53] Hence, it can be said that, in Biblical narratives, dreams can be determined as either true (that is to say, if it

[49] Benedetta Rossi MDM, “Jeremiah” in JBC, 917.
[50] See ibid*,* 918.
[51] Bulkeley, *Dreaming in the World’s Religions*, 135.
[52] See Jer 23:25-32.
[53] Tolochin & Smirnova, *Dreams in the Bible*, 952.

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authentically comes from God) or false (if it is rather fabricated and is meant to deceive).

In summary, it can be discerned that dreams in the Hebrew Bible deliver messages to people in times of crisis, not only for the individual dreamer concerned but are apparently meant for the entire people. The message can be generally thought of as an assurance of God's aid and presence to the people who are oppressed or, figuratively speaking, in the dark, in the night. This message of assurance, presence, and promise can all be synthesized in the word hope.

It is God who gives hope to his people; God himself is the true hope of his people. The last extract that we briefly discussed from Jer 29, provides a nuanced warning against false hope which can be described as false and unrealistic optimism - a kind of optimism that is "fleeting and illusory" as described by Tolochin and Smirnova.

Old Testament Dreams and Hope

At this point, we can summarize what we have discussed. First, we have established a Biblical and theological definition of what dreams are in the Old Testament: they are *visions in the night*, that is to say, it is one of the many ways as to how God reveals himself and communicates with people. Dreams, as a vision, are unique because of its temporal setting and the circumstance of the particular dreamer: it happens at night while the dreamer is asleep, resting. Secondly, we classified dreams in the Hebrew Bible into three categories: archetypal, prophetic and secular. Third, we have looked into the message of certain dream narratives which all unanimously provide the messages of God. In doing so, we also have briefly and hypothetically identified what factors influenced its authors to write such narratives. For instance, in our review of Gen 28, we are made aware of the underlying motives (national unity and the reiteration of Israel's reliance on the promises given by יהוה) as to why such a narrative was composed; of Dan 7's "Son of Man" heroic figure as an expression of hope for liberation, and; of Jeremiah's standards in determining whether visions or messages are from God or not. These exegetically nuanced pieces of information should provide us a deeper theological appreciation of dreams in the Old Testament and the messages therein.

Now we ask: "What do these dreams tell us, "pilgrims" of hope today?"

It can be reckoned that dream narratives and the messages that they contain were formed by the particular historical contexts in the periods of its composition written more than 2,000 years ago. At hand, we are confronted with the question of relevance and its implication for our generation.

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The historical setting of the characters and the narratives in the text, and as well as the historical setting of its being composed and redacted seems to be an intersecting point of interest. The story within the text and the story behind the text is almost identical: a time of crisis, a time of persecution, flight and exile.

It must be noted that most of the books of the Hebrew Bible were composed and redacted during the Babylonian exile and after the end of the exile as the elders of the people began to rebuild the Temple, thus marking the beginning of the Jewish religion. The texts that have reached us today and have now become the subject of this reflection are inclusive of the experiences of the people, their aspirations, and expressions of faith. Such experiences shaped their aspirations and as well as their expressions of their faith in God. Such aspirations and expressions of faith lead us to speak of hope: of the things that they hoped for, and of God, the hope of all ages.

Some of these experiences, aspirations and expressions of hope are manifest in the Bible through dream narratives. The composers of the Hebrew Bible, following a common Mesopotamian belief, must have intended their narratives to become "[sources] of divine comfort in periods of difficulty and distress."[54] The people who were at the receiving end of these narratives were perhaps empowered to have a sense of hope, to actually hope in God and the promises that God has uttered whether directly or as discerned in the historical experiences of the people.

Interestingly, it can also be pointed out that the nature of dreams - dreams that are "visions in the night" - as occurring while the receiver of such visions is at rest or at sleep somewhat shows the intimate setting of God's manner of intimating (or revealing) his message and himself to people. In such stories, which are perhaps literally imagined out of the theological reflections that are grounded in historical experiences, God's will is communicated. His will can also be rearticulated as his aspirations, his dreams, and his hopes for the people that he has chosen and loved as his own.

The world of the Hebrew Bible and ours are separated by more than 2,000 years. However, there are certain circumstances that resonate to us today: war, violence, oppression, poverty, false hopes and the implicit and explicit rejection of God and the goodness that he wills for people. By turning, appreciating, and praying with the narratives in the Old Testament we are drawn to discern in these dark times of ours what God wishes to tell us. In a word, we are called to hope with the God who hopes with us; to dream with the God who dreams with us. PS

[54] Bulkeley, *Dreams in the World's Religions,* 130.

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[illegible]

¶ La salue Regina [illegible]

Salue te dios reyna y ma
dre de misericordia. vida
dulçura y esperança nr̃a. Dios
te salue a ti llamamos los deste
rrados hijos de Eua. A ti suspi
ramos gimiendo y llorando en
aqueste valle de lagrimas. Ea
pues abogada nuestra, buelue
a nosotros essos tus misericor
diosos ojos. y despues de a-