

## J: Gen 13-15, Mat 18-19



### Genesis 13

1. It is often our journey thru temporary trials that God uses to bless us w/permanent treasures (1-2 w/10-20).
2. The place of atonement is where God has prescribed for us to call on Him for salvation/forgiveness (3-4; see Gen 4:26, 12:8, 13:4, 26:25; Psa 99:5-9; 1Chr 21:26 w/Rom 10:12-13; consider also Joh 4:21-24 w/Joh 1:16-17 – “spirit and truth” v. “grace and truth” = payment justification and fulfillment of the OT prophecies).
2. Strife caused by working w/brothers is not always a sign of sin (5-7).
3. Not all brothers can – or were meant to work w/each other. Separation in such situations can therefore be a godly and loving decision (8-9).
4. Possessing the Lord’s approval matters more (and will get you further) than possessing paradise now (10-18).

### Genesis 14

1. The armies of the ancient Assyrians were one of the world’s first superpowers consisting of not only 4 city-states but having subjugated and defeated 10 other city-states and peoples – including the various races of giants then in existence (1-10, “Rephaim...Zuzim...Emim...Amorites” = Giants. See Deu 2:10-11, 20-21, 3:11,13; Amo 2:9-10).
2. Abram and his 318 “trained men” represented the first seal team given their ability in special ops, stealth in defeating a major super-power and recovering hostages (11-16).
3. Tithing our treasure to Jesus and eating bread and wine at His table in the covenant community/city is doing the deeds of Abraham – i.e. what it also means to be the children of Abraham (17-20; Joh 8:39; “Melchizedek” = Jesus – Heb 7:1-22; “he brought out bread and wine...he gave him a tenth of everything”; “Salem” = Jerusalem or “city of covenant peace”. Melchizedek king of Salem [Jesus] means “king of righteousness”[as represented by the table], and “king of [covenant - Gen 34:21] “peace” [as represented by the tithe – Gen 28:20-22] – Heb 7:2).
4. God’s blessings (to us) includes vanquishing our enemies (19-20).
5. Never let the wicked be behind your success (21-24 – “I would not take a thread...lest you say, ‘I have made Abram rich’” = The king of Sodom’s name [“Bera” – 2] means “be evil” or “in evil”).

### Genesis 15

1. Believing what God says (i.e. trusting God) is necessary to receiving His righteousness – or saving covenant relationship w/Him (1-6, 7...18).
2. God initiates (“makes” = Lit. “cuts” – common way of referring to ancient covenant initiation) covenant relationship w/Abram by making promises backed by sacrifice (7-21; confirmation in Gen 17:2ff; covenant initiation = promises of the Covenant-maker established, covenant confirmation = obligations of covenant-people established<sup>1</sup>).

### Matthew 18

1. Those who are the most teachable (seeking to understand and obey what is taught versus doubting, questioning and being stubborn to what is taught) in the church are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (1-4; “kingdom of heaven” = The church – compare Mat 18:17 w/16:18-19; “like this child” = Metaphor for a person who is submissive to God’s Word/teaching of the kingdom. This is also the meaning behind “humbles himself” – see Exo 10:3; 2Ch 36:12; Pro 3:34; Isa 66:2).
2. Receiving our children into covenant relationship w/us and Jesus is one of the ways we show our reception/coming into covenant w/Jesus (5 – “one such child” versus “like this child” = Jesus is now speaking about the actual children).
3. Those who entice covenant children to follow their sinful habits/doctrines are better off: 1) dead (6 – “these little ones” = The actual children), or 2) disciplined out of the church (7-9, “hand...foot...eye” = Members of the church – 1Co 12:12-27).
4. The example we set for the covenant children in our community is extremely important to God and our assessment on Judgment Day (7-14).
5. God expects us to go the extra mile in helping to keep our covenant kids from going astray (12-14).
6. We are to practice/preserve justice in the church according to God’s prescribed jurisprudence: 1) personal confrontation unto confession (15) (Lev 19:17), 2) elder inquiry and judgment (16), 3) JUDCO judgment (17a), 4) declaration of apostasy for unrepentance (17b), 5) Jesus and heaven backing judgment of JUDCO (18-20) (Joh 20:21-23; Act 15:1-28; see also Deu 16:18-17:13, 19:15-21; Lev 19:15-18).
7. We are always obligated (22 - “seventy times seven”) to forgive our covenant family members (21, 35 -“brother”) which means: 1) seeking the best case scenario for them to serve, preserve and become just (again) (23-29), 2) seeking to see them fully restored (where possible) in their relationship to us (30-35).

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Pratt Jr., “First, we should note that we are not dealing with two covenants made with Abraham. In Genesis 15:18 we read that ‘the LORD made a covenant with Abram,’ or more literally ‘cut a covenant’, a common way to speak of the initiation of a covenant. In Genesis 17:2, however, God said, ‘I will confirm my covenant,’ using the Hebrew expression meaning to confirm or establish what was already in existence. So, we find here not two covenants, but two facets or dimensions of God’s one covenant with Abraham, the latter being a confirmation and further explanation of the earlier.” (*God of Covenant*). Understood from the perspective of marriage, Genesis 15 represents the betrothal, whereas 17, the actual wedding day; the time when there is the exchanging of vows and consummation of the marriage.

## **Matthew 19**

1. Biblical paradigms establish biblical precepts (e.g. 1-6 = The paradigm of a man holding “fast to his wife” [being singularly and sexually devoted to her] and becoming “one flesh” w/her establishes the precept that marriage is to be permanent [“What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”]).

2. Indecency/any cause as grounds for divorce was a prior concession (i.e. granting material value to something immaterial/no value) no longer in force/permitted (7-8) - “Because of your hardness of heart” = Figure of speech referring to obstinacy/stubbornness of the will and reflects the spiritual condition of all of those before the time of reformation - i.e. the NC age of empowerment and freedom from such stubbornness (e.g. Mar 16:14; Deu 9:27 w/10:16; Heb 9:8-9; Rom 7:18, 8:1-9). As such, the term refers to all OT believers – those whose help in living for God would come through concession rather than HS possession; “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives” = The form of divorce est’d in Deu 24 was a concession of condescension<sup>2</sup> not compromise. God does not wear out, wear down, give in, sell out or prescribe anything that w/b sin – Isa 40:28, 42:4, 48:8-11. Other examples of concessions of condescension would include polygamy and the OC cleans laws as justification. In both cases, God honors something – which in reality, does not possess real/full value – additional wives were not loved/nor valued the same as the first wife; animal sacrifices could not remove sin (e.g. Gen 29:30-31; Heb 10:1-4<sup>3</sup>); “but from the beginning it was not so” = Such concessions were not God’s original intent for divorce<sup>4</sup>.

3. “Sexual immorality” is the only direct violation/failure in relation to the marriage covenant and therefore the only permitted grounds for divorce (9a – “sexual immorality/infidelity” [Grk. “porneia”]) = A term used in the first century to refer to any/all extra-marital sexual activity -e.g. kissing, fondling, masturbation, oral sex, intercourse, viewing pornography, illicit nakedness, illicit sexual conversations<sup>5</sup>, etc.<sup>6</sup> or neglect (see 1Co 7:3-5). Like all crimes, sexual immorality (as permissible grounds) must be proven by evidence (to the Church) before divorce is granted (by the Church/by God) (Deu 17:6; Mat 16:19). These rules would apply equally to couples who are betrothed since God views this as the beginning of marriage – inchoate (e.g. Mat 1:18-19). Legitimate divorces are honored by God as a means of protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty. It also frees the persons to remarriage (Deu 24:1-2; 1Co 7:27-28).

4. People who get divorces for reasons other than sexual immorality are guilty of committing adultery (9b – “adultery” [Grk. “moicheia”]) = Sexual infidelity/immorality in relation to one’s spouse.

5. God expects a person to suffer through a difficult (even abusive) marriage (out of honor for Him), rather than file for an illegitimate (and sinful) divorce (10-11; 1Pe 3:1-2). That being said, a person in an abusive situation can seek the church’s approval for separation (but not divorce) until the abusive situation has been resolved or such separation creates infidelity (1Co 7:3, 10-12). The church is obligated to protect its people in abusive situations.

6. Marriage is therefore not for everyone. If you can’t abide by God’s established rules, then the way to avoid going to Hell for destroying your marriage, or by living in sexual immorality (in other ways) is by becoming “eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” - i.e. doing away w/the pursuit of sexual pleasure by focusing instead on pleasing/serving God (12; See also 1Co 7:32-35). In this respect, both Paul and Jesus were eunuchs. Jewish tradition taught that Daniel – as well as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were also eunuchs.

7. Children of covenant members belong to (and are valuable to) Jesus. Hence the reason special provision is made for their baptism/early entrance into the “kingdom of heaven” (13-15).

8. Salvation/eternal life requires maintaining what we have gained (by faith in becoming covenant members and disciples of Jesus) thru faithful obedience to ALL of God’s commands (16-22) = Though this covenant kept most of God’s commands (Deu 15:7-8), he ignored/refused to obey God’s command to care for the poor among the covenant community, and therefore would not be inheriting eternal life.

9. Being wealthy is a curse since few wealthy people get to heaven outside of God’s exceptional mercy (23 -26, 30) – “many who are first w/b last” = Those who were the first to receive good things - i.e. the rich in this life, w/b considered “last” in re: to righteousness on J-Day (Jam 2:5).

10. Those who submit their entire lives (including their loyalties to family and possessions) to the Lordship (control/will) of Jesus will receive back – both in this life and the life to come, many times more in family and possessions (27-29).

---

<sup>2</sup> Accommodation due to an inferior state (e.g. sippy cups for small children).

<sup>3</sup>As it re: to when this divorce concession was put in place, see Gen 20:10-12 - “cast out” – literally “send away” or “divorce”. To my knowledge, this is the 1<sup>st</sup> recorded divorce in the Bible. It is obvious, this concession of “any cause” is already in place [since otherwise God would never have approved]. In this case, it is Sarah’s jealousy.

<sup>4</sup> Though Jesus never challenges the Pharisees’ understanding of Moses’ prescription in Deu 24:1 (“indecency” as “any cause” – verse 3), it becomes easily discernible that there were exceptions (e.g. Mal 2:10-16). Any cause (or indecency) was therefore never meant to function as a catch-all reason for ending a marriage. Most likely it was a provision given exclusively to the man and covered only things (in the wife) which would constitute faithlessness/failure in relation to her wifely duties (e.g. insubordination, sterility, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> Porneia would not include illicit sexual thoughts. Such “mental” sins would be categorized as covetousness (Exo 20:17). To assume that one’s thoughts might also be grounds for divorce would also mean that Jesus is not limiting the permissible scope but expanding it.

<sup>6</sup> “In both the ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts, sexual immorality would have included any kind of sexual activity between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman... Porneia was a catch-all word used to reference any kind of sexual activity outside the bounds of proper sexual conduct. In Paul’s day avoiding porneia would have entailed avoiding any kind of sexual activity – even light sexual activity – between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman...When the biblical authors wrote, ‘Abstain from sexual immorality,’ their hearers knew exactly what they meant. In the first century context, appropriate conduct meant treating members of the opposite sex in a completely non-sexual way. – Gerald Hiestand (“Biblical-Theological Approach To Premarital Sexual Ethics: Or, What Would Paul Say About Making Out,” *Bulletin of Ecclesiastical Theology*)