



...Joseph dreamed a dream...

*5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying. (Gen 37:5-11)*

Though there are two dreams recorded within the text, they really apply to the same revelation. Bear in mind that nothing has transpired yet to warrant, in human terms, the preeminence of Joseph above his brothers. While it is true that Jacob was highly disposed to love Joseph more, there was not yet a Godly warrant to elevate Joseph above his brethren. Human reason would not have considered such a proposition fair, or justified; and, as one of our good ministers reminds us, the term 'fair' is not to be found in Holy Writ except as relates to appearance or bearing in speech. God's measurement is not the rule that man would use. God sees, not only the beginning of the life of a man, but the ending of it, and all points in between, as well. So He judges with far greater evidence than we can see, or have available to us. He sees the secrets of the heart. The subsequent sinful behavior of Joseph's brothers reveals the righteousness of God in sending dreams to Joseph.

Let us discuss the nature of dreams briefly as a context to this devotion. There are two kinds of dreams just as there are two kinds of families. Just as all upon the earth belong either to the Family of God, or the family of the Prince of the Power of the Air; so, too, dreams originate either in the fertile imagination of man's heart, or as an omen or prophecy of God. The dream of Joseph was prophetic. The dream of the wife of Pontius Pilate was an omen from God: *When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man (Jesus): for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. (Matt 27:19)* But God never sends dreams that are inconsistent with His published Word or which adds, or detracts, therefrom. (Rev. 22:18-19)

There are, too, false dreams of evil intent that the Lord strongly condemns. We hear such dreams proclaimed by unethical evangelist who lust after gold more than after God. There are books published for great profit that claim to be based upon dreams of heaven or hell. These are to line the pockets of greedy and faithless authors –

do not be a dupe! Examples may be found in such “smiling wonders” as Joel Osteen, Benny Hinn, and a host of others who have grown wealthy on the backs of deceived people. *I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart. (Jer 23:25-26) Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD. (Jer 23:32)* I am sorry if toes are bruised by my comparisons, but let the Word of God stand in lieu of mine, or any man’s, opinion. Does not verse 32 above perfectly describe the lying and deceitful Osteen who *cause my people to err by their lies, and by **their lightness***. Osteen, with a smile as broad as the road to Hell, disdains to speak of sin and its consequences. Why? Because the mention of sin makes people unhappy, and he says his job is to make people HAPPY. Paul describes those who rely on false prophets such as Osteen and consider the sterner truth of God to be foolishness: *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1:18)* If the preacher does not warn about sin, he is sinning himself by the omission.

So now, to Joseph’s two dreams. The first is fairly self-explanatory: *For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.* The sheaves are a personification of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph’s sheaf is shown great respect by those of his brothers. Joseph will be head, and his brothers, the tail, of Israel. Not truly knowing that this is not only a God-sent dream, but one intended for their comfort and salvation at a later time when famine and starvation strike Canaan, his brother are angry with jealousy.

The second dream is a bit more complex, though the meaning is the same. *And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him.* Why do you suppose Jacob, Joseph’s father, rebuked Joseph at this last dream? In the first dream, only the brothers of Joseph paid obeisance to him; but in the last, not only did his brothers, but his father and his father’s wives paid obeisance. Jacob was, indeed, wroth at the suggestion: *What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? **Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren** indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?* This may have not been a comfort to Jacob, but it was the unadulterated will of God. Godly people would be well-advised to be happy with the Will of God when they hear it because it is God’s will that shall prevail and not our own.

Let us look at this simple dream in detail. *I have dreamed a dream more; and.....*

1. . . . . *behold, the sun..... made obeisance to me.* This is the part with which Jacob took issue for Jacob is represented by the sun. The sun is master of the planets, and the provider of light and energy to them just as Jacob was father and provider for his sons. Jacob is Israel in name.
2. . . . . *and the moon..... made obeisance to me.* The moon depicts the wives and concubines of Jacob. They, too, will come to depend on Joseph in the place of Jacob for their provision in old Egypt.
3. . . . . *and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.* There are twelve stars that represent Israel as twelve tribes. The eleven stars mentioned here are the brothers of the twelfth tribe (Joseph). You will find in the Glory Cloud above the Eagle of the American Seal twelve Stars representing Israel. The forefathers believed that this nation

was founded upon the same promises made unto Israel. Our history (until very lately) has revealed that to be the case. America was most favored in the eyes of the Lord until we turned from our Lord and followed the world.

Do we find other mention of the nature of Israel being illustrated by the personifications of Sun, Moon, and Stars? Happily, we do have. *1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.* (Rev 12:1-5) John, the Revelator, sees visions of hundreds and thousands of years depicted in a single vision. He sees the Old Testament Church prefiguring the New in this vision. This is a symbolization in Heaven of a thing symbolized on earth. The Woman represents national Israel. She is bathed with the Light of the Sun (God). The Sun is spiritual Israel of which Jacob was the namesake, but ultimately, God. This is mentioned in Joseph's dream. The moon is under the Woman's feet. The moon may represent the mother's of Israel as in Joseph's dream. The twelve stars are very self-explanatory as the twelve tribes of Israel (or whole, and complete, Israel). Please remember the words of Paul that all who are of the race of Israel are not Israel, but only those who have believed the promise given to Abraham from every nation, tongue and people upon the earth. The Child that Israel gives birth to is the Lord Jesus Christ. From the moment of His birth, the Devil attempts to destroy Him. The Devil plants the seed in Herod's mind to kill every male child of two years age and under in Bethlehem. The Devil (Satan) is depicted by the Great Red Dragon. (If I were China, I would adopt a new symbol). Satan rebelled in Heaven and drew a third of the angels with him as his being cast down. Those unsavory demons are still among us. I know some of those personally – or at least, they SEEM to be. This vision of John helps us to see more clearly the meaning of Joseph's dream. All else is history. Out of jealousy, the brothers cast Joseph into a well and later sell him as a slave to a passing caravan. He was taken and sold in Egypt. He gradually, and after much trouble, gained the confidence of Pharaoh as an interpreter of dreams and a man of wise counsel. Joseph interpreted the dream of Pharaoh in seeing seven fat cows, followed by seven lean which devoured the seven fat ones. This represented seven prosperous years followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh made Joseph the second ruler of Egypt. When the famine hit Canaan, the brothers of Joseph were forced to come into Egypt to bargain for grain. Joseph took great pains to hide his identity, and was able to have his father, Jacob, brought down to Egypt along with his whole household. In the end, just as God had ordained, all the brothers of Joseph, and family of Jacob, paid obeisance to Joseph. It all fit snugly into God's plan of allowing Israel to experience the hard bondage of Egypt (symbolizing sin as well) so that they might appreciate more the salvation of the Lord in bringing them out after 400 years.

We, too, lose patience in our suffering that is sometimes a test of God so that we might appreciate a much greater blessing later. If we forget from where we have come, we may not appreciate well the place we are presently abiding. AMEN.