

BIBLE MYSTERY AND BIBLE MEANING OLD TESTAMENT

LESSON 3

THE PATRIARCHS

Reading assignment Genesis 11-17

Part I

We are still in the Old Testament book of Genesis which has been called the Book of Origins. Three Documents (J, E, and P) were woven together, with the P Document providing the framework into which the compiler(s) fitted the other documents.

The majority of Genesis records the stories of the patriarchs, the founding fathers of the beginning of a relationship between One God and man. These people, whether they lived in history or not, represent us. Their stories are about our own states of consciousness and the out picturing results.

People have called the Bible a history book, the history of a country or a people, a compilation of personal human case histories, a record of human evolution, and many other descriptions. It doesn't matter. The Bible is the story of the relationship between God and man. The Bible concerns itself with God and the laws of mind. It traces the movement from the Adam state (human knowing based on outer facts) to the Christ state (knowing based on Truth).

There are countless states of mind in this progression, and every story in the Bible is centered on some very specific state of mind. This is important because the Law of Expression has been in effect since the beginning: first in mind, then in manifestation. We need to recognize it in these stories so that we can see ourselves thinking and behaving the same way and producing the same results. These are not only stories about people who lived several thousand years ago. These are stories about us. Once we begin to read the Old Testament stories from this viewpoint, see why Abram became Abraham and Sarai became Sarah. We see the moment when Jacob became Israel. And, most important, we see our own understanding of Truth grow and become the foundation of our consciousness.

Names in the Bible describe certain qualities of mind, or persistent states of thinking. When a person's name changes, it simply means that a particular state of consciousness has changed into a different state of consciousness. We say that the past is behind them. This change does not happen often. What is more common is a change in behavior. Please know that a change in physical behavior is not the same thing as a change in consciousness. It is quite possible to change human behavior through sheer will power or through psychological means without changing consciousness. It is consciousness that attracts to it forms, relationships, circumstances, situations, and experiences that are a replica of the consciousness. This is the operation of the Law of Expression.

This is a good place to give you a general definition of consciousness. Nona Brooks defined consciousness as "established attitudes." Emmet Fox said simply: "life is consciousness." Dr. Al Salazar says that "consciousness is the sum total of our beliefs, opinions, convictions, attitudes, and moods. It is our sense of identity. We literally live as consciousness beings." Now you can see why a name change is a life changing event. It is the consciousness

that is changed, and therefore, new circumstances must, by the Law of Expression, come into your life.

Abram is first mentioned in Genesis 11:26. Thus begins the story of a man in circa 2100 B.C. who is called the father of the Hebrew nation. Abram and his family lived near the city of Ur. It was a cultural metropolis. Its inhabitants already had a calendar similar to the one we use today. They also already knew how to tell time as we tell time today with minutes and seconds. They were highly evolved and extremely intellectual.

The light of the moon is reflected light, not true light. It simply reflects the light of the sun. It is evident to us that the people of Ur were following a false god. They were star worshippers, worshipping the planets. Present day astrologers also believe that chunks of matter in the sky have the capacity to bring fortune or misfortune to the individual. This belief, that there is a power separate and apart from man's consciousness, is another sign of a reflected light. There is no other light but the Light in man that has any influence over our lives. In other words, no man is a victim of any outside thing.

Apparently Abram's father realized that remaining in Ur would influence his large family negatively. He wanted them to find and to know a True God, a God of True Light, not reflected light. Our Bible tells us that God is light and in Him there is no darkness.

So this family began their journey from Ur and headed for the city of Haran. Haran means the place of inner light. What a difference! They move from a place of reflected light to a place of inner light. That is how we grow. We turn our attention from the outer to the inner.

This is what takes place within when the individual begins to awaken to the truth that life is lived from within out and not the other way around. The light we seek is not "out here," as an outer light; rather, it is an inner Light. We are beginning to turn our attention from the outer to the inner. Slow as it may be. What makes us do this? For the individual, it is an inner prompting, a nudge from within that cannot be ignored. That is why we are in Divine Science. Because we are in Divine Science we could say that we are in the state of Abram consciousness.

Abram had a wife whose name was Sarai. This is important: the name Abram means a man of belief. The name Sarai means disappointed soul. Metaphysically husband and wife equal one individual: our thinking and feeling natures. We could say that Sarai was a lonely soul looking for its rightful place. Wives in the Bible stories signify the soul's attitude. In the Abram and Sarai story (belief and disappointment), it can be explained in this manner: Abram kept saying I believe in God. I know there is a God. And at the same time he was disappointed, frustrated and perhaps even a little bitter because nothing in his life indicated that God existed. Not for him anyhow. And yet he continued to believe that there was good in the world but not necessarily for him.

As this family or tribe grew large with dozens and dozens of aunts, uncles, cousins with their families and all the servants, they moved slowly through the land that will eventually be known as the Holy Land. A terrible drought forced them to leave and head south to Egypt because traders had told Abram that it was a rich and wonderful land. As they neared the border of Egypt Abram told Sarai: "You are so beautiful that when Pharaoh sees you, he will want to add you to his

harem. If he finds out that you are my wife, he will kill me, so you must say that you are my sister (Genesis 12:11-13).

And, sure enough, word of Sarai's beauty was passed up to Pharaoh and he added her to his harem. In a matter of weeks the palace household was stricken with disease. Pharaoh called Abram and said to take his sister and get out of the country. In fact, he paid him to leave: cattle, sheep, camels, silks, spice, jewelry and gold. Abram left Egypt a wealthy man. So, what are the metaphysical implications?

Think of Egypt as our subconscious mind. When an individual is constantly placing into this subjective stream a great desire and a great longing to demonstrate good, he is looking toward his good. He may have no physical evidence of any good at all; however, he is seeking. He is looking. And every time we look toward the ideal, dream, goal, we are actually moving towards it, even though nothing seems to be happening. The goal we are moving toward looks promising, it may also be terrifying because it looks like something that can destroy us. And yet, out of this very situation our good may suddenly spring forth. Which is what happened to Abram. We are told that Abram prospered. Why? Because he kept moving in the direction of his good, and this movement was inward: thought and feeling. Don't forget! There is nothing spiritual about this facet of life. If our main intent is to cater to the human condition, to improve the human condition, there is nothing spiritual about that. That is where Abram was, the man of belief.

In Genesis 14 Abram was returning from battle to rescue his nephew, Lot, when Melchizedek, the King of Salem, came to meet him with bread and wine. This is the good Abram had been seeking. He was face to face with the priest of the most high God who blessed Abram. (We know that the Bible is written in code and that king means ruling thought within the individual at a particular point in his unfoldment. It is the predominant thought of the individual and his overall attitude toward life in general. Salem means peace. The village of Salem later becomes *Jerusalem*, a place of peace; a consciousness of peace. Melchizedek was the greatest influence on Abram of his whole life, and here began the shift in consciousness that moved Abram to hear the voice of God in chapter 17: 5 say thy name shall be Abraham. Abram, a man of belief, became Abraham, a man of faith and also called the Father of all Nations. Abram has moved into an entirely different awareness of life, of being, a new consciousness.

Who was Melchizedek? The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary (highly recommended as an addition to your library for now and your future spiritual growth) tells us that Melchizedek was known as the King of Salem, one who was without mother and without father: without beginning or end of days. In the New Testament we are told that Jesus was of the order of Melchizedek. As Salem signifies peace, Melchizedek has peace as the ruling quality, which really refers to the Christ mind, a state of peace. This is the first mention in the Bible of the Christ Mind. It is no wonder that this meeting lifted Abram's consciousness to a close relationship with God and a new name, Abraham.

Belief is knowing on the mental, intellectual level that something exists (the Abram state of mind). Faith is the knowledge internalized; the know how that is lived naturally. Belief is not enough to lift our consciousness. Faith is the certainty that is the foundation of perception. Meeting Melchizedek opened the door to conversations with God.

When Abram became Abraham, God decreed that Sarai would become Sarah, which means noble presence. No longer is the soul disappointed. It is beginning to assert itself and claim its dominion. It is beginning to take charge of its life. Sarai had been disappointed because she was childless. When her name changed, she conceived although Abraham and she were well into their nineties. God said their son was to be named Isaac, in Aramaic a man of joy. How appropriate. Abraham's cup was filled to overflowing.

Until Abram met Melchizedek, Abram was all mental and occupied with his human hood. After meeting Melchizedek, the King of Salem, of peace, now Abraham, he has a different kind of demonstration. Whereas before he demonstrated material good, he is now experiencing an inner experience, joy. His consciousness now, instead of material or cumulative in nature, is filled with the quality of joy.

In many religions people are expected to be modest and pious and to squelch joy and happiness. This is what happened to Abraham. He began to wonder if he should relinquish his greatest happiness to prove to God that he really appreciated all that God had done for him. He would sacrifice his child, Isaac. And here is a major turning point for the evolution of most of the human race. For thousands of years, in almost every civilization, the idea of sacrifice has existed to appease the gods. This was done in order to have a good harvest or that the rains would come or that something could take place that would be of benefit to a nation, country, or tribe.

This idea of sacrifice continues to this day. It is based on human belief. In Genesis 22:12 Abraham raised the knife over his bound son and then God's voice stopped this sacrifice. Here we have a transition in the race consciousness (individual consciousness). Mankind realized that God never demands the sacrifice of joy and good and well-being. The founders of Divine Science include joy as one of the qualities or inherencies of God, a God of Joy.

Assignment

1. Start your day with a time of 15 minutes of Silence.
2. For a week do not place blame for your problem on anyone. Write a paragraph on Truth thinking and feeling that replace blame.
3. Interpret the significance of Abram's meeting with Melchizedek.
3. Write a paragraph about your concept of what was in Abrams mind and heart as he walked with Melchizedek.