

## PURGE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN

TEXT: **Genesis 21:** This is the first place in the Bible where the Scriptural doctrine is set forth on purging out the old fleshly leaven that we may be a new lump. It is later seen in 1 Corinthians 5:7 -- ***Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:***

The expelling of the fleshly nature (child) Ishmael out of the family of Abraham is a remarkable illustration of the New Testament doctrine of the flesh. The incident occurred when Isaac was about 2 - 3 years old, at the time of his being weaned. It formed another truth in the life of Christians as to when we should be sanctified, and the 'old man' crucified. As those of us who study the Bible know, there were supernatural events surrounding the birth of Isaac, just as there are supernatural events surrounding the new birth.

The supernatural miracle birth marks spiritual forces employed by God to bring it to pass. **At the time Isaac was weaned there was an outgoing of the old life, a life that was fleshly in all its heretofore unseen nature.** The new light in Christ always reveals the nature of the old life, and the old life must be purged out.

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We read that Ishmael who was about 15 years old at this time was found mocking, ridiculing, and teasing this younger child. He may have tried to destroy his toys, made ugly faces at him, poked at him, and showed his envy and jealousy against him because Isaac was the true heir of Abraham. **This mocking of Ishmael was**

very significant from a spiritual standpoint, because it is referred to in Galatians in a special way. It is to be looked upon as the fleshly mind fighting against the true spiritual life.

***The flesh attacks the spirit and persecutes the godly.***

You will notice it is *not* said that Isaac persecuted and mocked Ishmael. The flesh attacks the spirit and persecutes the godly. You will notice further in the Bible that Cain, the older brother, turns on Abel -- a type of the second or spiritual birth. This antagonizing spirit rails on Abel to kill him; and to be carnally minded is death, for carnality or flesh is a killer. Joseph is persecuted by his brethren for his spiritual attainments. Daniel is preferred above the princes, and 'flesh' charges against him. It was so with Jesus being attacked by the Scribes and Pharisees. Whether it be in the family or in the visible church, there is always this evil fleshly mind that attacks the good and pure mind and seeks to destroy the spiritual life of Jesus in the hearts of the fully surrendered.

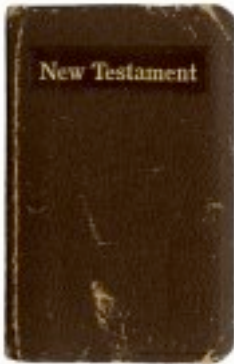
**The flesh is antagonistic toward God and righteousness.** When Sarah observed this conflict, this mocking, it aroused all the godly and just indignation in her spirit to stop the offender from trespassing upon the rights and life of this miracle-born child. Sarah took the initiative to expel the offender. When Abraham returned home at the close of the day, she told him what had happened. She said to him: ***Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman should not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.*** (Genesis 21:10) **Those were the first words ever recorded in the Bible preaching the divine truth of expelling the carnal nature or life, and purging out the old leaven.**

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Saints, of course, had been delivered in previous generations in various ways from the fleshly nature. It seems doubtful that this deliverance from the fleshly nature can be regarded as complete as is found in the New Testament in view of the *Better Covenant* (Hebrews 8:6; 12:24) made upon better promises and a better sacrifice (the Lord Jesus Christ).

For the first time in all history, this is announced as the Will and Plan of God Almighty. We must realize that in this connection, the Pauline letter to Galatians teaches us that Sarah at that time became the representative of the true spiritual church of God which proclaims a life of entire devotion and the principle of holiness.

**She had spoken those words to Abraham under the Spirit's inspiration, as a prophecy to the type of the spiritual church -- Jerusalem, which is above, which is free, and which is the mother of us all.** I don't suppose Sarah, in preaching that little sermon to Abraham, had any conception of the magnitude of her ministry, and of the unending effects that her words would have on all subsequent generations. **Little did she dream that the great apostle Paul would incorporate her words in the New Testament and make them the standard words in the teaching of the Christian church, extending also to the New Jerusalem.** When speaking under the direction of the Spirit, we never know the fullest extent of the significance of the message, or the vastness of its meaning.



Abraham surely didn't for a time until he took the matter up with the Lord. **But God spoke to him and sanctioned the teaching of his wife and said: *in all Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*** (Genesis 21:12b)

There is one case where God told the husband to obey his wife, and these words were spoken 2,000 years before Paul told wives to obey their husbands. I am only stating the facts, not to flatter Sarah or in the least to diminish the spiritual message

of Paul, because Sarah was only voicing revelation which Abraham didn't yet receive.

It is enough to bless the heart to see how God arranged the teaching of Scripture in long lines of light from one end of the Bible to the other. The word 'leaven' is always used in the Word to represent the fleshly mind and carnal reason, and is never in a single place used to signify righteousness or holiness. **Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 5 that one rotten apple would spoil the entire box, and demanded the**



**church to purge out a corrupt member because he would spoil the whole.** Elsewhere the same truth is

taught, that the leaven of fleshly mind must be put away, for it can never be improved or brought into the true service of God.

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Now looking again at the text, we see the same perfect unity of the Word even in the Old Testament. As long rows of trees in an orchard or rows of corn in a field, so long lines of divine truth arranged in perfect order are found from the beginning of the Bible.

Sarah preached to Abraham on expelling the old leaven of fleshly life and see how it conforms to the revelation to Moses: "*Thou shalt not*



*sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled.*" (Deuteronomy 22:9) For instance, the blooms of the gourd and tomato plants will fertilize and pollute the true nature of the plant and the fruit of one another. Hence, God taught the Hebrews that they learn the lesson of separation fr

from the garden and not mix contrary fruits by close proximity.

Also, in Deuteronomy 22:10 we read: *Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.* The ox is a clean animal and the ass is an unclean animal. The ox works with the yoke on the neck while the ass works with a collar about his, for they are contrary to each other in nature. This wasn't especially written on account of the animals, but for the Israelites, that if they wanted to serve God, they must not hitch up the old Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ to the same plow to carry on their religious farming.

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Deuteronomy 22:11 says: ***Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as woolen and linen together.*** Wool is a product of an animal, linen is from a vegetable. They are contrary in nature. Even if you wash a piece of wool for years, you can't get grease out of it, representing a type of the flesh, while linen is entirely free from grease and is always seen in Scripture as a type of

**holiness.** Many centuries later the prophet

Ezekiel told the priests ministering in the Holy Place not to wear garments of wool causing them to sweat, for sweat was a sign of the fall, sin, and bondage -- part of the curse. **God wants us to worship Him in spirit -- pure linen which is the righteousness of the saints as referred to in Revelation 19: a type of liberty verses bondage.**



Priestly garments.

Totaling up all these verses, we see a beautiful picture set forth: separation, no mixture of the old and new life, which is the sermon Sarah preached to Abraham in separating the spiritual child, Isaac, from the child of bondage, Ishmael. Notice when the expulsion took place -- when Isaac was weaned. Everyone of these speak a message or deep significance.





Hagar and Ishmael being

Taken off the milk diet is Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 3 and Peter's message in Peter 2:2 and Isaiah's in 28:9 : ***Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts.***

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

*1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with*

*milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

1 Peter 2:2

*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby:*

Hebrews 5:12-14

*12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the Oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

**Thus we see the weaning of Isaac at the time of the expelling of the old leaven (Ishmael), as the believer is entering the zone of a vicarious overcomer. Notice the fact that Abraham made a great feast at this same time. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would make a great feast for His people which doubtless refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the infant church, giving the believers a great feast of joy and gladness.**

**Joy!!**

**Gladness!**