

- include the shedding of blood?
63. Q. Does this mean that the ancients received actual remission of sins through animal sacrifices?
64. Q. What second principle of true religion did God establish through the Patriarchs?
65. Q. What third essential principle of true religion did God establish through the Patriarchs?
66. Q. On what grounds, then, were the faithful souls of Patriarchal times accepted with God?

### Lesson Thirty-Two

#### WHAT GOD DID THROUGH ABRAHAM

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Scripture Reading: Gen. 17:1-14, 22:15-18; Gal. 3:15-29.

Scripture to Memorize: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).

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67. Q. What was the Patriarchal Dispensation?
- A. The Patriarchal Dispensation was that particular period in which God revealed His laws, established His institutions, and dispensed the benefits and blessings of His grace, through fathers or heads of families who were known as the Patriarchs.

(1) The Standard Dictionary defines a dispensation as "the particular way by which, at different periods, God has made known His dealings with mankind." (2) The history of Redemption, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, extends over three dispensations, viz., the Patriarchal Dispensation, the Jewish or Mosaic Dispensation, and the Christian Dis-

penation. The personal ministry of Jesus on earth was of course a special dispensation in itself.

**68. Q.** By what is the duration of a dispensation determined?

**A.** By the type of priesthood that prevails throughout the dispensation.

(1) The ordinance of Sacrifice required that sacrifice for sin should be offered to God alone; that it should be offered by man; and that it should be offered by a priest or by someone acting in the capacity of a priest. (2) In the Scriptures, the word priest denotes a person ordained and consecrated of God to offer sacrifices for his own sins and for the sins of the people, in which capacity he acted as mediator between God and man.

**69. Q.** What type of priesthood prevailed throughout the Patriarchal Dispensation?

**A.** The Patriarchal priesthood.

(1) During the Patriarchal era, the patriarch or father of the family acted as priest of his own household, and officiated at the domestic altar; and was succeeded at death by his firstborn son. (2) With the establishment of the Jewish or Mosaic Dispensation, the Patriarchal priesthood was set aside, and the Levitical (or Aaronic) priesthood was instituted. See Question 85. (3) In the present or Christian Dispensation, under the new covenant, all Christians are priests unto God, and Christ Himself is their High Priest. See 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6; Heb. 7:16-17, 9:11-12, 9:24-28, etc. See Question 152. There is neither authority for, nor need of, a special human priesthood under the reign of the Holy Spirit.

**70. Q.** How did God make His laws known in Patriarchal times?

**A.** He communicated them to the Patriarchs who in turn handed them down to their posterity by word of mouth.

Gen. 2:16—"Jehovah God commanded the man, saying," etc. Gen. 7:1—"Jehovah said unto Noah," etc. Gen. 9:1—"God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them," etc. Gen. 12:1—"Jehovah said unto Abram," etc. Gen. 15:1—"the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying," etc. Gen. 22:1—"God did prove Abraham, and said unto him," etc.

**71. Q. Who was perhaps the greatest of the Patriarchs?**

**A. Abraham, who, because of his great faith, is known in scripture as "the friend of God" and the father of all the faithful.**

(1) Isa. 41:8—"the seed of Abraham my friend." Jas. 2:23—"he was called the friend of God." (2) Rom. 4:16—"Abraham who is the father of us all," i. e., the children of God of both covenants. His name was originally Abram which means "exalted father" (Gen. 11:26, 12:1); later, it was changed to Abraham which means "father of a multitude" (Gen. 17:5).

**72. Q. In what incident did Abraham especially demonstrate the greatness of his faith?**

**A. In the incident in which he showed his willingness to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, in obedience to God's command.**

See Gen. 22. Here was an instance in which God's positive law ("Take now thy son . . . and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering") superseded His moral law (the law forbidding the taking of human life, Gen. 9:6, Exo. 20:13). No matter to what extent, however, the sentiment of filial affection may have protested against his doing the thing commanded, Abraham raised no questions, nor did he hesitate in the least, but acted in implicit obedience to the Divine command. Heb. 11:17-19, "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac; yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it is said, In

Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back."

**73. Q. What, firstly, did God do through Abraham?**

**A. It was through Abraham that He originated the Hebrew people.**

(1) Gen. 12:2—"I will make of thee a great nation." Gen. 17:4—"thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations." Gen. 22:17—"I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore," etc.

(2) It should be explained that Abraham was originally a Chaldean. When he first appears in the Bible narrative his home was in Ur of the Chaldeas (Gen. 11:28), a city of Mesopotamia near the source of the river Tigris. There God called him to go into Canaan and made him the progenitor of the Hebrew people.

**74. Q. What, secondly, did God do through Abraham?**

**A. He originated and established the old covenant with Abraham and his posterity.**

(1) It should be explained here that the Bible consists of two parts, viz., the Old Testament Scriptures and the New Testament Scriptures. (2) The Old Testament Scriptures contain the record of the origination, establishment and development of the old covenant which God made with Abraham and his posterity, and which was mediated through Moses. The New Testament Scriptures reveal the principles, laws and institutions of the new covenant, which God has made with all true believers, through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

**75. Q. What was the Abrahamic Promise?**

**A. It is the name generally given to the four elementary promises which God made to Abraham when He originated the old covenant through him.**

These promises were: (1) that Abraham should have a numerous offspring, Gen. 13:16, 15:3-5, 17:2-4, 22:17. (2) That God would be a God to him and to his seed after him, Gen. 17:1-8. (3) That He would give to Abraham and to his seed an everlasting possession, Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:18-21, 17:8. (4) That He would bless all the nations of the earth through him and his seed, Gen. 12:3, 22:18.

**76. Q. In what manner was the Abrahamic Promise fulfilled?**

**A. It was fulfilled in a twofold manner; (1) literally, through the fleshly seed of Abraham, the Hebrew people; and (2) spiritually, through the spiritual seed of Abraham, the church of Christ.**

(1) This twofold reference of the Abrahamic Promise may be described also as typical, and antitypical. "The first element, for instance, was a pledge to Abraham that he would have a numerous family, first, according to the flesh; and secondly, according to the Spirit; the second, that God would be a God to both of these families, though in a far higher sense to the latter than to the former; the third, that each of these families would become heirs to an inheritance; and the fourth, that through each of them the world would be blessed" (Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption*, p. 76). (2) Rom. 4:1-17, especially v. 16—"to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Gal. 3:26-29, "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ . . . And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." (3) The old covenant was a fleshly covenant; the new is a spiritual covenant, established upon better promises. See Jer. 31:31-34, 2 Cor. 3:1-14, Heb. 8:6-13, etc. (4) The fundamental difference between the old covenant and the new, is in the fact that those who

belonged to the old did so by virtue of the fact that the blood of Abraham flowed in their veins; whereas those who belong to the new, do so by virtue of the fact that they have the faith of Abraham in their hearts. The old covenant took in those born of Hebrew parents who were inducted into the covenant by circumcision when eight days old, and those servants who were bought with Hebrew money, proselyted and also inducted into the covenant by circumcision; in other words, infants and heathen servants who had to be taught to know God after their induction into the covenant. But the promise was that, under the new covenant, "they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah." That is, they must be old enough to know God as He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, before they are eligible for induction into the new covenant. This is surely sufficient to convince any thinking person that infant church membership is not only unscriptural but impossible. See Gen. 17:9-14, Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:6-13. Those who would belong to the new covenant must be old enough to believe before they can be inducted into it. John 3:3—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Gal. 3:26—"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus." Rom. 5:1—"Being therefore justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

77. Q. To whom did the Abrahamic Promise specifically allude?

A. It alluded to Jesus Christ, who was the Seed of Abraham in a special sense.

That is, He was the Seed of Abraham, on His human side, through Mary. Gal. 3:7-8—"Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the

scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed." Gal. 3:16—"Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not. And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." In other words, it is through Jesus Christ, who was the Seed of Abraham through the Virgin Mary, that the provisions of the Abrahamic Promise are being realized in their nobler, spiritual significations.

**78. Q. What was the sign and seal of the old covenant which God originated through Abraham?**

**A. Fleshly Circumcision.**

See Gen. 17:9-14. The design of Circumcision was twofold:

1. "To separate Abraham and his posterity according to the flesh, from the rest of mankind, and thus to serve as a sign, seal, and token of the Old or National Covenant."

2. In its religious import, it was to typify "the cutting off of the body of sin from the soul, and the subsequent sealing of it by the Holy Spirit" (Milligan, *ibid.*, pp. 80-81). See Rom. 2:28-29, Phil. 3:3, Col. 2:9-12, Eph. 1:13-14. Under the present dispensation, the indwelling Spirit is Himself the sign and seal of our inclusion in the new covenant. See Acts 2:38, 2 Cor. 1:21-22, Rom. 8:15-17, Eph. 1:13-14.

**79. Q. What, then, do we find in the Old Testament Scriptures?**

**A. We find the record of the unfolding of the literal or carnal side of the Abrahamic Promise, in the history of the Hebrew people.**

**80. Q. What do we find in the New Testament Scriptures?**

**A. We find the record of the unfolding of the spiritual side of the Abrahamic Promise, in and through the spiritual family of Abraham, the church of Christ. Gal. 3:26-29.**

81. Q. What great lesson do we learn from these truths?  
A. That the subject-matter of the entire Bible is a unit; therefore the Bible must be of Divine origin.

No thinking person can become familiar with the internal unity of the Bible as a whole, without realizing that it is a book from God whose contents were revealed by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON THIRTY-TWO

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68. Q. By what is the duration of a dispensation determined?  
69. Q. What type of priesthood prevailed throughout the Patriarchal Dispensation?  
70. Q. How did God make His laws known in Patriarchal times?  
71. Q. Who was perhaps the greatest of the Patriarchs?  
72. Q. In what incident did Abraham especially demonstrate the greatness of his faith?  
73. Q. What, firstly, did God do through Abraham?  
74. Q. What, secondly, did God do through Abraham?  
75. Q. What was the Abrahamic Promise?  
76. Q. In what manner was the Abrahamic Promise fulfilled?  
77. Q. To whom did the Abrahamic Promise specifically allude?  
78. Q. What was the sign and seal of the old covenant which God originated through Abraham?  
79. Q. What, then, do we find in the Old Testament Scriptures?  
80. Q. What do we find in the New Testament Scriptures?  
81. Q. What great lesson do we learn from these truths?