

**Module** : Meditation

**Session 4** : Meditation's Manifestation – Part 1

**Focus** : Isaac, Joseph, Mary & Peter Meditated



Word to the World  
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The title for our focus in this session, 'Meditation's Manifestation' relates to the results of meditation. We have demonstrated from the Scriptures that the broad outcome of meditation is obedience, borne out from 'understanding' within the realm of the mind of the spirit. In this session, we seek to illustrate various outcomes of meditation using specific biblical case studies. Some of these are repetitive from prior sessions and are given brief mention, whilst others are explored more deeply. In this session we shall examine the meditation of Isaac, Joseph, Mary and Peter. In our next session we look at Timothy, Joshua and David.

As a man thinks, so is he (Prov. 23:7a). **The activity of the mind has an outward, discernible manifestation.** All meditation affects the individual. Biblical spiritual meditation has powerful positive effects and consequences for the son of God. Lets examine some of these by focusing on individuals in Scripture who employed their minds meditatively.

#### **MEN AND WOMEN WHO ACCESSED THE BENEFITS ATTENDANT WITH MEDITATION**

As you study the case studies presented below, you will soon realise that your meditative strength is probably the greatest determinant to your success.

The average person finds it easier to spend six hours travelling at great personal cost to hear a one hour sermon from an authentic servant of God, than to spend 15 minutes meditating on what they have heard. Tremendous thought and planning is exerted and performed in getting to hear teachings, yet sadly, not much commensurate effort is applied to meditate upon what was released. Thus, much of what the Lord intends to be yours is potentially lost because of indiscipline relative to meditation. Why spend up to R3000 or more in travel and accommodation costs and conference fees to hear WORD, when you have neither inclination nor intention to deeply ruminate the Word, reflecting and pondering on it. May I encourage you today to extract the fullest spiritual benefit from the Word given to you so that as Joshua 1:8 indicates, you will make your way prosperous and have good success.

#### **1. ISAAC – THE LIFTING UP OF THE EYES TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**

##### **Gen 24:62-64**

- 62 Now Isaac had come from going to Beer- lahai- roi; for he was living in the Negev.
- 63 Isaac went out **to meditate in the field toward evening**; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming.
- 64 Rebekah **lifted up her eyes**, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from the camel.

### Principles to learn:

- a. **Isaac meditated 'toward' the evening.** Whilst we are expected to meditate 'day and night' (Josh. 1:8), specific **concentrated meditation** warrants **a special time and place**, away from the busyness of life.
- b. From the context of a meditative mind, the **eyes can be lifted up to see** the fruition of hopes, the fulfillment of dreams, the realisation of desires or the enactment of prophetic promises. Note: Isaac in a meditative state, 'lifted up his eyes' to see and receive his bride to be. The 'lifting up of the eyes' is a powerful metaphor for the necessity to elevate one's prophetic sight to see things not readily apparent to the natural eyes. **The meditated mind is preparatory to sight and the embracing of things essential for the execution of Divine purpose.** The meditative state facilitates spiritual sight. Yet the caution is for this process to be **directed by the Lord** and not be governed by our own self-will or personal ambition.

Compare how Lot, fueled by personal greed and the appeal of the natural, lifted up his eyes and made a carnal decision with a disastrous final outcome, as opposed to how Abram lifted up his eyes in response to the commandment of the Lord to do so (Read Genesis 13).

**Gen. 13:14-15** The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, " Now **lift up your eyes and look from the place** where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

The Hebrew word translated 'LOOK' is **ra'ah** and does not primarily refer to physical sight. It means amongst other things, **"to perceive, to have vision, consider, give attention to"**. Thus Abram was to employ the mind of his spirit to mentally and spiritually perceive the vastness of the sphere God had given to him. Abram is to also LOOK from the PLACE he was at. Again this is not a reference to a physical location per se, for he obviously could not see the entire world (which is what God really meant) from where he was. The Hebrew word translated PLACE is **'maqom'** whose range of meanings includes **'a standing'** and also of a **'condition'**. Thus Abram's sight was dependent upon his standing or condition. This would determine the extent of his sight. Consistent meditation conditions the mind to a more accurate **'standing' or 'condition'** on the spirit that affords one the capacity to see the fullest extremity of all God desires to show you.

The mind accurately poised in reverent meditation is one of humility, blinding the eyes of the soul so that the eyes of the spirit could be the predominant medium of accurate sight. **The meditated mind is the medicated mind**, whose eyes are washed with eye salve, so that ultimately the eyes of our understanding can see and know the things that has been freely planned for and given to us.

**Rev. 3:18a,c** I advise you to buy ... eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

- c. In the process of waiting for the promise of God to be fulfilled, the mind is to be kept focused upon the **PROVIDENTIAL FAITHFULNESS** of God. The place at which Isaac lived after Abraham's death was Beer- lahai- roi (Gen. 25:11).

**Beer- lahai- roi** = The well of the life of vision; the well of her that lives and of him that sees; i.e., preserves me in life; the well of the living who sees me.

This place was initially a spring in the wilderness, the venue at which God spoke to Hagar and promised to both preserve and provide for her (Gen. 16). Hence, it depicts God's provision and preservation. It was here where Hagar literally saw the Lord, and after HE declared His provision, she declares, ...

**Gen. 16:13** So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

Literally translated, the phrase "I have seen the one who looks at me", in the original Hebrew reads as follows: "Have I really seen him here who sees me?" or "Would I have looked here for the one who sees me?" In a wilderness, she saw the ONE who constantly had His eye on her and assured her of His provision. In meditation, we see the Lord with the eyes of our enlightened understanding (Eph. 1:18), **in the fullness of His all-provident nature.**

ISAAC lifted up his eyes in meditation and saw the answer to his desire for a wife. Rebekah, upon seeing him from a distance, also 'lifted up her eyes'. There was the 'meeting of the eyes'. Symbolically, we may conclude that **what one sees prophetically as your eyes are lifted up in meditative thought, is actually God's provision attempting to locate where you are.** Provision comes to those accurately positioned mentally – in our mentality and belief about who we are in God and who He is in us.

Beerlahairoi is all about sight – our sight of God and His sight of us. Isaac knew this, and so he calmly stationed the activity of his mind upon the certainty that God will provide him the ideal wife, one in the calibre of his mother Sarah, so that a qualitative seed could be produced later on in Jacob – and so the generational transfer of God's global purpose was ensured to continue unthreatened. This I suspect was Isaac's motivation in his meditation – **his passion was only that God's broad worldwide purposes prevail.** In this context, **personal provision was guaranteed; for the motive in his need being provided for, was not selfish nor self-indulgent, but only existed as a priority in so far as it fed into the overall grand scheme of God's vast global will.**

**I strongly suspect that the subject of Isaac's meditation was GOD'S nature as 'Provision' –** specifically how God provided a ram at the time when his father Abraham was intent on obeying the command of God to sacrifice him. At that juncture both Abraham and Isaac saw the nature of God revealed as Jehovah Jireh – 'The Lord is Provision'. This experience etched an inedible imprint of the preservation and provision of God within Isaac – and he must have often recalled it whenever faced with issues of provision.

**Psalm 77:12** I will **meditate** on all Your work and muse on Your deeds.

**Psalm 143:5** I remember the days of old; I **meditate** on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands.

- d. Isaac was about to take a bride for himself. He was also probably deeply contemplative over this issue. **Marriage, and other strategic covenant relationships, ought be thoroughly thought through and pondered upon before they are established.** This last point raises the issue of Joseph's meditation as it bears reference (see below).

## 2. **JOSEPH: CONFIRMATION OF STRATEGIC COVENANTAL DECISIONS**

### **Matt. 1:18-22**

- 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together** she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.
- 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.
- 20 **But when he had considered this**, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared **to him in a dream**, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.
- 21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
- 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

Upon hearing the news of Mary's pregnancy, and knowing he was not sexually intimate with her, Joseph was intent upon breaking off his marriage engagement with her. Joseph, who was a righteous man, planned to do this privately so as not to publicly humiliate her. From our perspective, this decision would have been disastrous for Joseph as he would have marred God's prophetic plan and also forfeited the absolute privilege and honour of fathering the very son of God. What prevented this potential disaster? The simple answer is '**meditation**'. Clarity from an angel only came to him 'when he CONSIDERED' his planned actions. As he considered deeply the events of the day and his intentions, God spoke to him to take Mary as his wife without fear.

**Consider = enthumeomai =** to be inspired, to bring to mind, revolve in mind, ponder, to think, to deliberate; to have or resolve in mind; it means remembrance, bringing into the mind, but with agitation of spirit

**Joseph's problem was fear**, for the first thing the angel says to him is not to fear. He was agitated in spirit. At times the will of God might lead us to embark upon certain strategic decisions that may seem socially unacceptable (as was the case with Joseph), but yet are decisions which are divinely required. Fear can prohibit our obedience. Meditation – consideration - deliberation within our spirits prepares the context of our inner man to receive a confirming word from God.

In key decisions of covenantal joinings to people, meditation assists to confirm (or to disconfirm) planned actions and intentions.

**A reminder:** Recall in a prior session I encouraged to let your last dominant thought before you sleep be one of meditation upon God's word, ways, purpose or will. Joseph demonstrates this right here. He meditated just before he slips into sleep and in a dream God speaks to him. (see Ps. 77:6; Prov. 6:20-22)

### 3. MARY: UNDERSTANDING THE BIGGER PICTURE

#### Luke 2:15-19

- 15 When **the angels** had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."
- 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to **Mary and Joseph, and the baby** as He lay in the manger.
- 17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.
- 18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.
- 19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

#### Luke 2:18,19

And all who heard it were astounded and marveled at what the shepherds told them. But Mary was keeping within herself all these things (sayings), weighing and pondering them in her heart. (Amp)

#### Luke 2:18,19

And all those to whose ears it came were full of wonder at the things said by the keepers of the sheep. Mary kept all these words in her heart, and gave much thought to them. (BBE)

#### Luke 2:18,19

And all those who heard marveled about the things spoken to them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, meditating in her heart. (MKJV)

#### Luke 2:18,19

All who heard the shepherders were impressed. Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself (Msg)

**Treasured** = *suntērēō*; =

To preserve, keep safe, close;  
To *conserve* (from ruin); mentally to *remember* (and *obey*):  
To preserve (a thing from perishing or being lost)  
To keep within one's self, keep in mind (a thing, lest it be forgotten)

**Ponder** = *sumballo* =

"to throw together, confer,"  
"to put one thing with another in considering circumstances,"  
to throw together, to bring together; to converse;

Mary had a number of confirmations that the child she would give birth to would be the son of God, e.g.

- (1) She been informed by the angel Gabriel that she would bear the Christ child.
- (2) Joseph received added confirmation in his dream
- (3) Her cousin Elizabeth prophesied over
- (4) The report of the shepherds of what the angels told them as they watched their flocks by night.
- (5) Wise men from the east.

On hearing what the shepherds had to say, Mary meditated upon what they said in her heart. As indicated above, the word 'pondered' suggests the conferring or placing of one thing next to another in considering circumstances. It implies the bringing together of separate and seemingly disparate parts to form a whole, much like the accurate positioning together of the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle in order to understand the bigger picture. We should record God's Words or dealings with us over a period of time, especially when we perceive that we are divinely selected to be the custodians and stewards of significant aspects of His purposes. Like Mary did, we must TREASURE every detail or part, and as we do so, we will begin to understand the broader plan of God afoot and also have much greater confidence of our personal role in it.

For those who are central role players in God's global purposes, effective meditation on each key development in God's continuously unfolding plan is absolutely necessary – as is demonstrated by Mary. The 'others' who heard the report of the shepherd '**wondered**' (i.e. they were in awe), but Mary '**pondered**'. Some marveled; Mary meditated. They celebrated, while Mary cerebrated. What is acceptable for 'others' is not for those whom God is to use strategically. There is a higher and nobler response to the Word than mere ecstasy, awe, wonder and excitement. It is meditation. The thrill and elation of the Word must lead to the reflection upon the Word.

#### 4. PETER : CLARITY TO A PERPLEXING VISION OF DIRECTION

Meditation can clear the muddle of the mind.

##### Act 10:9-20

- 9 On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.
- 10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;
- 11 and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,
- 12 and there were in it all *kinds of* four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.
- 13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"
- 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."
- 15 Again a voice *came* to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no *longer consider* unholy."
- 16 This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

- 17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate;
- 18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.
- 19 While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you.
- 20 "But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself."

Cornelius was an Italian Centurion – a Roman Officer. He was a devout man who feared God, prayed much and gave to the poor (Acts 10:1,2). God appeared to him in a vision commending his prayers and almsgiving, and instructed him to seek out Simon Peter, the tanner living in the city of Joppa. In obedience, Cornelius sends his servants to locate Simon. At **exactly the precise point** at which they arrive in Joppa, Peter proceeds up to his housetop to pray and there being hungry, falls into a trance. He has a vision in which the Lord shows him unclean animals on a white sheet, animals that he is told to eat, but animals which Levitical dietary laws forbade Jews from eating. In the vision, Peter refuses to eat the 'unclean' animals based on his knowledge of the law. God then tells him not to 'CONSIDER' unclean that which God reckons as clean and holy.

Note - Peter is not to CONSIDER (v.15) the animals unclean, i.e. he is not to regard it as such in his mentality – in his belief system – in his thinking. His mind, filled with prior theological principles, presented the biggest obstacle in his obedience. The vision left Peter 'greatly PERPLEXED IN MIND'. The word perplexed is the Greek word '**diaporeo**', which means '**to be in doubt**' or '**to be entirely at a loss**'. The vision left Peter confused. Instead of resigning his mind to this confusion and disorientation, he elects to employ his mind to deeply REFLECT or MEDITATE upon it (v.20).

**Reflecting = Dienthumeomai = to consider deeply**

Again there is something to note about the issue of exact, precise timing in this story. As Cornelius' men enter the city Peter has the vision. Now as he meditates upon the vision, the men are actually at his gate seeking entrance to his house. While meditating on what the practical expression of the vision might be, the HOLY SPIRIT speaks to him informing him that men are at his gate seeking him and that he is to accompany them where they go '**WITHOUT ANY MISGIVING**' (v.20) or doubt in his heart.

The thing which Peter was previously in 'doubt' of and 'entirely at a loss' to understand, he is now assured and confident to pursue. Why? The Spirit gave him the answer he needed within the context of him meditating upon a directive from God that left him greatly perplexed. Meditation cleared the muddle in his mind and with divine assurance, he boldly obeys a command of God which in the natural contradicted prior theological knowledge. Had Peter not meditated, he would not have received clarity about a difficult command of God and the necessary boldness to pursue it WITHOUT hesitation nor MISGIVING.

READ the rest of Acts 10 to see how this story plays out. Cornelius and his entire household are ushered into the Kingdom, receiving the salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit and in water. Peter could have forfeited being used by God as a strategic role player in facilitating the migration of a significant

man and his household to a more accurate spiritual location in God. This was the first Gentile ('unclean' by Jewish perception) household to receive salvation.

There is more at stake here than meets the eye. Two things are noteworthy. Firstly, Cornelius, being a Roman Centurion Officer and devout, prayerful and God-fearing at that, would certainly have a huge sphere of influence. His salvation probably activated many to come into the Kingdom. Secondly, God was busy working in Peter, who tended to be racist against Gentiles – this was part of God's grand scheme of perfecting Christ within Peter. So when you consider these two factors, Peter's decision to REFLECT or meditate on the vision takes on heightened importance.

How much of God's plans and purpose do you and I forgo simply because we fail to meditate, especially upon issues that perplex our minds, yet issues God wants us to be key role players in, both for our own good and for the good of those within our sphere of influence. Like Cornelius' men were at the gate at the precise time of Peter's meditation, perhaps too there are a set of processes already positioned for you 'AT YOUR GATE', to steward on God's behalf. So let us prayerfully meditate on all the Father speaks to us about and commands us to do, for He, the Spirit, will make all things plain by already having spoken to and thus prepared the context in which God has determined for us to represent Him and execute His will.

In our next session we shall examine three more case studies of those who meditated on God's word.

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