

JESUS IN GENESIS

SEASON 2

JESUS IN GENESIS - SEASON 2: GENESIS 21:1-34

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE - WEEK OF JUNE 13, 2021

Introduction:

- This text is not primarily about the birth of Isaac, the sending away of Hagar and Ishmael or Abraham's responsible interactions with Abimelech, but about God. His work and character overshadow the events chronicled in the narrative.

1. God is Precise (v1-7)

- The beginning of this section focused on "the Lord," the repetition of "God," and the ending focused on God's work make it clear that the primary focus is not Isaac's birth, but about God's precise work and dealings with Abraham, Sarah and Isaac.
- Around the birth of Isaac, God did everything that He said He would and as He appointed. This should direct our attention to the precision with which God worked (and still works), and help us to see how Abraham responded precisely to His precision.
- God is precise and we need to be precise back with our worship, behavior, deeds, words, and inner words. Broadly, when we talk about God and spirituality, what we say needs to be precise.
- 2 Tim. 2:14-15 instructs us not to be quarrelsome over words, but to be precise when talking about God and matters pertaining to proper worship of Him.
- 1 John 4:15-16 provides an illustration of how we can go to the word of God in order to find precision on a matter that pertains to the being and character of God (love).

2. God is Protector (v8-21)

- God provides for the care and protection of Hagar and Ishmael in this section, but, first and foremost, these verses are about God's protection of Abraham's family. (See Gal. 4:28-31 for NT commentary on this.)
- We can interpret God's protection of the family through which His promises are passed, as a means to think about God's promise to protect us not just from persecution, but in persecution.
- God didn't primarily protect Abraham and Sarah's marriage from division by sending Hagar and Ishmael away, He did so by giving Abraham assurance that it was ok to send them away. While Abraham's love for Ishmael was clear, Abraham is ok with the departure of Ishmael and Hagar upon God's promise to care for the boy.
- V15-21: God's promise of protection of Ishmael and Hagar directs our thoughts to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In her distress, in the place where God first met her, Hagar cries out again for God's help and He responds. He gives her the ability to see the well of water before her that will give her life. This is how the gospel works; God opens our eyes to see that our ultimate means of salvation and comfort from the despair of our sinful estate is found when the (simple and old) message of the gospel makes sense to us through God's power. We truly see Jesus as the well that will satisfy our souls and give us everlasting life.

3. God is Praiseworthy (v22-34)

- In this section we see Abimelech strike a deal with Abraham in order to try to get the fear of God off of his back. He doesn't do this out of reference, but as a means to cover himself. Abraham, on the other hand, reveals that he has started to change by dealing truthfully with Abimelech and praising God for His faithfulness throughout his life.
- Verse 33 ties the three sections of this chapter together. With the help of Abimelech, who reminds him that "God is faithful to him in all that he does," Abraham, in this moment, sees that God has been with him since his calling. Abraham sees that God has been with him in his victorious moments and in his shameful moments, is with him in the present, and will carry out His promises in the future. Abraham truly sees that God is the "Everlasting God," who is in control of all things in creation and in his life, and Abraham responds in praise through the planting of the tamarisk tree
- Abraham sees that as God gave life in Sarah's barren womb, and as the tamarisk tree yields life in the desert, so God gives life to His children. Like the tamarisk tree, an evergreen that grows and survives in the desert, God is and always will be present to preserve and give life and hope to His people.
- As we grow in our awareness of who God is, like Abraham, we should grow in our praise of Him.
- The text leaves us with a question when it mentions that Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines. Will Abraham, as he sojourns, respond faithfully to God and trust Him in the midst of his sojourning, or will he act in distrust, as he has in previously? This should lead us to ask ourselves if we'll be faithful in the days of our sojourning, when the realities of life make it difficult to trust God.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand that God shall be praised for the birth of Isaac and preservation of Abraham's line.

Heart

To trust that God is still God and with us in the peaks and valleys of our walk in the faith.

Hands

To approach the future with boldness and humility, knowing that the Everlasting God goes where we go.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kids' Summer Nights: Registration is now open for kids ages 4-11 to attend our free, weeklong VBS program this summer! You can register your child(ren) or sign up to volunteer [here](#).

The next **Baptism Seminar** will take place on July 11th. The meeting will be held after 2nd service, at ~1PM. Meet Pastor Andy at the Welcome Center at that time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Genesis 21:1-34

1. Can someone summarize the main points of the sermon?
2. How is God's character highlighted within the text?
3. When you think about the precision of God's timing and work, as noted upon in this text, does it help you reflect on or understand events that have occurred in your own life differently?
4. Where do we see evidence of growth in Abraham's faith in this chapter?
5. How have you been corrected in your thinking or application of your faith by a non-believer?
6. What does it mean that God is "the Everlasting God"?
7. Have you ever had a moment where you were awestruck by "the Everlasting God" as Abraham was?
8. How has that moment impacted your walk in the faith?
9. Where do we see Jesus in this passage?