

LESSON IV

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Preparation

Gen. 12:entire
Gen. 13:entire
Gen. 14:14-24
Gen. 16:entire
Gen. 25:19-34
Gen. 27:entire

Markers

1. Gen. 12:1-4
2. Gen. 15:18
3. Matt. 12:46-50
4. Gen. 12:10
5. Gen. 14:18
6. Hebr. 6:13-20
7. Hebr. 7:1-28
8. Ps. 110:4
9. Gen. 15:13,14
10. Hebr. 11:8-19
11. Gen. 14:13
12. John 8:56
13. Gen. 25:19-34
14. Gen. 26:1,2,7,12,13,26,35
15. Gen. 27:1-4
16. Gen. 28:1,2,8,9
17. Gen. 17:18-20
18. Gen. 21:9-21

Lesson IV

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- (1) God had made a covenant with Noah (Gen. 9), but man had failed to keep it, as indicated in the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11); hence a new covenant was needed. This covenant is given in Gen. 12:1-4: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram (high father), Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will shew thee and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." In Gen. 15:18 we read, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

- (2) God had made a covenant with a small portion of the human race in order that it might purify the whole of mankind. The Bible account from Abraham on is an account of the actions and fortunes of the Hebrews until the arrival of Jesus and his extinction of the idea that race constitutes the basis of the acceptance of man by God.
- (3) In Matt. 12:46-50 we read, "While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without,

desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Thus faith in and acceptance of the will of God was finally seen as the only true basis for an eternal covenant. At the point we are discussing, however, the covenant is made with Abram.

(4) After receiving the covenant there was a famine in the land (Gen. 12:10) and Abram went to live in Egypt. He referred to his wife Sarah as his sister (she was his half-sister) to protect himself from the Egyptians who might want her and would kill him if it were known that they were married. They later left Egypt and returned to Bethel. Egypt represents the world, evil, darkness. Bethel was a holy city even before the time of Abraham. It was a city of the Canaanites.

(5) Lot was Abram's nephew. He dwelt in the plain of Jordan. During a series of battles he was captured. Abram, on hearing of this, pursued Lot's captors into the land of Dan and freed Lot and returned. On his return he met Melchizedek, king of Salem, that is, Jerusalem, who is called the priest of the most high God (Gen. 14:18), (El Elyon), and possessor of heaven and earth. Abram immediately gave tithes of all he possessed to this king. This king to whom God was known as the most high God was a Gentile king since Abraham was the first Hebrew. Moreover this Gentile was the priest of the most high God. He typified Christ as both king and priest. For Abraham, the father of all Hebrews, to acknowledge him was to acknowledge that his priesthood and rulership exceeded anything that could come from Abraham. This is elegantly explained in Hebrews 6:13-20 and 7:1-28.

(6) (7) Melchizedek symbolized Christ two thousand years before Jesus appeared. Abraham recognized this. Like Christ he symbolized peace as King of Salem, which means

(8) peace. He had no descent as Jesus' divine origin was reckoned from the Word in John. He was a king as Jesus was to be a king. He, like Jesus, was a priest, but not by human appointment (Ps. 110:4). He had eternal life as had Jesus.

(9) The captivity of the Israelites in Egypt was foretold to Abraham in Gen. 15:13,14: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance." They spoiled the Egyptians. They had been unpaid as slaves, so they came out with great substance; this was their pay.

It had been promised Abram that he would be a father of a multitude, yet he was old and without children. At his wife's suggestion (Gen. 16:1-16), he married and had a child by Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid, when he was eighty-six. This son was called Ishmael, which means "God shall hear." He was to become the father of the Arab nation, but he was not the son representing the promise made to Abram. How Abram had a son by Sarah when he was one hundred years old (Gen. 17) after God had been revealed to Abram as Almighty has already been discussed in Lesson II. The sense of God as both the strong one, or Father, and the feeder and nourisher, or Mother, opened the way for the fulfillment of the promise. Abram's name, which means "high father," was changed to Abraham, which means "father of many nations." This was followed by the birth of Isaac and the offering of Isaac upon the altar as discussed previously. Recall how following the Flood, Noah sacrificed upon an altar out of gratitude for his salvation and how this blood sacrifice foreshadowed the animal sacrifices of the future. Noah didn't invent animal sacrifice, as the heathen nations had done this for ages.

In order to distinguish the Hebrews from others and also to effect a greater purification, the rite of circum-

cision was instituted. This was purification by blood. Blood symbolized life, as did water, and its sacrifice was held to accomplish a purification. Like all material rites, it could accomplish its purpose only in belief. The circumcision of the heart which it symbolized could only be accomplished by a moral regeneration.

Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men. As explained by Barnabas, this symbolized the purification to be accomplished two thousand years later when Jesus sacrificed himself upon the cross for the redemption of the whole world. The symbols for eighteen are J H, which are 10 and 8, standing for Jesus. The symbol for three hundred is T, which represents the cross. Thus the number symbolizes Jesus on the cross.

- (10) In Hebrews 11:8-19 Paul summarizes some of the events in the life of Abraham. In verse 10 he tells us that "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." This may be more accurately rendered "he waited for a city which hath foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

We may summarize the events in Abraham's life as follows:

1. Terah and his sons Abram and Nahor and their wives leave Ur of the Chaldees and go into the land of Canaan to Haran.
 2. Abraham called of God at age 75 to leave his father's house. He goes to Bethel. He looks and waits for a city which hath foundations, the City of God. He is promised the land and that he will be the father of a great nation.
 3. There is a famine and he goes to Egypt.
 4. Abraham and Lot separate. Abraham called a Hebrew (Gen. 14:13).
 5. Abraham delivers Lot.
 6. Abraham meets Melchizedek and gives him tithes of all.
- (11)

7. Revelation of God as El Elyon, the Most high God (the highest God).
8. Abraham is promised seed as the stars of heaven.
9. Abraham has Ishmael by Hagar, the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, at the suggestion of Sarah.
10. Revelation of God as El Shaddai, the Almighty, meaning the strong one and breasted or implying Father and Mother. Abram becomes Abraham.
11. Circumcision instituted (318 circumcised).
12. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; Lot saved.
13. Isaac born when Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah 90 years old.
14. Offering of Isaac on the altar.
15. Elevation of Abraham's sense of sacrifice. Substitution of the ram.
16. Passing of Sarah at age of 127 years.
17. Abraham sends his servant to his own people to find a bride for Isaac.
18. Isaac marries Rebekah when he is 40 years old.
19. Abraham marries Keturah.
20. Abraham dies when 175 years old.

Summary of Main Events in Abraham's Life:

1. Called of God, Abraham seeks the heavenly city.
2. Receives God's promise that in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
3. Receives the covenant that from him will come a great nation and that he shall be blessed and they shall possess the land and he will be a father of many nations, i.e., of all men of faith whether Jew or Gentile.
4. Abraham meets and acknowledges Melchizedek as greater than he as priest and king of the most high God.
5. Revelation of God as El Shaddai, The Almighty.
6. Circumcision instituted.

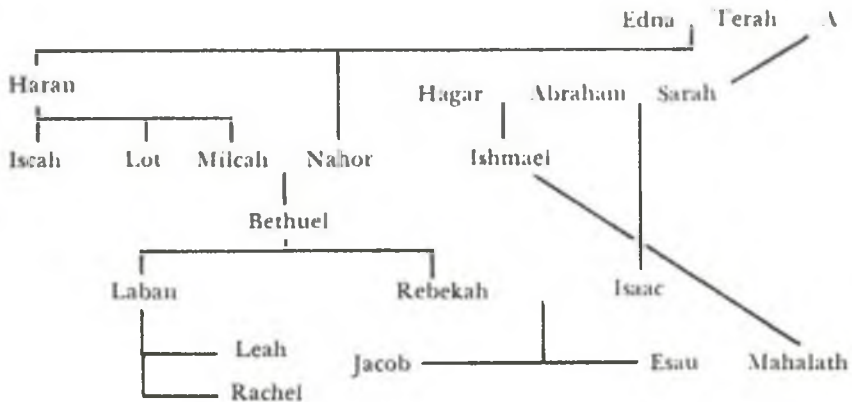
7. Isaac born. Beginning of the fulfillment of the promise.
8. Offering of Isaac on the altar. Substitution of the ram.

Events indicative of the Christ revealed to Abraham the first Hebrew:

1. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gentiles through Christ), (Gen. 12:3).
2. Meeting with Melchizedek, symbolic of Christ.
3. Circumcision of the 318.
4. Offering of Isaac and substitution of the ram.
- (12) 5. Jesus' statement, John 8:56.

The key to Abraham's life was faith. He had faith in God. Through faith he discerned a heavenly city. Through faith he accepted God's promise and covenant. Through faith he discerned God as Almighty. Through faith he discerned the Christ. Through faith he was willing to give up Isaac accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead and being willing to part from the sense that he apart from God could be a creator.

GENEALOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS



Children of Jacob (Israel)

By Leah	By Rachel	By Bilhah (Rachel's maid)	By Zilpah (Leah's maid)
Reuben	Benjamin	Dan	Gad
Simeon	Joseph	Naphtali	Asher
Levi	(Ephraim,		
Judah	Manasseh)		
Issachar			
Zebulun			
 Dinah			

Isaac

(13) In Gen. 25:19-34 we read of the birth of Esau and Jacob. We learn that they represent two nations. It is predicted that the elder shall serve the younger. Jacob caused Esau to sell his birthright. This was evil on Jacob's part followed by evil on Esau's part for falling in with it. Jacob's desire for the birthright indicated that he valued it and therefore showed some faith in God, faith which Esau lacked.

(14) There was a famine in the land (Gen. 26:1,2) but Isaac was told not to go to Egypt. When the people of Gerar asked about his wife, he called her his sister for fear of the men (Gen. 26:7). The famine and the reference to his wife as his sister exactly paralleled events in Abraham's life.

(15) Isaac became very prosperous (Gen. 26:12,13) and went to dwell in the valley of Gerar. Esau married two Hittites, which upset Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 26:35). Isaac then arranged to bless Esau (Gen. 27:1-4), but Rebekah heard it and arranged with Jacob to steal the blessing for him, as Isaac was old and his eyes dim. Jacob lied to his father

and said he was Esau. The name Jacob means “supplanter.” God had determined before the birth of Esau and Jacob that Jacob would also be blessed, but lack of faith by Jacob and Rebekah caused them to steal it. Esau’s blessing could not be stolen from him nor could Jacob’s be gained by stealing. Jacob obtained the blessing not because of, but in spite of, his deceit. Thus far Esau’s qualities have been much better than Jacob’s, and it is evident that future suffering will be the harvest of the evil Jacob has sown.

(16) Esau planned to murder Jacob so Rebekah sent him away. Isaac sent Jacob to marry a daughter of his wife’s brother, Laban. When Esau (Gen. 28:1,2,8,9) saw that Jacob was told not to marry a Canaanite, and that Isaac was displeased with the wives he had, then he also married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael.

(17) Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. God promised that he would establish his covenant with Isaac. (Gen. 17:19). He also promised that Ishmael would be father of a great nation (Gen. 17:18-20). When Sarah demanded that Hagar should go away, she fled, and in despair in the wilderness God heard her and again promised that
(18) of Ishmael should come a great nation (Gen. 21:9-21). Ishmael means “God shall hear.”

It had been promised to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. As explained before, this expression meant other nations besides the Hebrew nation. He would be father of both Gentile and Hebrew nations. His two sons symbolized these two elements.

Isaac in like manner had two sons, Esau and Jacob, who symbolized both Gentile and Hebrew nations. Ishmael married an Egyptian and had twelve sons and one daughter. Jacob also had twelve sons and one daughter.

A prophet may be the highest source of revelation at a given time or place. This does not mean that he never makes a mistake. A mistake does not mean he is less anointed. We do not approve or imitate a mistake if we

recognize it as such. To turn away from the prophet is to turn away from God's anointed. This is a serious error because it clouds our sense of his mission.

Isaac blessed Jacob when he thought he was blessing Esau. When he discovered his mistake, he couldn't reverse it, for he was obeying God. God's blessing could not be reversed. There was also a blessing for Esau.

Let us ask ourselves this question: When you call to God, does he hear you? Think through your answer to this question before reading further. Does God hear the human call for help?

Why call to God if he doesn't hear? Why pray to God if he doesn't hear? If God doesn't hear, you have no God. For prayers to be answered God must hear. The Bible tells us that Hagar called and God heard her. Ishmael means "God shall hear." Prayers are answered, so God must hear. The Bible tells us that God is Mind. When calling him we are calling mentally. To reach Him we must elevate our consciousness. We reach Him through the true human consciousness. How did the prophets foretell events unless they could call to God and he answered? Jesus said, "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29).

How reach those who don't believe in God? If God is all-powerful, no consciousness can be closed to Him. The fact that God is perfect in Heaven and is All doesn't prevent but enables Him to hear us. God knew Jesus and Jesus' identity. God knows all, so He must know us.