

Daniel 10:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

Analysis

The vision continues affecting Daniel: 'Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.' Despite physical collapse, Daniel retains consciousness sufficient to hear the divine message. The 'deep sleep' (תַּרְדֵּמָה/tardemah) is supernatural—not normal sleep but divinely-induced state enabling reception of revelation beyond normal human capacity. This parallels Abraham's deep sleep during covenant ceremony (Genesis 15:12) and Adam's during Eve's creation (Genesis 2:21). The posture—face toward ground—demonstrates prostration and worship. Reformed theology affirms that God accommodates human weakness: when direct encounter would destroy, He induces states (deep sleep, visions, trances) enabling revelation while protecting the recipient. This demonstrates divine mercy in revelation.

Historical Context

The Hebrew tardemah describes supernatural sleep imposed by God for special purposes: Adam's during creation of Eve, Abraham's during covenant ceremony, Saul's army during David's visit (1 Samuel 26:12), and Daniel's during vision. This distinguished divine revelation from normal dreams or human imagination—it was imposed state enabling supernatural communication. Ancient Near Eastern divination involved various altered states (drug-induced, ritual-induced, ecstatic), but biblical revelation emphasized divine initiative and control. God imposed the

state, delivered the message, and enabled recovery—the human recipient was passive participant rather than active practitioner. This protected both message integrity (ensuring divine rather than human origin) and recipient safety (preventing destruction from unmediated divine glory).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does divinely-imposed sleep enabling revelation teach about God's accommodation to human weakness?
2. How does tardemah (supernatural sleep) differ from normal dreaming or altered states sought through human techniques?
3. Why does God sometimes use special states (deep sleep, visions, trances) for revelation rather than normal consciousness?

Interlinear Text

וְכָשְׁמָעִי	אֶת	קוֹל	דְּבַר יוֹ	וְכָשְׁמָעִי	אֶת	קוֹל
Yet heard	H853	I the voice	of his words	Yet heard	H853	I the voice
H8085		H6963	H1697	H8085		H6963

דְּבַר יוֹ	וְאֲנִי	הִי יְתִי	נִרְדָּם	עַל	וּפְנֵי י
of his words	H589	H1961	then was I in a deep sleep	H5921	and my face
H1697			H7290		H6440

וּפְנֵי י	אֶרְצָה:
and my face	toward the ground
H6440	H776

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 8:18 (Parallel theme): Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

Job 4:13 (Parallel theme): In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

Genesis 15:12 (Parallel theme): And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

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