

January 16, 2011

God's Promises to a Dysfunctional Family **GENESIS 20 - 21**

Genesis 20:1-7

The use of the new names Abraham and Sarah indicate that this is likely subsequent to Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction and NOT a loop back in the Hebrew narrative.

- 1 "Territory of the Negeb"- this is the wilderness between Canaan and Egypt
- 2 NOT AGAIN! This is the same mistake as in Gen 12:13
Abimelech- name means "My Father is King" and is more of a title than a name
- 3 "you are a dead man"- some indication later on will show Abimelech may have gotten sick after taking Sarah.
- 5 both Abraham and Sarah are guilty in this ruse.
"in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands"- adding a political wife to his harem is civilly just even if it defies the creation in Genesis 1 – 2.
- 6 "It was I who kept you from sinning against me"- perhaps through an illness
- 7 "he is a prophet"- first time we have been given this insight into Abraham's office.

Genesis 20:8-13

- 8-9 These verses demonstrate that what ails a king ails all the people. This is common in the Psalms and has Christ the King implications: as he has died and risen, his people have died and risen.
- 11 "There is no fear of God"- there is no religious care for the promises made to Abraham
- 12 "she is indeed my sister"- technicalities do not excuse Abraham from his sin.
- 13 "when God caused me to wander"- is he blaming God?
"at every place to which we come"- It's even worse than we thought! Pharaoh and Abimelech may be the only two who have taken her, but they pulled this stunt everywhere they went!

Genesis 20:14-18

- 14 Like before, Abraham and Sarah make off nice for their sinful actions
- 17 God healed Abimelech, et al- Here we see the likely cause of Abimelech not touching Sarah. And his wife and female slaves had their wombs reopened.

Genesis 21:1-7

- 1 God draws near with mercy to fulfill his promise to Sarah, He is not slow in fulfilling his Word
 - 3-4 Abraham is not fulfilling his half of the bargain, he is giving his son the name and circumcision that God had ordained to be a blessing for Isaac
 - 5 Abraham was 100 years old- 25 years after the initial promise (**Rom 4:18-21**)
 - 6 God's faithfulness has changed Sarah's laughter from disbelief to joy
- Sarah is the first of MANY women in Scripture who CANNOT have children but do. Who are the others?

Genesis 21:8-13

- 8 "weaned"- customary around 2 or 3
"feast"- a celebration of a rite of passage in the child's life
- 9 This is an ambiguous verse. What kind of laughing is taking place?
- 10 Sarah is angry and requests the woman and her son be kicked out
- 12 God does not agree with Sarah's motive, but His promise is passed through the miraculous Isaac
"through Isaac shall your offspring be named"- the messianic seed is in Isaac's line
- 13 God reminds Abraham of the promise in 17:20, God *often* reminds Abraham of His promises

Genesis 21:14-21

- 14 Ishmael was about 14 years old when this takes place
Beersheba- southern part of Canaan land, name means Well of Seven or Well of the Oath
- 15 the implication is that Ishmael has collapsed from dehydration/exhaustion
- 17 “God heard the voice of the boy”- a groan but perhaps a prayer also
“angel of God”- different than “angel of YHWH” so perhaps it is not the pre-incarnate Christ
- 17-18 God’s promise to Hagar (and Abraham) continues and God provides the way
- 19 God opened her eyes and leads her to the well of salvation
- 21 “a wife from the land of Egypt”- mother gives him a wife like herself, not truly a YHWH believer
- For More on the Typology of Sarah & Hagar’s Feud, turn to Galatians 4:28-31

Genesis 21:22-24

- 22 Abimelech- the good old friend from chapter 20
Phicol- not a Hebrew or Egyptian name, possibly from Asia Minor or the Aegean
“God is with you in all that you do”- shown through Isaac’s birth and Abraham’s prosperity
- 23 This is the typical way of making a covenant, very different than how God has made them

Genesis 21:25-34

- 25 This is a very big deal in that culture!
- 26 Abimelech has a threefold defense
- 27 Compare with Genesis 15:7-21 where God alone is covenanting
- 30 Abraham has purchased the well with 7 ewe lambs and made a covenant through sheep & oxen
- 33 tamarisk tree- a desert shrub with tiny leaves
“called there on the name of YHWH”- we’ve seen this before, he worships God and gives Him the attribute “Everlasting” or “Eternal”

Psalms 111

Hallelu- Yah!

I will give thanks to YHWH with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

² Great are the works of YHWH,
studied by all who delight in them.

³ Full of splendor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy;

⁸ they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is his name!

¹⁰ The fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever!

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Sarah shares with her husband Abraham a tender moment feeling the wonder of life.