

Old Testament Interpretation

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OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

This course of fifteen lessons in Old Testament interpretation is based almost entirely on two Unity books: Let There Be Light by Elizabeth Sand Turner and the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary. Bible quotes are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

While Let There Be Light combines both history and metaphysical interpretation, this course attempts to deal only with interpretation. Most students agree that there can be more than one correct and helpful interpretation given to many sections of the Bible. However, in this course the interpretation presented is chosen as the one which appears to be nearest to the general spirit of our Unity teachings.

The Bible reading references listed for each lesson are the minimum required for the material to be covered. Students should, whenever possible, read more in a given book or books than just the passage or passages under discussion. This practice will allow the student to perceive the larger context of the material and can only enhance his or her working knowledge of the Bible.

METAPHYSICAL BIBLE INTERPRETATION

Ministers and teachers in Unity are often asked to explain just exactly what is meant by "metaphysical interpretation" of the Bible. This cannot be done in just a few words. It is not something which can be looked up in a dictionary and given as a neatly packaged answer.

For some persons, no answer whatsoever would be satisfactory. These are persons who are firmly convinced that every word of the Bible is to be taken literally and anything else is "sacreligious." For such persons metaphysical Bible interpretation is not valid under any circumstances.

But a growing number of persons are beginning to believe that there is something more to be done with the Bible than to just take it literally. They sense an underlying "something" which needs to be discovered and thought about. For such persons, metaphysical interpretation is that "something."

It begins with the realization that many parts of the Bible are allegorical. Even if these sections are true historically, they still contain a level of meaning which is strictly allegorical. These sections of the Bible contain the symbols that are strangely consistent throughout the whole Bible text. The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary is a sincere attempt to present and define these symbols for the interested reader. Charles Fillmore was mainly responsible for the production of the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.

The following excerpts from the writings of Charles Fillmore are now presented here as at least a partial explanation of what is meant by "metaphysical Bible interpretation." (Capitalization in quotes added for emphasis, here and in later references.)

"The Bible is a very wonderful book; as man develops in spiritual understanding it reveals itself to him, and he sees why it has been revered and called holy by the people. It is a deep exposition of mental laws, and it is also a treatise on the true physiological estate of the body. It shows that the human organism is mind in action, rather than an aggregation of purely material functions. But above all, the Bible explains the spiritual character of man and the laws governing his relation to God. These are SYMBOLICALLY SET FORTH AS STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS, ILLUSTRATED BY PARABLES AND ALLEGORIES. Paul says, referring to the history of Sarah and Abraham, 'Which things contain an allegory.' It is written of Jesus, 'And without a parable spake he nothing unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth IN PARABLES; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.' Jesus was Himself a parable. His life was an allegory of the experiences that man passes through in developing from natural to spiritual consciousness; hence the Bible and the prophets can be understood only by those who arrive at that place in consciousness where the writers were when they gave forth their messages. It requires the same inspiration to read the Scriptures with understanding that it required originally to receive and write them." (Christian Healing p. 73-74)

"Both the religionist and the physicist incorrectly hold that the Bible is a historical description of man's creation. Beginning with the very first chapter of Genesis, the BIBLE IS AN ALLEGORY. It is so regarded by the majority of Hebrew scholars. . . Hebrews almost universally claim that the story of the Garden of Eden, Adam, Eve, and the serpent IS SYMBOLOGY.

"In the face of these facts, it seems strange that orthodox Christianity should insist that the Bible is a literal history. IT IS THIS LITERAL VIEWPOINT THAT HAS STOOD IN THE WAY OF TRUE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. Read in the light of Spirit, the 1st chapter of Genesis is a description, in symbol, of the creative action of universal Mind in the realm of ideas. It does not pertain to the manifest universe any more than the history of the inventor's idea pertains to the machine that he builds to manifest the idea. First the problem is thought out, and afterward the structure is produced. So God builds His universe." (Christian Healing p. 31-32)

"An allegory is a description of one thing under the image of another. It suggests but does not specifically state a meaning. A key to its interpretation is necessary, and this is usually given in the proper names that are used. By the EMPLOYMENT OF SUCH SYMBOLS THE BIBLE DESCRIBES MAN IN HIS WHOLENESS, SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY. The names of men, places, tents, temples in every case have a meaning relative to the character of man. Mental states are thus described, and it is important that the individual who seeks spiritual wisdom for his regeneration shall be able to understand the allegory by use of THE KEY HIDDEN IN THE NAMES." (Mysteries of Genesis p. 231)

"A great deal is said in the Bible about man's body. In fact, the Bible is a MYSTICAL RECORD OF THE VARIOUS BODIES IN WHICH THE SOULS OF MEN HAVE LIVED. Bodies show the different states of mind of those who inhabit them, ranging all the way from the Adam embodiment and environment up to the Christ body and its freedom from environment. It is fair to say that THE BIBLE IS THE ALLEGORICAL RECORD of man under many aliases, in many bodies." (Atom-Smashing Power of Mind p. 116)

"The Bible contains more high mysticism than all other books. It requires study of certain fundamental spiritual principles to discern it. . . Unless you call on your own spiritual light you cannot appreciate the spiritual insight of those who wrote the books of the Bible. . . The Bible is a perpetual revelation to Truth seekers ON ACCOUNT OF ITS ALLEGORICAL CHARACTER." (Jesus Christ Heals p. 139-140-141)

We could include here other writings pertaining to the need for and the meaning of metaphysical Bible interpretation, but we feel that the statements given by Charles Fillmore will suffice for the time being. However, we would add here that a very comprehensive discourse on this important subject can be found in the entire preface to the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.

OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

Lesson 1 ALLEGORIES OF GENESIS

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meanings of the seven days of the creation allegory.
2. Significance of the Sabbath.
3. Introduction to the law of mind action.
4. Significance of the "knowledge of good and evil."
5. Metaphysical meaning of man, male (Adam); and woman, female (Eve).

II. READINGS

1. Genesis, chapters 1 and 2
2. Mysteries of Genesis Chapters I and II
3. Let There Be Light Chapters I and II

III. QUESTIONS

1. In general, what is the creation allegory dealing with metaphysically?
2. Why is the seventh step (Sabbath) important to man?
3. Give at least a partial definition of the law of mind action.
4. In what respect is man "the image and likeness" of his Creator?
5. Why is a return to Eden not the goal of man's evolution?

IV. ADDENDA

If it is felt that not enough explanation is given to the Sabbath in the course material, a more in-depth treatment of it can be found in Mysteries of Genesis on pages 31 and 32. Also, a quite extensive treatment is given the subject in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under the heading "Sabbath."

Lesson 1: ALLEGORIES OF GENESIS

"In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth." Thus the book of Genesis begins with an already created universe! The words which follow are not descriptions of actual creation, but are rather symbolic references to processes which take place within the already created universe. These processes are the same as those we use in co-creating in our own lives.

"And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." (Gen. 1:3) This states the coming forth of intelligence and awareness.

"Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. . ." (Gen. 1:6) This states the coming forth of the power of affirmation (a-firmament). The affirming power within man is called faith. The firmament represents our affirmative faculty which works in the midst of all the possibilities and potentials within life ("separate the waters from the waters.")

"Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so." (Gen. 1:9) This states the coming forth of the powers of concentration and attention. Concentration and attention enable the faculty of imagination to do an effective work. In Mysteries of Genesis, "The third step. . . is the beginning of the formative activity of the mind called imagination. . . the imagination begins a great multiplication of forms and shapes in the mind." (page 18)

"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night. . ." (Gen. 1:14) This states the coming forth of the faculties of will and understanding. "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth. . ." (Gen. 1:20) This states the bringing forth of the process of thinking in general. Thoughts blend with other thoughts of their own "kind" or character and they tend to reproduce themselves. This is characteristic of the law of mind action, which decrees: LIKE ATTRACTS LIKE, LIKE BEGETS LIKE.

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". . . So God created man in his own image. . . male and female he created them." (Gen. 1:26, 27) This states the culmination of all the processes so far mentioned in the allegory. This is the Genesis presentation of the God-created Real Self of every human individual. This is man's spiritual identity and spiritual nature.

"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31) Good is not a word which needs to be challenged or argued about. If one does not know what good means, then all the defining in the world will not illumine that person. The innate logic of the human mind recognizes good. Good is the basis and reality of what is true and meaningful to mankind.

On the metaphysical level of meaning, what have we been dealing with in these statements? Tradition insists it deals with Creation. But Creation has occurred before the allegory begins. The allegory is dealing with something which occurs after the original creation. It symbolically describes a process which has the spiritual identity and spiritual nature of man as its grand climax. What has been created is not "Creation" itself, but rather an environment within Creation. It is the environment in which the human family will exist and in which they will experience true evolution.

For persons who do not believe in metaphysical Bible interpretation, the next step in the allegory should present something of a challenge. If we are to take everything in the Bible literally, then why is this next statement included? "And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work. . ." (Gen. 2:2) Where is all this hard work which causes God to need a rest? Do the steps in the allegory sound like hard work? We read simply that God says, "'Let there be,'" "and there was." Is this hard work? Does this make a day of rest necessary? And we may even ask the very, very significant question: Do you worship a God who gets tired? Do you not worship a God who is omnipotent? Can omnipotence get tired? Can we not see that it is important that Unity students exercise what Charles Fillmore so strongly emphasizes in his book Christian Healing, when he says so much about the "innate logic of the human mind"? Mr. Fillmore urges us to learn to trust that innate logic of our minds. And the study of Bible interpretation surely gives us many good opportunities to test that innate logic.

The seventh step of the allegory is the symbol of that process within true creativity now called the Sabbath. The Sabbath symbolizes the process of conscious, willing rest. It is an inner resting, rather than an outer "not doing." Becoming still and silent within, even for a brief moment, is vitally important for a large number of reasons. This is simply the first reference to it in the Bible.

Beginning in the 2d chapter of Genesis, the name given to God is no longer Elohim, as in the 1st chapter. In the King James and Revised Standard translations it becomes Lord God. In most other English translations it becomes Jehovah from the German translation of the Hebrew YHWH, or Yahweh. In this course we shall use the name Jehovah. Jehovah is the God who is the subject of the entire Old Testament. Jehovah is the name of a human concept of God, representing the human awareness of "I AM." Jehovah is the human concept of a God of nature, a God of survival, a God greatly concerned with the difference between good and evil. Jehovah is a concept of a God who is influenced by human behavior. It is important for students of today to gain some understanding of the nature of the Jehovah concept, for it helps to clarify many of the strange things that are said and done in the Old Testament.

"... and there was no man to till the ground." (Gen. 2:5) This statement indicates that the story of Genesis has not so far been about manifest man, but rather the inner nature of man. Manifest man is presented in the Bible for the first time in these words: "... then the Lord God (Jehovah) FORMED man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." (Gen. 2:7)

This is a statement about the history of mankind in essence. It is not necessary to get too literal about it in the sense of dates in history, geographical location, or possible numbers of persons, etc. It is a statement of very broad scope and should be accepted with great flexibility of mind.

"And the Lord God (Jehovah) planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed." (Gen. 2:8) Eden has multiple metaphysical meanings. The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary mostly defines it as a state of great spiritual harmony and pleasantness. But it also states that this state contains "ALL POSSIBILITIES OF GROWTH." (page 181) These words are highly significant, for they point to the fact that the metaphysical meaning of Eden is that of a matrix for all possibilities for good. It is a state of all-inclusive potentials. It is a passive state, not an active or creative effort. It is beautiful and enjoyable, but it is not gained as a result of creative effort.

"And the Lord God (Jehovah) commanded the man, saying 'You may eat freely of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'" (Gen. 2:16, 17) The key words here would be "knowledge of good and evil." This is actually just another way of referring to worldly knowledge--knowledge of facts as they exist on Earth. The warning from Jehovah is applicable only to man if he chooses to remain in the Edenic state. The Edenic state is prior to evolution. It is static harmony and passivity. It is the inner realm of undeveloped potential. But the human soul sooner or later will begin to long for something more. The experience of being "tempted" usually begins with curiosity and a desire for sensations and experiences. We hunger and thirst for knowledge. But once the soul begins to gain knowledge it begins to "die" to innocence, ignorance, and passivity. And since all worldly knowledge contains the characteristic of polarity or duality, the "knowledge of good and evil" causes the soul to leave the Edenic state and enter the pathway of human existence and human evolution.

Further reference to the law of mind action is symbolically presented in Gen. 2:19, 20. Adam is given the power to give names to all the life forms which are part of his environment. This idea symbolizes man's involvement with the law of mind action. One aspect of this law is: LIKE ATTRACTS LIKE, LIKE BEGETS LIKE. The other aspect is: THOUGHTS HELD IN MIND PRODUCE AFTER THEIR KIND.

"Then the Lord God (Jehovah) said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'. . . So the Lord God (Jehovah) caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God (Jehovah) had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man." (Gen. 2:18, 21-22) Man (male, husband) symbolizes man's basic thinking nature. Woman (female, wife) symbolizes man's basic feeling nature. Before man can effectively begin his true spiritual evolution, he must be more than just a mental thinker (man alone). He must develop an extension of abstract thinking. This extension will have great beauty. It will be his intuitive and feeling nature (woman). This is his "helper fit for him."

Chapter 2 of Genesis ends with some beautiful and significant words. "And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed." (Gen. 2:25) When we are honest in our thoughts and feelings, we are not ashamed of the basic thoughts and feelings we have toward ourselves, toward others, and toward life in general. Shame and guilt are acquired negative emotions. An honest (naked) person does not need to be burdened with such emotions. A very wise Truth teacher at Unity School once stated the idea thus: "An honest mistake is more valuable than any successful deception."

OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

Lesson 2 ADDITIONAL ALLEGORIES OF GENESIS

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden.
2. Metaphysical meaning of Cain and Abel.
3. Metaphysical meaning of the birth of Seth to Adam and Eve.
4. Allegory of the flood.
5. Allegory of the tower of Babel.

II. READINGS

1. Genesis, Chapters 3-4, 6-9, 11
2. Mysteries of Genesis Chapters III and IV
3. Let There Be Light Chapter II

III. QUESTIONS

1. What two aspects of human nature do Cain and Abel symbolize?
2. What is the significance of the meaning of Seth's name ("compensation")?
3. Why is the allegory of the flood not a description of punishment?
4. Give your choice of a metaphysical point made by the allegory of the tower of Babel.

IV. ADDENDA

If it is felt that not enough in-depth explanation of the meaning of Noah is given in the course, a very extensive discussion of his metaphysical significance can be found in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under the heading "Noah."

Lesson 2: ADDITIONAL ALLEGORIES OF GENESIS

The famous encounter between Eve and the serpent is contained in Gen. 3:1-6. This event has been interpreted in any number of ways; and even today students are coming up with new insights concerning it. One of the most persistent questions concerning the traditional view of it has to do with the so-called "sin of disobedience." The question is: How could Adam and Eve be accused of disobedience when they had absolutely no knowledge of what is good and what is evil? Could they have done wrong when they had not the slightest notion of what wrongness was? Again, the innate logic of the human mind faces a severe trial when one tries to take the allegories of the Bible literally.

The serpent is the Genesis symbol of the desire for experience and sensations, and in ancient eastern cultures in general, was the symbol for wisdom. These can be gained only by leaving the Edenic state and stepping forth into the evolution of the soul which occurs through the experiences and knowledge gained by human existence. The exit from Eden is the symbol of the starting point for soul growth (evolution) gained by conscious human effort.

Jehovah's denunciation of the serpent (Gen. 3:14, 15) can be understood, in terms of man's evolution, only on a purely metaphysical level. The desire for varied experiences and the desire for sensations will always be a troublesome factor in the evolution of mankind. There seems to be no avoiding this. This desire is what the serpent symbolizes. He is not wicked or evil, he is simply trouble-causing. This is quite typical of man's sense nature and his curiosity about life's experiences.

In Genesis 3:21-24 we are told that Adam and Eve are given coats of skin. This symbolizes biological birth in a body of physicality. Then they are expelled from Eden and sent out into the world. Again, this denotes the experience of biological, physical birth. This event is duplicated in the human family each time a baby is born. Adam and Eve are the archetypes of humanity in general.

Adam and Eve out of Eden and into the world symbolizes the situation of persons who are living a life based upon worldly knowledge. It is not easy, ever. ("In the world you have tribulation." John 16:33) But it is necessary. For man now has his destiny, which is to develop CONSCIOUSNESS OF PERFECTION. That perfection is already in him, but he must discover it within himself and express it from within himself. He cannot do this in the Edenic (passive) state, so he cannot live in Eden any more. ("... and at the east of the garden of Eden he (Jehovah) placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life." (Gen. 3:24)

The entire 4th chapter of Genesis is the story of Cain and Abel. Each human being is primarily a thinking nature (Adam) and a feeling nature (Eve). And from these he has developed two predominant aspects in his human nature:

Cain (a tiller of the soil) "Cain refers directly to that part of the human consciousness which strives to acquire and possess." (MBD p. 135) "Abel (a keeper of sheep) means breath, which places him in the air, or the mental realm. . . the mental is more closely related to the spiritual consciousness than the physical (Cain). . ." (MBD p. 12)

One aspect of our human nature is mostly concerned with doing things in the outer and getting things from the outer. This is Cain.

Another aspect of our human nature is more concerned with our inner states and is more of an observer than a doer. This aspect of us is mostly mental, and hence is "nearer to the spiritual." This is Abel.

The violence of Cain and his slaying of his brother Abel is almost self-explanatory. The more physical-oriented side of us is often capable of resentment and violence. When it becomes frustrated, it often will turn against its own "twin brother," which is our inner, mental self.

Later, Jesus refers to this typical human predicament in His statement, ". . . and a man's foes will be those of HIS OWN household." (Matt. 10:36) Today people are referring to this human predicament when they say, "He is HIS OWN worst enemy."

In Genesis 4:14 we have another item which appears to frustrate the notion that all of the Bible is to be taken literally. Cain speaks these words to Jehovah: ". . . 'I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me.'" If we are taking the Bible literally, the only other persons on earth were Adam and Eve, Cain's parents. Was he speaking of them when he refers to "whoever"? Did he believe his own parents would slay him? If not, then who are these persons whom he fears will slay him? The Bible literally has made no mention of any others existing at this time. Then in addition to this, we read in verse 17: "Cain knew his wife. . ." The obvious question would be: if the Bible is to be taken literally, then how could Cain have acquired a wife?

"And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and called his name Seth, for she said, 'God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him.'" (Gen. 4:25) The word Seth means "compensation; substituted." The birth of Seth to Adam and Eve symbolizes the action of God's law of divine compensation. Nothing that we acquire lawfully can be taken away from us permanently. We may experience losses, but they are temporary if what has been lost is really rightfully ours. The law of divine compensation will recompense us. God's justice is perfect.

NOAH AND THE FLOOD (Gen. 6:5)

"The Lord (Jehovah) saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5) This is the first mention made in the Bible of "wickedness" and "evil" as descriptions of human behavior, and thus emerges the religious concept of "wicked people" and "righteous people" which continues throughout the remainder of the Bible narrative. We now look at this on a strictly metaphysical level as symbolic:

PEOPLE: thoughts and feelings within an individual consciousness.

EARTH: the soul; the individual human consciousness and its manifestations.

WICKED: thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, etc. which are false, negative, useless, harmful.

RIGHTEOUS: thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, etc. which are true, useful, beneficial.

Jehovah's decision to destroy "the wicked" symbolizes the action of the law which works to neutralize and eliminate the useless and harmful elements from man's consciousness (earth), and also their ill effects on his life and his world.

"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord (Jehovah)." (Gen. 6:8) The word Noah means "calm, rest, equilibrium". Metaphysically Noah stands for that within us which enables us to remain calm, poised, and balanced even when strong disturbances are happening within us or around us. It is the Noah factor within us which is always preserved and strengthened as we follow God's guidance through the many challenges and disciplines which are part of the educational experience of earthly life.

"For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth. . . ." (Gen. 6:17)

The decision of Jehovah to cause a flood symbolizes the action of spiritual law to insure that nothing in man that is false or harmful can endure permanently. It is eventually subjected to a neutralizing, dissolving, purifying process, wherein its energy is reduced back to the level of pure substance. (NOTE: Later on in the Bible this same idea is presented as a willing, conscious act which a person himself decides. On this level it is not called flooding or drowning, but is called "water baptism.")

Nothing within man that is real and good is ever destroyed or taken from him. The qualities within us which are symbolized as "Noah and his family" are protected and preserved from dissolution no matter what other processes or experiences may be occurring. This saving and preserving aspect of the spiritual law is symbolized as "the ark." Also, our basic elemental energies are also protected and preserved in "the ark." These elemental energies are designated as the male and female animals that are saved.

"And the rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights." (Gen. 7:12) Four is the numerical symbol of balance or sufficiency. Zero is the numerical symbol for unlimited or unspecified. The number of zeros does not change the basic meaning of zero. The number forty would then stand for a sufficient amount of time needed to bring balance or sufficiency (unspecified).

"Then God (Jehovah) said to Noah, 'Go forth from the ark . . . be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.'" (Gen. 8:15-17) These words contain a meaning which should bring encouragement and reassurance to those who undergo some of life's difficult cleansing experiences. When these experiences are over and have accomplished something useful in us, we will emerge from them stronger and wiser, and usefulness and meaning will increase for us.

The famous "Covenant of the Rainbow" is found in Genesis 9:8-17. The metaphysical meaning of this covenant is a great spiritual insight. The words of Jehovah are an assurance that the presence of God as our help in every need can always be found if one remembers, believes, and seeks. Clouds symbolize problems. The rainbow symbolizes the presence of God as many possible forms of help (colors of the rainbow). Within the cloud are always the elements of the rainbow. Within every human challenge and problem are always the elements of divine help. Our part is to remember, believe, and seek (pray).

The seemingly sordid story of Noah's drunkenness and the cursing of Canaan in Gen. 9:20 and following verses seem to be saying that man got off to a pretty poor start after the flood, and this is probably one of the original writer's points. However, there is a significant metaphysical insight to be gained here. Noah becoming drunk represents the human tendency to relax back into old patterns after the "spiritual victory" won through the flood experience. That these old patterns must be firmly denied in order for the growth gained to be maximized is well illustrated in Noah's action of cursing, or "denying", Canaan. Canaan represents the "fleshly organism and tendencies of man; it refers to the physical and not to the spiritual." (MBD, p. 138) Remember that one of the hallmarks of the Old Testament is its "imperfection." The characters and events, no matter how "advanced" they are do not reach the Christ level of consciousness, but only point the way.

The story of the tower of Babel is contained in Genesis 11. The metaphysical meaning of this allegory is not clear. The key symbol in the story is the city of Babel, which means "confusion; chaos; vanity; nothingness". The tower which is to reach to heaven stands for a consciousness of spiritual understanding. But how can one succeed in building spiritual understanding on a basis of "confusion" and "vanity"? Evidently it cannot be done, even though an initial appearance of success was achieved. A "confusion of tongues" stops the building project. But the builders were scattered over the Earth, each one speaking a new language. This would indicate that even out of our so-called failures and confusions we learn new "languages." Even failure can scatter seeds of future success!

Perhaps, too, we can learn something from the negative lesson in this allegory. If we remember that the city or tower was not named Babel until the end of the story, it is clear that the project was started without confusion. . . in fact there was a harmony of sorts since ". . . the whole earth had one language. . ." (Gen. 11:1) Then 11:4 becomes very significant. "Then they said, 'Come, let US build OURSELVES a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let US make a name for OURSELVES. . .'" The lesson here then is one that teaches the effect when we engage in an exercise of our human will, with no awareness of divine will. Although our human will may seem harmonious, there is no true harmony without divine will. The inevitable result of such an exercise is always confusion and chaos, the "offspring" of vanity. Our thinking becomes "scattered" or dis-integrated when our own human will is in charge. This isn't the end of the whole story however. The next stage in growth in consciousness is caused by laying hold of faith, as illustrated by Abraham (in this case, faith that there is a reality called divine will) in the next lesson.

OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

Lesson 3 ABRAHAM

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of Abraham.
2. Significance of the separation of Lot from Abraham.
3. Changes of name from Abram to Abraham; Sarai to Sarah.
4. Metaphysical meaning of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt.
5. Significance of the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah in their old age.

II. READINGS

1. Genesis, Chapters 12-14, 16-19, 21-22
2. Let There Be Light Chapter III
3. Mysteries of Genesis Chapters V, VI, VII

III. QUESTIONS

1. What does Abraham stand for in human nature?
2. What do the changes of name (Abram to Abraham; Sarai to Sarah) signify metaphysically?
3. What incident in the lesson illustrates the point that obedience to God's guidance does not rob us of joy and happiness?

IV. ADDENDA

If it is felt that not enough explanation is given for the specific metaphysical meanings of Sodom and Gomorrah, such information can be found in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under the headings "Sodom" and "Gomorrah."

Lesson 3: ABRAHAM

On page 33 of Let There Be Light Elizabeth Sand Turner gives a helpful introduction of the metaphysical meaning of Abraham: "Metaphysically, Abraham represents the first step in the redemption of man from mortal to spiritual consciousness. He symbolizes faith, not the full and complete expression of that quality, but rather the beginning of faith that is willing to follow the guidance of the Lord and go forth to a new land, symbolic of a new consciousness."

Some students may prefer to think of his metaphysical meaning as the first step in evolution from Adam level of consciousness into the pathway which will eventually lead into the Jesus Christ level. In any case, he definitely symbolizes the awakening of faith.

"Now the Lord (Jehovah) said to Abram, 'Go from your country, and your kindred, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, SO THAT YOU WILL BE A BLESSING. . .'" (Gen. 12:1-2)

NOTE: The "father's house" mentioned here is not the "Father's house" spoken of by Jesus! Abram's father was Terah. Terah means: "Lingering; loitering." Metaphysically, this represents procrastinating, indifference, and mechanical existence. The Father's house spoken of by Jesus represents "consciousness of oneness with God." In this connection it is interesting that Terah, in a way, received the original call (see 11:31), but he "loitered" in Haran; Abram then picked up the call and went to Canaan.

Abram is accompanied by Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his nephew. Sarai means "bitter, contentious, argumentative." Lot means "dark, hidden, concealed." Metaphysically, Sarai stands for a troubled and unstable emotional nature. Metaphysically, Lot stands for subconscious unbelief in us even when faith has become active. He also stands for negative beliefs.

These somewhat negative factors often remain in us and will even accompany our awakened and quickened faith in God and Truth. These all travel together with us for a while. But later in the story we learn that Abram separates Lot from himself, and Sarai has a significant change of name (symbolizing a change of character).

In Genesis 13 we read of the separation of Lot from Abram. There comes a time in our growth in consciousness when we are able to distinguish for ourself the difference between that in us which Abram stands for and that in us which Lot stands for. Abram stands for awakening faith in God. Lot stands for subconscious negative beliefs. When we are able to make this distinction within ourselves, then we are able to separate the two in an orderly and harmonious manner.

In the narrative, Lot chooses to dwell in the plain of Jordan, containing the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram is to dwell in an unlimited territory, chosen for him by Jehovah. Lot's choice indicates that subconscious negative beliefs are attracted to whatever is sensually exciting outwardly. This is the metaphysical meaning of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram's allotment symbolizes the unlimited possibilities of good which open up to us as we choose to follow divine guidance rather than responding only to the allure of certain outer appearances.

Abram and Sarai long for the birth of a son. In Old Testament symbolism the birth of a son always stands for another step forward in growth of consciousness. (NOTE: Even on a literal-historical level, the birth of each new male character in the Old Testament becomes one more step toward the eventual advent of Jesus Christ!)

"No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham" (Gen. 17:5) "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name." (Gen. 17:15)

The change of name from Abram to Abraham simply denotes an expansion in consciousness of what the word Abram represents: faith. Linguistic experts say that the syllable ha is an "aspirate" . . . meaning that an expulsion of breath is required to speak the syllable. Adding ha to Abram then means that more breath is added to his name. Breath is symbolic of life (both literally and metaphysically!) and clearly illustrated here is the idea that the expansion of faith brings a greater consciousness of life itself. In the case of Sarai, the whole meaning of the name changes:

Sarai: "bitter, contentious, argumentative"

Sarah: "noble woman, gracious lady"

This change of name symbolizes a great improvement in the feeling nature. Through growth, maturity, and close association with active faith, our feeling nature experiences a refining and mellowing process. Sarai becomes Sarah.

"And the Lord (Jehovah) appeared to him (Abraham) by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw THEM, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, 'MY LORD, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.'" (Gen. 18:1-3)

In the opening paragraphs of chapter 18 we have what is unmistakably the earliest version in the Bible of what will later become the doctrine of the Trinity--ONE GOD in three aspects. God Almighty as such is beyond the comprehension of the human mind. God can be perceived by the human mind only in a limited way. In the doctrine of the Trinity, God is perceived in three aspects:

| | | |
|--------|------|-------------|
| Father | Son | Holy Spirit |
| Mind | Idea | Expression |
| Spirit | Soul | Body |

Yet the human mind can always realize that God is ONE. This is illustrated in the opening of chapter 18 by the fact that Abraham perceives Jehovah as a Trinity, but addresses the Trinity as ONE ("MY Lord").

Chapter 19 of Genesis is an account of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the escape of Lot and his family, and the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt.

The meaning of this chapter is very similar to the meaning of the allegory of Noah and the flood. Only in this case some of the details differ slightly. The names change. The destruction is limited to just two cities. And fire is the destructive agent instead of water. But basically the meaning is the same.

Sodom and Gomorrah represent erroneous, negative, harmful states of consciousness. Nothing in this category can be permanent. Lot and his family compare in meaning to Noah and his family. They are not perfect, but the potential to become so is within them. Good potential is never destroyed.

The fire and brimstone out of heaven have the same meaning as the flood waters sent by Jehovah. Later in the Bible, Jesus talks about the "eternal fire of God." Then later, the book of Revelation talks about "the lake of fire." All these symbols pertain to the eternal cleansing action of Spiritual Law. This is never to harm anyone, but only to cleanse and purify.

"But Lot's wife behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." (Gen. 19:26)

This is pure symbolism if there ever was such! Sometimes our emotional nature (Lot's wife) cannot resist indulging in nostalgia (looking back) regarding the past, even though that past was mostly negative (Sodom and Gomorrah). This can become a bad habit (they were told by Jehovah not to look back). This can result in programming unhappy memories into the subconscious. Some of these unhappy memories may even become crystalized. This is the metaphysical meaning of becoming "a pillar of salt."

"And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac." (Gen. 21:2-3) In Let There Be Light (p. 42) we read: "The son born to Abraham and Sarah was named Isaac. The name means 'laughter', or 'joy'. This joyous quality (Isaac) is the child or offspring of faith (Abraham) and intuition (Sarah)."

We could also say that Isaac symbolizes the type of joyful quality that we develop only with growing maturity. Abraham and Sarah were called "old" when he was born to them. But what did "old" really mean in their case? The meaning of that word should change for all persons. Maturity is not "oldness," and maturity can give birth to a very special kind of inner joy (Isaac).

Chapter 22 of Genesis contains the strange and disturbing incident of the near-sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham. Unless this story is viewed on a metaphysical level of meaning it remains merely strange and disturbing.

Abraham represents our active and growing faith. Isaac represents our newly developed sense of inner joy. There are times in life when it appears to us that we must make certain decisions regarding our commitment to God and Truth. Sometimes it will seem that in order to remain faithful to our spiritual commitment we have to become willing to sacrifice our own inner sense of joy. Can we face this?

In this story Abraham represents one who CAN face this. His commitment to God is given first priority. The same is true for us today. Our commitment to Spirit should always come first, even if it seems to us at the expense of our state of joy. But we find, as Abraham did, that loyalty to God will never really take our inner joy away from us. As a matter of fact, our joy will increase!

Lesson 4 JACOB

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical significance of the "death" and "burial" of major Bible characters.
2. Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.
3. Metaphysical meanings of Jacob and Esau.
4. Jacob's dream of the ladder with the ascending and descending angels.
5. Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau.

II. READINGS

1. Genesis, Chapters 23-25, 27-33
2. Let There Be Light Chapter IV
3. Mysteries of Genesis p. 208-292

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, does the death and burial of important Bible characters mean that what they represent in us ceases to exist? If not, what do their "deaths" and "burials" illustrate?
2. What is the main metaphysical point in the story of how Isaac and Rebekah become married?
3. What do Jacob and Esau stand for in human nature?
4. What is the metaphysical meaning of the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau?

Lesson 4: JACOB

In chapter 23 of GENESIS we read of the death of Sarah at the age of 127 (a highly symbolic number!) and the burial of her remains in the cave of Machpelah.

Machpelah means: "double (cave); equally divided;" and metaphysically stands for "subconscious body substance." (M.B.D. 414)

The death of Sarah at the age of 127, and the burial of her remains in a cave which has the meaning "equally divided" contains a metaphysical meaning which holds true for all the great characters in the Old Testament. Each important Bible character symbolizes another important factor in the evolution of man's spiritual consciousness (from Adam to Christ). The death of the Bible character does not symbolize the cessation of what he or she represents within us, but just the end of cycle of development of that quality as a SEPARATE thing in our growth. Each of these is "buried," which symbolizes the implanting or blending of that particular quality into the whole fabric of consciousness, becoming part of the background and essence of our whole nature. In this way, each specific quality illustrated in Bible symbolism is made to merge and blend with all other qualities that have been developed in us. They all become part of the soul's wisdom. Remember that in the garden story of chapter 3 the serpent did not tempt Adam and Eve to do "evil," but rather challenged them to acquire wisdom (without telling them the whole story, to be sure, or they might not have taken the challenge!). The intervening chapters since then, and the chapters and books to follow, illustrate in part the soul's greater and greater acquisition and integration of wisdom.

NOTE: It may be helpful to realize that the sequence of the Bible narrative does not necessarily signify the same sequence which occurs in the soul growth of each individual human being. The actual sequence of the reader's unfoldment may not be in exactly the same order as in the Bible narrative. However, the Bible does seem to contain all the steps that are necessary for evolution of consciousness from Adam to Christ.

Elizabeth Sand Turner gives us this interesting opening in her chapter 4 of Let There Be Light: "One of the loveliest stories in the Old Testament is of the romance and marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. Abraham did not want his son Isaac to marry a daughter of the Cannanites, so he sent a servant to Haran, where Terah had settled when he moved from the southern part of Mesopotamia and where members of Abraham's own family still lived. Under divine guidance the servant selected Rebekah, the sister of Laban, for Isaac's wife. Rebekah represents 'the soul's natural delight in beauty. . . . The happy Isaac consciousness claims its counterpart in Rebekah'."

This story contains a valuable metaphysical teaching which has always been emphasized in our Unity teachings. Isaac represents a positive, loving, harmonious state of consciousness. Such a consciousness does not always have to work for the good it desires. The spiritual qualities which are active in such a consciousness often do the work for the person. They cause that person's consciousness to gain a magnetic quality which draws good unto him. Love especially can generate this power.

A person who has developed the Isaac qualities in consciousness can often draw his good to him without going about looking for it, competing or working hard for it. He attracts his good. The servant who found Rebekah and brought her to Isaac symbolizes the spiritual law of attraction which works to bring the good our consciousness is capable of accepting.

This does not mean that such persons never do any work. But the work of such persons is almost always work which they choose to do, rather than work which they have to do whether they like it or not. Many persons in Truth today are quite obviously developing this attractive characteristic which was illustrated in the symbolism of Isaac.

Elizabeth Sand Turner introduces us to the story of Jacob on page 44 of Let There Be Light: "Of this union (Isaac and Rebekah) twin sons were born, Esau and Jacob. From the description of the two brothers and the meaning of their names (Esau means "hairy, rough," and Jacob means "supplanter") (M.B.D. p. 206, 313) it is apparent that Esau represents the physical and Jacob the mental phase of consciousness. Man is first aware of himself as a physical being; as he develops, the mental takes precedence over the physical; supplants it. This is a step in the evolution of man's consciousness."

The fact that Esau and Jacob are twins symbolizes the fact that body consciousness and mental consciousness are really intimately related. It is significant that the narrative says that Jacob was holding on to Esau's heel at birth. Modern science has proved that mind and body consciousness are so closely connected and interdependent that it is often difficult to tell where the working of one leaves off and the other begins.

Jacob ("supplanter") represents our ever-developing mentality. He represents our growing consciousness of our own mental powers. The very meaning of his name is so metaphysically appropriate. The whole pattern of the development of our intellect is a supplanting pattern--supplanting ignorance with knowledge, supplanting the power of matter with the power of thought, etc.

In Genesis 25 Jacob persuades Esau to sell his birthright for some "pottage." The birthright which Jacob acquires represents the power of self-awareness. Self-awareness is possessed first by body consciousness. It is taken over at a later stage by mentality consciousness. In the majority of mankind the mental has supplanted the physical in development and expression of self-awareness. For this reason, a state of imbalance exists between the body and the intellect in many persons.

Genesis 27 describes Isaac's fondness for Esau and Rebekah's favoring of Jacob. Isaac would bestow the paternal blessing on Esau, but Rebekah contrives to trick him into giving it to Jacob instead. This leads to some repercussions--antagonizing Esau against Jacob. But Rebekah does achieve her purpose.

All this symbolizes the transferring of directive control (paternal blessing) from one part of our unfolding nature to another. During the different phases of our growth, the dominant power and directive control does not remain fixed and stationary, but is transferred to different centers within us according to the pattern of our development. This helps give us greater diversity in our unfoldment. Eventually the power of control will be held in PERFECT BALANCE when we duplicate the Jesus Christ Consciousness (true spiritual awareness). But until that is achieved it will probably continue to be centered mostly in our intellect (Jacob). Notice, too, the corollary lesson here. When the intellect is not in balance it often resorts to trickery to achieve its ends, as Jacob does in the story. As in the case of Noah, Jacob does not represent the perfect working of the intellect but does illustrate a great step forward.

In Genesis 27:38-40 Esau pleads for a paternal blessing also. Isaac's reply is: "'Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose YOU SHALL BREAK HIS YOKE FROM YOUR NECK.'" (Gen. 27:39-40)

Most conditions in the body are the results of what man does in his mind. This may cause much suffering in the body, and the body does protest. The body consciousness (Esau) has a very limited sphere of power and directive control. The body is very much subject to the mind. But the time will come when the mind will no longer subject the body to mistreatment, and a harmonious balance will be established between mind and body.

"Now Esau hated Jacob . . . and Esau said to himself, 'The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.'" (Gen. 27:41) Esau only threatens to kill Jacob. He never does. This illustrates a very mistaken belief which many people have. It is the fear that their body can kill them! When this point is really thought about it reveals something very interesting about human logic. My mind may really believe that my body is going to kill ME! This is symbolized in Jacob's fear of Esau.

Jacob goes on a journey to Haran to seek a wife. On this journey he has a dream which marks the beginning to a great change in himself and in his life. The dream is a vision of a ladder whose base is upon earth and whose top is in heaven. There are angels of God ascending and descending on all rungs of the ladder. When Jacob awakens he exclaims: "'Surely the Lord (Jehovah) is in this place; and I did not know it. And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven'" (Gen. 28:16).

This dream has two meanings. The first is a human realization of God as omnipresence. This is a shock to the soul at first ("How awesome (dreadful, KJV) is this place!"). But the shock soon changes into a feeling of great peace and assurance.

The second meaning of the dream is the constant communion between man and God. Ascending angels symbolize human aspirations and prayers directed to God from man. Descending angels symbolize God's responses to man's prayers and aspirations. Angels touch every rung, which means that every aspiration and prayer has a corresponding response from God.

In Genesis 28 and 30 we are told that Jacob falls in love with Rachel and works for her father for seven years in order to gain her as a wife. He is forced to accept her older sister, Leah, instead. But after a week, he is permitted to marry Rachel also, if he will work another seven years. Leah represents the more earthly-human qualities of the soul. These must be cultivated and developed (married and have children) first. Rachel represents more poetic, idealistic, ethereal soul qualities. These can be cultivated and increased (married and have children) only after a certain type of inner work has been accomplished first. This is the symbolism in Jacob's preference for Rachel and his willingness to work and wait while married to Leah in order to attain Rachel.

Jacob sires twelve sons, their mothers being Leah, Rachel, Bilah, and Zilpah. These twelve sons became the traditional founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. This constitutes the first presentation in the Bible of the symbolism which will continue as the twelve disciples of Jesus and the twelve manner of fruits on the Tree of Life in the book of "Revelation." In Unity we teach this symbolism as the twelve powers of man.

In Genesis 32:24-29 we are told of a wrestling match between Jacob and "a man." This occurs near the stream Jabbok. They wrestle all night, and at daybreak Jacob says to the man, "'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.'" (Gen. 32:26) "And he (the man) said to him (Jacob), 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then he said, 'your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with man, and have prevailed.' . . . And there he blessed him." (Gen. 32:27-29)

Obviously the wrestling match occurs in the mind. Jacob represents the person we now are, the man represents the higher self we can become. The struggle is the effort it takes to change, to grow, to improve. The struggle ceases when we accept the blessing of our higher self. That blessing always takes the form of a change for the better--a change of "name."

Jacob (the supplanter) is transformed into Israel (a prince with God). This represents a very significant change in attitude and in level of consciousness. This is the change from a mental manipulator for self-serving purposes (Jacob as a "trickster") into an intelligent willingness to commit one's self to God and Truth. The supplanter has been supplanted--not by another, more clever person--but by our own higher level of consciousness.

Genesis 33 tells of the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau. This symbolizes a very important step in the evolution of a person. It starts with forgiveness. It progresses with agreement and harmony. Harmony is established between thinking mind (Jacob-Israel) and body consciousness (Esau). This equilibrium is illustrated today by what we call "positive thinking." In Unity we practice this by denial and affirmation. Spiritual meditation is another method of achieving it. Physical and mental healing and well-being are its results.

NOTE: This is the first presentation in the Bible of symbolism which will be developed to its highest level of meaning in the Gospels by Jesus Christ. Here we have the idea of balance and harmony between mind and body. In Jesus we will have it developed to the degree of perfect healing consciousness, resurrection, regeneration, and immortality. The effects of the lack of such balance are clearly seen in the story of Cain and Abel, and in the first section of the Jacob/Esau story.

Chapter 37 of Genesis begins the story of Joseph and his brothers. Charles Fillmore refers to Joseph as "a type of Christ" in his book Mysteries of Genesis. Joseph is the first character in the Old Testament whose life does bear certain similarities to that of Jesus. However, Joseph is in no way really comparable to Jesus on the metaphysical level of meaning. For Joseph symbolizes only one of the twelve spiritual faculties--imagination.

Lesson 5 JOSEPH

I. MAIN POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of Joseph in both earlier and later years.
2. Joseph as a prisoner in Egypt.
3. Joseph as a secondary ruling power in Egypt.
4. Reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers.

II. READINGS

1. Genesis, Chapters 37, 39-50
2. Mysteries of Genesis Chapter XI to end of book (p. 293-376)
3. Let There Be Light p. 52-55

III. QUESTIONS

1. What does Joseph stand for in human nature in the earlier part of his story?
2. What does Joseph stand for in human nature in the latter part of his story?
3. What is the symbolism of Joseph's coat of many colors?
4. What is the main metaphysical point brought out in the reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers?

Lesson 5: JOSEPH

The twelve sons of Jacob constitute the earliest Bible symbolism of the twelve powers of man. This first listing is not the same as it is found in the Gospels as it appears as the twelve disciples of Jesus, nor as it was formulated by Charles Fillmore in the form we have it in Unity today.

1. REUBEN: "behold a son; vision of a son"--understanding through seeing
2. SIMEON: "hearkening; obeying"--understanding through hearing
3. LEVI: "joining; clinging"--love in human consciousness
4. JUDAH: "praise Jehovah"--prayer and praise in human consciousness
5. ISSACHAR: "he will bring reward"--zeal in human consciousness
6. ZEBULUN: "habitation; dwelling"--order in human consciousness
7. JOSEPH: "whom Jehovah will add to; Jehovah shall bring increase"
--imagination
8. BENJAMIN: "son of good fortune"--faith in human consciousness
9. DAN: "a judge"--judgment in human consciousness
10. NAPHTALI: "my wrestling"--renunciation and elimination
11. GAD: "fortunate; good fortune"--power in the human consciousness
12. ASHER: "straightforward"--understanding in the human consciousness

We can see by the above listing that this is not the same as the body of the twelve powers of man we now have in our Unity presentation. WILL, STRENGTH, AND GENERATIVE LIFE are not listed here. UNDERSTANDING is listed in three different ways. Also, PRAYER AND PRAISE are listed here as a faculty, but is not on the present day listing.

The fact that Joseph stands for the faculty of imagination is significant. Right use of the imagination is the main basis for what we now designate as "right thinking" or sometimes as "positive thinking." And, of course, right and positive thinking is a vital first step on the pathway of growth and unfoldment leading to the Jesus Christ level of consciousness. All true spiritual development begins with right thinking.

In the early part of his life Joseph symbolizes undisciplined and uncontrolled imagination. Such use of imagination can be exciting but can also cause mischief and trouble. Joseph told tales critical of his brothers, dreamed of being superior to them, dreamed of being superior to his parents. Later in his life Joseph learns through hard experiences and he develops depth and insight and self-control. His metaphysical meaning changes from mere imagining and becomes positive, constructive thinking.

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children . . . and he made him a long robe with sleeves." (coat of many colors in KJV) (Gen. 37:3) Joseph (imagination) being the favorite son is quite easy to understand. This faculty is capable of giving great delight to one who is willing to use it. What is obviously the favorite faculty of most young children? Imagination, of course!

The coat of many colors represents the most striking and attractive of the abilities of imagination, which is the ability to project color and emotional meaning into all areas of life. The imagination is clothed with this power to project color toward whatever we give our attention to. No other faculty can quite duplicate the feat.

Joseph's first two dreams (Gen. 37:6, 9) represent one of the common errors of unwise use of imagination--dreams of being superior to others. Superiority over others is really an unwise dream of uncontrolled imagination. And even MORE UNWISE is the telling of such dreams as though they were facts! Joseph made both mistakes, and the consequences for him were soon felt.

"So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore. . ." (Gen. 37:23) Negative or critical use of the imagination will eventually lead to devitalization of that faculty. The imagination loses its unique capacity to project color into life, and we lose much of our capacity to find interest and enjoyment. When this is carried to the extreme it is called "depression." It is almost an illness.

Genesis 37 ends with an account of his brothers intending to kill Joseph, but changing their minds under Judah's persuasion. Instead, they sell him to some passing Ishmaelites (for 20 PIECES OF SILVER!) who in turn sell him to Potiphar, a captain in the Egyptian army.

Metaphysically Egypt symbolizes the realm of the subconsciousness. It also symbolizes materiality and sensuality. Joseph as a slave in Egypt stands for an imagination temporarily in a repressed state, being used almost entirely for materialistic purposes or sensual fantasies. The episode involving Joseph and the wife of Potiphar (Gen. 39:7-20) bears out this interpretation. Potiphar's wife symbolizes sexual fantasies which attempt to take over all the energies of the imagination. Her frustration over Joseph's rejection of her results in Joseph being put into prison.

In Genesis 40 and 41 Joseph correctly interprets the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners. One of them is Pharaoh's butler, who later remembers Joseph and recommends him to Pharaoh, who has had a puzzling dream. Joseph interprets the dream as a warning of plenty and then famine and recommends protective measures to be taken. Pharaoh agrees and places Joseph in charge of the work, eventually raising Joseph to a position second only to himself.

Metaphysically all this symbolizes progress and improvement in the right use of imagination. Correctly used, our imagination becomes a very valuable faculty for both our outer and inner life. Right use of imagination can make our life very useful and productive even on a strictly

material and sensual level (Egypt). Even our own personal ego (Pharaoh) is able to appreciate the value of good imagination.

In Genesis 41 we learn of Joseph's marriage to Asenath and the birth of two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary tells us that metaphysically Asenath stands for "the feminine, or love side of the natural man." Ephraim stands for the will. Manasseh stands for understanding. All this symbolizes the development of new love, new understanding, and new willingness working with the imagination.

Chapters 42-49 are accounts of very long and involved interactions between Joseph and his brothers, and not until they all become honest in chapter 50 does their reconciliation occur, to the great satisfaction of all. Metaphysically this can be interpreted as an extended expose' of the futility of any sort of deception and guile. No real progress is made, and no real satisfaction is experienced until the intrigues come to a halt. It may take a long time for some persons to realize this, but when the realization does come it can produce results as happy as those described in the final chapter of Genesis.

Chapter 50 of Genesis brings the story of Joseph to its famous conclusion. This fame is very much based upon the words spoken by Joseph to his brothers. After they confess their wrongdoing toward him, they beg his forgiveness. Joseph replies to them: "'Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good. . .'" (Gen. 50:19-20)

There is a great depth of metaphysical meaning in this statement. It offers much food for thought to our spiritual perception. Some readers feel that this forgiveness extended by Joseph toward his brothers was a very Christ-like act, on a par with that of Jesus. But a careful examination will reveal that there is a notable difference. Joseph forgave with the aid of hindsight. He saw clearly that the evil intentions of his brothers had come to naught. What they did failed to cause him any real harm. He could easily review the pattern of past events in his life and see how time and time again God's good purposes became the outcome he always experienced in his life. He also had the human satisfaction of seeing his brothers afraid and repentant. This made it much easier for him to forgive them. So although his act of forgiveness was genuine, it was made easier through the power of hindsight. Joseph expressed magnanimous forgiveness.

Jesus expressed divine forgiveness. Jesus' forgiveness was expressed DURING his execution. He forgave even while the offense was being committed. He was witness to no sign of fear or repentance on the part of the tormentors. And most important of all, Jesus took no personal credit for the forgiveness He was expressing. He acknowledged all forgiving power to be entirely of God. He said, "'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'" (Luke 23:34)

We can say that Joseph's type of forgiveness was a genuine act of human magnanimity. Jesus' type of forgiveness was a divine realization. Both are right. But the outer GRANTING of forgiveness is limited to a fine human gesture. While the inner ATTITUDE of true forgiveness in Jesus is a divine attribute.

Lesson 6 MOSES Part 1

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of Moses.
2. Metaphysical meaning of Israelites, Pharaoh, and Egyptian bondage.
3. Symbolism of the burning bush.
4. Significance of the name of Jehovah stated as I Am.
5. Metaphysical meaning of the Egyptian plagues.
6. Metaphysical meaning of the parting and closing of the Red Sea.

II. READINGS

1. Exodus, Chapters 1-14
2. Let There Be Light Chapter V
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary p. 460

III. QUESTIONS

1. Why is Moses the most important character symbol in the old Testament, but not in the whole Bible?
2. What is the metaphysical logic of the fact that Moses spends forty years "growing up" in Egypt before becoming a spiritual leader?
3. Is I Am the name of God-Almighty? If not, what aspect of God is named as I Am?
4. What is the metaphysical significance of the 10th plague?
5. What is symbolized by the parting of the Red Sea? What is symbolized by the closing of the Red Sea?

IV. ADDENDA

If a teacher decides to go along with the usage of the words Pisces, Piscean Age, or Piscean level religious thinking (as used in this lesson material) it is important to make it clear to students that Unity does not ordinarily use Zodiac terms. It has nothing to do with horoscopes or popular astrology when we use the terms Piscean or Aquarian. We use those terms in this course only in their very broad application as pertaining to cycles of evolution in man's thinking.

Lesson 6: MOSES - Part 1

Moses is generally considered to be the most important character in the Old Testament. In fact, the body of teachings found in the Old Testament are referred to as Mosaic Law. Metaphysically Moses represents the highest human concept of God on a certain evolutionary level of human consciousness. That level has been given a number of different names. The best known to us would be:

1. Old Testament theology
2. Jehovah worship
3. Mosaic Law (rigid cause and effect, eye for an eye, crime and punishment)
4. In Zodiac symbolism: Pisces, Piscean age
5. "Born of water"
6. "Baptized of water"

The name of Moses means "water-saved; drawn out of water." In the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary (page 461): Moses symbolizes this progressive or drawing-out process, which works from within outward; as applied to the universe, the upward trend of all things--THE EVOLUTIONARY LAW.

This definition from the M.B.D. helps us to see the metaphysical meaning of Moses as an important factor in the evolution of man's consciousness. The Old Testament illustrates a whole system of religious thinking based upon the human concept of God as Jehovah. On this level, cause and effect is seen as the highest law for man, but it is limited to a very mechanical action. The difference between good and evil is the one and only purpose for religious teachings. Physical survival is seen as a reward for proper religious behavior. The image of God as Jehovah is very anthropomorphic.

This "Piscean age" religious thinking was a very necessary phase in the evolution of human consciousness. The vast majority of mankind is still on this level of religious thinking, including most of Christianity.

Moses is the Old Testament character who symbolizes that which will lead one through this phase of growth. He represents the highest and truest concept of God and religion for those who are learning and growing through Old Testament, cause-and-effect, Piscean age, "born of water" level of human evolution.

NOTE: It is only by careful study of the Gospels and all of the words of Jesus Christ that this aspect of the metaphysical meaning of Moses becomes more clear. If one limits Moses to just an important historical character, then the evolutionary meaning of his story in the Bible is not perceived.

MOSES: "drawn out of water, water-saved" symbolizes the action of the law of evolution in us which teaches us the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, and makes us become very much aware of the rigid aspect of cause and effect. Moses usually becomes the leading factor in our religious thinking when we find ourself in extremely undesirable states of existence (Egyptian bondage, material problems, physical suffering). The Moses factor begins to lead us into more desirable states of existence. Moses stands for that in us which learns the letter of religious teachings and makes the effort to obey those teachings. The "drawing-out" meaning of his name would refer to the process of evolution-from-involution, or "drawing-out" that which has been implanted in us. The "water-saved" meaning of his name would also refer to the idea that the Moses factor will safely lead us through the Piscean (water) levels of existence in our continued evolution.

ISRAELITES: "The illumined thoughts in consciousness which are undergoing spiritual discipline" (M.B.D. p. 304) Israelites symbolize all that constitutes our willingness to become illumined by the light of spiritual Truth: all that is willing to be part of our progress into greater consciousness. This aspect of us is now in process of awakening to a higher dimension of reality (later, in the New Testament to be revealed by Jesus).

EGYPT: "shut in; restraint; misery; tribulation" (M.B.D. p. 183) Egypt is a very complex symbol, including what Charles Fillmore calls "the depths of the body consciousness." Most generally Egypt is used in the Bible to represent materiality, sensuality. It also stands for areas of ignorance in human thinking.

PHARAOH: "Pharaoh means 'the sun.'" Metaphysically: "He is the ruler of the solar plexus. . . in the subconscious mind. This is obscurity . . . to the conscious mind." (M.B.D. p. 519) Pharaoh stands for the self-centered ego which rules from the subconscious. Most of our selfishness and willfulness is not really conscious and deliberate, but is subconscious in origin (has been "programmed" into us in the past).

In the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary we are told on page 520: "Moses and Pharaoh represent two forces at work in the (man's) consciousness . . . Moses represents the EVOLUTIONARY force of new ideas that have grown in the subconscious mind, that are tugging at the old states of limitation and material ignorance and trying to rise into a higher life expression. Pharaoh represents the force that rules the body under the material (old) regime."

Up until the incident of Moses' encounter with Jehovah in the burning bush (Exod. 3:2) the narrative of Exodus concerns itself with details of Moses' growing up in Egypt for his first forty years. Egypt symbolizes (among other things) the ordinary, materialistic, and sense-bound level of life. The number forty is a biblical symbol of "a sufficient, but unspecified amount of time." Moses' life during this period represents the fact that a person has to first accomplish many things in connection with ordinary, materialistic life before higher accomplishments of a more spiritual character are open and made apparent to him. Each person must develop a certain maturity, dependability, and some sense of service and usefulness in the "Egypt" level of life.

If any person is undependable and not useful to ordinary life, what are his prospects in the higher and more subtly demanding levels of a more spiritual kind of life? In the Bible narrative Moses had to "grow up" in Egypt before the "Promised Land" leadership assignment was given to him. It therefore is reasonable for us to accept the fact that we too have to "grow up" in our ordinary and materialistic sense-bound areas of life before we can be given opportunities to express our spiritual power and dominion. Likewise, Moses' second forty years were spent in the wilderness tending sheep (spiritual thoughts) and it is significant that his father-in-law was a priest (Exod. 2:15-3:1). One might then think of the first forty years as physical and intellectual preparation, the second forty years as spiritual preparation, and the third forty years (from the burning bush to Moses' death at 120 years on the edge of the Promised Land) as the fruits of the preparation. . . when the Israelites were led from bondage in Egypt to the very threshold of freedom. These three phases, intellectual and physical preparation, spiritual preparation, and the manifestation in activity, are significant steps in the process of growth in consciousness.

Chapter 3 of Exodus describes Moses' encounter with Jehovah as a voice issuing from a burning bush that is not consumed by the fire.

The bush is symbolic of man's entire nervous system, which includes his mental and emotional natures. This particular bush stands for the nervous system when Spirit is expressing through it and communicating with man's mind. The fire symbolizes mental and emotional energy. Ordinarily this fire "consumes;" that is, ordinary mental struggling and emotional outbursts use up and deplete energy--exhausting a person's mind. But this incident illustrates a different sort of mental process. This incident symbolizes those times when Divine Mind is thinking through us, imparting its ideas to us. Our mind and nervous system are able to be relaxed and receptive. This often occurs for us during times of meditation and prayer. This kind of "holy communion" does not deplete or "consume" our mental and emotional energies. The "bush is not consumed."

Moses is instructed to assume leadership of the Israelites and take them out of Egypt into Canaan. When Moses protests and asks what he shall say when the Israelites ask for the name of his Divine Authority, Jehovah replies: "'I AM WHO I AM.'" (Or, "'I AM WHAT I AM,'" or, "'I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE'", in some Bible references.) "And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exod. 3:14) Jehovah is the name of a HUMAN CONCEPT of God. And a realization within man of that particular concept is best expressed by the words I AM. In Bible language the name of anything contains some implication of the meaning of that thing. I AM contains the meaning of a being conscious of BEING. I AM isn't a thing, an object, or a person. It is a state of awareness--awareness of pure being. Awareness of pure being seems to arouse in a person a sense of the presence of God. Hence, the name I AM is used in Exodus to refer to the presence of Jehovah.

Man has freedom to do as he wills with his sense of I AM. Man can choose to connect his sense of I AM with almost anything. If he connects his sense of I AM to anything false or negative, he will experience that connection as part of his existence. But if he connects his sense of I AM with any Truth ideas, he will experience those divine ideas as blessings. In this part of Exodus, Moses' obedience to the voice of Jehovah symbolizes the connection of the sense of I AM to the idea of Divine Guidance.

"And the Lord (Jehovah) said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.'" (Exod. 4:21) "But the Lord (Jehovah) hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them; as the Lord (Jehovah) had spoken to Moses." (Exod. 9:12) We have here the puzzling fact that Jehovah intends to "harden" Pharaoh's heart, so that it is known in advance that he will not let the people go. This situation seems quite unjust, and would be if it was just literal history. But metaphysically it has a logical meaning:

1. The law of Jehovah is the process of growth, evolution.
2. Pharaoh stands for individual self-centered ego.
3. Israelites stand for potentials for development of spiritual awareness.

If the law simply forces a person to do something, would it really be growth or development of consciousness? Can man's spiritual unfoldment come by enforcement? Or must man himself determine his own willingness? Therefore the law of Jehovah gives our own ego "hardness of heart," which means the ability to RESIST or REFUSE the process of spiritual unfoldment. Pharaoh being what it is, must be given the ability of "HARDNESS OF HEART" for without it, it is not Pharaoh, but something other than itself! Pharaoh's hardness of heart is a figure of speech--a symbolic way of referring to the ability of our personal ego to say no! Moses' refusal at first to obey his call can be understood in this same way.

Chapters 5-13 of Exodus describe in great detail the events beginning with Pharaoh's first refusal to let the Israelites go. Moses causes nine different forms of affliction to be inflicted on the Egyptians; each one causing Pharaoh to promise to let the people go, but then he changes his mind after each plague ceases. The 10th affliction takes the form of the slaying of the firstborn of each Egyptian family. The Israelites were to sprinkle the blood of a lamb on the doors of their houses. This would cause Jehovah to "pass-over" their homes and not slay their firstborn.

(1) Pharaoh's reluctance and fluctuations about letting the people go illustrate the position our personal ego takes when spiritual growth offers a threat to its domination in our lives. Materialistic and sensual self-interest (Pharaoh) is not easily convinced to make way for spiritual commitment.

(2) The struggle between Moses and the will of Pharaoh illustrates an inner struggle which most Truth students experience. It is the vacillating which occurs between our desire to progress and grow in Truth consciousness and the self-serving aims of our personal ego.

(3) The various plagues are broad, general references to painful manifestations caused by negative thinking and emotions. The plagues are symbolic of useless, unnecessary suffering caused by ignorance and selfishness.

(4) The 10th affliction is death for the firstborn of each Egyptian family. Egyptians stand for materialistic, sense-bound states of consciousness. The "firstborn" stand for the offspring or outer results of this type of consciousness. No manifestation of materialistic or sense consciousness can live long--all such products are short-lived in one way or another. All materialistic and sensual things come (are born) and then go (they die.) It does not matter how precious or important they are to us (the firstborn). When a person finally comes to realize this for himself, then even his own self-egotism (Pharaoh) is persuaded that it would be better to agree to allow the process of spiritual unfoldment go forward (let the people go).

In Exodus 12:31 we read that Pharaoh tells Moses to take the Israelites out of Egypt. But in chapter 14 Pharaoh changes his mind again and sends his army to recapture them. When the Israelites reach the Red Sea it appears as an impossible obstacle. "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord (Jehovah) drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. . . . The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea. . . . So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow. . . . The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained." (Exod. 14:21, 23, 27-28)

This episode symbolizes the fact that once a person is really on the path of willing commitment to Spirit, nothing can force that person to return to the old states of bondage to negativity. Even things in our experience which at first appear to be obstacles and setbacks will turn out to be factors for progress and greater opportunity. Take special note of Exod. 14:13-14 which illustrates the source of power and energy which causes and sustains growth. Also, "The Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again" illustrates clearly the permanence of accomplished growth. . . it need not be repeated.

The waters of the sea drown the pursuing Egyptians. This symbolizes the dissolving and cleansing power of true denial over negative states of consciousness. The pursuing Egyptians represent persistent negative habits. The waters that drown them represent the results of true denial and renunciation.

NOTE: Later, in the New Testament, this same metaphysical idea is presented in less violent symbolism--that of water baptism.

Lesson 7: MOSES--Part 2

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical significance of the manna in the wilderness.
2. Metaphysical reason for each of the 10 commandments.
3. Metaphysical reason for Moses not retaining leadership after the entry into the Promised Land.

II. READINGS

1. Exodus Chapters 16, 20; Numbers 20:1-13; Deuteronomy 34
2. Let There Be Light Chapter VI
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary p. 460

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the manna in the wilderness?
2. Give a brief (one sentence if possible) metaphysical statement for each of the 10 commandments.
3. What is the metaphysical reason that Moses does not remain leader after entry into the Promised Land?

IV. ADDENDA

The teacher may note a rather pronounced difference between the interpretations of the ten commandments found in Let There Be Light and those in the course material. The reason for the difference is that Mrs. Turner includes moral and ethical viewpoints, while this course deals strictly with only the general metaphysical principles. The teacher should feel free to combine both.

Lesson 7: MOSES - Part 2

In Exodus 16:15 the manna in the wilderness is described as being provided strictly for the day-by-day sustenance of the traveling Israelites.

This manna, its method of being provided, and the restrictions connected with its provision have esoteric metaphysical implications. One of the meanings of manna is the type of nourishment by means of which life is sustained in the body physically FOR man--up to a point. Man can partake of nourishment mechanically, automatically by a process of what we call "nature." Nature now takes the role of a channel between the source of life (Spirit) and the conscious expression of life (man). Man does not create this--it is something done for him; it is given him. Man merely partakes of it and can be thus sustained day by day. By this arrangement ordinary man is enabled to continue his ordinary existence. However, since this is predominantly a mechanical process (even though it is also organic) it meets with the same fate as everything mechanical--it eventually results in "death." (Jesus said, "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died." (John 6:49))

As man attains greater and higher development of spiritual awareness this arrangement will change. Man will achieve the ability to make connections with a different sort of nourishment for his life. He will learn how to "eat of the living bread come down from heaven" which Jesus speaks about in John 6:50-51. This will involve DIRECT, CONSCIOUS APPROPRIATION of a life essence, which will never end in death, but will continue "unto life eternal."

NOTE: This theme of regeneration will be taken up extensively later in the Bible; particularly in the Gospel of John.

In chapter 20 of Exodus we have the presentation of what is generally considered to be the highest level of realization in Jehovah worship--the Ten Commandments. Jehovah worship is the religious teaching of the Old Testament. This level of religious thinking has two main purposes: physical survival of its followers, and learning the difference between good and evil. All this is taught under strict adherence to the letter of the law of cause and effect. This is a necessary evolutionary phase for mankind on earth. But it should not be considered permanent. Jesus came and demonstrated the next higher phase for us. But on the level of Old Testament Jehovah worship, the Ten Commandments are the culmination.

(1) "You shall have no other gods before me."

God is ONE. God is omnipresence in both space and time. God is the Infinite, the Absolute. God is NOT Jehovah, for Jehovah is a HUMAN CONCEPT OF GOD.

There can be nothing "before" God; there can be nothing "after" God. For God is not a thing, an object, or a being. God is the word we speak to refer to THAT WHICH IS ALWAYS GREATER THAN ANYTHING THAT IS. All the words and names we bestow on God are not really names of God. They are names of HUMAN PERCEPTIONS of God.

(2) "You shall not make for yourself a graven image. . . ."

It is folly to worship anything that exists (has form). To worship means to consider something as supreme, divine, and the source of one's good. Nothing in the realm of form can live up to this expectation, therefore nothing in the realm of form is worthy of worship. This includes people, money, property, position, beauty, or self. Only God is infinite and only Spirit is the source of good.

(3) "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. . . ."

It is important to remember that the "Lord your God" being written about here is Jehovah. Jehovah is a HUMAN CONCEPT of God, and this Jehovah concept of God is best named as I AM THAT I AM (or WHO or WHAT). I AM is not the Infinite. So what we are doing with the name of this God is what we are doing with our sense of I AM. What am I doing with my sense of I AM? If I connect my sense of I AM to anything that is not of Truth, then I am disobeying this commandment, and I will experience the consequences. If my sense of I AM is connected to any negative emotion, false belief, selfish attitude, then I am taking the name of Jehovah in vain. But if I make certain that my sense of I AM is connected to any divine ideas (Truth) then such a connection will become my experience in my life.

(4) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

The real meaning of Sabbath is an ancient metaphysical symbol of conscious silence and willing stillness. It is the true rest of the soul. Silence is the source of pure power. Stillness is the source of pure strength. Only from inner silence and stillness can we have access to the cosmic source of power and strength.

Sabbath is also the entry into a passive state of attention and concentration. This too results in a renewal of vital energy. Just as the Sabbath was the culmination of the Creation allegory, so it becomes the culmination of man's creative expression and the prelude to new creative expression.

(5) "Honor your father and your mother. . . ."

This commandment is the most "Piscean" of all the ten, and it most certainly can be best understood entirely in the light of religious thinking in Jehovah worship. Parenthood is utterly sacred in Jehovah religious thinking--especially among the Jews. Obedience and honor are considered as "divine rights" for parents. Any set of commandments issued in connection with religion would inevitably include this one.

But on a purely metaphysical level this has another meaning. It would pertain to honoring the Father-Mother aspect of God. The Divine Masculine is the wisdom and power of Spirit, and the Divine Feminine is the love and understanding power of Spirit. Both are to be fully honored, and we best honor them by making effort to express them through our own sense of I AM. Derived from this meaning is the recognition that within ourselves, both our intellectual (masculine) and intuitive (feminine) aspects must be "honored" for full integration of self--as in the "Wedding at Cana" in John 2.

(6) "You shall not kill."

Do you need a religion to tell you not to kill anybody? If so, then metaphysics is not for you. Even those still on the "Piscean" level of religious thinking surely do not need their religion to tell them not to kill others. There is no question that this commandment has a meaning beyond the obvious letter of it.

Metaphysically the only "killing" done by most people is in our inner world. People exist in our inner world as our thoughts and feelings toward them and about them. Is everyone safe in your inner world? Or are some persons in your inner world subject to violence, perhaps even to the stage of being mentally "killed"? The thought, the desire, the inner picturing of assassination or annihilation is tantamount the doing the actual deed (just as Jesus later says it is in regard to lust and adultery). We obey this commandment when mentally and emotionally we grant a safe-conduct pass to every person who travels in our inner world.

(7) "You shall not commit adultery."

Old Testament religious thinking probably requires some religious instruction pertaining to what is right and wrong in sexual expression. But the metaphysical level of meaning of this commandment is more subtle. Again, it has to do with what one does with one's sense of I AM. If one places his sense of I AM in any negative emotion, it constitutes the sin of adultery. If one places his sense of I AM in any false belief, it constitutes the sin of fornication.

(8) "You shall not steal."

To steal is one of the most futile efforts any misguided person attempts. It simply cannot succeed. There is a divine law which prevents such success. It is called "God's Law of Perfect Justice." To attempt to gain one's good at another's expense is like deliberately sticking a thorn into one's flesh. The most pitiful victim of any theft will eventually be the thief himself.

Not only is theft a sin, it is also foolish. Because in Truth there is absolutely no reason to steal. Divine Law decrees that any person can draw his own to him by right of consciousness. Any person's good inevitably will be drawn to him if he will but make the effort to develop consciousness of that good, affirm the good he desires, and give thanks for it in advance of its manifestation.

(9) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

The most obvious meaning of this commandment is not to tell lies about other persons. But it also pertains to a tendency to express false or harsh judgments toward others. Jesus taught that human judgments will always react in kind upon the one who judges. This does not mean we are not to judge. It means only that we should judge others only as we would be willing to be judged.

Perhaps the main reason why we bear "false witness" or express harsh judgments is because we constantly mistake a part for the whole. In other words, we seldom view another person in their wholeness, but only in the aspect of the moment. Very often this can be negative. The biggest mistake of all is to label anything negative in another person as a finality. This is false judgment, or "false witness."

(10) "You shall not covet. . . ."

To covet means to desire negatively. Desire in itself is good. It is an intuitive feeling that a certain form of good is right for us. But desire can be taken negatively--then it becomes coveting.

We covet when we want the good that another person has, to the extent that we become selfish and unhappy in our feelings. If we are willing to take that good away from the person, even though it deprives him, we are coveting. Coveting, like stealing, is quite unnecessary. Each person can experience his own highest good under the laws of consciousness. There is one Source of all good, and each person is one with that Source. Instead of stealing--pray. Instead of coveting--pray.

In Numbers 20:10-12 we are told that Moses is not to lead the Israelites into the promised land. In Deuteronomy 34:5-7, we are told of the death of Moses at the age of 120! Moses is succeeded by Joshua as leader of the Israelites.

The metaphysical reason that Moses does not enter as leader into the promised land is that Moses stands for only a certain degree of spiritual awareness, concerned mostly with the letter and mechanics of the law of cause and effect. While this is a good and necessary stage of soul growth, it does not suffice beyond a certain point. Knowledge of the letter of a religious teaching can take us so far, but no further.

The promised land symbolizes a level of consciousness better than that meant by "Egyptian bondage." The promised land is Canaan. Canaan is by no means "the kingdom of heaven" talked about by Jesus. But Canaan is a higher and better level than Egyptian bondage. The metaphysical meaning of Canaan is complex. In the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary it is defined as "the body consciousness," "the subconsciousness," "the invisible substance that surrounds and interpenetrates all forms, of which it is the matrix." So you see why we call it complicated!

Basically, Canaan appears to be a level of consciousness on which we encounter new possibilities for further growth. We are no longer in bondage of gross materiality, sensuality, and ignorance (Egypt), but we are not yet in the higher levels of spiritual understanding (Jesus Christ). We are definitely on the right path, but there will be mistakes and challenges. There will be much learning and growing, and much to look forward to!

Lesson 8 JOSHUA

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Joshua as an evolutionary symbol.
2. Spiritual law shows neither favoritism or antagonism.
3. Symbolism of the walls of Jericho.
4. Reason for the many violent symbols in the Old Testament.
5. Repeat of the metaphysical significance of the death of the major Old Testament characters.

II. READINGS

1. Joshua, chapters 5-6, 10, 13-14, 24
2. Let There Be Light Chapter VII
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary p. 368

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the main difference in the metaphysical significance of Joshua and Jesus? How are they most alike?
2. Does spiritual law work for certain persons and not for others? Explain.
3. What is the metaphysical significance of the collapse of the walls of Jericho?
4. What is the metaphysical reason for the tribe of Levi not being confined to a specific territory in the Promised Land?

IV. ADDENDA

In the section of this lesson dealing with the division of land, note that there are now thirteen tribes, twelve who receive their own territories, and the Levites who receive cities. The explanation for this lies in the tradition that there is no single tribe of Joseph. The tribe of Joseph split into two tribes, Ephraim and Mannaseh (his two sons, Gen. 48), which is the traditional explanation of how there are twelve tribal lands and one tribe with no land. The student should not be concerned over possible confusion in twelve power symbolism at this point. As previously noted in Lesson 5 on Joseph, the tribes of Israel are the first presentation of twelve power symbolism in the Bible. In the Old Testament they are only partially represented and do not reach their final form until the disciples in the New Testament.

Lesson 8: JOSHUA

In Let There Be Light we read on page 82: "The Book of Joshua is primarily a book of prophetic teaching. Its historical value is secondary. It presents a somewhat idealized account of the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, Moses' successor. . . . The name Joshua means 'Jehovah is salvation' (M.B.D. p. 368) which is the same as Jesus, the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua. Joshua is often referred to as a type of Christ, though in Joshua we do not find the full spiritual realization typified by Jesus. There is in Joshua, however, a conscious realization of identity WITH JEHOVAH and the courage to act in accord with His will."

Metaphysically we cannot think of Joshua and Jesus in the same terms, even though their names have a similar root meaning. Joshua symbolizes a degree of spiritual awareness still on the level of Jehovah worship. He represents an evolutionary process in the soul just a step higher than that which Moses represents. Joshua, like Moses, symbolizes something good and necessary in man's evolution.

We should remember that Jehovah is the name of a human concept of God. Joshua represents a very active and very effective worship of Jehovah. Jesus, on the other hand, does not represent Jehovah worship. Jesus brought to the world a new understanding of God, much higher than the Jehovah concept. Jesus revealed God as Spirit, as absolute good, as Father within. However, Joshua does exhibit certain qualities which can be seen as "previews" of what will later be so wonderfully demonstrated by Jesus.

An event of metaphysical significance occurs in Joshua 5:13-15.

"When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man stood before him with his drawn sword in his hand; and Joshua went to him, and said to him, 'Are you for us, or for our adversaries?' And he said, 'No; but as commander of the army of the Lord (Jehovah) I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said to him, 'What does my Lord bid his servant?' And the commander of the Lord's (Jehovah's) army said to Joshua, 'Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so."

Here we have a spiritual realization that is somewhat a repeat of Jacob and his dream of the ladder. The commander of the army (prince of the host, KJV) of Jehovah symbolizes a human concept of spiritual law. Joshua questions the prince as to whose side he is on in the current conflict. The prince replies that he is not on one side against the other, but is a representative of Jehovah.

This illustrates an important factor concerning the Absolute. It does not take sides, since it includes all sides. Omnipresence cannot be more in one place than in another. So it is with omniscience. It cannot see one point of view instead of another. It is all-knowing, therefore all-understanding. The fact that Joshua makes peace with the revelation indicates that he stands for a very open and progressive factor in human consciousness; something very important for continued evolution.

Notice too the similarity, especially in the wording, to Moses' experience at the burning bush. ". . . put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Exod. 3:5). From Jacob's realization of "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it" (Gen. 28:16), through Moses' experience with the burning bush, to Joshua's experience on the threshold of the Promised Land, we see a clear illustration of the growing awareness in human consciousness of the omnipresence of God.

"Joshua's first task was to overthrow the city of Jericho, as it was directly in the Hebrews' line of march. It was a walled city, and the Hebrews had no implements of war. Joshua resorted to ingenious means. Seven priests were instructed to walk before the Ark of the Covenant bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns, followed by the men of war. Once a day for six days the procession marched around the city. On the seventh day they marched seven times, and when the priests blew the trumpets, all the men of war shouted with a mighty shout. The walls of Jericho came tumbling down." (Let There Be Light p. 86)

Metaphysically Jericho represents the intellect that is resistant to spiritual unfoldment. The walls stand for fixed materialistic beliefs which impede progress into spiritual understanding. The priests stand for religious beliefs, and their marching represents the activity of religious thinking in the mind. The trumpets and the shouts on the seventh day symbolize the fulfilling of the Law of the Word. The Law of the Word is fulfilled by man through prayer, and there are three ways this can be done correctly: affirming, asking, or giving thanks in advance. When we are persistent in prayer, the blockages, resistances, and closed-doors (walls) of our intellect are dissolved (come tumbling down). Then our spiritual unfoldment can continue.

During a battle between the Israelites and an enemy tribe it appeared that the day would end before the Israelites would achieve their victory. "Then spoke Joshua. . . 'Sun, stand thou still at Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Aijalon.' And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. . . there has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord (Jehovah) hearkened to the voice of a man; for the Lord (Jehovah) fought for Israel." (Josh. 10:12-14)

This is very typical symbolism of Old Testament metaphysics. When man is very sincere and zealous in serving his spiritual commitment, even time and place seem to become subservient to the spiritual purpose. Although this idea is presented in imagery of war and killing, the meaning behind it is a valid one.

NOTE: For metaphysical students of today who are strongly committed to following the Truth as revealed by Jesus Christ, Old Testament symbolism can be very puzzling and confusing. Old Testament religious thinking does not seem to concern itself with the danger of negativity in consciousness, but rather with wickedness and disobedience in outer ways. Hence, the Old Testament lessons do not hesitate to use imagery and symbols which we consider negative and repellent. Jehovah worship is simply on a different evolutionary level of mind. Worship of God as Spirit [via Jesus Christ] has an altogether different attitude about religion.

Chapters 13 and 14 of Joshua tell of the division of land among twelve of the tribes, with the tribe of Levi not being given a specific area, but each tribe giving certain portions to the Levites. The tribes stand for the developing awareness of our twelve spiritual faculties. The tribe of Levi stands for the faculty of love. Although we do designate the heart center of the body as the physical representation of the abode of love in us, the fact is that love should not be limited in any way. Love should permeate every area of us and work in conjunction with every other faculty. Love is a pervasive spiritual power which should intermingle freely with every expression coming from a human soul.

The closing of the book of Joshua comes with the death of Joshua. We have disclosed the significance of the deaths of the important characters already in the section of Genesis dealing with the death and burial of Sarah. But here Elizabeth Sand Turner gives further helpful insight on the meaning of Old Testament character deaths in her commentary on the death of Joshua.

"After these things Joshua. . . the servant of the Lord (Jehovah), died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in his own inheritance. . . which is in the hill-country of Ephraim. . . ." (Josh. 24:29, 30)

Mrs. Turner tells us: "As we develop spiritually each God-given quality unfolds, knows fullness, and then moves into the background of consciousness. (Death and burial of Bible character-symbol) This does not mean that the work of any quality is no longer needed, but merely that it is time to let another come forth. Joshua's mission was to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. . . other characters, representing other qualities, had to assume control. This transition is represented in the Bible by the passing of one leader and the rise of another." (Let There Be Light p. 92)

Lesson 9 JUDGES

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meanings of Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and Samuel.
2. Delilah (a Philistine woman) as a symbol of the dangers of negative sensuality.
3. Ark of the Covenant as symbol of the spark of divinity in man's nature.
4. Metaphysical significance of Saul.

II. READINGS

1. Judges Chapters 4, 6-9, 11-16; I Samuel 1-4, 9-13, 15-16, 18-24, 28, 31
2. Let There Be Light Chapter VIII
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary under headings: Deborah; Gideon; Jephthah; Samson; Samuel; Saul

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the metaphysical meaning of the judges in general?
2. Metaphysically, why are Philistines designated as "enemy"?
3. What is one main danger in sensuality?
4. What is meant by "spark of divinity"?
5. What is the metaphysical significance of Saul's early successful rulership and his later deterioration?

IV. ADDENDA

Some of the historical references in Mrs. Turner's books are not in accord with more modern biblical scholarship. For example, in the quote on page 1 of this lesson she mentions "about a century" as the period of the judges. New information indicates a period more likely of 150-180 years. Some students may have this kind of historical knowledge and feel that there is a discrepancy. A valid response would be that Mrs. Turner's historical information is from an older scholarship and, more to the point, the metaphysical validity is not changed.

Lesson 9: JUDGES

We begin with a brief historical introduction to the book of Judges by Elizabeth Sand Turner in Let There Be Light: "During this period of about a century the Hebrews were ruled by chieftains called judges. When a tribe was forced to war it selected its ablest soldier as leader and generally retained him as civil ruler afterward. The rule of twelve such judges is recorded in the Book of Judges. . . . Four of the judges deserve special mention (Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson)" (p. 94)

Metaphysically the judges symbolize usage of the judgment faculty in overcoming errors in consciousness which interfere with the progress of our spiritual unfoldment. The enemies of the Israelites stand for errors in our thinking, feeling, and attitudes. Each judge illustrates a manner of using judgment to subdue and overcome these errors.

Deborah represents intuitive use of judgment. She was the only female judge. She chose Barak as her warrior helper. Barak represents the will. The Canaanites were the enemy. Canaanites stand for very strong and stubborn beliefs in the supremacy of materiality and sensuality.

Gideon represents the use of judgment united with the renunciation faculty. This is the proper use of the technique called denial. The Midianites were the enemy. The name Midian means "strife; contention." Jehovah tells Gideon to "smite the Midianites as one man." (Judges 6:16) This refers to the fact that proper use of denials can do a wonderful work of cleaning the consciousness of attitudes of strife and contention. If irritability is allowed to become a habit, it can lead to a general "souring" of the whole nature, and further spiritual unfoldment is seriously hampered.

Jephthah represents judgment inspired by zeal in the cause of Truth. The Ammonites were the enemy. Ammonites stand for "impure, ignorant, disorderly thoughts" (M.B.D. p. 47) This would place this kind of activity in the mind strongly in relation to thoughts and attitudes about personal gain, sex, and sensuality in general. It is not that these things in themselves are evil or wrong, but that our thinking in regard to them can become negative, selfish, and disorderly.

Samson represents judgment used with great strength. The Philistines were the enemy. Philistines do not have a specific metaphysical meaning, but rather a loose, generalized implication. Our Metaphysical Bible Dictionary says that "Philistines were opposed to all true spiritual discipline; they worshiped strange Gods. . . ." (p. 527)

Philistines would stand for any antagonistic thoughts or attitudes toward Spiritual Truth. They also stand for the tendency to "latch on to" and even worship anything that is strange and bizarre in the way of religion. There is something about the purity of metaphysical Truth which seems to irritate the Philistine nature and brings forth an antagonistic reaction which can be quite unreasonable. It is for this reason that good judgment coupled with much strength is needed in coping with the Philistine tendencies in our human nature.

The main interest in the story of Samson is in regard to his affair with the Philistine woman Delilah. The metaphysical meaning of Delilah is SENSUALITY, pure and simple! However, it is important to remember that Delilah is not so "pure and simple." She was a Philistine; she definitely meant harm for Samson. Therefore she stands for sensuality in its negative aspect. This can be very seductive at times, and if we let it divert our good judgment it can rob our judgment of its strength. We can easily observe any person who is not using good judgment in his indulgence of sensuality. The word most often used to describe a person in this state is that he or she is "weak."

NOTE: Some further words on the idea of sensuality may be well here. Sensuality of itself is not good or evil. It is a fact of life and a normal function of the human nature. But when sensuality assumes a negative or harmful aspect in a person's life, then it becomes a danger. It is this dangerous aspect of sensuality which is meant when a Bible character who symbolizes sensuality is used as an enemy of a good character.

SAMUEL

Elizabeth Sand Turner calls Samuel "the last and greatest of the judges." (L.T.B.L. p. 97) Samuel's greatness can be detected in little things. For example, when Jehovah calls in the night to Samuel, he thinks it is the priest Eli calling. He responds with, "Here I am." (I Sam. 3:4 and parallels) But Eli tells him he had not called. Samuel shows no irritation at this, but simply obeys by replying, "Here I am" each time he is called.

The second sign occurs when on the fourth occasion Jehovah again calls Samuel's name, and Samuel very simply responds with, "'Speak, for thy servant hears.'" (I Sam. 3:10) This gives us a very pleasant clue as to the nature of that which Samuel symbolizes in us. It would be a combination of judgment, humility, and a willingness to serve.

In chapter 4 of I Samuel we learn that the Philistines take the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites and set it up in the house of Dagon (the God of the Philistines). But the Ark proves to be of no value to them. Since the Ark is such an important part of the history of the Israelites, it would be good for us to gain comprehension of its metaphysical meaning. We read of the meaning in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary on page 64: ". . . the ORIGINAL SPARK OF DIVINITY IN MAN'S BEING. It is a covenant, or agreement, of the Father with the son that he shall inherit all that the Father has. . . ."

"This original spiritual spark is a very sacred, holy thing, because UPON ITS DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS MAN'S IMMORTALITY. It is represented as occupying the most holy place in the temple and as being protected and cared for with great devotion. All that man is has been brought forth from this CENTRAL SPARK, yet the sense-conscious man often neglects it and ignores its very existence."

This definition helps us to realize that man has "the spark of divinity in his being," which avoids the absolutist's statement that "man is divine." If "man is divine" then there is no need for self improvement or evolution. Then the whole purpose of religious thinking is nullified. But just as man has the potential for perfection within him, so he has the spark of divinity within him. This is what the Ark symbolizes, and that is why it is regarded as the "holy of holies."

In the 9th chapter of I Samuel we are introduced to the character Saul, who becomes the first king of Israel. The word Saul means "asked for; desired; demanded." (M.B.D. p. 575) Metaphysically he represents the will as the leading or dominant faculty in our unfolding nature. The will is a natural selection as our first "king," for it has the ability to express in two important ways: it can express as willingness, or it can express as willfulness. At the beginning of his reign Saul represents willingness. As his reign progresses, he displays symptoms of degenerating into willfulness.

In Let There Be Light Elizabeth Sand Turner gives this interesting commentary on the downhill pattern of Saul's rulership: "In the early part of his reign Saul lived up to the best expectations of Samuel. Later he became arbitrary and disobedient. Unless the will (Saul) is under divine guidance it becomes a destructive force. . . . Saul is typical of the person who begins a great task with true humility of spirit and accomplishes much, then gradually lets selfishness rule the will and become dictatorial and even cruel. This separates him from the divine or higher impulses and starts a decline that ends in loss and final defeat." (page 102)

Mrs. Turner has given us Saul's story and metaphysical meaning "in a nutshell." And it is here where it will be good to mention that many Truth students express a dislike for Old Testament metaphysics because so much emphasis is put on the negative aspects of human nature. They say they much prefer the positive idealism of the Gospels. That is understandable. But it is important that we realize that most of the time we are functioning on the Old Testament level of consciousness. We all have a great deal of self-improvement and overcoming of error to achieve. So an awareness of some of the negative factors still active in us can prove very, very useful if we use such knowledge in the right way. Not for purposes of guilt or self-punishment, but for incentive for further effort to improve consciousness.

Willfulness is easy to fall into. Willfulness is a way of using the will to attain that which we personally desire. This is a dangerous kind of "victory," for it can soon become a habit. The habit of willfulness results in our disconnecting our sense of I Am from God's divine ideas and connecting it with things of personal consciousness and the allures of the outer world. This inevitably leads into deterioration of inner states of consciousness and brings us many disappointments and defeats in our life.

Because of his failure to rule righteously Jehovah decides to have someone succeed Saul as king. Samuel is instructed to go to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite and choose a successor from among his eight sons. Samuel's first impulse is to choose the eldest, Eliab, but Jehovah rejects this choice. After seeing the first seven sons, Samuel asks if they are all here: "And he (Jesse, David's father) said, 'there remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here'. And he sent, and brought him (David) in. Now he was ruddy, and. . . handsome. And the Lord (Jehovah) said, 'Arise, anoint him; for this is he'." (I Sam. 16:11, 12)

Lesson 10 DAVID

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of David.
2. Symbolic outline of story of David and Goliath.
3. Saul's growing antagonism toward David.
4. Metaphysical significance of Solomon.
5. Metaphysical significance of the division of the kingdom.

II. READINGS

1. I Samuel 17-24, 28, 31; II Samuel 7, 11-12 (scan II Samuel 13-24, I Kings 1-2); I Kings 3-12
2. Let There Be Light Chapter IX-X
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary p. 166
4. Twelve Powers of Man p. 36

III. QUESTIONS

1. According to your understanding, what is the main metaphysical point to be found in the story of David and Goliath?
2. What does the antagonism of Saul toward David illustrate in human nature?
3. In what way does Solomon symbolize an important step in the development of spiritual consciousness?
4. Metaphysically, what does the division of the kingdom illustrate?

IV ADDENDA

The teacher will note that question 1 asks for the main metaphysical point in the story of David and Goliath. This is meant to give the student freedom of choice. The question should be considered correctly answered if the student correctly presents his choice.

Lesson 10: DAVID

In the story of David (I Sam. 16 to I Kings 2:10) we find a pattern that is strikingly similar to that in the story of Saul. In the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary we read: "David represents divine love individualized in human consciousness. . . . When David in his youth and purity daily communed with God, he closely reflected divine love. When he developed his human character, as a king in dominion over men, he manifested the limitations (negativeness) of the human in larger degree." (p. 166)

So here again we have the metaphysical symbolism of the dangers of certain inner qualities being given increasingly negative expressions through our human egos. Saul represented willingness coarsening into willfulness. David illustrates love of God coarsening into love of self for materialistic and sensual gratification.

The first great event in David's story is his encounter with and victory over Goliath. This incident is in many ways a classic example of a Bible story which lends itself perfectly to metaphysical interpretation. Rather than present an interpretation of it in essay form, let us take a look at it in bare outline form and let our imaginations construct a narrative of interpretation. The story is contained in I Samuel 17.

(1) DAVID:

"beloved; well-loved" divine love in human consciousness. David especially illustrates human love for God, Truth, and goodness.

(2) ISRAELITES:

thoughts and feelings turned toward Truth; all that is within consciousness as part of our growth and development of spiritual awareness.

(3) PHILISTINES:

erroneous thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes which keep us bound in sense consciousness.

(4) GOLIATH:

"revealing; conspicuous" a Philistine giant. He symbolizes strongly entrenched erroneous belief and its very conspicuous manifestation in a person's life.

(5) THREATS OF GOLIATH:

the intimidating and frightening aspect of manifested error, often assuming gigantic proportions in the point of view of the onlooker.

(6) ARMOR OF GOLIATH:

all the support of outer appearances and general acceptance which help to sustain error manifestations in the world.

(7) DAVID'S ACCEPTANCE OF GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE:

love for Truth is inspired to do something to overcome manifestations of error.

- (8) DAVID'S LACK OF ARMOR:
love for Truth is its own defense.
- (9) DAVID'S SLING:
power of attention and concentration at work in our love for Truth.
- (10) DAVID'S STONE:
The power of the word of Truth.
- (11) DAVID'S KEEPING DISTANCE FROM GOLIATH:
the wisdom of keeping a place of separation in mind between one's self and the error one is overcoming; not connecting one's sense of I Am to any negative appearance.
- (12) DAVID'S AIM AND THROW:
the power of a Truth affirmation. Any consciously spoken affirmation of Truth (silent or audible) has a projectile-like power. It can travel anywhere within existence to find its place of fulfillment.
- (13) DAVID'S STONE PENETRATING GOLIATH'S FOREHEAD:
the law of the Word fulfilled; manifested as the penetrating of error appearance by the power of affirmation of Truth.
- (14) GOLIATH CRASHES TO EARTH:
symbolizing the return of the energy sustaining error appearance (Goliath) back into elemental substance (earth).
- (15) DAVID USES GOLIATH'S OWN SWORD TO SEVER HIS HEAD:
error carries its own seed of destruction. All error manifestations "lose their heads" after an encounter with a consciousness zealous with love of Truth (David).

In I Samuel 18 we read of the beginning of Saul's growing envy and antagonism toward David. This continues until Saul's death (I Sam. 31:6) Metaphysically this illustrates the reluctance of willfulness to surrender its domination in human consciousness. It is important to remember that willfulness becomes a habit--a very strong habit. Willfulness has been king for a long time in most human natures. Even when love for Truth becomes very active and very successful in helping a person progress into greater spiritual awareness, willfulness does not fade away.

Saul remained king for a long time even after David was chosen in his stead. David took no aggressive measures toward Saul, but Saul took many against David. This makes great sense on the metaphysical level of meaning. Love will not seek to destroy the will, but willfulness will persistently seek to destroy our love for Truth if such love poses a threat to its continued domination of the consciousness.

Eventually, according to one account, Saul commits suicide. Again, this makes metaphysical sense. Willfulness cannot sustain itself indefinitely. When a person begins to realize for himself the futility of continued willfulness, he becomes willing to surrender it. Such a surrender is symbolized as the suicide of Saul. (A similar meaning is repeated later in the Bible in the suicide of Judas.)

In chapter 11 of II Samuel, we read of David's infatuation for Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, a soldier in David's army. David arranges for Uriah to be killed in battle so that he could marry Bathsheba. Later, the prophet Nathan tells David a story about a man guilty of theft and tells David that "you are the man." (II Sam. 12:7) David declares his repentance in Psalm 51:10; "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and put a new and right spirit within me."

Elizabeth Sand Turner comments on this: "In such repentance a real healing takes place. Though the first child born to David and Bathsheba died, they rejoiced greatly in the birth of a second son, whom they named Solomon." (L.T.B.L. p. 115)

Metaphysically this indicates that love can be expressed in many ways, not all of them in conformity to spiritual principle. But when wrongness is detected, acknowledged, and followed by sincere repentance, the divine law works to bring forth forgiveness and right adjustment. The lesson is repeated numerous times throughout the Bible. The cast of characters changes, but the central idea remains constant.

The story of David ends with a metaphysical meaning quite similar to the ending of the story of Moses. Moses was able to bring the Israelites to the promised land, but he was not to make the entry with them. He did not resent this, and he died very peacefully.

In David's case he was able to gather together all the materials needed to build a fitting temple for worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem, but he was not to do the actual building. David does not resent this and lovingly turns over the privilege of building the temple to his son, Solomon.

Elizabeth Sand Turner comments: "David's work was complete when he unified the kingdom and brought his people together in a closer bond than ever before. This is the function of love, to co-ordinate and harmonize the forces of our being." (L.T.B.L. p. 119)

"Then David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. . . . So Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was firmly established." (I Kings 2:10, 12)

NOTE: It is interesting to observe how often the Old Testament refers to the death of a character in terms of "sleeping with his fathers" and almost always with specific mention of "being buried." Students of metaphysics today may have questions concerning this. Does a soul that has gone through a death-transition literally "sleep with its fathers"? And what is really "buried" after a transition? Is a person buried? Or is only the physical remains of the abandoned body the thing that is buried?

SOLOMON

In the story of King Solomon is contained one of the all-time great utterances of spiritual awakening. It occurs when Solomon is told by Jehovah, "Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon's request was, "Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind (heart, KJV). . . ." (I Kings 3:5, 9)

Understanding is one of our twelve spiritual faculties. It is the ability of rightful knowing and the ability to perceive meaning. To ask for an understanding mind or heart is a high form of praying for illumination. Charles and Myrtle Fillmore often said that the prayer for illumination should always come first. The answer to such a prayer is usually quick and sure. Such an answer is illustrated in Jehovah's response to Solomon: "And God (Jehovah) said to him, 'Because you have asked this. . . behold, I now do according to your word. Behold I give you a wise and discerning mind (heart, KJV). . . I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor. . .'" (I Kings 3:11-13)

The meaning of the name Solomon is "whole, complete, peace." But like a number of other Old Testament characters, the life of Solomon illustrates this meaning only in the early years of his life. Later as he gains more wealth and power, a deterioration sets in with him just as it did with Saul and David. (There is something to think about here.)

After much dissension and upheaval (with a pleasant interlude of a visit by the queen of Sheba (I Kings 10) the story of King Solomon concludes with these words: "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father. . . ." (I Kings 11:41-43)

Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, and he fully expected to succeed his father as ruler of Israel. Things had become bad for the people under Solomon's deterioration as a ruler. They hoped things would become better if they appealed to his son Rehoboam. The appeal is spoken by Jeroboam: "'Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke upon us, and we will serve you'." (I Kings 12:4)

They were in for an unpleasant surprise. Rehoboam's response was: "'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions'." (I Kings 12:14)

In our Metaphysical Bible Dictionary we learn that Rehoboam represents: "That in man's consciousness which exalts the senses, that which is receptive to and comprehensive of the selfish demands of the sense thoughts and desires only". (p. 550) So once again we have in the symbolism of Bible characters an illustration of how selfish sensuality ALWAYS CAUSES THINGS TO GO FROM BAD TO WORSE! This is a metaphysical pattern which is repeated constantly throughout the Bible. Yet it is a lesson which many persons never seem to learn.

The next important event is the division of the kingdom of Israel. The ten northern tribes withdrew into a separate kingdom, retaining the name Israel. Jeroboam was ruler. Judah, the southern kingdom was ruled by Rehoboam.

The division of the kingdom and the rulerships of Jeroboam and Rehoboam symbolizes a deterioration of religious thinking in the consciousness of any individual. The tendency to externalize God, to think of Him as some kind of "formed thing" is a form of idol worship. To place our sense of I Am in outer things and conditions, instead of in divine ideas, is another form of false worship. This can result in a life that has much tension and unnecessary confusion in thoughts and emotions. This is the symbolism of the divided kingdom. (Jesus later gives this same symbolism in his teaching concerning "a house divided against itself.")

Historically, this time became the time of need for the Hebrews to have the coming forth of the Old Testament prophets. Metaphysically, this represents the time in a person's life when he has need of corrective measures in his consciousness--especially in his religious thinking. Such efforts at correction are what the prophets represent.

Lesson 11 ELIJAH AND ELISHA

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical significance of Elijah and Elisha.
2. Metaphysical meaning of Jezebel.
3. Metaphysical meaning of "adultery."
4. Significance of God as "a still small voice."
5. Metaphysical meaning of "a double portion" of Elijah's spirit.

II. READINGS

1. I Kings 17-19, 21; II Kings 1-13; II Chronicles 21-25
2. Let There Be Light Chapter XI
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary p. 191; p. 193

III. QUESTIONS

1. Metaphysically, how are Elijah and Elisha similar, and how do they differ?
2. What is the main danger of what Jezebel stands for?
3. What is one of the benefits to man in realizing God as "a still small voice"?
4. What is the symbolic meaning of "a double portion" of the spirit of Elijah?

IV. ADDENDA

In regard to question number 3, the teacher will note that the specific answer to the question is not written out in the course material. Therefore the teacher should deal with it in class, either as the teacher's own point of view, or as a subject of class discussion.

Lesson 11: ELIJAH AND ELISHA

The stories of Elijah and Elisha are contained in I Kings 17-22; II Kings 1-13; II Chronicles 21-25. These two great characters are referred to as prophets, yet they represent something more than prophets. In many ways they are symbolic of characteristics which are forerunners of Jesus Christ. Elijah means "Jehovah is God." Elisha means "God is salvation."

Both characters symbolize phases in growth toward full spiritual consciousness. Elijah has more to do with works for the sake of convincing proof of the results of correctly worshiping Jehovah ("Jehovah is God"). Elisha has more to do with works and demonstrations for the sake of blessing and helping people, rather than "proving" a point. ("God is salvation")

Elijah achieved a spectacular victory over the priests of Baal, described in I Kings 18. Elijah takes advantage of this victory to persuade the witnesses to kill 450 priests of Baal. But he did not reckon with the danger of their patroness, Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab. Jezebel's fury over what happened and her threats of revenge cause Elijah to flee for his safety, and he quickly falls into discouragement bordering on despair. (I Kings 19:4)

The name Jezebel means "adulterous, licentious." The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary interprets her as: "The animal soul, unbridled passions of the sense consciousness." (p. 352) A more clear and simple metaphysical definition of her would be simply negative emotions.

Jezebel is the female counterpart of the male metaphysical symbol Satan. Satan stands for negative thinking and erroneous beliefs. Jezebel stands for negative emotions and erroneous beliefs. Elijah underestimated Jezebel's power and influence, and he paid for his mistake in forgetting how dangerous she could be by succumbing to fear and discouragement. People of today also make the same mistake in underestimating the power and influence of negative emotions.

Traditional Christianity does not emphasize the danger of negative emotions. Rather it gives emphasis to "sin" and "evil" and "disobedience". But New Thought Christianity takes a different view. Unity does not consider "sin" and "evil" the great dangers of human existence any more. But negativity of thought and emotions, and erroneous beliefs and attitudes, are seen as the greatest dangers to unfolding consciousness. Jezebel would symbolize something very important in modern New Thought Truth teachings - the ever-present danger of letting negative emotions rule us.

And another important aspect of the meaning of Jezebel is "adulterous." Adultery with Jezebel occurs any time a person connects his sense of I Am with any negative emotion. This does not mean just simply feeling the presence of a negative emotion. But it does mean to connect one's sense of I Am with a negative emotion that is felt. Adultery brings painful consequences unless it is detected and corrected as soon as possible. This is done through "forgiveness of sin," or denial.

While in the depths of discouragement, near to despair, Elijah has the experience which is one of the landmarks of Bible narrative: "And he said, 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord (Jehovah). And behold, the Lord (Jehovah) passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains. . . but the Lord (Jehovah) was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord (Jehovah) was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord (Jehovah) was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.'" (I Kings 19:11-13)

This is very unusual metaphysical symbolism for the Old Testament. This is the first presentation of the meaning of Jehovah under the symbols of stillness and silence. But from this first usage, such symbolism in the Bible becomes more and more frequent.

Prior to the Elijah story, Jehovah is found in circumstances of a more impressive and spectacular nature. He is a God of sounds, of fire and water, of battles, of nature. But here He is present as the presence of "a still small voice." This represents a definite progression in the conscious awareness of the presence of God. Some Hebrew scholars say that a more accurate translation of these words would be "a voice of gentle stillness"--an image even more appropriate to Unity's understanding of the source of strength and power.

Listening to the still small voice (or voice of gentle stillness) Elijah received instruction to anoint Elisha to be the leading prophet to succeed Elijah when his work was done. Elisha means "God is salvation," and he symbolizes a step near to the Jesus Christ level of spiritual awareness.

NOTE: Elizabeth Sand Turner refers to Elisha as "a type of Christ" (L.T.B.L. p. 138); and so he is. But we cannot ignore a very strange incident about him recorded in II Kings 2:23, 24. "He (Elisha) went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, 'Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!' And he turned around, and when he saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord (Jehovah). And two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys."

What are we to make of this? Should we simply turn our eyes away from the page and pretend it was never printed. Or should we simply say that the kids had it coming to them? None of these tactics would be honest. Metaphysically, this strange incident would symbolize an important fact which serious students of metaphysical Truth must become reconciled to: NOTHING IN THE REALM OF MANIFEST EXISTENCE IS AS YET PERFECT. No symbol is perfect, no analogy is perfect, no human personality is yet capable of expressing perfectly all the time. This is not something to resent; it is something to make peace with.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

Lest we become too angry with Elisha over this incident, let us keep in mind that Elisha merely "cursed" the children. The coming of the ferocious she-bears was not something he did (the bears did it!). Is it not reasonable to assume that he had no idea that his human reaction of "cursing" at his tormentors would have such horrendous results? Let us now realize that we too have often "cursed" things and persons we did not like. We are simply fortunate that she-bears did not rush forth and kill those we cursed at!

In the Bible narrative Elijah and Elisha work together, but Elijah knows that his work is soon to be completed and that he will make the transition. He tells Elisha this and asks Elisha what he can do for him before he makes the transition. Elisha asks for "a double share of your spirit". (II Kings 2:9)

The double share of the spirit of Elijah refers to the duality of energy expressions on this plane of existence. The energies of the manifest world all have polarities, positive and negative. In our inner world energies also have polarities. In human psychology these polarities of energy are "yes" and "no." (Later Jesus points out the great importance of understanding these polarities when He says, "Let what you say be simply 'yes' or 'no'. . ." (Matt. 5:37) A more definite ability to say both yes and no is this "double share" of Elijah's spirit conferred upon Elisha.

Elisha continues in a very busy and successful ministry until his transition which is recorded in II Kings 13:20, 21) The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary contains these words, which is a very fitting memorial tribute to Elisha:

"Elisha is often referred to by Bible commentators as a forerunner of Jesus. His character and his marvelous works are easily recognized as proceeding from the same spirit that inspired Jesus, and his gentleness and simplicity are paralleled only in the Master. It is not difficult to see in Elisha an incarnation of the Christ, and he was in a certain degree God manifest. Jesus was a fuller manifestation of the same spirit." (p. 193)

NOTE: For students who are interested in going into greater detail concerning the events which have earned Elisha the reputation of "a type of Christ," we refer them to the following:

- (1) Increase of the widow's oil. (II Kings 4)
- (2) Raising the son of the Shunammite woman. (II Kings 4)
- (3) Miraculous feeding of a hundred men. (II Kings 4)
- (4) Extraordinary mercy extended to the Syrians. (II Kings 6)

Lesson 12 THE PROPHETS Part 1

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Isaiah.
2. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Zephaniah.
3. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Micah.
4. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Habakkuk.

II. READINGS

1. Isaiah Chapters 1, 6, 9, 26, 30, 60; Zephaniah 2; Micah 6; Habakkuk 2
2. Let There Be Light Chapters XIII - IXX
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary--under headings for separate names of prophets.

III. QUESTIONS

1. How does Isaiah express a sincere commitment to Spirit?
2. How does Isaiah advocate the wisdom of non-resistance?
3. What is the metaphysical significance of the Messianic prophecies?
4. Does Micah teach that it is difficult to please God? If not, what does he teach?
5. What does Habakkuk tell us about "divine appointments"?

IV. ADDENDA

The teacher will note that these course lessons dealing with the prophets do not follow the exact sequence in Let There Be Light. For this reason, the "READINGS" will simply refer to the entire body of chapters dealing with the prophets in Let There Be Light. Also, each prophet can be looked up separately in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.

Lesson 12: THE PROPHETS Part 1

In this and the following lessons of this interpretation course dealing with Old Testament prophets, we shall deal only with the metaphysical meanings of their names and certain of their statements which have DEFINITE METAPHYSICAL IMPORT.

If a student is interested in the more historical aspects of the prophets he may refer directly to either Mrs. Turner's Let There Be Light, or to any of numerous other fine books on the subject.

Also, some students may feel that this course should contain more statements from the prophets than those which have been chosen. Others may feel that too many have been included. In any case, the explanation is that only those statements which appeared to have a DIRECT CONNECTION with the Unity teachings have been included in this particular course.

(1) ISAIAH:

"Jehovah is salvation;. . . deliverance of Jehovah. . . Meta. The higher self, that in which discerns the reality, the real character, of spiritual man, and fearlessly proclaims it; spiritual understanding." (M.B.D. p. 300)

"And I heard the voice of the Lord (Jehovah) saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'" (Isa. 6:8)

This simple statement can be taken to constitute one of the purest affirmations of sincere willingness to make a commitment to Spirit. "Here am I! Send me." Or we might alter it slightly and affirm, Here am I God, USE me. When this simple statement is uttered from the heart it can cause a person to become a chosen instrument for any number of God's good purposes. The whole universe cherishes a willing channel for the work of Spirit, and the rewards are indescribable.

"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past." (Isa. 26:20)

This is a statement of true spiritual psychology, which is to be repeated in more elaborate fashion later by Jesus. Here, in gentle poetic language, Isaiah is illustrating what is often stated by others in a more harsh manner: DON'T REACT TO ANYTHING NEGATIVE BY BECOMING EVEN MORE NEGATIVE! Isaiah is really paraphrasing a statement used very often in Unity, which goes somewhat like this: Let us become still; turn within; and acknowledge the loving presence and power of God.

Isaiah is using the word "wrath" as we would use the word "negativity" in Unity. Let the negative pass. Do not connect your sense of I Am to any passing negative emotion. Let it pass and return to your own inner peace before you proceed.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. . . ." (Isa. 9:6, 7)

This is the first great Messianic prophecy which has its actual outward manifestation as the birth of Jesus. But its inner meaning is for all persons and is universal and timeless.

This prophecy refers to that time when an individual has a newborn realization of the true nature of God as it can be expressed in and through man. It begins as a spark of inner realization (child) and develops into the greatest and highest of realizations within man. Before this illumination comes, God is usually thought of in strange anthropomorphic ways. He is powerful but stern. He is just but harsh. He is to be feared because of the harm He is capable of causing. This is very low-level religious thinking. But the Messiah is born eventually. The Messiah is a new realization about God. This is the concept of God revealed to us by Jesus, and this is the God worshipped in Unity.

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord (Jehovah): though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. . . ." (Isa. 1:18)

Here we have in the Old Testament something that is seldom mentioned but is mentioned very frequently in the New Testament. It is one of the main spiritual points made by Jesus and given strong emphasis by Him. It is FORGIVENESS OF SINS. The statement as worded by Isaiah can be boiled down to its very essence, which is: sincere communion with God results in forgiveness of sins.

"For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust (confidence, KJV) shall be your strength.'" (Isa. 30:15)

Every person has within himself a center of silence and stillness. The center of silence is the source of pure power. The center of stillness is pure strength. When we return to this inner center in preparation for meditation and prayer, we are once again connected to the source of all spiritual power and strength, and we are once again renewed and restored. Modern metaphysics teaches this basic principle in many ways, but here we have it in an ancient form in the words of the prophet Isaiah.

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord (Jehovah) has risen upon you." (Isa. 60:1)

A totally positive affirmation. Light is the symbol of divine illumination and guidance. It only needs to be affirmed in order to be experienced. The prayer for illumination is always answered quickly and surely. In the New Testament, the writer of Ephesians repeats Isaiah's same idea in his statement: "Awake O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." (Eph. 5:14)

(2) ZEPHANIA:

"Jehovah has hidden; secret place of Jehovah" Meta.: Truth active in the consciousness of the individual but hidden from the outer, sense phase of his being. (M.B.D. p. 693)

"Seek the Lord (Jehovah); all you humble of the land, who do his commands; seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the wrath of the Lord (Jehovah)." (Zeph. 2:3)

This statement is a good example of the level of consciousness which the prophets in general symbolize in our spiritual unfoldment. They do not represent the Truth of high spiritual understanding. Nor do they represent all the crudities of literal or negative religious thinking. They represent a transitional phase of consciousness--emerging out of the old literalism and negativity and developing into an awareness of the greater light of Truth thinking.

This quotation from Zephaniah illustrates this transitional type of religious thinking. He is telling us that it IS possible to avoid certain negative outworkings of the law of cause and effect (the wrath of the Lord). He even tells us some of the ways we can do this (seek the Lord; seek righteousness; seek humility). He does not guarantee us that this will work ("you may be"), but he says that at least it is possible. Although this prophetic statement does not reach the level of truly realizing the forgiving love of God, it does at least point in that direction!

(3) MICAH:

"Who is like unto Jehovah? Who can assimilate Jah?" Meta.: The individual's awakening to the truth of his real being, to the fact that in his real, true self he is spiritual. . . ." (M.B.D. p. 448)

"He (the Lord Jehovah) has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord (Jehovah) require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

This is a classic example of how utterly simple pure Truth thinking can be. This is a metaphysical statement which does not need interpretation because it is not really symbolic. It is factual.

(4) HABAKKUK:

"embracing; infolding; a wrestler; a struggler" Meta.: The clearness of vision in us that, looking into the working of the thoughts of our consciousness, foresees their fruition and holds tightly to (embraces) that which is good and true, while it wrestles or struggles with the error in an attempt to purge it out." (M.B.D. p. 244)

"For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end--it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay." (Hab. 2:3)

This statement might be termed: assurance that you have an appointment with a blessing! The vision mentioned is symbolic of either a goal in the mind or a desire in the heart. When the vision is sought through the help of God, its fulfillment is certain. We will receive the proper guidance ("it will not lie") and the timing for its fulfillment will be right ("it will not delay"). We are also cautioned to not get impatient or discouraged if the time factor entails a waiting period ("if it seem slow, wait for it"). Impatience has spoiled many an answer to prayer, but patience is a virtue which always pays off.

". . .the Lord (Jehovah) is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." (Hab. 2:20)

Here is another admonition to observe moments of silence. Silence is golden, especially inner silence. The realm of Spirit is silence. In silence the mightiest works of Spirit are done. One of the great obstacles to spiritual realization is unnecessary talking and noise making. This usually consists of an inner clamor of mostly negative dialogue, argument, promising, justifying, etc. Habakkuk tells us to "keep silence" and the law of our highest good (the Lord) will accomplish many wonderful things.

Lesson 13 THE PROPHETS Part 2

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Ezekiel.
2. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Haggai.
3. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Nehemiah.
4. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Malachi.
5. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Jonah.

II. READINGS

1. Ezekiel Chapters 24, 37; Haggai Chapter 2; Nehemiah Chapters 1-2; Malachi Chapter 3; Jonah Chapters 1-4
2. Let There Be Light Chapters XIII-IXX
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary--under headings for separate names of prophets.

III. QUESTIONS

1. Why is the statement in Ezekiel about "not mourning for the dead" metaphysically correct?
2. What is the main point made in the vision of the dry bones?
3. Why is it wise to follow Malachi's instructions about giving (tithing)?
4. What is the main metaphysical idea within the story of Jonah and the "great fish"?

Lesson 13: THE PROPHETS Part 2

(5) EZEKIEL:

"God strengthens; God is strong: whom God makes strong" Meta.: "That in us which relies on Spirit and encourages us to place our full trust in Jehovah, that the Lord Jehovah (the spiritual I AM in us) may become the keeper of our sheep (our spiritual thoughts)." (M.B.D. p. 211, 212)

"Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead." (Ezek. 24:17)

These words are not spoken by Ezekiel, but are heard by him as the voice of Jehovah instructing him as to how to handle his grief over the recent death of his wife. These words symbolize a healthy attitude toward the fact of bereavement. Some sorrow should be felt, and some of it may even be expressed (Sigh--but not TOO loud). Real sadness and genuine sorrow can be therapeutic to the soul. Grief DOES NOT HAVE TO BE NEGATIVE! Few persons seem to realize this. But for one who does realize it great strength can be gained. Part of Ezekiel's meaning is "whom God makes strong."

"Make no mourning for the dead" is also metaphysically correct. If one mourns, he is really mourning for himself. He is bemoaning the way he feels, the way he is reacting within himself. Such mourning is really not for the dead. Another reason why this instruction is metaphysically correct is because, in Truth, THERE ARE NO DEAD. There are no dead persons. Souls do make transitions, but souls do not die. And even the body does not really "die." The physical arrangement of the body atoms is simply cast aside and the atoms form into new structures as the soul goes into the transition experience. Therefore, the only thing involved which deserves any mourning is the sorrow over personal sense of separation.

Chapter 37 of Ezekiel presents his vision of the valley of dry bones. There are many possible metaphysical meanings for this vision, but the one which would relate most closely to the Unity point of view would be that a consciousness of Truth can transform even hopeless-looking situations.

Dry bones represent discouraging outer appearances. They also represent bare essentials, bare possibilities. They could also stand for old memories. But as an assembly, they represent situations most persons find themselves in at various times throughout life.

Ezekiel is told to prophesy to the bones. Later he is told to prophesy to the breath (wind, KJV). This means to speak words of Truth right into the facts of barren, hopeless-looking outer appearances. We are told that as he does so the bones begin to move, then connect, then to shape themselves into new forms. As Ezekiel continues to prophesy (affirm the Truth), the bones take on flesh, rise back into life, and become a living "host". All of this wonderful imagery symbolizes the bringing forth of new good out of old possibilities and old memories.

This is part of the wonderful "magic" of correct use of affirmation. To affirm is to declare the Truth of any of God's divine ideas. The idea of life is omnipresent--omnipresent in time as well as in space. Old conditions may pass away, but life is never absent. It only needs to be made manifest as new conditions. The story of Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones is a classic metaphysical allegory illustrating just this point.

(6) HAGGAI:

"festive; joyous; rejoicing" Meta.: "A realization of good as taking the place of seeming evil. That spiritual insight in man which heralds joyous, full, free deliverance from oppression, and abundance of rich substance and life for mind and body; it feasts upon the Truth daily, and foresees and foretells the working out of good." (M.B.D. p. 248)

". . . Consider how you have fared. You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes." (Haggai 1:5, 6)

This passage symbolizes the very reverse of "all sufficiency in all things." Haggai denounces the consciousness which produces INSUFFICIENCY in all things. Where does this consciousness of insufficiency come from? Its basic cause is ever the same: too much indulgence in materialistic thinking and judging and believing.

The material is meant to serve the spiritual. But too often man uses his mind to try to reverse the process. He makes this attempt mostly in his attitudes and in his reactions to things. This develops a negative type of approach to the whole idea of sufficient supply. Later, Jesus exposes this erroneous attitude in the words "has not." Jesus says that one who expresses from a "has not" attitude will experience just that. What is the alternative? It is simply to change the thinking about supply to a spiritual basis. Acknowledge God and His omnipresent spiritual substance as the true source of all needful supply.

(7) NEHEMIAH:

"Jehovah consoles; Jehovah comforts" Meta.: "In Nehemiah 1, Nehemiah represents one who has been carried away from spiritual peace (Jerusalem) into the confusion of sense (Babylon) and is desirous of again restoring the Holy City . . . Nehemiah 1:11 shows the earnest faith and simplicity of this spiritual-minded man." (M.B.D. p. 476)

"Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall; and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work." (Neh. 2:15, 16)

This statement takes on special metaphysical significance when one keeps in mind that Nehemiah was highly successful in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. This statement illustrates one of the reasons for his success, which is, he did not do any unnecessary talking about it before undertaking the work. Elizabeth Sand Turner makes a very perceptive comment on this idea: "Is it not best to work out a plan with God before we ask outer help? Many a worthy endeavor fails because WE TALK ABOUT IT

TOO MUCH beforehand. Much discussion dissipates the energy required to perform the deed! (L.T.B.L. p. 224)

Mechanical talking is an energy dissipater. Promise making is an energy dissipater. Excuse making is an energy dissipater. Self-justifying is a terrific energy dissipater. Nehemiah is an example of not doing any of this; hence, his marvelous success in constructive and restorative work.

(8) MALACHI:

"one sent of Jehovah; messenger of Jehovah; minister" Meta.: "The voice of conscience in man calls his attention to his shortcomings and encourages him to do right. Conscience is symbolized by Malachi." (M.B.D. p. 420)

". . . put me to the test, says the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing." (Mal. 3:10)

Malachi has presented us with one of the most beautiful symbolic descriptions of the law of tithing and giving and receiving. The importance of this law cannot be too strongly emphasized for all serious Truth students. The infallibility of its action has been proved beyond question. Yet people seem to find it so easy to forget and to neglect cooperation with it.

The divine law of giving and receiving speaks through Malachi. It urges us to "prove" it in our daily living. Willing and sincere giving must always result in an experience of receiving. But the strange and wonderful thing is that the receiving experience will not be an exact equivalent of the giving. Spirit does not deal in even exchanges. The receiving from Spirit will always be one of having increase. ("God gives the increase." See I Cor. 3:5-7)

(9) JONAH:

This prophet is an especially interesting symbol in many ways, but especially in the light of the wide range of qualities which his name means. In the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary we find listed as definitions of the word Jonah: "a dove; dove-like; warmth; affection; lovable; fruitful; productive; fertile; effervescent; fermenting; passionate; oppressive; violent; intoxicating; destructive." What are we to make of all that? Did you ever see such a wildly fluctuating range of meaning for one word? Then we also read that metaphysically he symbolizes "a prophetic state of mind." At first this may all seem puzzling and confusing. But careful thought will more than likely yield an insight into the meaning of Jonah.

To prophesy means to speak the Truth as it is revealed to us and as we understand it. The prophets of the Old Testament all represent different attitudes, motives, states of mind, and degrees of understanding. All represent attempts to share words of Truth. Jonah stands for an extremely wide range of all this IN ONE SYMBOL! He is a very mixed symbol (as most of us are!).

Notice how his name runs the whole gamut of meaning--all the way from "dove-like" to "destructive." Therefore he represents a wide range of factors in one consciousness. His meaning includes very wide possibilities of different motives (some contradictory), attitudes, states of mind, etc. as we attempt to comprehend and express Truth. Some of these result in harmony and satisfaction; some result in turmoil and distress.

The most significant incident in the book is the swallowing of Jonah by "a great fish." Elizabeth Sand Turner interprets this as "falling into a disastrous state of affairs." (L.T.B.L. p. 236) This certainly can be true from one view. But there is an equally valid interpretation for this from quite another view. Fish is a metaphysical symbol for idea. Fish made by God symbolize divine ideas. This particular fish was a "great fish" and was sent by God. Therefore, it does represent a divine idea.

Also, this fish did not come to harm Jonah or kill him. It came to rescue him after the sailors granted Jonah's request to cast him into the sea. So we can say that Jonah's being tossed into the stormy sea would symbolize "falling into a disastrous state of affairs." But, as Unity teaches, God is our help in every need. And much of the time the help that God provides comes in the form of any needed divine idea. This is the meaning of the "great fish" prepared by God to rescue Jonah.

Metaphysically this illustrates the fact that no matter how complicated or hopeless looking a dilemma we may ever find ourself in, God will provide the right kind of help for us if we are willing to receive. Most often the right divine idea will be revealed to us. It will be a Truth idea into which we can immerse all our attention, belief, and faith. We can let it absorb our attention. This is the meaning of being "swallowed by a great fish." This can prove to be our salvation. Here are a few examples of divine ideas in the form of Unity affirmations. These are ideas into which we can totally immerse our minds:

- (a) God is my help in EVERY need.
- (b) All things are working together for good.
- (c) God is my health, I can't be sick.
- (d) Prayer changes things.
- (e) God means it for good.

Lesson 14 THE PROPHETS - Part 3

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Joel.
2. Metaphysical meaning and main metaphysical message of Daniel.
3. Metaphysical meaning of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego and the fiery furnace.
4. Metaphysical significance of Daniel and the lion's den.
5. Metaphysical meaning of Ecclesiastes.

II. READINGS

1. Joel 2; Daniel 3, 6; Ecclesiastes 11-12
2. Let There Be Light Chapters XIII - IXX
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary--under headings for separate names of prophets.

III. QUESTIONS

1. How does Joel assure us that it is possible for us to change our past?
2. What is the main metaphysical point in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and also the story of Daniel in the lion's den?
3. How do we "cast our bread upon the waters," and what will be our benefit if we do?
4. What does Ecclesiastes see as man's whole duty?

IV ADDENDA

The teacher will note that the written text for this lesson is much briefer than the other lessons. The reason for this is the text does not deal with Psalms, Proverbs, or Ruth. Since these books are so well-known and loved, the teacher may want to use class time dealing with them, even on a non-metaphysical level.

Lesson 14: THE PROPHETS Part 3

(10) JOEL:

"worshipper of God; he who fulfills every desire" Meta.: "Joel bespeaks the I Am in dominion in the individual. In this consciousness all things are possible." (M.B.D. p. 355)

This book contains a very esoteric metaphysical Truth which surprises and delights most persons who come into a realization of it. It is symbolized in these words: "I will restore to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten. . . ." (Joel 2:25)

This statement points out a deeply metaphysical idea, which is that it is possible to experience a CHANGE OF THE MEANING OF ONE'S PAST, especially anything that was wasteful or undesirable in that past. One has this experience by letting the Lord make that change (I (the Lord) will restore the years the locust has eaten.) We cannot change our past personally. But we can let our Lord totally change its meaning for us, and thus we have the feeling that the past itself has been changed. But only God can do this for us. "We know that in everything (even the mistakes of the past) God works for good with those who love him. . . ." (Romans 8:28)

A person's past seems to change in the sense that its meaning for him changes. The REAL meaning for all things is good. Even negative, painful, wasteful events of the past can be changed by development of spiritual faith and understanding. It can be done. But only one who BELIEVES it can be done and WANTS it to be done will have the experience. Sad to say, there are still those who want to hang on to the past at any cost, and will not allow even unhappy memories to change their perspective. Such persons, then, cannot have the "locust-eaten" years restored to them!

(11) DANIEL:

"God is my judge; judgment of God" Meta.: "Daniel signifies pure judgment, conscious integrity. He typifies the clear, penetrating insight of Spirit." (M.B.D. p. 164)

The main metaphysical point made in the book of Daniel is contained in chapter 3:1-30. This recounts the episode involving Daniel's three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men refuse to worship the golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar, and they are cast into a fiery furnace. But they remain unharmed, and are joined in the furnace by a fourth person. Then they are allowed to come out and are placed in high positions by the king.

The following definitions are taken from the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.

- (1) King Nebuchadnezzar--human will power backed by human intellect
- (2) His golden image--anything which is a glorified concept of self or a projection of our human egotism and selfishness

- (3) Daniel--spiritual judgment
- (4) Shadrach--true humility
- (5) Meshach--love
- (6) Abednego--spiritual understanding
- (7) The fiery furnace--the threat of suffering or destruction which the negative side of human nature fears will occur if we do not obey selfish impulses (worship the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar)

The furnace had no power to harm or destroy those qualities in us symbolized by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Not only did their refusal to worship the golden image result in no harm or loss for them, it added a fourth member to their group.

The additional (fourth) man is described in the story as "like a son of the gods (God, KJV)". He represents a new dimension of consciousness which is always gained by us when we remain faithful to Principle (God) instead of worshipping selfishness and egotism. This fourth man stands for a more God-like quality developed in our individual unfoldment.

Later in the book (chapter 6) Daniel has an experience in a lion's den which has become responsible for making him one of the most famous characters in all the Bible, or at least in the Old Testament. His experience in the lion's den has almost exactly the same metaphysical meaning as the story of his three friends in the fiery furnace. The only difference being that Daniel is the only character involved in the lion's den episode. But the metaphysical lesson is amazingly similar.

The books of Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Psalms, fall more into the categories of poetry, philosophy, maxims, wit, and music. They are not metaphysical in the sense of being allegorical or esoteric symbols. This is not to say that they are not enjoyable and highly instructive. This is only to say that they do not lend themselves to the kind of interpretation which has been followed in this particular course. This may also be said of the book of Ruth. Much as we may love this book, it does not possess the material suitable for a strictly metaphysical interpretation. However, there is an interesting metaphysical meaning to the name of Ruth:

RUTH: "female friend; sympathetic companion; desirable; delightful:

Meta.: The love of the soul in its natural state, or the love of the natural soul for God and for the things of Spirit."
(M.B.D. p. 562)

Also, in Ecclesiastes 11:1 we find a very metaphysical statement: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days." In Bible symbolism, bread stands for substance or essence. This statement tells us to "cast" our substance, or essence (bread) into the waters of life: for in doing so we find our own substance and discover the real essence of ourself.

This teaching is in direct conjunction with the great law of giving and receiving. As we give ourselves to life, so we find greater dimensions of ourself in doing so. Life returns to us an increased awareness of our real worth as we serve life according to the laws of Spirit. This is a beautiful teaching, and it is confirmed over and over again by Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiastes also contains this statement of metaphysical importance: ". . . Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the WHOLE DUTY of man." (Eccles. 12:13) The metaphysical meaning of Ecclesiastes makes this particular statement doubly significant. Ecclesiastes stands for: "Experience. Experience preaches very effectively; the fruit of experience is the most impressive sermon in life. Experience teaches us that it is impossible to find satisfaction and true lasting joy in sensual, earthly pleasures and in self-seeking. The ONLY WAY to gain the realities of life that satisfy both soul and body is to turn within to God and become unified consciously with Him." (M.B.D. p. 181)

Lesson 15 JOB

I. MAJOR POINTS

1. Metaphysical meaning of Job.
2. Metaphysical meaning of Jehovah and Satan.
3. Metaphysical significance of Job's afflictions.
4. Metaphysical futility of trying to justify earthly suffering.
5. Metaphysical significance of Elihu.
6. Metaphysical significance of conclusion of the story.

II. READINGS

1. Job 1-14, 32-42
2. Let There Be Light Chapter XX
3. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary--under separate headings: Job; Bildad; Eliphaz; Zophar; Elihu

III. QUESTIONS

1. What is the metaphysical significance of the fact that the word "Job" has such a wide range of definitions?
2. Are Jehovah and Satan separate beings existing "out there?"
3. What is the metaphysical meaning of Satan being "permitted" to afflict Job?
4. Can earthly suffering be justified by apologies, accusations, or moral reasoning? Explain.
5. What metaphysical lesson can be found in the conclusion of the story?

Lesson 15: JOB

The book of Job maintains great fame and popularity for obvious reasons--its poetic language, its thought-provoking dilemmas, its drama, its "outrageous" plot. But for many readers it is a troubling book because of its unanswered questions, the seeming injustice of much that occurs in it, the long-winded and rather pointless discussions, and the strangely arrogant tone given to Jehovah's speeches. All in all, the book STRICTLY AS LITERATURE can cause mixed reactions in readers.

But a truly metaphysical interpretation is possible. A metaphysical (rather than philosophical) approach must be on the same basis as that used for all other metaphysical portions of the Bible; and that is that the ENTIRE narrative symbolizes things WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL.

NOTE: "I believe that if one deals with this book on a literal level--that is, treating it as a conventional drama and dialogue occurring among many different persons (Jehovah, Satan, Job, etc.) one will miss its metaphysical-Truth meaning. The metaphysical interpretation should be based on a realization that the whole thing symbolizes something WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL." (Ed Rabel)

Who are Jehovah, Satan, Job, Eliphaz, and all the others? Are they each separate persons who have separate existences? Are they "persons" separate from the reader? Or are they Biblical symbols of different factors within an INDIVIDUAL human being?

JEHOVAH: the indwelling Lord; the spiritual law of our being.

SATAN: the "adversary," the human tendency toward negativity; the existing possibility of error. He represents the as-yet unilluminated, negative, violent aspects still existing in human nature.

JOB: "persecuted; calamitous; afflicted; a coming back; returned to one's senses; converted" (M.B.D. p. 354) Yes, his name in Hebrew does have all those definitions! So we can see that metaphysically he stands for a WHOLE CYCLE OF EXPERIENCE in an individual human consciousness. His name represents almost the whole gamut of possibilities of experiences in consciousness which can be reflected into outer experiences in life.

Satan is given permission to afflict Job. Some interpreters feel that this fact denotes a desire on the part of Jehovah to "test" Job. But Jehovah is an aspect of Divine Mind, and why should Divine Mind need to test anyone about anything? Divine Mind is all-knowingness.

Jehovah is IN INDIVIDUAL MAN. Satan is IN INDIVIDUAL MAN. Job is IN INDIVIDUAL MAN. Man has relative freedom of choice in most aspects of his nature, from his highest level (Jehovah) to his lowest (Satan) and all that is in between (Job). If an individual chooses to let his lower nature prevail, he can do so. Satan has permission to express. This is part of our freedom of individuality.

NOTE: If you want to be fearful, angry, resentful, who is to stop you? Even though you will suffer for it (be afflicted) Satan (your own negative attitude) has "permission" to afflict!)

It should come as no surprise that Satan in us (our lower nature) takes advantage of this freedom, and Job is afflicted. But Job is US! We all, each one of us individually use this freedom of choice to indulge our own negative tendencies. Who can deny this?

Am I never willingly negative?

Do I never hate?

Do I never lie?

Do I never foolishly boast?

Am I never ruled by vanity?

We all know the answers to these questions. We all do these things at times. We permit our negative tendency (Satan) to have its way, and then we and our life are afflicted.

The first set of afflictions do not cause Job utter despair, because they happen to others in his life. While we do suffer from the misfortunes of others, we can bear it. (Dr. Maurice Nicoll has written in his "Psychological Commentaries": "Nothing in life is easier to bear than the misfortune of others.")

But next, Job himself is afflicted (smitten with boils and deprived of health and possessions) and thus sinks into despair.

Three friends try to comfort him, but are unsuccessful. They are Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. (These three each have metaphysical meanings which can be found in the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary.) In a very general sense, these characters symbolize all unsuccessful efforts of our human intellect to "explain" things with one-sided viewpoints, opinions, incomplete analysis, and moral judgments.

In a more personal sense, these three characters represent our own inner attempts to explain existence in terms of itself, and to try to rationalize and justify on the level of strictly human emotional and intellectual reasoning. Such attempts are hardly ever successful. True, in certain cases it may seem to work. Words can be very convincing when cleverly used--but this does not make them true. Especially is this so when one is trying to explain or justify accidents, tragedies, and suffering in life ON THE BASIS OF BELIEVING THAT LIFE EVENTS ARE AN END IN THEMSELVES, RATHER THAN MEANS TO OTHER ENDS.

In other words, we should be learning that it is futile to try to explain certain things which happen in our lives IF WE ALWAYS TAKE THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN ONLY AT THEIR FACE VALUE. (Jesus said, "Do not judge by appearances. . ." Jn 7:24) For example: a certain accident may not have any meaning or explanation strictly in and of itself. It may not be justified or explained satisfactorily on its own terms (as a separate phenomenon). We may try to justify or rationalize it, but how successfully?

All through man's history he has gone through this sort of thing, and has really gotten nowhere with it. "Why did this happen to me?" "Why ME--why not someone who is a little worse than me?"

Sickness, rejection, financial setbacks, human relation problems, death; they happen, yes. But why should any of them happen to me? Then that which is symbolized by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar go to work in us. We ponder, we reason, we justify, we blame, we judge, we resent--and usually all in vain. Because we look for an explanation for a negative event in terms of negativity itself. It may seem as though this kind of thinking should work, but it doesn't. Something very different is needed in our manner of thinking on these subjects. And this new approach to thinking about negative happenings is symbolized in the book as Elihu.

ELIHU: "My God is that which is; my God is He" Meta.: Elihu of the book of Job represents the Holy Spirit." (M.B.D. p. 191)

Strictly within man, Elihu represents spiritual thinking. That is, thinking in a dimension which may include, but goes deeper than strictly human reasoning, judging, and justifying. The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary says that Elihu represents the Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit that enables us to experience the only way of thinking which will really lead us to the help we need when we are in the midst of unexplainable and seemingly unjustifiable afflictions in our life.

The help which Elihu brings is not given directly, but indirectly: mostly by turning Job's mind to a different level of thinking. This is typical of the way Truth acts in our minds. Often we are not led by Truth into point-blank answers or "head-on" solutions to our problems. Quite often Truth thinking leads a person to a new awareness of possibilities. Truth thinking may simply quicken positive factors in our consciousness into new activity. This makes it more possible for us to perceive and understand the right answer, or makes us much more receptive to divine help. Thus it is in the narrative of the book.

Elihu says to Job, ". . .It is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand." (Job 32:8) Can we realize the importance of this idea? Have we ever asked ourselves these questions:

What IS my understanding? Where does it come from?

Do I create it, do I make it?

In fact, can I REALLY explain ANYTHING? (Try to "explain" a thought. Try to "explain" how you move your little finger.)

Of course, we cannot. Spiritual Truth cannot really be "explained," but IT CAN BE SPOKEN AND BE UNDERSTOOD! It is an understanding beyond the human level of explanations. ". . . the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand" refers to intuitive or spiritual understanding. It is only on this higher, more inclusive level of thinking that man can find the sort of help he really needs in the face of mysterious, unexplainable, and seemingly unjust afflictions in life.

Chapters 38-42 of Job consist of long discourses spoken by Jehovah, seeking to impress on Job the fact that ordinary man does not create in the pure sense; but he can only be a witness to that which has been done. Man is a receiving creature, an observer, a producer. It is only in the sense of being productive that he is creative. Man is an arranger and a re-arranger of that which has already been created by God.

Job comes to understand this and agrees with it, and as a result he has an inner experience which is now called "seeing the light." He surrenders his personal being into the living Principle of God, and in so doing he finds himself--his Real Self.

At this point the metaphysical meaning of Job changes. He now stands for that in us which finally comes to the realization that the real answer for anything that occurs in human life is that GOD IS THE ONLY PRESENCE AND POWER THAT IS REALLY ETERNAL. Within God is all meaning. The trials, errors, afflictions, and tribulations of human life will come and go. Some can be partially explained, some not at all.

Man suffers. All men do. Whether one thing causes it or another is not the really important thing. Whether one thinks he deserves it or not is not the really important thing. Man suffers.

In spite of the sad fact that all persons suffer the Truth is always there in spite of it all. Truth is behind everything, before everything, beneath everything, above everything, within everything. And the Truth is: GOD is the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality of all that is GOOD. No matter what may happen (or fail to happen) in the realm of temporary form and passing phenomena, God means it for good.

Metaphysically, the outcome of the book of Job seems to underline this basic teaching: No amount of justifying or explaining gives a person any real satisfaction where human suffering is concerned. The only satisfaction we can have relating to suffering is the OVERCOMING of it. The book of Job tells us that only total recognition and acceptance of the Truth of God and good as the ultimate meaning will overcome human suffering. Nothing else really suffices.