

The Source of a Dream

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Psalm 34:18 The LORD [is] nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. 19 Many [are] the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

Our present meditation is based upon a dream, the dream of a young man who was raised in the fear of God, a young man who revered the kingdom of heaven. When it comes to dreams, we puzzle sometimes. To devote a whole study to a dream? A dream can have many different sources. The dream we now want to contemplate is based on its source, and we ourselves are in a position to have the same source as that dream had.

Different Sources of Dreams

1. A Troubled Mind

The Scriptures reveal that dreams come from different sources. One of these is found in the following:

Ecclesiastes 5:3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business;

If your mind is overburdened with many multitudes of thoughts and burdens, dreams come from that. This is a source of a dream – a troubled mind; perplexities; too much on the brain. Some strange dreams can come up when we are in that condition.

2. Divine Inspiration

Then we turn to another source of dreams:

Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, [I] the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, [and] will speak unto him in a dream.

This is a dream that comes directly to someone who is a prophet or a leader among God's people – God speaks to him in the form of a dream. This is the source of a dream.

3. Man Causes

Jeremiah 29:8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that [be] in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

There is a cause, a source of a dream. Dreams that some people pay attention to, thinking God is speaking to them in a dream, when it is they themselves that have caused that dream.

Jacob's Dream

The dream that Jacob dreamed may resemble somewhat to the kind described in Ecclesiastes 3, because he was a troubled person; but in this experience of his, Number 12:6 was to the point. We may know the story of the dream, but we need to know the "Thus saith the Lord" in reference to the dream, to get the true meditations into our minds.

Genesis 27:41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. 42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, [purposing] to kill thee. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

We understand well why Esau was so angry that he wanted to kill Jacob. It was because Jacob received the blessing through deception. And Esau wanted to deal with that. So Jacob ran for his life so that he would not be slain by his brother.

Genesis 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put [them for] his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I [am] the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

Here you can see that Jacob's mind was really in turmoil. And, as we have seen, someone whose mind is in turmoil can have a dream. But this one was a dream that had something to do with the interests of God's kingdom. The mind occupation that precedes a dream is very important for our consideration. Jacob

was not just a troubled person because of his sin; he was also a godly person. As it says, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all*. So as we research into the source of this dream, there are some important appreciations that come here into focus. Jacob was a godly-minded person in contrast to Esau. Let us explore this. As we shall see, Esau's mind and Jacob's mind were two different minds altogether.

Vast Differences

Genesis 25:29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he [was] faint: 30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red [pottage]; for I [am] faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

Jacob was a godly person who craved for the birthright.

Genesis 25:32 And Esau said, Behold, I [am] at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised [his] birthright.

This is the importance of reading the Scriptures. What do they say? What was the mind of Esau? He *despised his birthright*, contrary to Jacob. Jacob yearned for the birthright.

Genesis 28:6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

Here is Esau watching how Isaac had counselled Jacob to only marry a believing wife;

Genesis 28:7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; 8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; 9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

What do you see here? How did Esau's mind function? He just heard his father say, I want you Jacob to marry a godly wife; and what does he do? He basically poked his tongue at it, and he went along and did the exact opposite. He didn't care about who he married, whether it was a believing wife or not. So he had a

disdain to the birthright and he was deliberately opposing the counsel of his father. This is the mind of Esau in contrast to the mind of Jacob. This is an important criterion for us to draw correct conclusions in reference to this story.

Jacob's Heart Longings

He who received [the birthright] was to be the priest of his family, and in the line of his posterity the Redeemer of the world would come. On the other hand, there were obligations resting upon the possessor of the birthright. He who should inherit its blessings must devote his life to the service of God. Like Abraham, he must be obedient to the divine requirements. In marriage, in his family relations, in public life, he must consult the will of God. {PP 177.3}

What do you understand from this in reference to the mind of Jacob in contrast to the mind of Esau? Did Esau have the qualities of mind to receive the birthright? Obviously not, because he disdained it and he was not prepared to follow the counsel of a godly father to follow the principles of becoming the priest of the family, to marry only a person who is godly.

Jacob had learned from his mother of the divine intimation that the birthright should fall to him, and he was filled with an unspeakable desire for the privileges which it would confer. It was not the possession of his father's wealth that he craved; {PP 178.2}

What was his state of mind?

...the spiritual birthright was the object of his longing. To commune with God as did righteous Abraham, to offer the sacrifice of atonement for his family, to be the progenitor of the chosen people and of the promised Messiah, and to inherit the immortal possessions embraced in the blessings of the covenant--here were the privileges and honors that kindled his most ardent desires. His mind was ever reaching forward to the future, and seeking to grasp its unseen blessings. {Ibid.}

What was the state of his mind? Did he disdain anything of God's counsel to him? Not at all. He was a righteous man who wanted righteousness and the kingdom and the covenant and the promises of Abraham.

With secret longing he listened to all that his father told concerning the spiritual birthright; he carefully treasured what he had learned from his mother. Day and night the subject occupied his thoughts, until it became the absorbing interest of his life. But while he thus esteemed eternal above temporal

blessings, Jacob had not an experimental knowledge of the God whom he revered. {PP 178.3}

Interesting. He needed an experimental knowledge. But he revered God.

His heart had not been renewed by divine grace. He believed that the promise concerning himself could not be fulfilled so long as Esau retained the rights of the first-born, and he constantly studied to devise some way whereby he might secure the blessing which his brother held so lightly, but which was so precious to himself. {Ibid.}

If you meditate on this very deeply you can see here a person who is truly devout and devoted to the blessings of God. But he still needed a conversion. So with that condition, he was trying to gain the spiritual blessings, *devising some way* from his natural self *whereby he might secure the blessing which his brother held so lightly*. He thought he had a spiritual pre-eminence over his brother (which of course he did); but this was what motivated him instead of a new heart. He was sensitive to godliness, to purity, to obedience, and to righteousness. But because of this desire for the birthright Jacob ultimately deceived his father and Esau to gain the birthright. And this is what ended him up as a fugitive in disgrace.

On the Run

Threatened with death by the wrath of Esau, Jacob went out from his father's home a fugitive; but he carried with him the father's blessing; Isaac had renewed to him the covenant promise, and had bidden him, as its inheritor, to seek a wife of his mother's family in Mesopotamia. Yet it was with a deeply troubled heart that Jacob set out on his lonely journey. {PP 183.1}

So he was doing what God wanted him to do, but he had done it in his own human way. What an interesting meditation.

With only his staff in his hand he must travel hundreds of miles through a country inhabited by wild, roving tribes. In his remorse and timidity he sought to avoid men, lest he should be traced by his angry brother. He feared that he had lost forever the blessing that God had purposed to give him; and Satan was at hand to press temptations upon him. {Ibid.}

Remember, *many are the afflictions of the righteous*. Here is a demonstration of the afflictions of righteous Jacob in contrast to the unrighteous Esau.

The evening of the second day found him far away from his father's tents. He felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course. {PP 183.2}

We want to meditate upon this. Where do we fit in in regards to our life and the consequences of our life? Here are consequences that demonstrate something to us.

The darkness of despair pressed upon his soul, and he hardly dared to pray. But he was so utterly lonely that he felt the need of protection from God as he had never felt it before. With weeping and deep humiliation he confessed his sin, and entreated for some evidence that he was not utterly forsaken. Still his burdened heart found no relief. He had lost all confidence in himself, and he feared that the God of his fathers had cast him off. {Ibid.}

Are you picking up an interesting comparison? How many righteous people who made mistakes in their life like that feel just like that. They are afflicted; *many are the afflictions of the righteous*. But here in this dilemma, in this detailed material, we see a person who is suffering because he exercised self, just like Abraham exercised self to help God by having a child by Hagar and causing problems there. We are dealing here with subjects that often a person does not appreciate when he has failed badly but his heart was yearning, like Jacob's was, for the blessing of God, spiritual blessings. Jacob had respect unto God, as opposed to those who do not have respect unto God. The unrighteous person is one who poohos God's will. The righteous person, even though he makes serious mistakes, does not poohoo God's will; he wants God's will, but he fails and sins. And as a consequence there is this deplorable experience and affliction that Jacob is going through.

With such cogitations, without the comforts of home, with a rock for his pillow, he falls into a troubled sleep. Have you ever fallen into a troubled sleep, and then you end up with a troubled dream? And if that was the only source of the dream, it wouldn't be anything special. But this was a person whose mind was based upon following God and wanting His way; and he was troubled because he had sinned against God, and he was crying to God for some help. With bitter tears he confessed – a true repentance. And, lo, what happens as he goes to sleep with a troubled mind?

More Than a Dream

Genesis 28:12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I [am] the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west,

and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I [am] with thee, and will keep thee in all [places] whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done [that] which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew [it] not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful [is] this place! this [is] none other but the house of God, and this [is] the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put [for] his pillows, and set it up [for] a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel:

Was this a mere dream generated from a troubled mind? While it was generated from a troubled mind, the troubled mind was a spiritual troubled mind, and God was responding. We know that this dream is not merely one that came from a troubled mind in general, because Jesus explains to us its true meaning:

John 1:51 And [Jesus] saith unto [Nathanael], Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Here was a dream that Jesus identifies for us as a dream from heaven. Here was a dream that had a source that is important for every true, God-fearing mind.

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. {DA 311.5}

Christ is who Jacob saw in that vision. This is what Jesus said; "You shall see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man." This meditation is much more than a meditation on a mere dream. God communing with a sin-disturbed believer – this is what the dream is about. There we see God communing with a sin-disturbed believer; not with an Esau; not with a person whose mind was despising God's ways, but with someone who loved God's ways but had sinned.

In the vision the plan of redemption was presented to Jacob, {PP 184.2}

This is a dream in which the plan of redemption was presented;

...not fully, but in such parts as were essential to him at that time. The mystic ladder revealed to him in his dream was the same to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael. Said He, "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." John

1:51. Up to the time of man's rebellion against the government of God, there had been free communion between God and man. But the sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, so that man could not have communion with his Maker. {Ibid.}

Can you see? This dream is more than just a dream for Jacob. It is a source that is for you and I.

...the sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, so that man could not have communion with his Maker. Yet the world was not left in solitary hopelessness. The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication. Had He not with His own merits bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power. {Ibid.}

All this was revealed to Jacob in his dream. Although his mind at once grasped a part of the revelation, its great and mysterious truths were the study of his lifetime, and unfolded to his understanding more and more. {PP 184.3}

Can you see the importance of the dream? It is not just a quick story that gives you a quick answer; it is something that, like Jacob, we are called upon to grasp as a revelation of the mysterious truths that have to do with our eternal salvation.

Why Are You Here?

We are here because we honour God, aren't we? Why are you here? Why do we come to church? Why are we uniting together as this small, insignificant people that we are? We are here because we, like Jacob, revere God, and revere and honour what His kingdom offers us. See whether we can truly appreciate the value of this in the following words:

Isaac made known to his sons these privileges and conditions, and plainly stated that Esau, as the eldest, was the one entitled to the birthright. But Esau had no love for devotion, no inclination to a religious life. {PP 178.1}

This is Esau and his characteristics in people around us – *no love for devotion, no inclination to a religious life.*

The requirements that accompanied the spiritual birthright were an unwelcome and even hateful restraint to him. {Ibid.}

Can you appreciate what this is saying? For so many people, when they come to the full message of the standards and principles of God's kingdom that we have carefully studied over the years, it becomes a yoke of bondage, and they walk away from it because it is a yoke of bondage to them, like it was to Esau.

The law of God, which was the condition of the divine covenant with Abraham, was regarded by Esau as a yoke of bondage. Bent on self-indulgence, he desired nothing so much as liberty to do as he pleased. To him power and riches, feasting and reveling, were happiness. He gloried in the unrestrained freedom of his wild, roving life. Rebekah remembered the words of the angel, and she read with clearer insight than did her husband the character of their sons. She was convinced that the heritage of divine promise was intended for Jacob. She repeated to Isaac the angel's words; but the father's affections were centered upon the elder son, and he was unshaken in his purpose. {*Ibid.*}

Jacob had learned from his mother of the divine intimation that the birth-right should fall to him, and he was filled with an unspeakable desire for the privileges which it would confer. {PP 178.2}

Here is a description, not only of Esau versus Jacob, but for you and I to examine ourselves. Am I in Jacob's mind, or am I in Esau's mind? The problem with Esau's mind was violating his hope, or dishonouring his estimation of what he should be. But Jacob was also dishonouring his own estimation; he was deceiving; he was a supplanter. He was tempted to doubt, because when life's mistakes and sins were drawn up before him, it crushed him and destroyed his hope. Have you gone through that? Have you gone through experiences like that? And maybe in the future Satan will bring these things past you again; and God will permit him to do that, because we are going to meet Jacob's trouble.

A Source and Dream Applicable To the Believing Sinner

As it was for Jacob, so it is for you and me, for us who may have become afflicted because we have brought our own problems upon ourselves. You and I, in the meditation of this dream, are given the source of it. What is the source? My condition in my desire to live for God and failing miserably. This was the source of the dream; and that source of the dream is for every person who becomes overwhelmed with the sense of having dishonoured the hope that they have in them. We become overwhelmed with our failures, as did Jacob. And how many mistakes he made.

All this was revealed to Jacob in his dream. Although his mind at once grasped a part of the revelation, its great and mysterious truths were the study of his lifetime, and unfolded to his understanding more and more. {PP 184.3}

If that was the case for him, what about you and me? These mysterious truths are to unfold to our minds more and more. Every time we come to another dimension of our afflictions, the dream of Jacob is applicable. When we fail miserably, when we have sinned against God and His wonderful light, but we still love Him and still desire to be with Him, and still desire the birthright, as it were, the covenant of promise; then don't despair, the Lord's vision to Jacob is yours, and He is speaking to us as He spoke to Jacob.

As he slept, a strange light broke upon his vision; and lo, from the plain on which he lay, vast shadowy stairs seemed to lead upward to the very gates of heaven, and upon them angels of God were passing up and down; while from the glory above, the divine voice was heard in a message of comfort and hope. Thus was made known to Jacob that which met the need and longing of his soul--a Saviour. With joy and gratitude he saw revealed a way by which he, a sinner, could be restored to communion with God. The mystic ladder of his dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man. {SC 19.2}

I carry a deep burden for every human being, that this story, the source of Jacob's dream, may indeed be an awakening of our own source, which is the same as that which created that dream. My burden is that when we come face to face with the overwhelming sense of our unworthiness, we will not despair. I have seen people who have fallen for this overwhelming thing, and my heart ached to see them fall for it. And then, those who are in this terrible Laodicean mentality, who don't even know that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, become judgmental on those who, like Jacob, have failed bitterly. We are called upon to concentrate on the source of the dream, because that is the source for us.

We, like Jacob, have suffered badly; but we don't want to justify our past wrongs. All we want to do is call upon God, as Jacob did, crying with bitter tears; and when we do that, the Lord gives us that vision. It's yours; it's mine, as Jacob saw it. And it unfolds to our understanding because, as we take it to heart, it becomes a personal meditation. This is not just a lovely story; this is life and death to us. Our need is that this truth will unfold to our understanding more and more. And we need this unfolding now more rapidly than at any other time, because we are right at the end and the time of Jacob's trouble is going

to be severe. And if I haven't got this vision right, applicable for me, I will not survive the time of Jacob's trouble.

We are to believe in the fact that we are here because we have a mind for God. And because we have this mind, we are not to be like the Esaus; but we are to be like Jacob; and the dream is applicable to us. By God's grace let us take firm hold of this dream, and let it be an unfolding to our understanding in all its greatness and beauty.

Amen.