

Fresh Oil Releases

Transition and Manifestation-New Wineskins for Old

Part Two

In the first part of this article, I discussed the transition between the old and new wineskin. Now I want to have a look at the life of Abraham, he being the father of faith, to see this principle demonstrated. In Genesis 17, we find God coming to speak to Abraham. The previous conversation between them had been before Ishmael was conceived. For thirteen years Ishmael grew up in the house and according to Abraham's understanding, he was the son that God had promised to send. However at this juncture, God re-aligns Abraham's understanding and speaks to him about covenant and circumcision.

Hagar was an Egyptian. Egypt is a type of the world and its ways. When the seed of Abraham joined with the ovum of the world, Ishmael was brought forth. Sarai represents the barren Church living with this Ishmael in the house of Faith. She is told that what is growing up in the house is a manifestation of God's promise, yet the child's ways are the ways of his mother. He has been raised on the milk of the world system and so his mannerisms and the way he walks blend in more with Egypt than they should. The general atmosphere of the house is mixture. In my opinion, to a large extent, this mirrors the situation in much of God's house. We have borrowed the ways of the world. Techniques used for the growth of large commercial companies are borrowed and implemented in the church in an effort to produce growth in numbers and to present a professional face to the world. When the world looks at the Ishmael which has grown up in the House, they don't see Father God - they can see his mother, Hagar of Egypt, in him.

Therefore it is time for God to have a conversation with His Body. It is time for circumcision. It is necessary for the fleshly covering over the source of our seed to be removed permanently. Ishmael was thirteen when he was circumcised. This is the age when a Jewish boy enters manhood. He moves from being under the tutelage of his mother to being under the personal teaching of his father. He is educated in the Word of God by his father. Similarly it is time for the Body of Christ to stop looking to the pulpit of its mother, the Church, and to begin to sit at the Father's feet and receive personal instruction under the guidance of the Spirit. It is time to grow into maturity and begin to receive meat from the Father's hand Himself. This application of the sword of the Word is what brings about the circumcision of Ishmael in the house. It is a painful process when the division between what is soulish (worldly, fleshly) and that which is truly of the Spirit, takes place.

Gen 17:26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. Gen 17:27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

Notice that God decreed that every man in Abraham's house was to be circumcised. Both those who have fathered the son that is in the house at this point AND all who are in the house, come under the same knife. There is no distinction in God's dealings in these days. He is coming to circumcise the hearts of leadership and the hearts of the rest of the Body.

Ishmael is also representative of the group of Israelites that arrived at the border of the Promised Land without the covenant mark of circumcision upon them. They were adults but God required that

the foreskins be removed as soon as they entered the land. Their parents may have come out of Egypt forty years before but it seems that Egypt had not come out of them for they failed to circumcise their sons and they perished in the wilderness.

Ishmael and Sarai are both a picture of much the same thing; barrenness and the borrowing of a worldly womb in order to produce something that looks like true fruitfulness. There is A son in the house - the problem is just that it is not THE son of promise and if Sarai, the barren Church, is honest with herself, she knows when she looks at this thirteen year old son before her, that this cannot possibly be the manifestation of what God has promised by His Word. The problem is she just does not know how to manifest the promise herself. She is an old wineskin, dried out and stiff. However, God is in the business of producing new wineskins! On the day Ishmael was circumcised, Sarai had a name change! This is significant because 'Sarai' means 'headstrong, willful'. Then God changed her name to Sarah, which means 'princess, queen'. He actually took one of the letters of His name and inserted it into her name. The circumcision of the son of mixture puts the character of God back into the Church.

It is recorded in Genesis 18, that Sarah laughed when she heard that she would have a child. Basically, she was saying, "been there, done that, got the tee-shirt. Gone through all the motions of intimacy with my husband for years and years, but nothing has ever come of it; I have brought forth only wind." This is the voice of hope deferred. It has made the heart sick. There many in the Body who have grown disillusioned with hearing the talk and never experiencing the results. In fact, living with Ishmael has become too much for them and sickened in heart, they have chosen to eavesdrop from the doorway, rather than be a part of this conversation. The promise God spoke many years previously has never materialized in purity and they have become cynical. They listen to the message that fruitfulness is coming for the Church and they laugh. For these ones, God in His kindness is going to repeat His Word of promise over their lives in this season. This will cause them, like Sarah, to enter the conversation fully and be a part of what God is doing. No more hiding in the shadow of the tent door, watching God speaking to others.

According to Genesis 17:17, Sarai was ninety when Ishmael was circumcised. Isaac was born in the same season the following year. Therefore Sarah was ninety-one when she brought forth the promised son. Do you remember Anna, who dwelt in the temple? She lived with her husband for seven years. Then she had eighty four years of widowhood. This adds up to a total of ninety-one years. After **ninety-one** years, Anna brought forth the message of Christ to all who were looking for redemption. In just the same way, many, many years before, Sarah brought forth the son of promise at the age of **ninety-one**. She did not bring him forth in her own strength or by borrowing the womb of another. She brought him forth by the Spirit, not by might or power, in God's appointed time.

The thirteen years during which Ishmael grew in the house were the years of the trying and purging of the vessel which is the Church, in order to make it fit to house the glory of the manifested Son. They parallel the thirteen years Joseph spent in the prison of preparation.

Following the repeating of the promise to Sarah, the discussion turns to Sodom. The Lord expresses His intention to destroy the city and Abraham begins to intercede for it according to the number of righteous men found therein. Eventually the Lord promises not to destroy the city if ten righteous men be found in it. I have always considered Sodom to be a depiction of great evil and immorality. However there is a very interesting verse in Revelations

Rev 11:8 *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

Here it seems that both Sodom and Egypt are spiritual names for Jerusalem. This is an indication that within this city that is known as belonging to the King of Kings, there are characteristics which are not fitting. Both worldliness, uncleanness and immorality are found there. If God's city is to truly be the light of the world, then certain elements need to be dealt with. We also read in Isaiah chapter 1, in a prophesy addressed to Judah and Jerusalem, that the Lord later refers to them as Sodom and Gomorrah because the faithful city has become a harlot. When the Church borrows the womb of the world in order to produce some semblance of fruitfulness, God is determined to do what it takes to restore her to 'the city of righteousness' again (v 26)

We are told in the New Testament that everything written in the Old Testament was for the purpose of teaching us. Therefore, the description of Abraham's conversation with the Lord about Sodom is more than just a record of Abraham's debating ability. The key lies in the Lord's final statement that if there are ten righteous men found there, then He will not destroy it. Ten men speaks of a tithe company. The tithe is the portion that belongs to God. So if there can be found within the city, the portion that belongs to God, then it shall not be destroyed. Yet we know that Sodom was destroyed. How does this tie up? In Isaiah 65, when the Lord is discussing the sinful state of His people, He speaks about preserving His servants which are in their midst and likens them to the new wine:

Isa 65:8 Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

When new wine is extracted from the cluster, that which housed the juice is crushed but the juice is preserved. The former receptacle is discarded but that which is of value, that which is of God is brought forth to bring joy to the hearts of those in the new season. Lot was a relative of Abraham's and he was extracted from Sodom as it was destroyed. Sadly his daughters took the wine of Sodom with them and it was this they used to make their father drunk and they brought forth children of an incestuous union. **The old wine must be left behind with the old wineskin.** We cannot afford to carry anything tainted by the world or the unclean atmosphere of Sodom with us on our journey toward the new wineskin.

After circumcision, Abraham moves location. Once the Church has been through its circumcision dealings with the two-edged sword, it moves to a new spiritual location. However, like his nephew, we find Abraham also entering into compromise on the way to the new wineskin.

Gen 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

Kadesh means 'sanctuary' and comes from a root word meaning 'to consecrate'. However 'Shur' means 'to travel about as a harlot'. Here he was choosing to live between these two locations, not fully consecrated and in danger of being influenced by the ways of Sodom. He pitched his tent at a place, Gerar, which means 'to chew the cud'. Anyone who has seen a cow chewing the cud, knows that it regurgitates something it has already eaten and chews it again. So Abraham is going over the same old meal as the previous season. He seems to have brought the wine of Sodom along with him. How do

we know this? He operates in deception, passing his wife off as his sister to protect his own skin. Let us learn from Abraham and make sure we do not also attempt to bring our old teachings and Second-Day nourishment into the Third Day.

He is prepared to put the woman who is destined to bring forth the promised son in harms way for his own temporary comfort. This is shortsighted at best because if anything happens to her, he will not get to experience the manifestation of the promise. Furthermore God requires a womb that has never been exposed to another man's seed, to bring forth this promise. Here, in chapter 20, we see how God protects the wineskin that will pour forth the new wine. Justice and recompense is the order of the day as God supernaturally deals with every area of compromise and injustice toward His Sarah. Then it is time for her to conceive and at the appointed time, bring forth that which has been growing within her.

Gen 21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

Isaac becomes the first child to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life, setting in motion the pattern of the new wineskin. Eight is the number of new beginnings.

Gen 21:6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

Sarah laughed because her season of joy had come after a long night of weeping and heartache. A hallmark of the appearance of this promised son will be fullness of joy in the Lord's presence. This joy will be because of the fulfillment and manifestation of long-awaited promises. There will also be a great feast provided by the Father as this child is weaned from milk and moves on to the meat of the Word. It is at this point that there comes a final separation between Ishmael and Isaac. A man's enemies will be the members of his own household as Jesus uses the sword of separation He came to bring. That which was birthed through the manipulations and scheming of man, and which has the genes of the world systems running through its veins, can no longer dwell side by side with that which is brought forth by God. Mockery is childish behavior and once maturity is reached, childish ways must be laid aside. Once again the soulish must be separated from that which is born of the Spirit. The house must be single minded, with the mind of Christ. The money-changers and sellers of doves must be driven out of the temple. The son of promise must have the freedom and space to grow in wisdom and favor within the house and both paternal and maternal graces must lavish their full attention on that which God is raising up before their eyes.

Let us learn from Abraham and Sarah that we too may partake in the joy set before us;

Isa 51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. Isa 51:3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.