

"Dream, Dream, Dream." – July 9, 2017  
by Wayne J. Schneider – Credo in Unam Deum

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Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Dreams are a study in contrasts. They are part history and part lunacy. There is an oddness surrounding these unplanned encounters. In the Holy Scriptures, we discover many dreamers: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, St. Paul and Pilate's wife, to name a few. Dreams are something else beside a neurological event in the frontal lobes of our brain. They may be deeper experiences of God. Do you remember your dreams?

Abram is one-hundred years old and has lived an astonishing life. He **has journeyed with 'a Voice' for a decade. This voice has continually told him** that he would be an influential person, who will have an uncountable number of descendants.

*"Count the stars, if you are able,"* was the Lord's challenge to Abram. Unlikely, because there was no Hubble telescope, and there is an estimated 100 billion stars in just our Milky Way. If you started to count them at the rate of 1 star a second, it would take you 100 billion seconds, or 3,000 years! Some astronomers guess that there are somewhere around 100 billion galaxies like ours . . . try to imagine how many stars there are! *"So shall your descendants be,"* said God...

This ancient one continues to listen to the voice he believes to be the Holy One, Yahweh, God. Across the desert sands, in all that heat, even though his name means "exalted father," Abram and his spouse, Sarai have no children.

The voice speaks again: and with a storyteller's genius, we learn that the voice of God comes to Abram *"as the sun is setting."* God commands Abram to kill two birds and three animals. In a weird ceremony, Abram cuts

the animals in half and lays the halves on the ground, making a path between them.

At twilight, Abram descends into REM sleep where a "thick and dreadful darkness" envelops him. It is in a dream that he hears the Spirit of God speaking to him. God creates a covenant with Abram. In this dream, Abram sees a smoky fire pot and a raging torch and God says to Abram: "*the land you see, and more, belongs to you and all those who come after you. Yes, you do have a future. You will wake up tomorrow. The darkness and the depression and the dream vanish.*"

What does all of this mean? Is it possible that there is an Abram strolling around inside each of us? And if there is, what do you think God is trying to say to you? Could it be that God is saying we arrive at a stage in life where we believe that we have done the best that we can? We've followed God for one, two, three or more decades, a lifetime, and we have done the best we can with what God has given us.

A family moved into a new neighborhood, and their son had already made new friends. Ten were invited to his birthday party. When the day arrived, and he opened his presents, 8 of his friends had brought him a sweater.

Later a comment was made to the mother of one of the boys to explain about the multiplicity of sweaters in the hope that an exchange could be done.

She replied coolly, "Well, after all, you were the one who wrote on the invitation what you wanted me to buy."

The little boy's mother was stunned into silence; then she realized what had happened. Since the party was to be held in the basement, which was always cool, she had written on each invitation, "Please have your child bring a sweater."

We have a feeling that we have done our best with our home, our children, our career, our friendships, our church ministries, at least in our estimation. Our human best is at odds with the holy best. When we hunker down, grit our teeth, clench our fists to survive in today's world, and by its nature it is unable to receive something truly beautiful done for you.

As with Abram, we may still not have what we need most. We have an annoying emptiness, an existential angst, that sometimes dogs us. So we ask ourselves: "*Do I need more?*"

This is why I often mutter, "*You cannot be completely human by yourself.*" This may be the reason Jesus told that gloomy joke, of the wealthy gentleman having as difficult a time getting into Paradise, as that camel going through the Needle's eye, because carrying his visa card in his pocket, he is so efficient serving his needs that he cannot see that what he needs more than anything else, can be had only as a gift.

For some of us, life is slipping away from our loved ones or perhaps, ourselves. Today we have fewer years ahead than behind us. And, like Abram, we are afraid. Please note that God's opening words to this faithful centenarian are, "*Be not afraid!*" And yet we are afraid. Sometimes we doubt that our retirement incomes we get us through; or that there will be medical insurance available for our family.

Sometimes I' am like a child: not convinced that God will be there when I need Him. I do need to hear God say again: "*Do not be afraid, Wayne. I am your shield, your very great reward.*" It is in the bleakest of times, the Dark Nights of the Soul, when we long for God's dream, a dream of God who always does what is best. No matter how badly we have done, God will do what God does best. When the future looks miserable, God does what is best. God walks as fire and torch between your life. All of our lives are laid before God. The scenes of broken homes, poor health, unwise decisions, and failed dreams that drain our spiritual energy.

But God comes like a smoking pot and a flaming torch. God comes to us with mercy, forgiveness, a dream, a vision, and a promise.

Abram brings us the Gospel, the "Good News," two thousand years before Jesus. Jesus knows about dark days. On one, he hung on a fractured tree for you. He steppes among the death of our lives to teach us that the way of love is the way of life.

This morning, I'm wondering what you are dreaming? I am pondering where you are going to do with those dreams? And, I'm musing on how **God's** new dreaming for you will be revealed? Alleluia Amen.