

S. N. Maul 9, 1975 7:30 P.M. WXP
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JACOB'S NIGHT AT BETHEL

Gen. 28:10-22

By way of introduction, we speak of the journey which Jacob went forth from his father's home in Beersheba - that covered perhaps 40 miles. And providence kept him along the way and he would rest for the night. He must go without a guide and he must start without delay on this journey.

He had provoked the wild passionate brother Esau to anger and his life was no longer safe in his father's tent. He must pass through a country. Where there was no law for the protection of a traveler. There was no courtesy or hospitality - though he was a stranger. Except in the limits of the tribe and the family.

He himself did not belong to the natives of this land. And there was no chief that would give him protection. If he should be wronged - there was no one to revenge for him. If he should be robbed or murdered on the way, there was no one to take up for him.

What made the matter worse, Jacob himself was to blame for this sad quarrel which had broken out between him and his brother. In the long and lonely journey before him, he must have the worst company as a fellow traveler - (a guilty conscience.) The hard road, the bad weather, the exposure to accident, to sickness, - I imagine reminded him there was no place like home.

I imagine like many of the young people who have left out of home, and gone out into the wanderings of the world - have said, I have brought all of this upon myself.

Now Jacob by nature was a timid man. He was not like his brother, a restless hunter. But from his earliest youth, he had grown up in a peaceful sort of life. In the quiet occupation of a herdsman. But there was the uncertainty now that Esau was seeking his life. And so his nature was a little bit opposite of that of Esau. But Jacob always appears to have the advantage when you compare these two brothers together. There is even the fond love of the old father. Who liked Esau. And Jacob was always constant and faithful. And Esau received his praise but he never could be relied upon.

But Jacob always has the attention of the home and he seeks after pleasing his father. But Esau was gone on hunts - long hunts. And returned home only periodically. And so it is strange that Jacob lived this dependent type of life as a child with his parents. And he had lived in a way that was pleasing.

But he had provoked the outbreak between his brother Esau and he knew very well that the divine promise that the inheritance of the name and the fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham would fall to him. Now he was not content to trust that in some way God would work out things for him. And so he was the suttle suplanter who had not faith enough to wait on the divine providence - but he wanted to accomplish things in his own way.

25-130-34
> You remember that Esau came in from the chase - tired, faint, fretful and said in an unusual rash of extravagance - "I'm at the point of death with hunger. I must have some food at any cost." Jacob took him at his word and told him that he would give him something to eat if he would give up his birthright claim - to the inheritance of honor. And this wreckless hunter who cared little for the claim which would tie him down to his father's quiet peaceful life,

sold his birthright and made an oath with Jacob and then went on back to his hunting ground.

How many people in the light of the instruction that Esau gives us had thrown away everything - their health, their character, their life, their soul salvation for just a brief trifle gratification. How many in an unguarded fretful moment let words pass through their lips that no tears or after regrets can recall. How easy it is in the moment of an enticement to give one's hand to do things that you can never change. And you can never blot them out of the memory book. How many make bad bargains in one way or another. A good conscience, a pure conscience, a hope of Heaven and let it go.

Esau is elsewhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a profane person. A man who made light of sacred things - he brought a curse upon himself. And he just throws away the greatest things for the least gratification. And he commits sin in this way.

Another reason why this man is on this journey is that Isaac, his daddy, the old man was blind. And he was ready to pronounce a final blessing upon his favorite son Esau. It was agreed between them that the hunter would go out and get some venison from the field and make some savory meat, such as the old man loved. His favorite dish. The arrangements was overheard and defeated by Jacob and his Mother. While the hunter was gone, Jacob sincerely believed that the birthright was due to him, both by purchase and by divine promise. He put on the garments of his brother, he covered his hand and his neck with goatskins to make the disguise complete. He said plainly to his doubting father, I am Esau, the first born. He said he had done as his father had bidden. He offered him the flesh of kids. Disguised in the

27:12-19

cunning cookery of his mother. And he said it is venison. He said the Lord gave me success in my chase. He came near his blind father, and confirmed the lie of his lips by exposing to the old man the touch of the hair covering his hands and his neck.

We have the Right Man - Slave Days - man did on old McPherson farm by name of Ken Carter. The Membership of Salem Baptist - Thinks Ken's a good man - came near Big family, his 12 neg. ch - De Pastor thinks good man - Prach ground tells - good Bro Ken - True & wife - Provider family - Sadie - De Pastor done wrong - oldest Boy Jim - go up Deu & dook in dat coffin & see if a dot's

Now the Lord had to discipline Jacob - as a direct consequence of this, dishonorable policy and instead of establishing him at the head of a rich family and honorable family - he was obligated to flee for his life. He had nothing but his staff in his hand. He must go a foot and alone, several - many miles through the wild country.

ye jaggery in Dec - no uncertainty Jacob is in this effin thought

If he takes servants or beasts of burden, his course and his road can be easily traced. Second, if he takes money, he may be robbed the first night out.

If he goes without it, he must beg and he must accept what he can receive along the way. He must depend upon his poverty for protection. The journey was long and perilous.

It would take a man (several days) traveling on foot in that strange country. And there was no entertainment along the way. He starts out in silence and in gloom. And then he goes to the distant hills afraid - as the landscape before him is all new. And he passes through the plains and he keeps a watch to the right and to the left, lest some robber rushing upon him - and here he is just a solitary shepherd. Traveling alone without a home. And he is traveling the same path that his father, (saac), traveled many years before. When going with Abraham following the vision in Beersheba at night to offer him as a sacrifice.

28 10-11

I. THE NIGHT TIME RESTING PLACE - V. 11

The Bible says that he comes to a certain place and tarries there all night because the sun has set. Here is a solitary place. He is weary, hungry, homesick. And he feels that God has forsaken him and he is left to the dangers and the darkness in the shades of night and there is loneliness on that bleak, barren hill. The hardships of the day and the horrors of the night multiply the fears of his heart. When this darkness becomes complete he is in a certain place. The sun sets.

He took of the stones of that place and took them for his pillows

And then he stretches out on the ledge to sleep or to stay awake and wait for the day. And now he feels as he has never done in his father's tent. The need for some protecting eye that never sleeps and a hand that never grows weary, to minister to him.

*Hand for Head - Snoring in ch - disturbs whole congregation -
Man don't feel well - Praying in my hand, What is sign of? fail, sign it is hollow!
" Do you ever Praying? No Never - " " " " " " " " it is Cracked!*

How much it would be worth now to this lonely traveler to be assured that somehow there was someone to watch over him and that he had not been forsaken of all. How much lighter the burden of his heart would have been if he had been right in his heart. And not been on this journey. Where could he turn for council. There was no written word of God for him to draw upon at that time. Nothing that could help his hopes or could build them up. So as an outcast lies down to sleep, this helps us to understand the sinner's condition.

For the night over took him at a certain place. And this place may be the place that he would often unaware of - but a place that God had appointed - and this is the way it is with every other sinner. God has some appointed place if we could just discern that place. We would know that it is for our meeting with him. To be sure now in his hard lodging here, it is very cold

on that ground and his bed is one that is not very easy - or that his bones would rest comfortably upon. He is very much exposed. He is fleeing for his life. And he had been dwelling in tents. And there was no such thing as lying down to pleasant dreams. Because he takes up a stone and uses this for his pillow.

II. NIGHTTIME DREAM - V. 12

He dreamed and behold a ladder set up on the earth. And the top of it reached to Heaven.

write, good dead over sins - reach Heaven - met Preacher coming down - were going - going get some more chalk -

When a man loses all confidence in God, it is time that God come in and help him.

And so in the dreams of this man on this memorable night, there was an inspired vision of that night. The sleeping exile saw the pathway of communications between earth and Heaven. He saw a glorious gate that opened into the eternal Heaven beyond. He saw the (shining staircase) go up with steps of light from the desolate ground where he slept. And it reached the highest Heaven.

There were (living messengers or angels) that were passing up and down these steps. And these were special messengers ministering to God, waiting upon Him in that hour. This promised mercy was brought to him. It brought a protection of the everlasting blessing that God was in that place with him.

The (scene) here is ¹¹ -be sure your sins will find you out. ¹¹ The record here is that Jacob went out from Beersheba under the threats of his brother.

But the real cause was the sin of Jacob. And sin always drives a man out away from his home, his friends, and his joy and away from his peace. Our first parents sinned and they went out away from the Garden of Eden. And when Peter denied his Lord, he went out from his presence and wept. When Cain slew his brother, he went out from the presence of the Lord. Judas let Satan enter his heart - he went out and it was night. That is the way (sin does). And here was Jacob having a dream at Bethel. One of the loveliest things in the Bible - how swift and complete the change from a lying, deceiving wretched man who would deceive his father. Here he is sleeping at the foot of a ladder. The top of which to Heaven. Poets, painters, hymn writers, preachers have all taken a hold of Bethel. And they have tried to describe that scene. It is something of simple beauty in the Old Testament. And it is something when you think of this (lonely) homesick, sinful man and probably all of us have had experiences and have done things as Jacob. And then there has come a time when God has seemed nearer to us - really beyond any question or doubt that he was at any other time. And for Jacob, this was the gate of Heaven. This was truly something to see a ladder reaching from earth to Heaven. It helped him to know that God did not rest day or night. That the angels were always busy working and that the mediation of Christ in our behalf goes on. And of course these are encouraging words to Jacob.

It is a lovely type of hymn, who is the way - John 14:6. This ladder like the salvation of Jesus Christ was set up on earth - indicating that there was a way of access for man and it's top reached to Heaven. The ladder of Christ's cross, did not come short of the very throne of God's holiness. And all the ladders that men have erected have failed to reach Heaven.

These angelic climbers or ministers - all ministering spirits are sent forth from God to help men come to salvation. Heb. 1:14. As soon as the

ladder is set up, the angels are on it. How quick they are to take advantage of any opportunity of service. The angels have no way from earth to Heaven but one way - they ascend and descend upon the son of man. John 1:50.

III. NIGHT TIME VISIT FROM GOD - V. (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. This is a time for God to intercede. And God came in this desolate place and Jacob was able to see the pathway between earth and heaven, at this barren point.

Here is first of all possession - land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it. Now this is true to all of those who will trust in Jesus Christ - the living ladder. He gives them the inheritance and he guarantees a possession.

Second protection. I am with thee and will keep thee. This is also a promise of our Lord that he is our keeper. 2 Kings 2:2.

His abiding presence, I will not leave thee. Fear not. Here Jacob is given the assurance that God will not leave him nor forsake him. And this is a night time visit from God. God works in this hour and comes in confidence to help him. And V. 15 - tells him that God is going to go with him and this was the assurance that Jacob was looking for and searching for in his heart.

A night time of discovery - V. (16). Jacob waked out of his sleep and he

said surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. This was a solemn discovery for Jacob. His heart was rid of doubt and fears. And this was a vision at Bethel. To him this was the beginning of a new and better life. This is a place, this night discovery, that the Lord was in the place.

V. 17 V. 17 He discovered it was a dreadful place He was afraid for he knew that there was none other than God's house here and the gate of Heaven before him. And so this tremendous discovery changed his whole life. And this is where I would say that Jacob was converted and he said, I knew it not. And how blind we go along until all of a sudden people discover that Jesus Christ was on a cross sacrificing his life for the sinner. And this is the place where sin is settled. Where the wrath of God descended upon the head of his son.

"
This is the house of God. Here God was. And here I am a sinful man. Here is the gates of Heaven. The door to eternal life. And I have found the way to enter in - Jacob said.

As you reconstruct this story, it was a long journey. A hard pillar, an uneasy conscience. And here is a supernatural event. And yet it was very natural. This man on this barren desert hillside with his head on a pillar of stone - the only thing available, and naturally fell off to sleep. Of course the whole hillside was terraced with angels. And what is more likely than a man who believed in God as Jacob did - and never ceased to do. His father had believed in God. As Isaac did and had never ceased to do. And whose grandfather Abraham had been a man who believed in God and had heroic faith. But here is a man who dreamed and imagined that God stood right beside him.

Now I do not know how we can interpret all dreams - but somehow this night

at Bethel with Jacob in this dream was something that awakened his consciousness and had some results because you can just recall the circumstances when he layed down to sleep. He had a consciousness of (a nearness of God.) When he awoke in the morning he said surely the Lord is - not that he was - in this place and I knew it not. And they are suggestive words. The mere consciousness - (not) that God had been here the night before. Not that God had just visited Jacob in the night but that God was (there at that moment) - surely the Lord is in this place. And this is why I think it is a conversion - a new discovery. He arrived there the night before lonely, homeless, exile - he didn't know God was there.

Then this was a discovery that night that the impression that was made on his soul - Jacob came to discover the (presence of God) And this is something that we are all familiar with and yet we fail to practice it. Being right there where he was. This is a Bible doctrine of God. It is impossible to conceive of God revealed in the Bible without admitting his omnipresence. It is a truth for us to be believed. As the Psalm says (whether shall I flea from thy presence - if I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in sheo, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning or dwell in the utter most parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night. Even the darkness hideth not from thee but the night shineth as the day. This is something that was a tremendous discovery.

Think about Daniel's prophecy in the story of Belshazzar's feast. The story of a night of drunkenness. The story in the midst of immorality.

And there was a mystic writing on the wall. And you listened to the prophet interpret the message and they looked fearfully. The God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified.

And that man had failed to glorify God. And the God in whose breath and whose hand breath is. Whose are all thy ways. Belshazzar was there drunk. The very breath of his life was in God's hands.

As Paul passed through Athens, he told those men that they were ignorant of God. He is not far from each one of us. For in him we live, we move, and we have our being! Thus the language is simple and yet direct.

You take the case of Jacob, it was the consciousness of the presence of God in an unexpected place. First when you think about the place itself. Jacob was near Luz. At Bethel the natural landscape is so bare and exposed that it opens no doors into the super-natural. There is nothing there to suggest to a man that God was there. There are really not many signs of nature to suggest it to his mind. But the place was barren and Bethel was such a place. And Jacob was far away from home - and far away from anything that spoke to him about religion. And presently he says, this is the house of God. But there is no temple there - not even a tabernacle there. There is not a shrine - no altar there. He has left that behind in the tents of Isaac and Beersheba. There is not a thing that suggests religion to him - or to suggest God to him.

You think about Belshazzar in the halls of drunkardness - God was present. He could not be excluded.

You take the rich fool in the parable. Our Lord said, when that man said

my fruits and my fields, my barns, suddenly in the midst of all the things he talked about, God said thou art a fool. Certainly God broke in. And where was God. Right there in the man's fields, right there in the harvest, right there in his barns. And God was forgotten but he was there.

The truth means that God is where man is. And man never escapes. My brother, my dear friends, tonight you face no sterner duty today than to be obedient knowing that God is there. Elijah said I am the only one left. And true to the ways of God. But he discovered that he was not alone in that hour. There were others who suffered in the midst - and God was in that place.

And God is in every lonely congregation tonight and every church, and in every place around about. And some people talk about the loneliness they have - you are not alone. You know, (no one sits alone tonight.) There is somebody besides you. You may be away from home, away from your friends, away from your old associates, but you aren't alone - God is with you.

Jacob did not say, God came to me in the night. God has visited me. God was here yesternight. (And now is gone.) He did not awake to that consciousness of a visit. He awoke to the consciousness of a presence. The thing that he found out that night was not that God visited man, but that God is with man wherever he is.

Now we expect to meet God in the sanctuary, in the church. But he is near us in the market place. He is out there even close to those dens of wickedness tonight.

Another thing to think about is the unconsciousness of the fact of the

nearness of God. Jacob said surely the Lord is in this place. And I did not know it. How are we to account for the fact that Jacob did not know that God was there. I believe that that was what took Abraham out of the Chaldeas, when he felt that God was with him. And I think that when a man goes deeper in his spiritual life, he will begin to recognize that God is with him day by day. Wherever he is. As Job said, canst thou by searching found out God.

Jacob at the beginning of that night's sleep was dead and dull spiritually when he chose to put his head upon that stone, and go to sleep. But there was God high above and God was with him.

Now I don't have time to recount the spiritual deadness of Jacob. But there was moral failure and trickery, and meanness and deceit. Remember this was not a man who you can describe as Godless, he was Godly in a way. I think he sort of believed in God. The trouble with Jacob was, that he never truly believed in God. Believing in God, he did not believe that God could manage and help him in his life. And he was trying to carry on by his own wits and his own wisdom. That is really the story of Jacob and that is why he took the evil course.

Now this unconsciousness is wide spread. And who can tell it. The case of (men and women) - thousands of them today. Who do not know that God is near and have no immediate consciousness of God's presence with them. And yet they go on trying to live life apart from him. There are people today who spend their time in card games and yet God is close to them. There are those who burn a little incense on Sunday - not to God, but just to be respectable. To go through the notion of attending some temple or some place of worship. And they really do not know God - they are at sea. But

closer is he than breathing. Nearer than hands or feet. Here is God who goes with those who work in government. God who goes with those who work in commerce. Those who as a physician passes in and out of homes that has sickness. Everywhere men are busy - God is close at hand. And that is the tragedy of all tragedies. The supreme tragedy is that we do not know it. I knew it not - why not. There was spiritual deadness and dullness.

V. 18
This was a night time conversion - V. 18-21, 22. We find some resolutions made and he is going to set up a memorial of the impressions just made upon him. He erected a few stones and he called them Bethel. They were a fixed point to remind him of the past. The power of this Bethel we shall see as we come to read Chapter 35, in a future sermon. But his impressions, his feelings shall pass away. Unless we have some memorial. We are spiritual beings of course - then we might be without form. But Jacob, to keep his religion in mind, and his church going active, and to keep the Sabbath. But truly this is hard to do without some point of interest and emphasis. If a man will say I can read the Bible at home, I can think of Christ without attending church. I can make every day like this - his religion will die. Because of omission. The world gets a cold icy hand upon him.

W. 18 - He sat up with memorial and poured oil upon it. He was beginning a new life and a better life. He was now making a covenant as he set this memorial up. Which was going to be a mark in his life - and this was going to be something that he would always remember.

Like the young sailor on the ship in mid ocean - who went down to his locker room wet and cold. He sleeps during the storm. He is far away from home. And he hears again the evening prayers offered by his parents. In his

imagination he hears the church bell ring and call him to the meeting in the village church. He hears the blessed words of Christ to come unto me. God is speaking to that wanderer on the sea. And (this) is what God was doing at Bethel, in that dream that night. He was calling Jacob - the house of God - the gate of Heaven. And when he awakes, Jacob was ready to give God his heart and this was the beginning of a new and better life for him.

V. (21) then shall the Lord be my God. Here is a confession of his faith. This is what ever man needs to do on sea, on land, in the city. By day and by night. God is calling the wanderers home. He speaks from his high throne down to the desolate, the weary, and the disappointed.

A man can be guilty and refuse to hear when God speaks. It is sad when one is hopeless and helpless and he plods along his way clinging to this earth. When there are the wings of angels hovering over him. When there is the blessed glorious ladder that is extended to every day life. The house of God in every home. The gate of Heaven in every hour of need, seemed to be opened to us.

Jacob sets up a memorial from the impression made upon him that everyone would know that this is where he truly had an encounter with God. The second (he is determined that he shall worship God henceforth and forever.) Not for honor, or pleasure, or business. But he is going to worship God. And he says I am going to take the Lord for my God.

V. 22
In the third and final place in V. (22) - he says (I am going to give God the tenth of my increase.) Now this is an important event in the history of Jacobs life. Leaving home and without money traveling by foot - this dreamer met God through this stairway to glory. It was really by grace that he was permitted to receive this direction.

And Jacob vowed a vow saying if God would be with me and keep me - and if he'll give me eat and raiment and all of these things, I will surely give him a tenth.

Now there is the evidence of his conversion. His keen sense of divine presence and realization of the importance of divine communication and his recognition is for the first time that he is going to try to live a worthy life.

With a fixed purpose that came into his heart - he is going to serve God and honor God with the first fruits of his income.

Now here we come to the second mention of tithing before it was given in the law at Sinai. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. This man is changed from this time on. He does not lose - but he is Godly and prayerful. Now that is going to be the secret of a righteous life. And he says I am going to honor God with everything that I have.

Dr. Carroll tells an incident out of his life that after the war, the Civil War, he says I remember sitting in the back of a wagon reading this passage from Gen. to my wife. He says it was at the close of the war between the states. And he said I was crippled and wounded, and I was bankrupt. He said I have voluntarily assumed an ante-bellum debt of \$4000 - not legally my own. And had finally paid all by selling everything I had. But my wife and my baby - and I was moving to a church on the promise of \$500 a year.

I said, now wife, here is a time to (settle our financial relation to God.) We haven't got a thing - we are sure to fail if he is not honored by us. And if he is honored, we will succeed. Let us enter into a covenant right here

and whatever happens we will give God 1/10 of every cent that we ever make.

We did from that time on. I have longed since passed that limit. For many years I had been giving 1/5. And some years 2/5. So here was the event that changed this man's life. And here is something that Dr. Carroll said helped him. What matters if we are banished from home alone without friends and without money. God was his portion - he was rich no matter how poor. If God was with him, he had company - no matter how lonely. If God was for him - who could be against him.