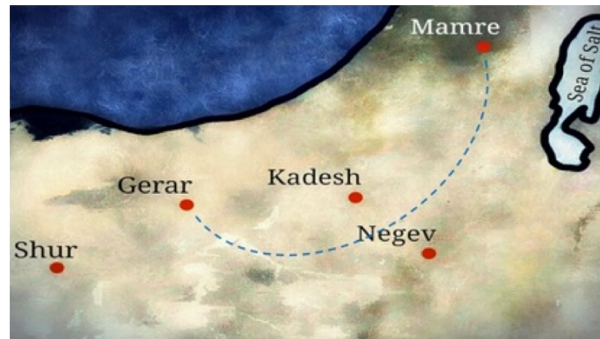


“The Birth of Isaac”
Genesis 20:1-21:34
For the week of March 14, 2021



Summary

Remember in chapter 3 we saw how sin infects everything except God? Now in the beginning of chapter 20, Abraham relapses into his former sin and Abimelech is faced with the fact he is a sinner. Once again, we see God's character remains unchanged. Despite the tragic mistakes of Abraham, we see promises fulfilled, God's faithfulness and His provision.

Abraham and Abimelech (Genesis 20:1-18)

Read Genesis 20:1-18 and then Genesis 12:10-20. Abraham misrepresented his relationship with Sarah again, calling her his sister. It's easy for us to say Abraham should have known better. What do we learn about Abraham and about the nature of sin when we compare these passages?

Abraham is not the only one who returns to the same patterns of sin. What can cause a person to fall back into a pattern of sin? What can be done to end this sin pattern?

Abraham stopped asking what is the right thing to do and instead asked what would keep them safe. Share an example where you rationalized a decision you made to yourself or manipulated the truth, instead of asking what is the right thing to do. How did it turn out?

This incident contrasts God's faithfulness to Abraham compared to Abraham's unfaithfulness to God. What does Abraham learn about Yahweh? Read 2 Timothy 2:13. From the Genesis 20 and 2 Timothy passages what do you learn about the character of God?

In what ways is Abimelech faced with his own sin (Genesis 20:3-6)? How did God intervene to preserve Sarah's purity (Genesis 20:6-7, 18)? Why is this significant? How did Abimelech attempt to make things right (Genesis 20:7)?

Discuss Together

Reread Genesis 20:8-17. When you contrast Abraham's more righteous actions in chapter 18 with his deceitful, cowardice actions in Genesis 20, has there been a time in your life where your actions demonstrated that you were not trusting in God? Likewise, are there examples where you have shown complete trust in God? Share your responses in your community group.

It must have been a humbling experience for Abraham to intercede on behalf of Abimelech. Perhaps he felt a deep sense of inadequacy, unworthiness or even shame. Although there is no recorded prayer in the Bible of what Abraham said when he prayed for Abimelech, God had favor on Abraham's priestly ministry and answered his prayer. God healed Abimelech, his household, his wife and maidservants.

The blessing on the Gerarites and the preservation of Sarah illustrate once again the grace of God. In what ways do you see the grace of God in your life and in the life of others?

Although Abraham was God's chosen, it did not make him more holy or righteous. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Read Genesis 20:6; Proverbs 16:2; and Hebrews 4:12. What is significant about God knowing our motives?

The Birth of Isaac

Genesis 21:1-2 reads: "*The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him.*" Underline "as he had said," "as he had promised," and "at the time which God had spoken to him." Now read the verses again. What is the significance of these two verses?

Isaac becomes wonderful type (picture) of Jesus:

- Both were promised sons
 - Both were born after a period of delay
 - Both mothers were assured by God's omnipotence (Genesis 18:13-14; Luke 1:34, 37)
 - Both were given names rich with meaning before they were born
 - Both births occurred at God's appointed time (Genesis 21:2; Galatians 4:4)
 - Both births were miraculous
 - Both births were accompanied by joy (Genesis 21:6; Luke 1:46-47, 2:10-11)
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Read Genesis 21:3-11. Why does Sarah want Abraham to cast out both Hagar and Ishmael? How does God provide for Hagar and Ishmael?

Read Galatians 4:21-31. Paul uses the story of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah as an allegory to illustrate grace and works even though we read the account as a literal true story. What is the difference between the births of Ishmael and Isaac? What does Paul teach the Galatians believers?

An Everlasting God

Read Genesis 17:7 and 21:33. How does God mark his "everlasting" covenant with Abraham? After the birth of Isaac, what does Abraham do?

After waiting 25 years, Abraham sees the promise fulfilled and experiences God's protection and provision again and again. He calls on the name of the Lord, who is the everlasting God. His promises are trustworthy and everlasting. What areas of your life are requiring faith and patience as you wait on God's timing?

Final Thoughts

God promised Abraham he would be the father of many nations and not even Abraham's missteps would stop God's plan! God gave Abraham a promise when it was improbable and waited to fulfill it when it was impossible. God's purposes and plans will not be thwarted. As you trace the promised seed throughout Scripture, we see the faithfulness of God to bring redemption and we see that in the fulfillment of His promises through Jesus.