

Bringing it Home For Sunday, May 25, 2025

By Allison de Kanel



Today we heard two Bible stories about people who had visions. Do you know what a vision is?

Usually, vision refers to something you see with your eyes, just like we hear with our ears or touch with our hands.

But in the Bible, visions are ways God tells people what to do, or helps them understand something about God.

Sometimes visions are given in dreams. That might be what happened in our first lesson, when Paul had a vision in the night. In the morning he obeyed God, changed his plans, and went on a trip.

In other visions, God lets people feel as if they are somewhere else, seeing something real, something beyond normal experience.

If I told you an angel carried me away in spirit, you'd probably think I was crazy, or else lying.

But that's what happened to the writer of our second lesson. God showed him how wonderful heaven will be. And God wanted him to share his vision with us.

You see, God wants us to trust him and love him and obey him. And sometimes he has to do something special to get his message across. In these visions, he was saying, "pay attention! This is important!"

Maybe we won't ever have a vision like this. But if we pay attention to what we learn from the Bible, and if we trust the people who tell us about God, we won't need a vision. We'll experience God's love for ourselves.

Today's First Lesson: Acts 16:9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Today's Second Lesson: Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

In the spirit the angel carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Artwork: New Jerusalem, after Gustave Dore, by Laura Sotka, 2012.