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DREAMS IN THE BIBLE

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".....to dream, perchance to sleep..."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| II. MODERN DREAM RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATION | 2 |
| III. HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF THE BIBLICAL DREAM | 7 |
| IV. THE BIBLICAL DREAM | 17 |
| V. PARADIGMS OF NEAR EASTERN AND BIBLICAL DREAM STRUCTURE | 35 |
| VI. THE BIBLICAL DREAM: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS | 43 |
| VII. PROPHETIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS DREAMS | 74 |
| VIII. CONCLUSIONS | 78 |
| IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 81 |

I. INTRODUCTION

Jews have been concerned with their dreams long before the advent of psychoanalysis. Long before the appearance of the "Gaon of Vienna", the rabbis viewed the dream as an entity that possessed something worthy of investigation. Rabbi Hisda is purported to have said, "A dream which is not understood is like a letter which is not opened" (Berachot 55a). On the other hand, the Talmud states in the name of R. Meir, "Dreams are of no consequence." (Horayot 13b) While the rabbis were ambivalent at best, in their attitudes about dreams and dream interpretations, they were well aware of the complexity of a dream and the need to understand it.

Nearly a millennium and a half later, Sigmund Freud, probably not a student of the Talmud, expanded upon R. Jonathan's statement (Berachot 55b) "a man is shown in a dream only what is suggested by his own thoughts" and began working on the the understanding of his patients' dreams.

II. MODERN DREAM RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATION

Freud viewed dreams as a means of uncovering the patient's unconscious wishes, needs and fears. For Freud, dreams have two levels of content: latent and manifest. In the latent content are the hidden, symbolic, and unconscious motives of the individual. These irrational desires only "come out at night" because it is safe to do so. They become "manifest" - in the dream itself, as it appears to the dreamer and are made less threatening. This is termed "dream work". Dreams then, are the hallucinatory fulfillment of irrational wishes that originated in early childhood and have yet to be transformed into other defense mechanisms. ¹ Dreams contain symbols, and it is the work of the analyst to decipher the symbols. Symbols serve to distort the wishes in order to disguise the painful irrational desires. ²

Another modern psychologist, concerned no less about dreams, was Carl Jung. It is in dreams that "the unconscious aspect of any event is revealed to us..... where it appears not as a rational thought but as a symbol" ³ Jung differs with Freud in his attitude toward dreams to the extent "that the unconscious mind is capable at times of assuming an

¹ Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language. (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1951) p.67

² *ibid.* p.68

³ Carl. G. Jung, Man and His Symbols. (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964) p.5

intelligence and purposiveness which are superior to actual conscious insight." ⁴ Jung esteemed the dream, and even went so far as to assert that the "voice which speaks in our dreams is not our own but comes from a source transcending us." ⁵ Dreams for Jung then, tap into something much greater: either transcendent or transpersonal. It is at this point that Jungian dream and symbol interpretation become particularly radical. He suggests that the memory holds more than the images and ideas conveyed in dreams. One inherits a collective unconscious rather than simply individual unconscious. It is in the collective unconscious where one discovers a blueprint containing wisdom of the ages. According to the Jungian approach, we Jews, if we accept the Jungian approach, can assert that we really were at Sinai. Dreams then, uncover this collective unconscious --- and tell us more than what Freud asserted.

Nonetheless, Freud, Jung, and others assert that dreams help to give the patient in analysis insight into issues that are unresolved in daily life. The dream tells us about the personality of the patient. Psychology then, is one modern hermeneutic for understanding the substance of a dream.

Today however, most research about dreams is focused on the physiological and chemical aspects of sleep and dreaming

⁴ cited by Fromm in The Forgotten Language. p. 96

⁵ *ibid.* 9.96

and is observed and studied in sleep laboratories. Researchers are now suggesting that dreaming occurs during sleep most frequently when an individual's physiological patterns undergo change. That is, there are changes in breathing, pulse, and eye movement during sleep. Most individuals experience this physiological change between four and five times a night, if their sleep is undisturbed. This stage is called REM-sleep (meaning Rapid Eye Movement). When researchers woke individuals during sleep, they found that highly visual dreams occurred during REM sleep. Less vivid dreaming occurred in non-REM sleep. While brain wave patterns (EEG) of REM sleep, tend to resemble waking state patterns, the behavioral measures suggest that REM sleep is a very deep sleep.¹

I began this thesis with an investigation of the psychological and physiological understanding of dreams because this is where my interest in dreams begins. That we spend a third of our lives in a state of reality which we do not wholly understand, is a compelling enterprise into which both modern and ancient civilizations have inquired. This semi-consciousness reality called sleep retains its mystery even today.

While the modern psychological understanding of the dream is of special interest to me, my thesis will focus on

¹ Psychology Today. (Del Mar, California: CRM Books, 1972) pp. 285-286

the biblical dream and what it meant to the biblical ancients. But it is the self-same curiosity about the modern dream that lead me to begin to investigate the biblical dream.

It should be noted out at the outset, that our modern understanding of the dream differs from the understanding of the Biblical dream. A Freudian or Jungian approach to the stories of Jacob and Joseph would be most interesting, but not particularly helpful. The Freudian model asks us to examine what the dreams tell us about individuals and their psychological status. Jung's model asks us to examine psychological status as well the ancestral heritage of the individual. The Biblical dream in contrast, is a condensed report. We cannot learn from the biblical dream what we can learn about an modern dream report.

The tools for studying a modern dream are not available to us in analyzing the biblical dream. Whereas we might utilize the "free association" technique, in decoding the modern dream, it is not possible to do so with the biblical dream. Daily occurrences, which influence the modern dream, are not available to us in the biblical dream report.

Yes, we can assert that Joseph was not getting along all that well with his siblings, as his dream report suggests, but the Bible does not give us the opportunity to invite Joseph to tell us more about his family. Further, what is of concern in the Bible is not really Joseph's

psychological status, but rather the internal literary and theological needs of the Bible itself.

While reading the psychological hermeneutic into the Bible is appropriate for homiletics, it is not helpful in procuring what the dream meant for the biblical ancients. To be sure, I have given many sermons which focus on the psychology of family relationships found in Genesis, the focus of this thesis will be different.

But long before many Jewish individuals took their dreams to the couch, and even before the rabbis of the Talmud commented upon the validity and meaning of dreams, the dream played an important role in the lives of the individuals of the ancient Near East. Modern psychology agrees with the ancients on one significant point: dreams contain symbols and messages.

This thesis then, must necessarily veer away from the psychological and investigate the biblical dream qua biblical dream. Modern psychological principles cannot be "read into" the text except when delivering sermons. However, this is not to say that the biblical dream developed in a vacuum. Quite the contrary, the biblical dream must also be seen in light of the world in which it developed. Thus the next section is devoted to the milieu in which the biblical dream arose.

III. HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF THE BIBLICAL DREAM

A. Ancient and Modern Conceptions of the World

The history of dreams and dream interpretation sheds some light onto the arena in which the Biblical dream arose. What a dream means to us and what a dream meant to the ancients is different because our understanding of the world and reality are different.

While the modern individual may divide the world into two separate realities: that of the conscious and that of the unconscious, for the ancient, this distinction was not known. We know that the dreams of last night may influence us this morning, yet the reality of the dream we had last night is in the world we relegate to the unconscious. We acknowledge the unconscious, yet it is the waking world that we moderns esteem.

We moderns may also divide the world into two separate categories: subject and object. That is, phenomena are subject to universal laws and create a gap between "what is" and what our perceptions of "what is" are. This division was not so apparent in ancient civilization. Our need to distinguish between reality and appearance is meaningless to the ancients.¹ Hence,

"Whatever is capable of affecting the
mind, feeling, or will has thereby

¹ Henri Frankfort, Before Philosophy. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966). p.20

established its undoubted reality.
There is for instance, no reason
why dreams should be considered less
real than impressions received while one
is awake" ¹

Prior to the development of Greek philosophy, the human being was not separated from-- nor opposed to-- the realm of nature. The distinctions we make between life and death are different than those made by the ancients.

Our notion of cause and effect differs greatly from the ancients' notion. We understand that phenomena occur as a result of universal laws. The ancients understood that they were intimately involved in willing what happens. And, what we as moderns relegate to the noumenal world, the ancients did not. Nor did the ancients view themselves as merely objects of something greater. Instead, they saw themselves intimately involved with why an event occurred. Cause and effect are not merely removed intellectual ideas for the ancients, rather they are understood in terms of particularity.

We moderns might show some concern were the President of the United States to share his dream of last night with us, even if it were to lead to better social policies. Messages from the "social policy gods" would not be welcome, no matter how progressive (and an improvement over present day policy making methods) they might be. For the ancients however, in a society where the dream was considered as real

¹ *ibid.* p.20

9

as the waking state, such a communication from the gods would be esteemed. The ancients took the words they received at night in their sleep and recorded them. These communications with the gods were as valid, if not more valid than the waking world.

B. Dreams in the Ancient Near East

1. Dreams are Messages from God(s)

Understanding that the worldview of the ancients bears little resemblance to ours, we can now examine the ancient Near Eastern dream sequence in terms of its purpose and function. Extant dream reports overwhelmingly suggest the esteem in which the dreams were held. They were considered "messages emanating from supernatural powers, and great importance was attached to their contents and interpretation as evidenced by the compilation of 'dream books' in Mesopotamia and Egypt".¹

Gaster explains that:

"Dreams are visions of things actually transpiring on an ultramundane plane, where persons are not bound to bodies nor events to specific moments and places. This plane is indistinguishable from that of the gods (or God), and dreams are therefore considered to be divine communications."²

¹ Isaac Mendelsohn, "Dreams" IDB, Vol 1 (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952) p. 868

² Theodore H. Gaster. "Dreams: In the Bible." Encyclopedia Judaica. vol. 6, ed. Cecil Roth (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) p. 208.

Unlike myths, which are the attribution of unexplainable events to the gods,¹ and are "the expression of man's total response to his encounter with reality and his subsequent effort to secure his own existence meaningfully in the face of that reality"², dreams are generally particular to the individual who has them, and they only encompass the sleeping hours, not the entirety of the day. The Near Eastern daydream is the exception, not the rule³

2. Dreams are a Form of Divination

Further, dreams share much in common with typical Near Eastern omens.⁴ Divination, the attempt by humans to perceive the future (as opposed to magic which seeks to change it), through technical means common in both the Near Eastern and biblical worlds.⁵ Hints of divination appear in

¹ John F. Priest, "Myth and Dream in the Hebrew Scripture" in Myths, Dreams and Religion, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1970) p.49

² *ibid.* p. 52

³ Only one dream, that of the Pharaoh Thutmose IV reports that the dream took place at noon. Perhaps the report mentions the time to suggest that daydreams were unusual. See Oppenheim Dreams, p.187

⁴ Gnuse, The Dream Theophany of Samuel, p.12

⁵ Shmuel Ahituv, "Divination", Encyclopedia Judaica. vol.6, Cecil Roth, ed. (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) p.111

the Bible, despite the fact that the Bible considers divination to be an abomination. (Deut. 18:9-11, Lev.19:26,31) ¹ Divination by means of arrows, a Mesopotamian custom appears in Ezekiel (21:26) Divination through the use of a container or cup appears in the hymn to Shamash (and coincidentally mentions that Shamash is source of dream interpretation).² This act of lecanomancy mentioned in Near Eastern sources, may even bear some relation to Genesis 44:5, in which Joseph's divination cup is placed in Benjamin's bag. The consultation of Urim and Thummim however seems to be the only divination technique (besides dreams) which the Bible tolerates. ³

3. Incubation

It was not uncommon in the Greek and later Near East for royalty to sleep purposively in a sanctuary in order to induce a dream. In Greek cult practices, one would go to sleep in a sacred space in order "to dream a cure to ailments of body and soul and to seek guidance, fortune, and

¹ Divination was not considered an abomination at all times and in all instances in Jewish tradition. While certain biblical passages do consider divination an abomination, later rabbis approved of certain forms of divination (i.e. Bat Kol).

² Oppenheim, Dreams p. 220

³ The prophetic attitude toward divination will be explored late in this paper. See p. 74

knowledge from a divine being."¹ In a Hittite source, there is the story of a ritual which includes a dream which would cure impotence. In this dream, through contact with a goddess, the man's impotency would disappear.²

Gudea, a Sumerian ruler wanted to build a temple to the gods, and is given instructions in a dream, but is unable to understand them. Hence he resorted to "incubation" to decipher the meaning of the first dream. In this second dream, after "long-winded prayers and cultic preparation" Gudea learns the architecture of the temple he must construct.³

Pharaoh Thutmose IV spent the night in the shadow of the Sphinx where he had a dream. And, in the Hittite legend of Naram-Sin, the king went to a sacred place to receive divine advice.⁴ Another example of incubation is found in a report of the Hittite King Murshili II, who, when faced with widespread pestilence called upon his priests "to learn about it by incubation, or let man see it in a dream!"⁵

Ugaritic records report two instances of incubation in the stories of Dan'el and Keret. While the authors do not

¹ Benjamin Kilbourne, "Dreams" The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Mircea Eliade vol.4 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987) p.486

² Oppenheim, Dreams. p. 194

³ Oppenheim, Dreams p.212

⁴ *ibid.* p.188

⁵ cited by Oppenheim from Goetze, ANET, p.394ff

detail the process, it was assumed that the listeners were well aware of incubation.¹

4. Dream Interpretation in the Near East

a. Dream-Books

The existence of "Dream-books" in the Near East "marks the transition of the mantic practices from the folklore level to that of systematic scholarly activity."² Extant dream-books, which were collections of traditional dream interpretations for the guidance of priests are limited to Egypt and Mesopotamia. From the library of Assurbanipal, the Assyrian Dream-Book, a collection of dream reports from Mesopotamia, has been translated by Oppenheim. In Egypt, oneiromancy has a two thousand year old tradition:

"The hieratic Book of Dreams (Papyrus Chester Beatty III, dating from the Ramesside period), whose content appears to go back to the Middle Kingdom, lists formulaically a host of situations ('When a man sees in a dream how he....') and then states whether the dream is to be interpreted 'favorably' or 'unfavorably'."³

b. Dream Interpretation and Interpreters

The key to dream interpretation rests upon the

¹ Robert Gnuse, The Dream Theophany of Samuel. (Lanham, Maryland: The University Press of America, 1984) pp.35-36

² Oppenheim, Dreams, p. 242

³ J. Bergman, "חלום Chalam: Egypt" Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. vol. IV, ed. G. Johannes Botterwick and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978) p. 423

understanding the meaning of the word pasaru in Akkadian, and bur in Sumerian. The primary meaning of pasaru means to untie and unbind. ¹ As applied to dream interpretation, pasaru means both to report and translate the dream as well as to release the dreamer from evil implications of the dream. ² This also means that in Near Eastern dreams the emphasis is in "translating" the dream -- that is its essence, not on utilizing a psychological nor exegetical hermeneutic.

In the Assyrian Dream Book, there is a report of how one can remove the evil consequences of a dream by "transferring it to a lump of clay which is then thrown into water there to dissolve and disappear." ³ This is done by telling the dream to the clay, so that once the clay is dissolved, the evil dissipates.

In Mesopotamian dream literature, it is women who often serve as interpreters. ⁴ In the dream of Dumuzi, the Sumerian god, it is his sister who is the interpreter. And the mother of Gilgamesh who is his dream interpreter. In the Hittite dream of Keshshi, the "symbolic" dreams are interpreted by his mother.

¹ S. David Sperling, "Studies in Late Hebrew Lexicography in Light of Akkadian" PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1973

² Oppenheim, Dreams, pp. 218-219

³ *ibid.* p.219

⁴ *ibid.* p.221

It is the sa'ilu or sa'iltu who serves as the "divination-expert". The meaning of this word is to "inquire" and is akin to the Hebrew שאל and נסיע. But it is the baru priest, "who, however, it seems to have had a higher social standing, owing perhaps his scholarly training..."¹ The baru was not however involved in dream interpretation. Further, extant dreams suggest that in general, it was women who sought the advice of these dream-professionals. The function of this professional class was to "ask specific questions to the gods either by means of some oracular mechanism or on a manner appropriate to induce the divine powers to express in a form which only the sa'il(t)u was able to understand."²

The above discussion provides a backdrop for which the Biblical dream can be viewed. However, the comparison between Near Eastern and Biblical dream sequences cannot be forced. There are similarities in structure, language and purpose which will be explored in this paper. But the internal demands of the Bible: literary, political, theological keep the biblical dream distinct from other Near Eastern dream reports.

The Bible utilizes dreams for its own reasons: distinct from its Near Eastern neighbors, yet not wholly separate from the milieu of the Near East. This then will be the

¹ *ibid.* p.221

² *ibid.* p.221

focus of my thesis. I will examine what the biblical dream is in terms of what it meant to the ancient Hebrews.

IV. THE BIBLICAL DREAM

A. ETYMOLOGY

One way of understanding the dream is through an analysis of the instances where the word halom (dream) is used in the biblical dream narratives as well as any mention of the word, both in verb and noun forms. Through an analysis of the word halom, one can begin to ascertain what a dream is, what a dream meant, and what a dream was for the biblical ancients. Further, in the examination of the context, setting, time, characters, content and narrative, one will be able to get a sense of what the biblical dream is. As Oppenheim correctly points out, "The dream-experiences of a civilization dead for many millennia must be studied in the reflections which they have produced in the literary documents of that civilization." ¹ Language and literary criticism then, hold the key to unraveling the biblical dream.

But there are other words which share some similarities with the word halom. These other words include: hazon/hazon lailah and mar'ah. A comparison will be made between halom and instances where hazon/hazon lailah and mar'ah appear and determine whether or not these other terms connote the same meaning as h-l-m.

¹ Oppenheim, Dreams, p.184

Later, each dream sequence will be categorized structurally (ie. as part of a narrative, whether it is a message, symbolic message or mantic dream) and analyzed literarily. Context, theology, literary style, and politics will also be examined as possible influences upon the meaning of dreams and their use in the Bible.

The etymology of the word "dream", according to Brown, Driver and Briggs, is related to the "experience an emission of the seminal fluid; attain puberty".¹ That this is the origin of the Hebrew word for dream is debated. The word "dream", with the root "h-l-m" also is found in Aramaic, and Ugaritic.

Gnuse suggests that BDB has formulated a connection between puberty and the age in which a youth "reaches the age of sexual awareness and fantasy. One sense is that the chief connection of the word must be with sexual fantasies in one's sleep."²

Oppenheim points out that the Ugaritic root, "to see" supports the idea that the dream is a visual experience.³ But, his reasoning is incorrect, as h-l-m has no Near Eastern derivation. It simply means "to dream" not "to

¹ Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951) p.321

² Robert Karl Gnuse, the Dream Theophany of Samuel p.59

³ Oppenheim, Dreams. p. 226

see".¹

In other Near Eastern languages, the word is associated with "sleep", (in Akkadian sittu meaning "early morning" or "sleep"). Perhaps, as Oppenheim explains, this "time" was an "intermediary stage between wakefulness and slumber in which dream-experiences of a special nature are said --in classical sources--- to occur".²

The noun "dream" (halom) appears 65 times in the Bible. As a verb, h-l-m appears 27 times in Hebrew and in 22 instances in Aramaic. And, while h-l-m (both verbally and nominally) appears most frequently in the Joseph stories and Daniel, there are other words which are similar in meaning to h-l-m. The other words which connote what may in fact be a dream or a dreamlike state, hazon, hezion lailah, and marah are generally distinguished from the dream according to many scholars. But there is scholarly disagreement here as to what constitutes a "dream".

The following is an inventory and description of the word as it appears. Halom is categorized in terms of what can be said about the hebrew dream in general. In outlining the instances of the use of the word "dream", one can make several assertions about what is common to the passages

¹ In Dreams, Oppenheim cites C.H.Gordon's Ugaritic Handbook; revised Grammar, Paradigms, Texts in Transliteration, Comprehensive Glossary 228 no.674, Rome, Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947 as his proof that the Ugaritic h-l-m means "to see".

² ibid. p.225

which speak about dreams. ¹

B. PHILOLOGY

1. Dreams occur at night. The idiom ba/halom ba/halailah occurs four times in the bible. This is an hendiadys, meaning dream, In Gen. 20:3, 31:24, 40:5, and 41:11, this idiom appears. Even where the idiom is not explicit about including lailah, night is the time for dreaming as in Gen. 28:11 " בְּחֵלֶם לַיְלָה". Speiser however, translates this as "in a dream one night", indicating that the definite article is significant and thus it is for him, not an hendiadys.²

2. Words associated with sleep and awakening surround the dream sequence. Jacob placed a rock and lay down (Gen. 28:11)...and "awoke from his sleep" (Gen. 28:16). Solomon goes to Gibeon where God appears to him in ba halom ha-lailah (I Kings 3:5) and at the end of the sequence Solomon awakens: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים וְהָיָה חֵלֶם (I Kings 3:15). Following the dream of the ladder (Gen. 28:16), Jacob: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים וְהָיָה חֵלֶם. In Daniel 2:1, a

¹ Only in instances where the noun or verb halom appear are examined in this present inventory. Other words which are similar in meaning (ie. hazon, hezion lailah, and marah) are examined in the following section.

² Speiser cites Gen. 19:30 in Genesis p. 145 as reference that this is not an idiom. Lichtenstein, however suggests that it is an idiom, citing Job 33:15 and Isaiah 29:7 use of hazon/hezion lailah as a parallel to ba-halom ba-lailah, both having the equivalency of an Akkadian word tabrit mūsi, the synonym of šuttu, in "Dream-Theophany and the E Document", p. 46f.

connection is made between a dream and the loss of sleep:

וַתִּבְּצַע רִיחוֹ וַשְּׁנָתוֹ נִהְיָה עָלָיו . And

again in Daniel 7:1, there is another report of a dream "in bed"

בְּנֵי יָמֶיךָ חֲלֵמִים חֲזָה וְחֲזָוִי רָאָה עַל מִשְׁכְּבֶה

And, in Psalm 73:20

כִּי חֲלֵמִים מִהֲקִיטִים

3. There is a theophany. God comes to the individual in a

dream at night as is the case with Abimelech (Gen. 20)

וַיָּבֹא אֵלֶיהֶם אֵל אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בְּחֲלֹמוֹת הַלַּיְלָה ; Laban

(Gen. 31:21) וַיֵּהָא אֵלֶיהֶם אֵל לָבָן בְּחֲלֹמוֹת הַלַּיְלָה and

Solomon (I Kings 3:5) וַיֵּהָא יְהוָה אֶלְשֹׁמֶת בְּחֲלֹמוֹת הַלַּיְלָה In

Gen. 31:11, an angel of God appears to Jacob:

וַיֵּהָא אֵלִי מַלְאָךְ הָאֱלֹהִים בְּחֲלֹמוֹת יָעֲקֹב וַאֲמַר הִנְנִי

In Numbers 12:6, God makes himself known to the dreamer:

אֲבוֹצָצַת בְּחֲלֹמוֹת אֲצַבֵּר בִּי .

4. The are visual aspects to the dream. In Gen. 31:10,

Jacob: וַאֲמַר עֲיָנִי וַאֲרָא בְחֲלֹמוֹת וְהִנֵּה הֶעֱצִימָה לִּי אֱלֹהִים הַצֵּבֵא In

the following sentence, an angel of God "appears" to Jacob.

Although there is no verb "to see" in Gen 28:10ff, the Bible reports that Jacob "sees" a stairway on the ground.

Something visual has occurred. In Genesis 37:5, Joseph

describes what he saw in his dreams. And in Judges 7: 13ff,

there is a discription of a barley loaf which strikes a tent and uproots it.

5. There is an auditory component/ communication (ie. a

dialogue) in the dream. In Gen. 20:3, God speaks to

Abimelech; in Gen. 28:13, God speaks to Jacob. In Gen. 31:11

and 31:12 an angel of God speaks to Jacob, and in Gen. 31:24, God speaks to Laban. Solomon in I Kings 3:5ff, is asked by God what he wants. They carry on a lengthy conversation. Saul, in I Sam. 28: reports that God does not answer him neither by prophets or dreams. Hence, God does communicate to men in this fashion.

6. The recipient of the dream is always male. Nowhere, in any of the passages where the word "halom" is used, are women the recipients of the dream. In fact, one might even assert that only patriarchs, kings, and courtiers of the kings, be they Hebrew or non-Hebrew have dreams. One dream is related by "non-royalty". (Judges 7) It is not Gideon who "has" the dream. Rather, the dream is reported by a Midianite:

חלום חלמתי והנה צלול לחם שסר'ם מתהפך במחנה מצ'ן ו'הא
 38 האלה ייכרו ו'פ'ל ו'הפכו לחם פ'ל האלה:

However, on the previous night, there are two descriptions of the building of the altar at Ophra. One account, while not invoking the word "halom", mentioned that God spoke to Gideon "balailah" -- suggesting another instance of a dream.

In Numbers 12:6, God points to whom he relates to in a dream: the prophet. While the Bible speaks of female prophets, no biblical prophetess receives a dream. In Greek dream reports, women do receive dreams.¹ In other Near

¹ Oppenheim cites the Odyssey and reports that in Greek tragedies, women were almost exclusively the receivers of dream messages.p. 197. Dreams.

Eastern dream reports, women are generally not the recipient of dreams. In Hittite civilization, there are extant two reports of dreams experienced by women. One woman who receives a dream is the wife of Hattushili, who is visited by the goddess Ishtar. Her husband's promotion to a high priestly office is predicted in her dream.¹ In another Hittite account, a woman dreams that a certain princess Gashuliya is visited by a god, but she does not perform the ritual needed following a visit in the dream by this god. The princess becomes ill, and her illness is ascribed to her neglect of the prescribed rituals following the visit. (Apparently, she was supposed to make a likeness of herself and dedicate it to the god so as to fend off the "evil".)² Apart from these Hittite dream-reports, "spontaneous revelations of the deity in dreams are reserved to persons of the male sex."³ In a religious setting where there are both gods and goddesses, it is curious that there are not more reports of dream communication by gods with women.

7. There is a prediction and fulfillment of the dream.

Oppenheim asserts that the Joseph dreams are symbolic rather than mantic because there is no verbal message.⁴ Joseph's dreams and his interpretations are both symbolic and

¹ Oppenheim, Dreams. p.197

² Oppenheim, Dreams p.197-198

³ *ibid.* p.190

⁴ This is elaborated in the next chapter of the thesis.

predictive: his brothers do end up "bowing down to him" and the baker is beheaded. Likewise, Solomon does receive the wisdom he requests from God. The dream mentioned in Judges 7 although symbolic, also is fulfilled.

8. There is symbolism in the dream in need of interpretation.

Dreams requiring interpretation seem to be limited to non-Hebrew royalty and non-royalty. Both Daniel and Joseph interpret dreams in the Bible for non-Hebrew royalty. Joseph interprets his cell mates' and the Pharaoh's dreams. Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezer's dreams. Both claim that the ability to interpret stems from God (Gen. 40:8 and 41:16, and Daniel 1:17 and 2:28). Both Daniel's and Joseph's interpretations are fulfilled. The dream of Judges 7 is related by a Midianite and interpreted by a Midianite. Joseph's dreams of sheaves and stars are the only symbolic dream in which the dreamer is Hebrew.

9. There are dreams that do not require interpretation and are messages from God. (ie. directions and warnings) Laban

is instructed not to "deal with Jacob" (Gen. 31:24). Abimelech receives immediate instructions as to what he is to do (Gen. 20:3). Solomon's dream does not require interpretation. (I Kings 3ff) And Jacob's dream at Beth-El is a message from God.

10. There may be incubation. Solomon's dream (I Kings 3ff)

follows the typical incubation pattern.¹ Jacob's experience at Beth el suggests that this may be an incubation experience, but Oppenheim points out that inasmuch as Jacob did not know that he was in a sacred place, this should be labeled an "unintentional incubation".² A discussion of the concept of incubation is discussed in the previous section of this work.

11. Dreams have an ephemeral, non-real sense. At different times, dreams may reflect a description which suggests non-reality, futility or non-corporeality. In Isaiah 29:7, Ariel (Jerusalem) is said to be so strong, that any attack by the nations will be pointless: והיה כחלום חז"ן עולם. And, in verse 8, the one who "dreams he is eating, but wakes to find himself empty; And like one who is thirsty and dreams he is drinking, But wakes to find himself faint and utterly parched". Job 20:8, the wicked "flies like a dream and cannot be found".

12. Dreams are seen in a positive light. Psalm 126:1 reflects a positive attitude toward the dream: "When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion --we see it as in a dream -- our mouths shall be filled with laughter, our tongues, with songs of joy..." . Job 33:15 presents a

¹ Some scholars do not consider Solomon's dream at Gibeon to be an incubation dream. See T. H. Gaster, "Dreams: in the Bible", Encyclopedia Judaica, vol.6. (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971)p. 208

² Oppenheim, Dreams, p.187

positive view of dreams in which God opens men's understanding through dreams and visions. Joel 3:1, states that "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions", suggesting that communion with God will someday be available to all.

13. Dreams are seen in a negative light and are viewed critically. In Jeremiah, 23:27,28, 32; 27:9; and 29:8,, warnings are given to those who prophesy falsely in God's name. Zechariah echoes a similar sentiment against those "dreamers who speak lies and console with illusions" (Zech. 10:2). Psalm 73 also presents a negative picture of a dream state. It is compared negatively to those who do not "enter God's sanctuary".¹

C. OTHER DREAM/ DREAM-LIKE WORDS: HAZON/ HEZYON LAILAH AND MARAH

Jepsen, in his article on h-z-h, claims that, "chazah, etc., refers to a special type of divine revelation, probably during the night but distinct from a dream."² He asserts that h-z-h is a loan word from the Aramaic, and is associated with the prophet's revelation. However, h-z-h finds its root in Canaanite, (ie. Hebrew and Phoenician)

¹ A detailed contrast between the positive and negative evaluations of dreams is elaborated in a discussion of prophetic attitudes towards dreams as distinct form of revelation on p.74.

² A. Jepsen. " חֲזָה Chazah". Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol. IV, p.290

rather than Aramaic.¹ The assertion of Jepsen is thus invalid - it is the Aramaic which if anything, is the loan word. Jepsen asserts that it is not a visual image, but rather a word from God. Often, though paralleled to halom (Is. 29:7, Job 20:8, 7:14, 33:15; Zech. 10:2; and Joel 3:1), it lacks "a theophany or visual image to be interpreted".² He supports his argument by adding that although words associated with "sleep" are included in passages with this root word, and that it is understood that the hazon takes place at night (Micah 3:6; II Sam. 7:4, 17), this is still qualitatively different from a dream.³ He also points out that the h-z-h which appears in Daniel use the Aramaic sense of the word "to see", and are so closely "associated with dream images that they cannot be separated from them."⁴

What Jepsen fails to take into account however, is that the root of h-z-h is directly connected with the root meaning "to see". How a revelation which occurs at night, particularly in the case where hazon appears with lailah, is disconnected from its root "to see", is difficult to accept. That the Bible reports it as a "word" from God yet lacks a theophany or visual, cannot rule out the

¹ The writer's knowledge of Near Eastern etymology is limited, and this assertion that h-z-h is from the Canaanite is based upon a conversation with the writer's thesis advisor, Dr. Sperling.

² *ibid.* p.283

³ *ibid.* p. 283

⁴ Jepsen. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. p. 288.

possibility of a dream. Also, there are dreams at night in which there is no visual (I Kings 3ff)

Generally, the root h-z-h is associated with prophecy or seeing with an "inner eye", but that is not its only meaning as I will illustrate below. There is a "plain sense" of the word:

In Proverbs 22:29, one sense of the verb is given וְזָהָר אֵינֶה

מְהִירָה מֵאֲרָכָה לִפְנֵי מַלְכִים יִזְכָּר בְּיָמָיו חֹשֶׁךְ כִּי־

In Exodus 8:21 וְאַתָּה תִּחְשַׁךְ מִכָּל הָעַם אֲשֶׁר מִלֵּךְ יִרְאֵה אֱלֹהִים

These three examples have the meaning "to see" or "to behold". These examples are not necessarily associated with prophecy, but rather, suggest the plain meaning "to see". Or in Job 19:17, h-z-h is even paralleled to roeh: אֲשֶׁר מִן אֲנֹכִי

וְיִזְכְּרֵנִי וְאֵל זָכְרִי וְכֹלֵהוּ בְּחִקִּי

Yet, h-z-h also appears to have an auditory realm, and encapsulates the "word of God". This is where the meaning is securely tied to the concept of the prophet and his communication from God. Amos 1:1, describes God's word, but without the report of a visual experience: דְּבַר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בָּא

בְּנֶבֶךְ צִיִּים מִמִּקְוֵה אֵלֶּר חֲזָה דֵּם יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isaiah 13:1 also depicts God's word, without the visual

image: מִכָּא בָּבֶל אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁעִיהוּ בֶן אֲחִישֵׁר

¹ In Psalms 58:9, 11, there is another use of the word h-z-h, but its translation is difficult and its meaning is uncertain: כִּי־זָכַרְתָּ אֱלֹהִים יִהְיֶה נֶכֶד אֲשֶׁר הָאֵל

יִשְׁמַח צִדִּיקֶיךָ מִזֶּכֶר נֶכֶד בְּשִׁמְיוֹ יִרְחֹם הָאֵל הַרְדֵּם

hezyon lailah are one in the same.¹

Job 4:13 omits the mention of halom, yet there is a sense that it is a dream since there is the mention of sleep: בשכבם אחזיונות לילם בנפח חרצמה אל אנשים.

Further, Job 7:14 : והמתני' בחלמות ומחזיונות חבצתני

There is no mention of lailah in this report, but it is clear that there is some reference to some sense of comparison in that the previous verse seems to match up the word חלמות (ב) and חלמנות (א) suggesting paralellism.

Joel 3:1 also sets up a parallelism: והיה אחרי כן

אשפיק את רוחי על כל בשר ונבאו בניכם ובנותיכם זקניכם חלמות יחלמון בחלומיכם חזיונות יראו

As זקניכם is compared to בחלומיכם, halomot is compared to hezyonot.

Zechariah 10:2 also suggests the affinity:

כי חתרים צברו און וקובסאים חצו שקר וחלמות במוקד' צברו הבל' יחלמון על כל נפסו במו יסון כי אין רעה

While there are grammatical differences in this passages, the meaning is equivalent.

While in Aramaic, the book of Daniel uses the idiom. In 2:19, Daniel has a hezwe lelya in order to interpret Nebuchanedzar's dream. And in 7:7 and 7:13, the idiom is again mentioned: באמר צנה חזה היית בחצוי עילאי

¹ Lichtenstein makes this assertion in his footnotes to his article "Dream Theophany and the E Document." p. 46. He claims that this is based on the Akkadian word "tabrit musi" which is a synonym for suttu "dream". Perhaps it suggests the relationship between halom and hezyon lailah?

Halom and hazeh lailah seem to be almost interchangeable in Daniel. :

It is clear to me that while the word halom is not used instead of hezyon lailah, or appears with the word, the similarities are too close to distinguish the halom from the hazon lailah. The parallelism and sleep terminology attest to the similarity in meaning. Further, one cannot simply dismiss the fact that h-z-h finds its root in the visual. What it is also clear is that none of the selections in which either hazon or hezyon lailah appears with halom, is in the Pentateuch. What can be said is that there is a change in terminology as one moves from the Pentateuch into other sections of the Bible. To "prove" that hazon-lailah was simply the word for "dream" (halom) in the Prophets and Writings, would be difficult. The reasons for the change cannot be proved yet speculation is in order.

There is another word, mar'ah which is frequently associated with a dream. Stemming from the Hebrew root r'-h, meaning "to see". It appears in the Bible twelve times and is associated with the prophet. Only in one instance is it not associated with prophecy: in Ex. 38:8, it is a "mirror".

In Numbers 12:6, God makes his presence known in a vision:

וַאֲמַר אֲנִי אֶל יְהוָה וְהָאֱלֹהִים יִרְאוּ אֶת אֲנִי

¹ Most scholars suggest the affinity between the Daniel and Joseph dream narratives, hence the terminology would correspond. A detailed comparison can be found on p.73

אמר צהר הילול ואצבר בו עאבן עבדי אשר בכל ביתי נאמן הוא
 בה אלהי צבר בו ומכאן עלה חזית ומחנה יהודה יבית
 ומצוד לא יכאמם אצבר בעצב במשה

In this instance the word halom appears, apparently as an equivalent of mar'ah. What is clear is that there is a distinction between this form of revelation and the form in which God communicates with Moses). This is an example of literary parallelism at work.

In another passage, Genesis 46:2, mar'ah appears: ויאמר

אלהים לישראל במראה הלילה ויאמר יעקב יעקב ויאמר קנו

In this instance, the word appears with the word lailah, suggesting that it is a dream.

Speiser concludes that in Genesis 46:2, the mar'ah is considered another form of indirect communication from God used by the "E" source. ¹ Speiser translates the word as "vision by night" but does not call it a dream. It does however, take place in Beersheba, and Israel (Jacob) offers up sacrifices, suggesting the possibility that this is an incubation scene (Genesis 46:1), and may in fact be a dream, akin to the other ancient near eastern and biblical incubation practices.

Mar'ah appears in I Sam. 3ff and the story of Samuel's

"call" from God in a "vision": וישנה שמואל צד בבקר ויפתח
אז נאמרו ביה יהוה ושמואל רץ והבין את המראה אל עזי

There has been much debate as to whether this is a "dream"

¹ E. A. Speiser, Genesis (New York: Doubleday, 1985) p.344

sequence. The word halom does not appear in the sequence. From what we know about dreams, as the Bible sees them, this sequence has much in common with dreams. If a visual experience is what differentiates a dream from a vision--hazon, as Jepsen concludes, this is not a dream. Samuel's experience is an auditory one. But, verse 10 suggests that there is a theophany not unlike Gen. 20 and Gen. 31. A message is given in this sequence, not unlike the messages of Gen. 20, Gen. 31, and I Kings 3. God speaks in this sequence and it occurs at night. It seems to have many of the components to claim that this is a dream. Here, as in each case, context, and analysis of structure will support my claim that mar'ot lailah and mar'ot are dreams.

Daniel also uses the term mar'ah frequently. In chapter 10:1,7,8 and 16, mar'ah is used to describe the visions he has which are prophetic:

ואמר הדבר וצבא שצדק וכן את הדבר ובינה לו
 הער זה ונאמר אני צדק אלה לבד את המלאכה... ואנשים... ולא ראוי את המלאכה
 וכן נאמר לבד וראה את המלאכה שצדק המלאכה... ואמר את המלאכה שצדק
 אצני במלאכה

In these passages, there is no mention of initial sleep. Instead, Daniel mentions the exact day in which he has this vision. He does not become "sleepy" until the vision is in progress.

Ezekiel also uses this word, but his mar'ot lack the dream quality of Daniel, but perhaps this is just due to the lack of dream language that is found in Daniel. For Ezekiel, the word carries the significance of a vision: Ez. 1:1 והנה

השמים וארצה מכאן אלפים

In 42:2, Ezekiel has a "vision", atop a mountain: וכמרץ ה
המראה אשר ראיתי כמו נראה אשר ראיתי בבאנו לשלוח את העיר ומנא
במראה.

There are no "sleep" words here, dreams to be interpreted, only the word of God, according to Ezekiel.

V. PARADIGMS OF NEAR EASTERN AND BIBLICAL DREAM STRUCTURE

A. Biblical Dreams

It should be no surprise that there is "scholarly disagreement" as to what constitutes the dream report structure. What follows in the next section is a brief "review of the literature" of ancient near eastern and biblical dream structure.

Yehezkel Kaufmann divides biblical dreams into two categories: the symbolic and the prophetic. In symbolic dreams, the meaning of the vision is veiled, and in need of interpretation. In the prophetic dream, the deity "reveals himself and speaks directly to man" ¹ Kaufmann also adds that the prophetic dream is closest to the "spirit of the Israelite inquiry of God" since it is the most direct, while the symbolic dream, because it needed interpretation, was akin to pagan divination. Hence, the Both Hebrew "oneirocritics" (Joseph and Daniel) attribute their interpretational talent to God. ² Yet, this assertion of Kaufmann must be questioned since later rabbinic Judaism accepted dreams as a valid expression of revelation and was not considered pagan.

Isaac Mendelsohn identifies two typologies of the dream structure: simple and symbolic. Simple dreams are

¹ Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, (New York: Schocken Books, 1972) p.93

² Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, p.94

"announcements delivered in plain language" and include Gen. 20:, 6-7; 31:10-13, 24; and I Kings 3:5 ff. Symbolic dreams are those which can be resolved only by interpreters. These include: Gen. 37:5-10; 40:5ff; 41:1ff and Daniel 2.

T. H. Gaster does not define dream structures by rigid typologies. He considers dreams as divine communications to be regarded as omens. They are usually symbolic and need of visionaries (prophets, mantics, and ecstasies) who possess "rapport with the divine dimension" in order to unravel their meaning.² He does however, distinguish between dreams which occur at sacred places and are considered "incubation" dreams. In this category he includes only Genesis 46:1ff as falling into this category. Other alleged "incubation" dreams (i.e. Gen 28, I Kings 3, and I Samuel 3) are not included in this category.

Benjamin Kilborne asserts that there are two categories of dreams in the Bible: "Royal Message" and "Apocalyptic". The first is the "Royal Message" dream. Kilborne states that this message dream is "a communication from God to a king or a prophet in which the dreamer is no more than a medium."³ On the basis of Numbers 12:6ff, he includes in this category those dreams which are tied to politics. Thus

¹ Isaac Mendelsohn, "Dream" IDB, Vol. 1, p.868

² T. H. Gaster, "Dreams:In the Bible". Encyclopedia Judaica. vol. 6 (Jerusalem; Keter, 1971), p.208

³ Benjamin Kilborne, "Dreams" The Encyclopedia of Religion, vol. 4, ed. Mircea Eliade. p. 482

the Joseph and Daniel dreams are included. An "Apocalyptic" dream is also a communication from God, but "differs from the political divination dreams in that it is imaginary." ¹ Here, he includes Jacob's dream of the ladder (Gen. 28), Ezekiel's description of a whirlwind (Ez. 1), and Daniel's visions of chapter 7 and 10.

Ottoson divides Biblical dreams into two categories: symbolic and non-symbolic. The non-symbolic dream follows the following pattern: God comes and speaks to the dreamer who replies (Gen. 20:3; 31:11; I Sam. 3:10; I Kings 3) ²

Symbolic dreams require interpretation and are primarily found in Genesis and Daniel, although the Midianite dream of Judges 7:13 may also be included. Ottoson points out that it is mostly non-Israelites who have symbolic dreams. The structure includes the following: there is a dream and the dreamer is troubled because he cannot interpret the dream. Interpretation is part of the dream, and "only God knows the correct interpretation". ³ Joseph and Daniel are Yahweh's instruments. Only one non-Israelite is capable of interpretation, and that is the Midianite of Judges 7. Israelite dreams however, are self-explanatory and are clear. Daniel's are apocalyptic.

¹ ibid. p.482

² M. Ottoson, "Chalam", Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, p.429

³ ibid. p.431*

B. Ancient Near Eastern Dreams

The most widely cited source for Ancient Near Eastern dream research is A. Leo Oppenheim's The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East: With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream Book.¹ Although primarily a work on the Assyrian Dream Book found in Assurbanipal's library, Oppenheim collects dream texts from all over the ancient Near East as a means for establishing dream structure paradigms. Because Oppenheim's models are based on the most broad collection of extant dream report sources, his paradigms will be treated in depth, as they help establish a framework for analysis of biblical dream reports.

Oppenheim divides the dream-experience into three categories:

1. Message Dreams

Dreams as messages or revelation of the deity which may or may not need interpretation. In this first category, there is a what Oppenheim terms a literary "frame". That is, a description of the setting of the dream, who is having the dream, where the dream is taking place, and when, (i.e. "while Prince X was sleeping in his bed") as well as the

¹ Two other major works about biblical dreams are: Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich's Der Traum im Alten Testament, BZAW, vol. 73. Berlin: Gruyter, 1953 and Andreas Resch's Der Traum in Heilsplan Gottes: Deutung und Bedeutung des Traums im Alten Testament, Freiburg: Herder, 1964.

content of the dream itself. Often there is a "messenger" who "stood" at the head of the dreamer. There is a waking of the sleeping person with the question, "Are you asleep xxxxx?" There is a coming and going of the deity/messenger. Reference to the size of the deity or messenger is noted. There is also an opening "Fear not" phrase typical of dream sequence beginnings.

After the content is described, there is a concluding section. It is not uncommon for the dreamer to awaken suddenly, and there is the reaction of the dreaming person or the fulfillment of the prediction of the dream.¹

The content of the dream influences the form. Dream theophanies tend to be the norm in Near Eastern dream sequences. Dialogue is the exception, and in most cases, "submissive consent is the only admissible reaction."² Unlike a theophany usually accompanied by thunder and lightning, dreams are usually unaccompanied by "special effects". If it is an incubation dream, the recipient is generally royalty.

In this first category, there are also "symbolic" dreams in which the human is granted entry into a world which is home to the demons, gods, and beasts. It is in these dreams that Oppenheim asserts censorship to be rigorous. These "symbolic" dreams (and the word symbolic

¹ Oppenheim, Dreams, p.187

² Oppenheim, Dreams, p.191

cannot be understood in the same way we mean symbolic in Freudian dream analysis), consist of a

"message, not expressed in clear words but transmitted in a specific way by which certain selected elements of the message, such as persons, key words, actions, etc., are replaced by other elements" ¹

There are symbolic dreams which are self-evident, but generally, symbolic dreams require an interpreter. The content is generally concerned with the future. The dreamer then, is faced with the problem of what to do with the dream. Generally (and Oppenheim points out that this is not the case in biblical dreams), the resolution or interpretation is dependent upon the intelligence of the dreamer. ²

In symbolic dreams, there is the typical literary "frame": setting, content, interpretation and "as well as the triumphant verification by actually occurring events" ³ One way to ascertain whether the dream was a "meaningful" one, is through the use of repetition. That is, two or more dreams with the same theme will be recorded. Further, though somewhat a rare occurrence, two people or more will have the same dream on a given night. This is found primarily in later sources rather than earlier, but not wholly unknown in

¹ *ibid.* p.206

² *ibid.* p.207

³ *ibid.* p.207

the ancient Near East. ¹

Symbolic dreams are generally "interpreted" in three ways, with the aid of an interpreter:

"There is the first interpretation based on an intuitive understanding of the associations which link the message to its 'coded' version.... Then there is the use of collections of dream-omina, in other words, an interpretation based on precedents which have been observed, collected systematically and augmented or supplemented by means of (pseudo-) rational deductions.....Finally, the interpreter may turn for verification of proposed interpretations or, directly for an unequivocally worded message to the very source of the dream, that is, to the deity. This he may do either by means of magic practices, by using some kind of oracular apparatus which provokes the deity to express his will through other media of communication, or by resorting to sought dreams, to visionary experiences, etc." ²

2. Psychological Status Dreams

A second type of dream in the ancient Near East include dreams which "reflect, symptomatically the state of mind, the spiritual and bodily 'health' of the dreamer, which are only mentioned and never recorded." ³ These dreams, a rare occurrence, may speak about sex, incest, and the moral qualities of the individual. There are also "pleasant"

¹ This type of dream is found in Artimidorus' Dream Book as well as in the Talmud (Ta'anit 21b)

² *ibid.* p.221

³ *ibid.*, p.184

dreams, which may predict "pleasant" events. There is no known word for "nightmare" in Akkadian, but, there is one "nightmarish" dream reported in the sources. When a person has an "evil" dream, this may be a sign that he or she is in poor health.

3. Mantic Dreams

Finally, there are dreams which are mantic dreams in which events are prognosticated. These type also have a literary frame, similar to that of "message" dreams. These dreams are based upon the assumption that dreams have prognostic importance. Differing so greatly from our modern understanding that dreams only relate to the past, the mantic dream of the ancient Near East was related to the future. This form of dream was more typical of Egypt than Assyria, and these dreams required an interpreter.

What can be said about the mantic dream is that there is special attention given to the time (ie. before dawn) Further, mantic dreams fall in two categories: political and private. They tend to be reports about the political life of the king or they are derived from ominous encounters in daily life.

VI. THE BIBLICAL DREAM: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

What follows in this section of the thesis is an analysis of the Biblical dream, utilizing the paradigm of the Near Eastern dream sequence outlined by Oppenheim. An analysis of each dream sequence will be made in the order of its report in the Bible. While there are some places where fragments of dream sequences remain, only those places in which the word halom, hazon/hezyon lailah, and marah will be considered as dreams.¹ There are also instances which use the word halom metaphorically. This analysis will be limited to dream sequences.

I am limiting my analysis to one which will identify the biblical dream as part of Near Eastern dream literature, and thus subject to the same rigorous analysis that has been applied to Near Eastern dreams. I will not examine dream sequences in order to ascertain their authorship.

¹ Genesis contains several reports which share similarities with dream sequences. For example, Genesis 15 reports that Abraham has fallen into a "deep sleep". There seems to be some vestiges of an incubation since there is a sacrifice, but no sacred site is named. There is a message with a divine promise not unlike Gen. 28, but the word used in this passage is mahazeh which is not seen as a word meaning dream. Hence, due to the difficulties which this text presents, it will be omitted from an analysis, since it is not clear that it is a dream. Gnuse points out other instances where there are vestiges of dreams, but their present report is not termed a dream sequence. These include: Gen. 21:16-19; and 22:1-2; What will be included however is Numbers 22:8-13, 19-21 even though the word dream is never mentioned, it possesses all dream sequence formulae.

Instead, I will examine the literary structure of the dream sequence.

Many scholars claim that the hallmark of the "E" source is its preference for dreams. According to these scholars, "E" describes the appearance to human protagonists in dreams rather than in direct revelation.¹ In contrast, it is maintained that revelations in "J" are described as corporeal theophanies.²

This distinction, as Lichtenstein has pointed out, is false. As Lichtenstein has shown Near Eastern dream reports have intermingled both the direct and ambiguous revelation in a single dream report. Likewise, biblical dream accounts must be read in the same fashion. Whereas some scholars make the distinction of two editors involved in Genesis 28, for example (i.e. Yahweh and Elohim are mentioned; Yahweh stands over him/ over it [J]; He had a dream [E]), Lichtenstein demonstrates that both types of revelation are consistent within single ancient Near Eastern dream accounts.³ Therefore each dream sequence will be treated as a single literary unit, just as Oppenheim has treated the ancient Near Eastern dream sequences he studied.

¹ E.A. Speiser, Genesis, p. 219

² Alan W. Jenks, The Elohist and North Israelite Traditions, (Missoula, Minnesota: Scholars Press, 1977) p. 35

³ Lichtenstein, "Dream Theophany and the E Document", p. 51

As stated before in the previous chapter, Oppenheim's model of the Near Eastern message and symbolic dreams contain the following components:

1. A description of the setting
2. Who is having the dream
3. Where is the dream taking place
4. Theophany (if any)
5. Message/ Content of dream
6. Conversation (if any)
7. Conclusion of the dream
8. Reaction to the dream
9. Interpretation or fulfillment of the dream if
mantic

A. DREAMS IN THE PENTATEUCH

1. Genesis 20

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Abraham is in Gerar with his wife, and tells Abimelech that Sarah is his sister. God comes to Abimelech in a dream and tells him that he will die because he has taken a married woman (Sarah). Abimelech says that she had been described as a sister and that he had not touched her. So God spoke to him in a dream and said that He had kept Abimelech from touching her, and that he must return Sarah so that he will not die. The next day Abimelech summoned Abraham and asked for an explanation. Abraham explained that Sarah was his sister (father's daughter), and that he instructed Sarah to tell anyone that he was her brother. At this point, Abimelech restores Sarah to Abraham, gives him land to settle and silver to serve as a sign that she was vindicated. God also restores the possibility for Abimelech

and his household to have children as a result of Abraham's prayers.

b. Analysis of the Dream

There are two instances of the word halom in the narrative. In analysing the structure, we can see that it follows the typical "message" dream sequence pattern. A place is named (Gerar), Abimelech is having the dream at night בחלום הלילה. There is a theophany ויבא הנך מלך אשור עקח הוא. There is a message הוא. There is a message הוא. The dreamer responds in conversation with God אזניו האיש צדק תהיה הוא אמר אמתי הוא אמתי הוא אמתי הוא. The dreamer responds in conversation with God אזניו האיש צדק תהיה הוא אמר אמתי הוא אמתי הוא אמתי הוא. God responds with a promise of the future ואתה תהיה השבת האיש כי יבא הוא ויתפלל בעדך וחיה ואם אינך משפחה כימות תמות אתה וכל אשר עך. The dream is concluded with words of startled waking וישם אבימלך במקור. Abimelech reacts to the dream by asking Abraham why he had set him up, and the dream is eventually "fulfilled" to the extent that the promise of life granted to Abimelech and all that is his is fulfilled כי צר יהיה בעדך כל רחם אבימלך על דבר שרה אשר אברהם.

c. Notes on the Passage:

As most scholars will attest, this passage is a parallel to Gen. 12 and 26, but only this version contains a dream. Further, this is an instance in which God speaks to a non-Hebrew king in a dream. This dream is included in this

account of the "wife-sister" story to give divine sanction to Abraham's ruse.

2 GENESIS 28:10-22

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Jacob has left Beersheba, heading for Haran. He finds a place to spend the night. He takes a stone and places it under his head and lays down to sleep. He then has a dream in which a ladder which reaches between heaven and earth, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. God stands at the top of the ladder, ' and delivers a message. In this conversation, the identity of the Deity is announced as well as a promise to Jacob of his future which includes: a land, offspring, and protection. Jacob woke up and announced that God was here, only he had not known this. He considers this place to be a House of God, and thus takes the stone from his head and sets it as marker, anoints the stone and names the place Beth El. He then makes a vow to God and that he will pay one tenth tribute to this God if the vow is kept.

b. Analysis of the Dream

This dream begins with a description of the setting and an announcement of the place וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב לְעֵקֶב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַי וַיָּשָׁן וַיִּשְׁכַּח וַיִּשְׁכַּח וַיִּשְׁכַּח, tells us who is having the

' Alternatively, וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב לְעֵקֶב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַי may be translated at his (Jacob's) head.

dream וִיחֹלֵם , a visual image וּבְרָאָה מַצֵּב אֶרֶץ וְנָאֵל
וּבְרָאָה מַצֵּב אֶרֶץ וְנָאֵל a theophany וּבְרָאָה מַצֵּב אֶרֶץ וְנָאֵל
 , an identification of the deity אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
הַבְּרָאָה a message from the deity with a promise אֲבִרָה
אֲבִרָה an awaking of the
 dreamer וַיִּקָּץ יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסַּב וַיִּצְרָף with a reaction to
 the dream וַיִּבֶן יַעֲקֹב מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמֵוֹ יְהוָה, and a ritual
 following the dream sequence of naming, vowing, and
 anointing וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שְׁמֵוֹ יְהוָה
וַיִּבֶן יַעֲקֹב מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמֵוֹ יְהוָה

The promise of the dream, that of land, progeny, and protection finds fulfillment in later chapters of the Bible.

c. Notes on the Passage

This message dream sequence may contain some
 conflation, since there is repetition concerning Jacob
 arising in the morning since there is both וַיִּקָּץ and וַיִּסַּב
 Further, it differs from the previous dream sequence in that
 there is only a message. There is no conversation between
 the God and Jacob.

While this dream is not "symbolic" and in need of
 interpretation, the modern reader might question the meaning
 of the "ladder". The ancient listener however, was probably
 familiar with the ziggurat, the Mesopotamian steps which
 stood by the Temple. It was on these steps that the deity

could converse with mortals.¹ Speiser points out, that if this verse is heard/read in conjunction with verse 17, it would remind the ancient reader/listener of this ziggurat.

Further, I suggest that this dream sequence is an incubation scene. Oppenheim considers it "involuntary incubation" because Jacob did not know that he was in a numinous place. Following the dream, and only by chance did Jacob recognize the place as a "holy place".² But the mention of makom three times at the beginning of the sequence, suggests that Beth El was a designated place, where incubation dreams could be induced.³ According to scholars, makom is the technical word for shrine.⁴ When we take into account Speiser's insight that the sulam suggests ziggurat, we are led to conclude that Jacob's dream is typical of incubation dreams. Oppenheim considers this dream "unintentional incubation", because Jacob did not know that he had happened upon a holy site. The listener/reader, however, familiar with incubation, knows that this is an incubation scene. It is only Jacob who did not know.

It has also been suggested that the stone which Jacob

¹ E.A. Speiser, Genesis, Anchor Bible Vol. 1, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1985) pp. 219-220

² Oppenheim, Dreams, p. 187

³ Everett Fox, In the Beginning, (New York: Schocken Books, 1983) p.113

⁴ Gnuse, The Dream Theophany of Samuel, p. 67

erects harkens back to a Canaanite tradition of the Canaanite god El, who, with his divine retinue, was worshipped at this site.¹ What is missing, however, in order for this to be a typical incubation scene is a sacrifice following the dream. There is an "anointing", but no sacrifice. Most scholars however, believe that this dream sequence is included in the narrative to legitimate Beth El as a holy site.

It is also worth mentioning that there are three words which appear in the dream sequence which help the dream narrative literarily: מַכּוֹם, מַכּוֹם, and מַכּוֹם

Further, the repetition of makom in verses 11, 12 (2X), 16, 17, and 19 also add to the structural unity of the narrative. And, if there were concerns about the sanctity of Beth El, repetition of this word makes sense.

What seems to be important about this passage is that the divine promise is reiterated, during Jacob's flight from his brother.

3. Genesis 31:10-17

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Jacob speaks with Rachel and Leah concerning the treatment he has received from Laban, and relates a dream he had of a conversation with God. In the dream he sees a varied flock of speckled, streaked and mottled he-goats mating. An angel appears in this dream and tells Jacob that

¹ *ibid.* p.67

justify Jacob's departure. While the message is clear as to what action Jacob should take, and while the dream justifies the trickery of the previous report, by attributing Jacob's action to divine intervention, the inclusion of the speckled animals in this report, remains unclear. Oppenheim suggests that the content of this scene may have its origin in some folkloric shepherd myth.¹

4. GENESIS 31:24

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Laban hears that Jacob has fled. Laban takes his kinsmen with him and chases after Jacob, and catches up with him in Gilead. God appears to Laban in a dream at night and warns him not to deal with Jacob. Laban overtakes Jacob and asks him why he left in secrecy. He tells Jacob that he could harm him, but relates his dream to Jacob. Laban then accuses Jacob of stealing his gods.

b. Analysis of the Dream

Like Gen. 20:3, a place is named וידבק אתו בהר גלעד. Laban is having a dream at night במלוא הלילה. There is a theophany ויבא אל לָבָן בארמ'ו and a message השמור לך בן אדמ'ך עֲקֵב מֵאֵבֶךְ עַד רֶגֶל. There is no conversation with God, nor immediate response to the dream, but Laban follows through on the "warning" of the dream. There is a "telling" of the dream to Jacob השמר לך. והשמר לך עֲקֵב מֵאֵבֶךְ עַד רֶגֶל. And later in the passage,

¹ Oppenheim, Dreams, p.194

there is a ritual erecting of a pillar א'jar lnp'1
oe15k'1 5e1ex'1.

c. Notes on the Passage

This is a simple message dream, one of two which appear in chapter 31. Usually, message dreams are reserved for Hebrews, whereas symbolic dreams are given to non-Hebrews. What is also important about this dream is that the dream helps to save Jacob. It is important to note that dreams help Israelite heroes directly in that powerful gentiles behave favorably towards Hebrews after dreams.

THE JOSEPH DREAMS

The entire remainder of Genesis literally hangs upon the dream. Without the dream, there really is no story. We would not know why Joseph's brothers hated him. We would not know how he ended up as a vizier in Pharaoh's court. And, importantly, we would never understand how we were enslaved in Egypt, nor how God redeemed us. Further, as will be examined later in this chapter, these dreams serve as a paradigm for the Daniel dreams.

5. GENESIS 37

Synopsis of narrative: Joseph is loved more than his siblings and is given a "coat of many colors". His brothers are very jealous of him and hated him for "his words". One time, Joseph had a dream which he insisted on relating to his family. In his dream, he said that when the family was

in the field binding the sheaves Joseph's sheaves stood up and his brothers sheaves rose around his sheaf, and bowed down to it. His brothers then asked Joseph whether this meant that he planned to be their master. "And they hated him more for his talk about dreams." ¹ He then relates another dream in which the sun, moon and eleven stars were bowing down to him. Joseph tell this dream to his family and his father rebuked him. Later in the chapter, his brothers sell him to the Ishmaelites.

ANALYSIS OF THE DREAMS: There is an announcement of the

dreams by the dreamer: 37:5-6 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם וַיֹּאזְזֵם אֲחִיו

and 37:9 וַחֲלוֹם אֵלָיו חֲלוֹם אֶחָד There is an

introduction to the dreams: 37:7 וַהֲנֵה and 37:9 הֵנֵה

The messages of the dreams are stated 37:7 אֲנִי חָלֵמָה אֲלֵהֵם

וְהֵשֵׁנִי and 37:9 בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהָיָה חֵמָה אֲלֵהֵם וְהָיָה נִצָּבָה ...

וְהָיָה וְאֵלָיו חֲלוֹם אֶחָד כִּכְכָּבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לֵי ...

And there is dream interpretation 37:8 הַחֵלֶם חֵלֶם עָלֶיךָ אֵל

הַבּוֹא נִבְּאָה אֵלַי וְאֵתְךָ וְאֵתְךָ לְהִשָּׁחֵת and 37:10 וְהָיָה חֵלֶם אֲלֵהֵם

לְךָ אֶחָד Fulfillment of

the dream comes later in Genesis, but there is no verbal promise of the fulfillment.

c. Notes on the Passage

These two dreams differ from previous dreams in that

¹ This is an hendiadys because it was not that he had dreams which caused the problems with his family, it is the fact that he insisted on telling his dreams which caused the friction.

there is no theophany. There is no message nor promise here. There is no conversation between the dreamer and God. God is nowhere to be found in this passage. And in the second dream, there is mention of Joseph's mother, who died in Genesis 35:18.

This dream is a symbolic dream whose interpretation is "self-evident". There is no "dream interpreter" per se, it is the brothers and the father who interpret the dream. Its purpose and focus is different from the preceding dreams. This is the first in a series of "Joseph" dreams. First they tell us that dreams will be used to move the story ahead. In addition, these dreams serve to tell us about Joseph and his rise to power in Egypt. This symbolic dream has political significance.

While we know something about the personalities of the earlier Biblical dreamers, in this dream narrative, emphasis is given to the personality of Joseph. The personalities of Laban and Jacob have little to do with their dreams. Joseph however, is referred to as "that dreamer" (Gen.37:19). It is Joseph's words and dreams 17231 12/11/18 which engender jealousy in his brothers. Significantly it is Joseph's dreams which serve as a keystone of the narrative to explain how Joseph ends up in Egypt. Dreams serve to further the literary technique of irony. Joseph is sold because of his dreams and Joseph will be saved because of his dreams. Most important, it is Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, an

ability which he attributes to God, that ultimately allows him to rise to a powerful position in Pharoah's court. I take issue with Oppenheim who considers these dreams to be "symbolic message" dreams. Because they are predictive, I would consider them "mantic".

Joseph's dreams have been compared to the dreams of Sargon. As a "cup-bearer" to a king, he dreamed, not unlike Joseph, that he would replace his master. ¹ There is also a similar motif in that Sargon is sent into a trap, much like Joseph. In Sargon's dream there is symbolism. The need for interpretation as in this Joseph passage, is self-evident. In Sargon's dream however, there is a theophany. While in Joseph's dream, neither Yahweh nor Elohim is present. Both dreams share the common motif of "surpassing their superiors, and both survived attempts to prevent their prophetic dreams from becoming reality" ² The Joseph dreams of Genesis 37 differ from the folkloric motif of surpassing superiors, because despite the absence of God in this and subsequent dream sequences, (a goddess is present in the Sargon story), God is very much present in the resolution --that is, the redemption of the Hebrews.

As Oppenheim has pointed out, dreams may appear in pairs. In the Gilgamesh dreams, one object (symbol) is

¹ Jerrold S. Cooper, "Sargon and Joseph: Dreams Come True", Biblical & Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1985) p. 38

² *ibid.* p.38

thrown into the air, above the inhabitants of a town. In one report the object is described as the kisru of the god Anum, while in the second report, and the symbol is replaced and is an axe.¹ In the first report of Joseph's dream, the sheaves are replaced by the stars, yet the story and the outcome are very similar. The presence of dream pairs also serves as a literary technique to support the validity of the message of the dream.

5. GENESIS 40:5

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

After an interesting day with Potiphar's wife, Joseph is innocently sent to jail (Gen.39). Later, two of the king's courtiers are put in jail with Joseph, where they both have separate dreams on the same night. The next morning, Joseph finds them distraught and when he asks what is upsetting them, they respond that they need someone to interpret their dreams. Joseph answers them by saying that God can interpret their dreams and encourages them to tell him the dreams. The cupbearer relates his dream and Joseph interprets it, and asks the cup-bearer to keep him in mind when he is set free. Then, the baker, seeing that the cup-bearer's dream had been interpreted favorably asks Joseph to interpret his dream. The baker describes the dream and Joseph interprets it, but does not ask the baker to remember his talent since the dream foretold the baker's death. The

¹ Oppenheim, Dreams, p.208

dreams come true, yet the cup-bearer forgets Joseph.

b. Analysis of the Dream

In the dreams, there is an announcement והנה חלום and איש חלום בלילה אחד Both begin with the formulaic והנה. The dream are told בחלום ומה ומה אבן לבן and והנה אבן לבן שלמה שרים והוא רב נחמ אלה נדה בלילה אחד בלילה שלמה סלי חר' על ראש' וכל העליון מכל בלילה נחמ אבן ומה אבן אבן שלמה הנשים שלמה ימים הם The dreams are interpreted אבן אבן באבן שלמה ימים יסא ברעה אבן and באבן שלמה ימים יסא ברעה אבן The dreams are fulfilled אבן שלמה ימים יסא and אבן שלמה ימים יסא

c. Notes on the Passage

Again, there is no theophany and no conversation with the deity. Like the previous dream, these two dreams are paired, one with a positive ending, one with a negative ending. As was mentioned in the previous dream sequence pair, it is not uncommon for Near Eastern dreams to come in pairs, particularly in symbolic dreams. As Oppenheim points out, one of the vehicles in which the wisdom of a given character may be illuminated is through the interpretation of dreams. One ironic wordplay worth mentioning at this juncture is the use of the word אבן Ironically, like the dream which has led Joseph into trouble with his siblings, yet will ultimately save his life, so too with the phrase אבן which will save

one of the prisoners, לֵאמֹר אֶתְּחַיֶּה וְאֶתְּחַיֶּה yet cause death for the other לֵאמֹר אֶתְּחַיֶּה וְאֶתְּחַיֶּה. Speiser points out that this phrase means both to comfort and behead.¹

In these two dreams we are told that there are some dreams which do need interpretation. Joseph tells his cell mates that the interpretation of dreams comes from God. So, while God's presence is not involved in the message of the dream, the interpretation is deemed God's. And, while there is no dialogue in these dreams, we witness another instance where non-Hebrews receive dreams. Further, it takes the skill of a Hebrew (even though it is attributed to God) to interpret the dream.

6. GENESIS 41:1

a. Synopsis of the narrative

Two years after the cup-bearer is pardoned, Pharaoh has a dream. In this dream, Pharaoh was standing by the Nile. Seven fat cows were grazing, and behind them, seven lean cows came out of the Nile and stood on the bank beside the fat cows. Pharaoh went back to sleep, and dreamt a second time. In this second dream, seven full ears of grain grew on a single stalk, while behind them were seven thin ears which were scorched. These seven thin ears then ate the seven full ears. When Pharaoh woke up, agitated, he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, to interpret the

¹ E. A. Speiser, Genesis, p.308

dreams. None were able, but his cup-bearer recounted the incident in the jail where he and the baker had dreams, and that a Hebrew youth had interpreted the dreams. He recounts Joseph's talent, and Pharaoh sends for Joseph. Joseph informs Pharaoh that God will interpret the dreams. Pharaoh reiterated his dreams for Joseph who tells Pharaoh that God has informed Pharaoh what God is planning on doing. Joseph tells Pharaoh that there will be seven years of abundance in Egypt, and seven years of famine. He then tells Pharaoh that he had the same dream twice to mean that it has been reaffirmed by God and that it will happen soon. Joseph then takes the opportunity to suggest that Pharaoh should select a wise man to organize the country for what lies ahead. Pharaoh thinks that this is a good idea, and since God has made "all of this known to you" he places Joseph in charge over Egypt.

b. Analysis of the Dreams

There is an announcement of the dream וּבְרָעָה חֶלֶם

וַיִּשְׁן וַיַּחֲלֶם שְׁנַיִם and וְהִנֵּה

There is the formulaic וְהִנֵּה in both instances. The

dream content is given וַיַּחֲלֶם מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם שְׁנֵי חֲלֻמִּים

וְהִנֵּה שְׁנֵי חֲלֻמִּים שֶׁלֹּא הָיוּ בְּרִיאַת and מִצְרַיִם

וַיַּחֲלֶם מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם שְׁנֵי חֲלֻמִּים. There is a conclusion of the dream and

Pharaoh awakens וַיִּקָּץ פַּרְעֹה and וַיִּקָּץ פַּרְעֹה

There is a reaction to the dream בְּבִקְרֹת וּבְעֵצָה רַחוּ

He does not understand his dreams וַיִּשְׁכַּח וַיִּקְרָא אֶת כָּל מַלְאָכָיו

... חלומותיו. His dreams are interpreted by Joseph שבע ברר
החבר שבע שנים נכה ושבע השנים הטוב שנים נכה חלום אחד
הוא. The interpretation is attributed to God אשר

האלהים עשה חלום הארץ And there is a fulfillment of
 the dream ויקרה ארבע אכזר שנים אשר היו הארץ חלומות
 (Gen. 41:48) ויאן אכזר בערים אכזר שנים חלום חלום חלום חלום

NOTES ON THE PASSAGE: Joseph, "the dreamer" is now Joseph
 the dream interpreter. Not only that, he is now in a
 powerful position in Egypt. His first dream of sheaves may
 even be connected to this final dream of famine.¹ It is in
 this third dream, that the next step in the story is taken.
 Joseph is now in a powerful position in Egypt. The stage is
 now set so that the first dreams of Gen. 37 will be
 fulfilled. Famine will occur, and his brothers will
 eventually bow down to him (Gen. 42:6)

Irony again enhances the story. Further, in addition to
 the literary use of irony, we see that "recapitulation" is a
 technique utilized in the Joseph stories for literary value.
 Dreams are told in doublets, but are recounted again, (ie.
 Gen. 41:18ff) as are the recapitulations of the following:
 Gen. 39:6/9; 39:10-12/14-15/17-18; and 40:2 ff./41:10-12. ²

In this passage we learn that God speaks to foreigners
 through dreams. As we have seen in other places, non-Hebrew

¹ Donald B. Redford, A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum Vol. 20 (Leiden:E.J. Brill, 1970) p.70

² *ibid.* pp. 77-85

royalty are the recipients of dreams¹, and require Hebrews to interpret the dreams.

7. GENESIS 46

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Israel sets out for Beersheba and makes an offering to God. In a mar'ot ha-lailah, God calls to Jacob, and identifying himself, tells Jacob not to fear about going to Egypt. God promises Jacob that he will make him a great nation there, and that God would accompany him to Egypt and would bring him (ie. the nation) back. God also tells Jacob that Joseph's hand would close his eyes. Jacob then sets out from Beersheba.

b. Analysis of the dream

A place is named ויבא בארזה שבט. There is a sacrifice. ויצבחו זבחים לאלהי. There is a theophany ויאמר אני ה' אל. The deity identifies himself אלהים ישראל במרא אל. The recipient of the dream is named יעקב. There is a message אל תירא מרד מצרימה. There is a promise כי לאני גדול אסיומק שם... אני ארד עמך מצרימה. There is a fulfillment later.

c. Notes on the Passage

This is a message dream, even though the word halom is omitted. As was stated earlier, mar'ot ha-lailah means

¹ a discussion of the similarity of Joseph and Daniel follows on page 73

dream. ¹ This seems to be an incubation scene. There are indications that the narrative is a composite as the names for the dreamer are changed. ²

NUMBERS 22

In two dreams, Balaam is called upon to put a curse on the Israelites. God comes to Balaam asking why he is there. He tells God that he has been asked by Balaak to go with them and curse the Israelites. God tells him not to curse them. Then Balaam awakens and tells them that he cannot do what Balaak requests since he has been told by God not to. Balaak send more officials to plead with him, but refuses again. That night, God came to Balaam in a vision and tells him that if the men invite him to go again, he may go, but he must do whatever God commands him. The next morning, he departed with the Moabite dignitaries and God is angered.

ANALYSIS OF THE DREAM: There is an theophany ויבא אליהם אלהים and ויבא אליהם אלהים. The recipient is named בלעם. There is a conversation בין הנשיא האלהי עמלק. A message is given אמלק נא לא יאמר עמלק לא לאר... and אמלק נא לא יאמר עמלק לא לאר.... There is an ending to the dream ויקם בלעם בבקר and ויקם בלעם בבקר.

NOTES ON THE PASSAGE: Despite the absence of the word halom, this passage all the other aspects of a dream.

¹ see page 32ff for definition.

² The presence of both וישראל and ויקם as the name of the dreamer may indicate different sources.

B. DREAMS IN THE PROPHETS

1. I SAMUEL 3

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Samuel is serving under Eli. One day when Eli was sleeping in his usual place, Samuel was sleeping in the temple where the Ark of God was. God called out to Samuel, and he answered, "I'm coming", and Samuel ran to Eli to see what he wanted. Eli told him that he had not called him, and to go back to sleep. This happened a second time, and it is noted that Samuel had not yet experienced the Lord, and that the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. God called out a third time and Samuel went to Eli. Eli then understood that it was God calling Samuel. So Eli told Samuel that if he were called upon again, he should answer, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening". Samuel went back and lay down, and God came and stood there and called out, "Samuel". This time, he answered as Eli had instructed and God delivered his message. God tells Samuel how he is planning to punish Eli's sons, because they had committed a sacrilege about which Eli knew. In the morning, Samuel awoke, but he was afraid to tell Eli of the visions and his conversation with God. Eli told him to relate the vision and Samuel did.

ANALYSIS OF DREAM

While there is no announcement of a dream, the place is named בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה, and it is noted that Samuel was

sleeping וְשָׁמַע שִׁכָּה. There is a theophany וַיֵּאָר
וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה וַיִּתְיַבֵּן and three times God calls out to Samuel
וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֶל שְׁמוּאֵל Samuel answer God בְּבֹרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ
אֲנִי אֵשֶׁת דָּבָר. There is a lengthy message אֲנִי אֵשֶׁת דָּבָר
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר כֹּה שָׁמַעְתָּ צִלְעִינָה שְׁתִּי אֶפְרַיִם בְּיוֹם הַהוּא אֲקִיֵּם אֶל עָלִי
אֶת כֹּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֵלַי בְּיָמֵי הַחֹל וְכֹה הָיָה. וְהִיא דָּתִי עֹזֵבִי שֶׁפֶסֶל אֲנִי
אֶת בֵּיתִי עֲצָוָלָם בְּעֵינֵי אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא כִּימָקְדָּלִים לְהַמְכִּירוֹ וְלֹא כֹהֵה בָּם...
 There is no end to the dream, but the text does acknowledge
 that it took place at night and that וַיִּשְׁכַּח שְׁמוּאֵל עַד הַבֹּקֶר
 The dream/vision is reported... וַיֵּאָר עַל שְׁמוּעָה אֶת כֹּה הַדְּבָרִים...
 and it is fulfilled (I. Sam. 4:11) וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּנֵי עָלִי מֵתָו תַּכְנִי וּפְנִיחָם

c. Notes of the Passage

This is a message dream, not unlike Gen.20. But, many scholars hold that this scene is a typical "call" narrative for the prophets. As Gnuse has shown in his research, the message dream is the vehicle, not the typical call narrative structure of the other prophets. ¹ Many scholars assert that since there is no visual element, this cannot be a dream. But, auditory message dreams such as this are typical of biblical dreams and do not require visual elements. Further, this dream sequence is much like an incubation scene in that it takes place in a sanctuary, and there is communication with the Deity. What is missing here is preparation for incubation. There is no sacrifice, but Shiloh was a shrine where sacrifice was typical. Perhaps

¹ Gnuse, The Dream Theophany of Samuel, p.134

there was no need to mention that since it was a common occurrence.

2. JUDGES 7:13-15

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Gideon receives word from God that he will deliver the Midianites into his hands. God commands him to attack the camp. Gideon is afraid, but God instructs him to go down to the camp and listen to what the men in the camp are saying. This visit will give him the courage to attack. Following God's orders, he goes down to the camp, where he overhears a Midianite relating a dream to another. In the dream, a loaf of barley bread strikes the Midianite tent which causes it to collapse. The listener concludes that the dream means that the Midianite camp will be delivered into the hands of the Israelites. Upon hearing the dream interpreted, Gideon bows and returns to his camp and gathers his men. They attack the Midianite camp, and the Midianites fled.

b. Analysis of the Dream

There is an announcement of the dream והנה חלום חלמתי with the introductory formula והנה. The content of the dream is given בשם זהם סערים מתהפך במחנה מצין ויבא עזהאיה. There is an interpretation of the dream אין זאת בלתי אמתה אצדען כן יבא איס ישראל נתן האלהים...

c. Notes on the passage

This is a symbolic dream. Its purpose is to supply Gideon with the courage to attack the Midianite camp - for

which he is rebuked in chapter 8. The dream is incorporated to relieve Gideon's anxiety and reassure him that God will accompany him in his endeavors. The dream is visual, and there is no dialogue with God. God, however, knows about the dream (v. 9), suggesting that God is the source of the dream. The dream, as a literary device, is used to tell us what will happen in the following verses.

This dream differs from other symbolic dreams to the extent that it is interpreted by a non-Israelite. The interpretation suggests that the "bread" symbolized the Israelites, who were agriculturally based, while the tent was the Midianites who were nomadic.¹

3. I KINGS 3:5

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Solomon goes to Gibeon to offer sacrifices. God appears to Solomon in a dream at night and "God said, 'Ask, what shall I grant you'". Solomon articulates his desire to be taught the ways of leadership. God seems pleased that Solomon has asked for wisdom rather than for riches and long life. But God says that He will grant Solomon both riches and long life anyway as well as the wisdom he seeks, if he will walk in God's ways and observe the commandments as his father did. Solomon wakes up and acknowledges his dream. He

¹ Tanakh, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985) p.390f

then goes to Jerusalem where he stands in front of the ark of the covenant of the Lord and offers up a sacrifice and gives a banquet.

b. Analysis of the Dream

In this dream, the setting is given ניסן המלך גבעונה and a time is given קדש There is a sacrifice and sanctuary suggesting an incubation אלהם יצאם אל המזבח and a theophany נראה יהוה אל שלמה and a conversation between the deity and recipient שאל מה אתה רב.
אמרתי ליהוה עבדך צדק אני חסד עשיתי כאשר הוצאת לפניהם באמת
ובצדקה וב'שרת לבית עמך ומשמר לו את החסד העשית קדש ...
 a message/promise from the deity נתתי לך לבחבם ונבון
אשר במדבך לא היה לפניך ואחריו לא יקום כחוק. ואם אשר
ויקם שלמה ויבן The dreamer awakens לא שאלת נתי' לך אם עשר
חלום There is a reaction ויבא ירושלים And the dreamer offers a sacrifice וישחזק לפני ארון ברית עזני ויעל עולה
 Fulfillment is not mentioned in the sequence, but Solomon is known for his riches and wisdom.

Notes on the passage: This appears to be an incubation dream, although Gaster thinks that it is a "general revelation" rather than incubation. ' I think that Solomon went to Gibeon expecting to dream there.

In the verses preceding the dream sequence, there seems to be an apology or explanation for the continued use of shrines. This dream is reiterated in II Chronicles 1:7-13,

' Gaster, "Dreams" p.208

although the altar where the 1,000 sacrifices are offered is described differently, and I Chronicles explains that this dream is what preceded the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. In chapter 6 of I Kings, the building of the Temple is begun.

One scholar suggests that this dream is modeled upon Egyptian dreams which are reported to legitimate succession to the throne.¹ The dream mentions that Solomon was a young boy, and one of the possible successors to the throne, and the dream could serve to legitimate the succession.

III. DREAMS IN THE WRITINGS

A. DANIEL'S DREAMS CHAPTERS 2 & 4

DANIEL 2

During Nebuchadnezzar's second year of his reign, he had a dream. He called upon all of his magicians, sorcerers, and even the Chaldeans, to tell him what the dream meant. But no one could interpret the dream, and he decided to have all the wise men put to death, among them Daniel and his three friends. That night, in a night vision, Daniel learns the contents of the dream. Daniel receives a stay of execution and asserts that not only can he reveal the content of this dream but that he can interpret the dream as well.

Daniel tells the king that only God in heaven can reveal the meaning of dreams, not wise men, exorcists, etc. Daniel then

¹ Gnuse, The Dream Theophany of Samuel, p.82

tells the king the dream: of a large statue of four minerals with the feet made of two substances. There was also a stone crushing its feet. Daniel then interprets the dream: the Babylonian kingdom is gold, which will be replaced by a silver, inferior kingdom, and then a bronze. The fourth kingdom, described as strong as iron, will crush and break the others yet will be a divided kingdom with element of iron. Finally, God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Following the dream, the king worships Daniel's God, and Daniel and his friends are elevated to positions of power in the king's court.

b. Analysis of the Dream

The dreamer announce that he had a dream חלום נבכינצר

חלום. He is frustrated that he cannot understand it והבטח דחיו ושלמי נביתיה עילי... עקרא עחרטחיה אל אשפים וסמכספים

אל כסדים להגיד עמלק חלמותי An interpreter is found who knows the content of the dream ואלו צלם חז שטיא צלמא דכ/ לה

וציוה יתיר קאמ עקמלק ורוע דחיס. הוא צלמא ראשה צי דהה סה חצוהי ודכעוהי צי רפס מצוהי וירכנה דיקחש שקוהי צי ברצל רגלוהי

מניחין צי ברצל... but who attributes both the knowledge of the content and its interpretation to God עקאלה אמת' מודקא ומשה

אנה צי חכמא ומוכחא ימנה לי. The dream is told

ואלו צלם חז שטיא צלמא דכ/ לה וציוה יתיר קאמ עקמלק ורוע דחיס. הוא צלמא ראשה צי דהה סה חצוהי ודכעוהי צי רפס

מצוהי וירכנה צי נחש שקוהי צי ברצל רגלוהי...

and the dream is interpreted ראשה צי דהה. ורמק

תקום מלכו אחרי ארצה מן ומלכו אל ית'א אחרי די מלש' די
 גשט בלש ארצה. ומלכו נב'עיה תתוא גקיפה כפרשלא כל
 קבל די פרשלא מה דק ומלש בלש וכפרשלא די מלשע....

The dream is declared to be certain and trusted and will be fulfilled
 כל קבל די תשיג די מלשלא אר גלרת אמן די לא בידין וה דק גפרשלא
 חסד נטפא ונחבא אלה נה הודע למלכא מה די למנא אחרי דנה וי'ב' חלמא
 ומנין גשרה

DANIEL 4

a. Synopsis of the Narrative

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that alarms him. He sends for wise men etc. to help him understand the dream, but then Daniel, named Belteshazzar, announces that he can interpret the dream. The king relates the dream, of a large tree whose branches are full and beautiful and its fruit abundant. But from heaven, a holy sentinel came to tear off the branches scatter its fruit, yet its roots remain in the ground. Daniel interprets the dream to mean that the king, like the tree had grown too big and too powerful. It meant that the king would be driven away from the kingdom for seven years, as punishment for pride and greed. Twelve months later, the dream comes to fruition.

b. Analysis of the Dream

The dreamer announce that he had a dream חלמ' חלמ'
 וי'ב' חלמ' ונחבא אלה. He is frustrated that he cannot understand
 it מאדן עלמין חלמ'א אשפ'א כשדים וגלריא וקלמא אחר אנה
קדמיתון גפרשלא חלמ'א חלמ'א An interpreter is found who

The dream is related
 וְעַל אֲמָרָיו עַל קְדַמְיָאֵל ... כְּשֶׁמֵּאֲלֵהּ ... knows
 וְרוּחַ יִמְשָׁא לְשִׁמְיָא וְחִזּוּתָהּ לְשִׁמְיָא כֹּס אֲרַעַס סְפִיָּה שְׂפִיר וְאַנְבִּיָּה שְׂאִיא
 מִזֶּן לְכֹלָא בְּהַ תְּחִמּוּהִי תִּשְׁלֵם חִיּוּר בְּרָא וּבְעִנְיָהּ יִזְרִין צְבִיר
 שְׂמִיא וְחִנָּה יִרְצִין כֹּס בְּשִׁרָא ... אֵינְנָא וְקִצְצוּ עֲנָבוּהִי אֲתִירוּ עֲפִיקָה וְהִזְרִי
 אֲנָבִיָּה מִנְּךָ חִיּוּרָא מִן תְּחִמּוּהִי וְצְבִירָא מִן עֲנָבוּהִי ...
 The dream is interpreted אֵינְנָא דִּי חִזִּית דִּי רְחֵי וְתִקֵּן לְרוּחָהּ
 יִמְשָׁא לְשִׁמְיָא וְחִזּוּתָהּ לְכֹס אֲרַעַס וְעֲפִיָּה שְׂפִיר וְאַנְבִּיָּה שְׂאִיא
 וּמִזֶּן לְכֹלָא בְּהַ תְּחִמּוּהִי חִזּוּרָא וְהִיא וְעֲנָבוּהִי "שְׂנִין צְבִיר"
 and the dream is fulfilled שְׂמִיא אֲנָבִיָּה הוּא מְסַכָּא דִּי ...
 כֹּס אֲרַעַס עַל נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מִלְכָּא .. לְקִצְרָא יִרְחִין גְּרִי עֲשֵׂה
 עַל חִינָם מְסַכָּא דִּי בְּהֵם מְהֵלֵךְ הוּוּ ... קִלְמָן שְׂמִיא לְפִסְלָא אֲמָרָיו
 נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מִלְכָּא מְסַכָּא עֲשֵׂה מִנְּךָ

c. Notes on the passages

These two dreams will be analysed together. There are similarities in content and form in both dreams. Both concern Nebuchadnezzar, who is disturbed by his dreaming. In the first dream, he is outraged and condemns to death anyone who cannot interpret. In the second dream, he is more frightened than outraged, but he does not threaten anyone with death. In the first sequence Daniel ascribes his talent to interpret comes from God, while in the second this is not articulated. Both dream sequences demonstrate that none of the pagan interpreters have the skill. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes this skill attributed to God, and offers praise to God following each sequence.

This should sound familiar, for there is a common theme between the Daniel dreams and the Joseph dreams. Even the vocabulary is similar. When Pharaoh wakes from his dream, he is agitated והבשר רעע ברעג. So too Nebuchadezzar upon waking from his dream והבשר רעע ושלג... and וידעו נבי' ומוהרין. Both call upon their soothsayers to interpret, but neither the ויעלם ויקרא אל כל חכמי מצרים nor the לרבא לחרטמים וכלאשים ולחכשפים... can interpret the dreams. Both resort to finding someone of low status to interpret. Joseph is in jail, and Daniel has been carried off to Babylonia. In both dreams, the ability to interpret is given to God: אזאסר נאסרם עשה ה' לז' עברעג and לך אלסא אברה' מנוצא יושבט אנה זי חנאס ואבורתא יונה ל'. Both gentile kings recognize the dream interpreters' God אשרי ענומסנא לדינא לאמרו and וודיע אלסם אורק אל כל זאא אין לבון... קש זי אסנון הוא אלס אסנון ומכא מלכין ואלס רעין זי יכלס למלכא רשא זנה

VI. PROPHETIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS DREAMS

While it appears that the narrative sections of the Bible are positive in their view towards dreams as a form of revelation, when one examines the prophetic attitude towards dreams, it is difficult to make the same conclusion. What follows is an analysis of passages in which the dream is referred. Two Pentateuchal references will be included in this survey because they deal directly with the prophetic attitude towards dreams.

What can be stated in general about the prophetic attitude towards dreams is that the Prophets are ambivalent. That is, the prophets do not say dreams or dreamers are bad, unless they are dreamed by dreamers who lead people away from worshipping God.

NUMBERS 12:

In this sequence, Miriam and her brother Aaron have rebuked Moses for marrying a Cushite woman. Additionally, they seem very upset that God only speaks through Moses, and not through them. This angers God, who takes the opportunity to call a meeting with of the three, and God says, in a positive way, that God makes himself known in visions and dreams to the prophet. This seems to say that both dreams and visions are valid forms of revelation. However, God continues to say that to Moses, He speaks face to face, which is a qualitatively higher form of revelation than either dreams or visions. And, God says that he speaks

plainly with Moses, not in riddles. Thus, dreams and visions (mar'ot) are not the most esteemed form of revelation. If the _____ הַחֹזֵן _____ is the most direct form of revelation, then it is the model for revelation. But, if this passage specifically selects Moses as the only prophet who receives _____ הַחֹזֵן _____ revelation, then it cannot be generalized beyond Moses to other prophets.

DEUTERONOMY 13

In this section, a warning is given to the people against following prophets or dream-diviners who lead the people away from God. The passage continues to say that even if the dream or portent comes true, what is really occurring is that God is testing the loyalty of the people. It then states that prophets and dream-diviners who lead people away from God should be put to death.

This appears to be a strong statement against dream-diviners and prophets, but in reality it is a statement against only those who lead people astray. The passage does not demean either dream diviners or prophets who are "true". Nor does it articulate any heirarchy. Prophecy and dreams are equated. Rather it seems that this passage is making a strong statement against false prophets. The only negative attitude that can be asserted from this passage is that dream-diviners are associated with false prophets.¹

¹ Gnuse, The Dream Theophany of Samuel, p.86

JEREMIAH 23:27, 28,32; 27:9; AND 29:8

In contrast to Deuteronomy 13, Jeremiah, of all the prophets does not regard dreams as a legitimate form of revelation. In analysing 23:28, where the text states "Let the prophet who has a dream tell the "dream"; and let him who has received My word report My word faithfully", suggests that a dream is only dream, not the "Word" of God. Further one could assume that this text which describes what God will do with false prophets makes a distinction between the God's true prophet and the recipient who receive God's true dream. But as most scholars point out, "Jeremiah never received a Word of the Lord by a dream" ¹

But most of the references to dreams and dream diviners is clearly negative: 27:9-10

"As for you, give no heed to
your prophets, augurs, dreams/dreamers,
diviners, and sorcerers, who say to
you, "Do not serve the king of Babylon"
for they prophesy falsely to you --
with the result that you shall be
banished from your land; I will
drive you out and you shall perish." ²

There is no hierarchy here, as all are liars.

ZECHARIAH 10:2

This clearly states that the dreamers are compared to the "teraphim" and augurs by use of literary parallelism:

¹ ibid. p. 87

² Tanakh, p.828-829

כי המגלים צברו און והקיסמים חסו שקר וחלומות השואל צברו חלום

י' חלום It suggests that the people have resorted to these professionals for consolation, and that this has caused the people to stray from God. Only through association with "teraphim" and augurs can we assert that Zechariah does not say positive things about dreams.

JOEL 3:1

Clearly, the passage from Joel:

"Your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams and you young men shall see visions"

suggests a positive attitude towards dreams and dreaming.
In this passage, it speaks of a time in which revelation will be available to all.

VIII. Conclusions

This thesis has reviewed Biblical dream reports. Through an investigation of language and context, we can conclude that the Biblical dream is a literary and theological device of the Bible. In the bible, dreams are a form of revelation. Often they are simple messages, while at other times dreams need interpretation. Often, dreams are visual, but at times dreams are only conversations with the Deity. Dreams occur at night, when the dreamer is sleeping. Dreamers are always male, and all dreams which are predicted "come true". The word dream may also be used metaphorically. Dreams are viewed both negatively and positively. On occasion the Bible considers dreams as a lesser form of revelation, while in other instances, there is no hierarchy. Furthermore, there are other words that the Bible uses to describe dreams.

This thesis has analyzed the Biblical dream as it structurally compares to extant ancient Near Eastern dream texts. The Biblical dream shares similar patterns of structure, language, and literary style with extant ancient Near Eastern dream reports. Both Biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts may share like plot motifs and may serve to carry common folk myths.

Further, extant ancient Near Eastern dreams give us entre into the world of the ancient. Through both Biblical and ancient Near Eastern dream reports, we learn of the

realia of the ancient Near Eastern culture and society.

Like many of the ancient Near Eastern dreams, the Biblical dream reflects one form of communication between the Deity and the protagonist. Both Biblical and ancient Near Eastern dream accounts tell us that dreams were a legitimate form of revelation, serving a theological function. The Biblical dream also serves to tell us something about revelation, as one means of how God chose to communicate with God's protagonists.

In the Bible, the dream is utilized as a literary device to expand the narrative. But because the Bible is composite literary work, it necessarily differs from the ancient Near Eastern dream material. As an epic, and as a literary composite, it is a record of the relation of God to the Hebrews. Biblical dreams are not merely found papyri nor engraved stones, rather Biblical dreams are recorded events, part of a literary whole.

Biblical dreams were not recorded to merely tell us how Biblical dreams were interpreted. While the writer of the Joseph dreams may have wanted the reader/listener to know that Joseph was a talented interpreter whose inspiration was Divine, the dream narratives are not included to teach us about how to interpret dreams. Rather, the Joseph dream sequences are included to explain a Divine plan. In the Joseph narratives, the Biblical dream is both theological and literary.

The Biblical dream is part of something much larger than merely the recording of the dream itself. Most extant ancient Near Eastern dream materials however, tend to be collections of dreams from dream-books. These dreams may share common conventions with Biblical dreams, but their function differs. Only those dreams from the limited literary works such as the "Epic of Gilgamesh" or the "Legend of Keret" may share the same function as the Biblical dream sequence.

Hence, while there are similarities in patterns between Biblical and extant Ancient Near Eastern dreams, it is difficult to conclude anything more than surviving texts will allow. The paucity of extant ancient Near Eastern literary texts, coupled with the the larger literary and theological function which the Biblical dream uniquely serves, can only lead us to conclude that they share common structural patterns.

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