

**“Dreams”**  
**October 9, 2011**  
**Grove Presbyterian Church**

It seems to be quite popular these trepidatious days – perhaps itself evidence that our world is so confusing, so disappointing we look for rescue or escape.

What? I’m talking about those popular predictions of the end times -- books and preachers and movies and Mayan calendars and silly stuff on the History Channel (often mixed up with Nostradamus and UFO’s) and other purveyors of doom and gloom -- warning of the last days; what often is wrongly referred to as days of apocalypse, Armageddon, anti-Christ. Tons of turmoil and trouble followed by the tardy Christ finally coming back to fix it all and make it all better.

Wooo, scary.....

Give me a break. As if Jesus isn’t here now? Whoever said Jesus left?

Well, Simon Peter (Rocky to his friends, like Jesus) might just have something to say about such fear-mongering. He steps up here on the heels of what we call Pentecost – when the Christian movement got its shove of the Holy Spirit and when the judgmental spectators thought these ‘Christ-tians’ weird and drunk because they were so happy, so energized with delight.

Peter steps up to tell us we have something better than a wistful future hope to promise our little ones born into this anxious age.

Let’s hear what he says.

**But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out 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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’**

For you, me, little Blake here -- it is not as if we have to wait longingly for those last days, the end times, the Day of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord may be for the prophet Joel (whom Peter here quotes) prediction: that future Day when God, in the last days, finally gets around to giving us what we need to be saved, for us to rise above the world with all its sorrow, mistakes, loneliness, trouble.

For Peter? Not prediction. Description.

Peter is very clear here: The Day of the Lord just happened. We are in the last days. Great and glorious. What we hoped for just arrived. Christ is resurrected. Christ is ascended. Christ lives. Christ is. It's happened. Because we have him always and we have each other while we may, we have been given what we need. As he promised, we are not left alone nor abandoned.

A community that becomes by Holy Spirit the new humanity of Christ able to live Christ's "costly demonstration of unconditional love" -- with all his forgiveness, justice, compassion, lack of judgmentalism, hope -- proves Christ is always present tense.

Why do we keep looking into the sky for rescue?

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What else does this mean that the Day of the Lord has come?

Despite those Zionist Christians obsessed with the notion that modern Israel must get that new Temple built so Christ can come back again, well, they forget that Christ proves how any temple in Jerusalem is superfluous, irrelevant. The real temple is the body of Christ, which means the people who love God: us called to embody him right now. The institution of bricks and rituals is replaced by this breathing temple, where each of us is a priest.

Even blunter, the real Israel Jesus talks about isn't a geographical nation. The real Israel is become a universal, spiritual kingdom. It doesn't have borders. It isn't a place, but a way of living in this Spirit. That spit of land along the Mediterranean Sea isn't the holy land any more than is New Jersey or Khajistan or Honduras. Wherever you find people living the way of God is where you find the holy land. Except as an historical curiosity, who cares about Gethsemane or Galilee or Bethlehem? Danville, Shamokin, Bloomsburg is holy land. Maybe we can bring tourists here to walk where Jesus walks. You want to see the baby Jesus? He's right there. His name is Blake.

Listen to Peter's incredible news: the signs of the age of Christ have happened, revealed above in heaven and beneath here on earth.

Signs for all not just to see and believe, but, better, for us to show to others.

Gentiles, Jews, men and women, slaves and free – the old divisions have vanished, for all have the gift of forth-telling the truth of God.

The time is come. This is the Day of the Lord. The young – boys and girls -- will have visions. Despite their youth, Peter urges us, we need to pay attention to them. Jesus speaks through them.

And old men? They will dream dreams. Which might be nice because it tells us we'll have a good night sleep. That'd be nice. Old men, normally the source of ponderous practical Polonius advice and counsel drawn from the lore of the past, monitors of tradition, here now contribute in awakening us to new insights also.

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Dreams, dreams, dreams. Dream a little dream of me.

Let us be accurate in our language – for these dreams are far more than aspirations, desires, hopes, fantasies.

These dreams are visions, messages, filled with bedtime's bizarre symbols. I do hope you keep a pad by your bedside to record your dreams before they dissipate like sugar spooned into tea.

Throughout the Bible we are told how these night visions are really important. The Bible folks believed dreams as how God whispers to us intimately, divine pillow talk, even if in our more modern scientific age we adjust our bifocals and explain it as 'our unconscious in-breaking into and speaking to our consciousness.'

Brains firing all night. Body may sleep. Our minds, our imaginations, our souls remain ever percolating.

Dreams, dreams. Divine messages for us to interpret. From our dreams we gain knowledge of ourselves, insight into our very being -- and how we shall live in faith. These night visions showing us visually, vividly, some truth to which we are being beckoned to remember and respond.

Like a child's voice waking us in the middle of the night. Did you hear that?

Dreams from the spiritual world – the soul world. Anthropologists and sociologists have long suggested that the concept of soul comes from our dream world. We live in two worlds: our spiritual self at night and the material self during waking hours.

Now, in faith, the two worlds blend into one. This is divine time within time. Now is the eternal.

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We are more than the physical. More than the logical. More than reason, reasonable, sensible.

I often wonder if when we die we look back on our lives the way we do a vacation – did it really happen? It all seems at times a dream.

We are equally metaphysical – reality from beyond and above – a people inspired and made alive by the poetical, the symbolic, the powerful, the mystical, the mysterious.

The older I get the more I begin to appreciate the metaphysical reality, and, despite my pokey tendency to be pragmatic, hard nose, practical, I realize how unfortunate we are when we starve ourselves of the metaphysical, failing to live and grow and throb with a vivid spirituality.

My physical self is a pane of glass admitting clear light. My spiritual self becomes a stained glass window where sunshine is all hues and color, shadows and dimension, prisms of wonder.

Mystical. Magical. Marvelous.

We speak of the mystical as ever coincident with the ordinary, making the ordinary incredible and the incredible every day. For when, as Kathleen Norris writes, momma Jenna here bathes her beautiful baby boy, the bath water becomes an event far more than just getting the kid clean and fingernails scrubbed. It is play and touch and amazement. It is wonder and delight and joy burst forth in human flesh.

Who needs to wait for the Day of the Lord?

The trick is to find the paradise that's right next to you. Paradise never far away. Always near. And a paradise, darling, meant to share, for there always is room in paradise, where the doors of grace never are closed.