

Fantasy - The New Reality - Amos 5

The next time you are walking around at lunch time, watch what others are doing. How many have their noses glued to their smart phones? How many have ear buds etc. stuck in and are oblivious of their surroundings? How many are buzzed out on legal or illegal substances? How many are engaged in a passionate discussion, not aware that the light has just turned red? So how many people does that leave who are in their right mind and conscious of their environment & their surroundings? And it is not only pedestrians, but cyclists, motorists, truckers etc. Recently, an international flight was boarded by police just before takeoff. They had information that both the pilots had been drinking too much alcohol. So they were hauled off to jail, and the flight had to be re-scheduled for the next day.

There seems to be two states of being, two states of mind. The original one is reality. Mankind was created that way. Genesis 2:8-17 - And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

So there was Adam, the chief horticulturist of the most beautiful and serene garden in the world. Everywhere he went making amazing discoveries of God's Creation. And scientists are still finding new things from the depths of the ocean to the deepest reaches of space. Adam had another special privilege, he named every living thing. And to top it off, Our Lord Jesus created him a special companion, who became his wife and help-meet. What a wonderful time they had in the garden, especially when Our Lord walked with then in the cool of the evening. There were no distractions, as they basked in God's Reality.

But, one day, something happened. Their peaceful and innocent reality was about to be assaulted. The arch villan of humanity had been watching

them for a long time, and he now had a plan to destroy their special relationship with God. Genesis 3:1-7 - Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Mankind had fallen from their special relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. No longer could they stay in the garden, but were driven out, to a life filled with pain and misery. And in order to keep them as far away from God as he could, the devil had to distract their attention. Adam and Eve knew what reality was, and their closeness to Jesus Christ. What would turn them aside? He had to keep them in a state of being as far away from Jesus Christ as possible. And as the original anti or instead of Christ, he implemented many diversions. To keep people from worshipping the True and Living God, the devil shifted their worship to everything else. But they believed that they were still doing the right thing. They were in a state of unreality or fantasy. One of the Old Testament prophets caught a glimpse of the situation. Amos 5:20 (Message) - At GOD's coming we face hard reality, not fantasy, a black cloud with no silver lining.

The devil has tried long and hard to turn mankind from being in the image of God to being in the image of him. The difference between him and Our Lord Jesus Christ is as stark as light is from darkness. John 10:10 - The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I (the Lord Jesus Christ) am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. When you follow the trail of death and destruction, it is the devil's signature. At first, Isaiah 14:12-15 - How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

After the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden, the fight kept going on to

pollute mankind as much as possible. Cain killed Abel. It reached another pivotal moment soon after. Genesis 6:1-8 - And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

And after a major reset, problems arose again. Genesis 11:1-9 - And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

And the battle has been going on for a long time, with the devil pulling hard to get people from God's Reality to his fantasies. But 2000 years ago, God took definitive action, when He sent His Son in a human body. 1 John 3:1-10 - Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Whosoever committeth sin

transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in Him: and He cannot sin, because He is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Jesus Christ paid the debt for our sins with His Shed Blood, thus opening the door to Heaven for us. He gave us His Holy Spirit as well. And in the ongoing battle with the devil, we now can use the Name of Jesus, we can use His Blood, and we can use His Word. He has also given us His Authority. Luke 10:17-22 - Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name. And He said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows Who the Son is except the Father, and Who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Believers are the best equipped by God now to fight the battle of removing all fantasies from our lives, so that we can have more of God's Reality. Would there be any Biblical references to fantasy? Proverbs 21:6 (NKJV) - Getting treasures by a lying tongue Is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death. Proverbs 21:6 (AV) - The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

Strong's #01892 hebel heh'bel AV-vanity 61, vain 11, altogether 1; 73 n m 1) vapour, breath 1a) breath, vapour 1b) vanity (fig.) adv 2) vainly.

Imagination is the same as vanity and fantasy. If you were to look up imagination in your concordance, there would be 20 entries. You can check them out later. So, now that we have established that fantasy is mentioned in the Bible, we can search for other examples. Most of them are in the Message version & we'll compare to the NKJV.

Exodus 5:9M - Crack down on them. That'll cure them of their whining, their god-fantasies.

Exodus 5:9N - Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.

2 Kings 4:16M - Elisha said to her, This time next year you're going to be nursing an infant son. O my master, O Holy Man, she said, don't play games with me, teasing me with such fantasies!

2 Kings 4:16N - Then he said, About this time next year you shall embrace a son. And she said, No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!

2 Kings 18:19M - The third officer, the Rabshakeh, was spokesman. He said, Tell Hezekiah: A message from The Great King, the king of Assyria: You're living in a world of make-believe, of pious fantasy.

2 Kings 18:19N - Then the Rabshakeh said to them, Say now to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: What confidence is this in which you trust?

Psalms 131:1M - GOD, I'm not trying to rule the roost, I don't want to be king of the mountain. I haven't meddled where I have no business or fantasized grandiose plans.

Psalms 131:1N - A Song of Ascents. Of David. LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.

Proverbs 6:25M - Don't lustfully fantasize on her beauty, nor be taken in by her bedroom eyes.

Proverbs 6:25N - Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

Proverbs 26:16M - Dreamers fantasize their self-importance; they think they are smarter than a whole college faculty.

Proverbs 26:16N - The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can answer sensibly.

Ecclesiastes 5:7M - But against all illusion and fantasy and empty talk There's always this rock foundation: Fear God!

Ecclesiastes 5:7N - For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.

Jeremiah 29:8M - Yes. Believe it or not, this is the Message from GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, Israel's God: Don't let all those so-called preachers & know-it-alls who are all over the place there take you in with their lies. Don't pay any attention to the fantasies they keep coming up with to please you.

Jeremiah 29:8N - For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed.

Jeremiah 42:20M - that you are living out a fantasy. You're making a fatal mistake. Didn't you just now send me to your GOD, saying, Pray for us to our GOD. Tell us everything that GOD says and we'll do it all?

Jeremiah 42:20N - For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the

LORD your God, saying, Pray for us to the LORD our God, and according to all that the LORD your God says, so declare to us and we will do it.

Ezekiel 7:13M - The bottom has dropped out of buying & selling. It will never be the same again. But don't fantasize an upturn in the market. The country is bankrupt because of its sins, & it's not going to get any better.

Ezekiel 7:13N - For the seller shall not return to what has been sold, Though he may still be alive; For the vision concerns the whole multitude, And it shall not turn back; No one will strengthen himself who lives in iniquity.

Ezekiel 13:6M - All they do is fantasize comforting illusions and preach lying sermons. They say GOD says ... when GOD hasn't so much as breathed in their direction. And yet they stand around thinking that something they said is going to happen.

Ezekiel 13:6N - They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, Thus says the LORD! But the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed.

Ezekiel 13:7M - Haven't you fantasized sheer nonsense? Aren't your sermons tissues of lies, saying GOD says ... when I've done nothing of the kind?

Ezekiel 13:7N - Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, The LORD says, but I have not spoken.

Hosea 12:1M - Ephraim, obsessed with god-fantasies, chases ghosts and phantoms. He tells lies nonstop, soul-destroying lies. Both Ephraim and Judah made deals with Assyria and tried to get an inside track with Egypt.

Hosea 12:1N - Ephraim feeds on the wind, And pursues the east wind; he daily increases lies and desolation. Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians, And oil is carried to Egypt.

Amos 5:20M - At GOD's coming we face hard reality, not fantasy, a black cloud with no silver lining.

Amos 5:20N - Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

1 Timothy 1:4M - Apparently some people have been introducing fantasy stories and fanciful family trees that digress into silliness instead of pulling the people back into the center, deepening faith and obedience.

1 Timothy 1:4N - nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

Strongs #3454 muthos moo'-thos AV-fable 5; 1) a speech, word, saying 2) a narrative, story 2a) a true narrative 2b) a fiction, a fable 2b1) an invention, a falsehood.

1 Timothy 1:4 Neither give heed to fables <3454> and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith:so do.

1 Timothy 4:7 - But refuse profane and old wives' fables <3454>, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

2 Timothy 4:3,4 - 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound

doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables <3454>.

Titus 1:14 - Not giving heed to Jewish fables <3454>, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Acts 15:1,2 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

2 Peter 1:16 - For we have not followed cunningly devised fables <3454>, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

So fantasies, vain imaginations, fables etc. have been part of Creation, and from almost the very beginning. And they are doing a very good job of drawing people, even believers from God's Reality and Our Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to get closer to Our Lord, we will have to get rid of all fantasies. Sins need to be confessed and repented of. The associated curses need to be broken off. The evil soul ties with all the fantasies need to be broken off, and your soul needs to be restored. And then, the demons need to be cast out in Jesus' Name. One of the big ones is Fantasy Prone Personallity. Wikipedia has an article on it. If not, how far is it from being a zoombie if not dealt with?

Fantasy prone personality (FPP) is a disposition or personality trait in which a person experiences a lifelong extensive and deep involvement in fantasy. This disposition is an attempt, at least in part, to better describe "overactive imagination" or "living in a dream world". An individual with this trait (termed a fantasizer) may have difficulty differentiating between fantasy and reality and may experience hallucinations, as well as self-suggested psychosomatic symptoms. Closely related psychological constructs include daydreaming, absorption and eidetic memory.

History - American psychologists Sheryl C. Wilson and Theodore X. Barber first identified FPP in 1981, said to apply to about 4% of the population. Besides identifying this trait, Wilson and Barber reported a number of childhood antecedents that likely laid the foundation for fantasy proneness in later life, such as, "a parent, grandparent, teacher, or friend who encouraged the reading of fairy tales, reinforced the child's ... fantasies, and treated the child's dolls and stuffed animals in ways that encouraged the child to believe that they were alive." They suggested that this trait was

almost synonymous with those who responded dramatically to hypnotic induction, that is, "high hypnotizables." (easily hypnotized) The first systematic studies were conducted in the 1980s by psychologists Judith Rhue and Steven Jay Lynn. Later research in the 1990s by Deirdre Barrett at Harvard confirmed most of these characteristics of fantasy prone people, but she also identified another set of highly hypnotizable subjects who had had traumatic childhoods and who identified fantasy time mainly by "spacing out." (Now is it not 99% of the population?)

Characteristic features - A fantasy prone person is reported to spend a large portion of their time fantasizing, have vividly intense fantasies, have paranormal experiences, and have intense religious experiences. People with FPP are reported to spend over half of their time awake fantasizing or daydreaming and will often confuse or mix their fantasies with their real memories. They also report out-of-body experiences.

A paracosm is an extremely detailed and structured fantasy world often created by extreme or compulsive fantasizers.

Wilson and Barber listed numerous characteristics in their pioneer study, which have been clarified and amplified in later studies. These characteristics include some or many of the following experiences:

- 1.excellent hypnotic subject (most but not all fantasizers)
- 2.having imaginary friends in childhood
- 3.fantasizing often as child
- 4.having an actual fantasy identity
- 5.experiencing imagined sensations as real
- 6.having vivid sensory perceptions
- 7.receiving sexual satisfaction without physical stimulation.

Fantasy proneness is measured by the "inventory of childhood memories and imaginings" (ICMI) and the "creative experiences questionnaire" (CEQ).

Developmental Pathways - Fantasizers have had a large exposure to fantasy during early childhood. This over-exposure to childhood fantasy has at least three important causes:

(1) Parents or carers who provided a very structured and imaginative mental or play environment during childhood. People with fantasy prone personalities are more likely to have had parents, or close family members that made their inanimate toys as children seem real. They also encourage the child who believes they have imaginary companions, read fairytales all through childhood and re-enact the things they have read. People who, at a young age, were involved in creative fantasy activities like piano, ballet, and drawing are more likely to obtain a fantasy prone personality. Acting is also a way for children to identify as different people and characters which can make the child prone to fantasy-like dreams as they grow up. (Referred to David praising the Lord guided by God while watching the sheep.) This can cause

the person to grow up thinking they have experienced certain things and they can visualize a certain occurrence from the training they obtained while being involved in plays. People have reported that they believed their dolls and stuffed animals were living creatures and that their parents encouraged them to indulge in their fantasies and daydreams. For example, one subject in Barrett's study said her parents' formula response to her requests for expensive toys was, "You could take this (household object) and with a little imagination, it would look just like (an expensive gift)."

(2) Exposure to abuse, physical or sexual, such that fantasizing provides a coping or escape mechanism.

(3) Exposure to severe loneliness and isolation, such that fantasizing provides a coping or escape mechanism from the boredom.

Regarding psychoanalytic interpretations, Sigmund Freud has stated that "unsatisfied wishes are the driving power behind fantasies, every separate fantasy contains the fulfillment of a wish, and unproves an unsatisfactory reality." This shows childhood abuse and loneliness can result in people creating a fantasy world of happiness in order to fill the void.

Related Constructs - Openness to experience is one of the five domains that are used to describe human personality in the Five Factor Model. Openness involves six facets, or dimensions, including active imagination (or fantasy), aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity. Thus, fantasy prone personality correlates with the fantasy facet of the broader personality trait "Openness to Experience."

Absorption is a disposition or personality trait in which a person becomes absorbed in his or her mental imagery, particularly fantasy. The original research on absorption was by American psychologist Auke Tellegen. Roche reports that fantasy proneness and absorption are highly correlated.

Fantasizers become absorbed within their vivid and realistic mental imagery.

Dissociation is a psychological process involving alterations in personal identity or sense of self. These alterations can include: a sense that one's self or the world is unreal (derealization and depersonalization); a loss of memory (amnesia); forgetting one's identity or assuming a new self (fugue); and fragmentation of identity or self into separate streams of consciousness (dissociative identity disorder, formerly termed multiple personality disorder). Dissociation is measured most often by the Dissociative Experiences Scale. Several studies have reported that dissociation and fantasy proneness are highly correlated. This suggests the possibility that the dissociated selves are merely fantasies, for example, being a coping response to trauma. However, a lengthy review of the evidence concludes that there is strong empirical support for the hypothesis that dissociation is caused primarily and directly by exposure to trauma, and that fantasy is of secondary importance.

Health and Theoretical Implications - False pregnancy (pseudocyesis). A surprisingly high number of female fantasizers – 60% of the women asked in the Wilson-Barber study – reported that they have had a false pregnancy at least once. They believed that they were pregnant, and they had many of the symptoms. In addition to amenorrhea (stoppage of menstruation), they typically experienced at least four of the following: breast changes, abdominal enlargement, morning sickness, cravings, and "fetal" movements. Two of the subjects went for abortions, following which they were told that no fetus had been found. All of the other false pregnancies terminated quickly when negative results were received from pregnancy tests.

Maladaptive Daydreaming - A 2011 study reports on 90 excessive, compulsive or maladaptive fantasizers who engaged in extensive periods of highly-structured immersive imaginative experiences. They often reported distress stemming from three factors: difficulty in controlling their fantasies that seemed overwhelming; concern that the fantasies interfered in their personal relationships; and intense shame and exhaustive efforts to keep this "abnormal" behaviour hidden from others.

Parapsychology (paranormal experiences) - The pioneer Wilson-Barber study states that fantasy prone personality is a key to understanding reputed paranormal (parapsychological) experiences, such as extrasensory perception (or ESP).

Now is there anyone out there who can honestly say that they do not have or have been affected by fantasies and their by-products? Thank Jesus Christ for the freedom that is available for us in the Full Gospel of Salvation, Healing and Deliverance.

Seek the Lord Jesus Christ for help. Remember the Gadarene Demoniac coming to be set free by Jesus.

Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Mark 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Name of Jesus!

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