

Genesis: God and Man

God Heard the Voice of the Lad

Genesis 21:9-34

Last time:

We skipped over this section to let the message focus on the birth and potential sacrifice of Isaac. We saw Abraham really become a father of faith in his immediate and deep obedience.

Today, we're going back to fill in an important part. Something that is still continuing on this very day in 2018.

The call of Abram

- God calls and promises...Abram leaving a homeland, but waiting and taking family and possessions
- God speaks at the tree...Abram keeps passing through the promiseland to get back to a prosperous land
- Abram lies, Sarai given away, God intervenes and gets them back on track and even has Pharaoh bless them
- God promises again, Abram's heart turns and calls on God
- Abram risks his life and rescues Lot - the guy he wasn't supposed to bring, blesses God instead of the world
- Abram looks to God for blessing, God reminds him of the promise of an heir
- Sarai and Abram wait, but give up on waiting and get themselves and those around them in a mess...which we'll see the fruit of today...however God rescues and blesses the mess

This is why this study is called "Genesis: God and Man"

It's a look at the reality of the relationship between God and Man(kind) throughout this history book.

These are real people.

This is THE real God.

And He's really involved personally in their lives. And ours, if we'll let him.

21:(8) 9-13

V8 - Isaac weaned. Probably a few years old, a toddler. No longer a little baby, a "big boy."

1Pe 2:1-3 NKJV - Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.

If you've been weaning yourself off the scriptures, come back to them. Feed the desire, no matter how little it is, and it will grow again.

Ishmael scoffing

to laugh, mock, play

Isaac was being weaned, there was a great feast, and Ishmael scoffs.

It reminds me of the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, angry at the party for his brother. Not quite the same, though.

Ishmael quite a bit older, roughly 13 years older.

So here's a teenage boy, maybe 16 at the time, you know what those are like...

My middle school yearbooks

Scoffing at his younger, baby, half-brother.

It's obviously a rough family dynamic.

But there wasn't a party at Ishmael's weaning.

Jealousy, resentment, not getting the attention he wants. He's the son of the handmaid.

I'm sure by 13 he's figured out that it isn't an ideal situation.

Elf

He's seen Isaac running around the house, being favored, maybe having more toys, more time with Abraham. His mom still the servant of Isaac's mom. There's obviously conflict in the house, at least under the surface. You know the feeling, maybe even at one time or another at family gatherings this time of the year. When it's not dealt with, it'll quickly bubble to the surface.

Son of the promise - Isaac - God promised

Son of the flesh - Ishmael - Sarah and Abraham tried to make God's promise happen a just a decade too early.

It's tragic, but the children always bear the roughest consequences of their parent's (and other adults in their lives) decisions. Whether it be divorce, drug/alcohol abuse, working too much, fighting, physical abuse, bad habits passed down...whatever

Sharing with Mia

Sarah was fed up.

There was already strife and resentment after Ishmael was born (16:4)

A decade and a half later there is still this going on. It's festered, gotten worse.

She now wants them out. Cast out. This isn't like they live in the suburbs and she can go stay with friends or family or get public assistance...they're in a very rural, wilderness like area...Sarah could care less what happens to them at this point. She has become completely callous and hard towards them. The lady whom she once considered her closest servant, one who (in her wrong thinking) would somehow bring God's promise of a child to them and good enough to sleep with her husband...this is real, personal, at home tragedy.

Heb 12:14-15 NKJV - Pursue peace with all [people], and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

Bitterness goes down deep, it grows, it's a root that entangles everything in your life. Emotions, thoughts, actions, relationships and consequences.

We live in the Bitterroot Valley

From Wikipedia: Bitterroot (Lewisia rediviva) is a small perennial herb in the Montiaceae family. Its specific epithet rediviva ("revived, reborn") refers to its ability to regenerate from dry and seemingly dead roots.

We know that God is able to revive, restore and resurrect anything in our lives, including our actual lives

We believe this is God's plan for this valley, to bring revival and resurrection to those needing to be brought back to life

Exo 15:22-27 NKJV - So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they [were] bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast [it] into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I [am] the LORD who heals you." Then they came to Elim, where there [were] twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

Not be heir with Isaac

Sarah could not even think of letting Ishmael get any piece of Abraham's fortune and what should have totally been Isaac's. She couldn't get over the massive mistake she had made. (But that didn't mean Ishmael was a mistake as a person. He certainly wasn't and has value in God's eyes as we'll see)

Very displeasing to Abraham because of his son

Remember, Ishmael was just as much Abraham's son as Isaac was. I'm sure his heart loved his boy, even if he knew all the time that they shouldn't have gone about it this way. With the situation, I'm sure there was a constant reminder of that.

Displeasing - grievous - to tremble, quiver

Abraham was completely shaken up over this

His house was no longer in peace. And he was being forced to sacrifice the son of the flesh.

I love that the next verse is "But God said to Abraham..."

God was paying attention even in all of this and Abraham was looking to God and in a place to hear his voice.

Psa 139:1-4 NKJV - For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. O LORD, You have searched me and known [me]. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For [there is] not a word on my tongue, [But] behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

God always has an answer to the thoughts, questions, doubts, pains, joys and whatever else is going on in us. He knows and has an answer for us even before we ask.

If there's something bothering you. Ask Him. Ask Him and expect an answer. It will bring peace within you and in the situation.

God says that Abraham must do this.

That what Sarah is asking must be done as there is no healing of this situation another way. God makes it clear that Sarah is his wife, Isaac is the son of the promise, Hagar is not his wife but his slave, and Ishmael is his son but not of the promise.

But God still honors his word to Abraham about his son becoming a great nation.

It applies to Ishmael now too, although out of a bit of technicality, but more out of God's grace and mercy, especially on Ishmael because it's not Ishmael's fault he is who he is.

Far too often in society we blame the children for the things their parents have done and put it on them to carry it out - namely, abortion. Is it right when the mom is raped? Well, is it the child's fault? Is that child less valuable because the parents weren't in love and in fact, farthest from it?

I'm not saying the practical solutions to that real-world problem would be easy, painless, or not life changing...but tell me, how is it that child's fault? It's not our place to bring judgment on the innocent.

Let's think for a minute...we know Isaac grows up and the nation of Israel comes from his offspring. We know that Ishmael grows up and a lot of the middle eastern nations spring from him...could you imagine how big Israel would have been and how much different history would have been if Abraham and Sarah had just waited?

The bitterness still continues until this very day. Look at Israel and the middle-eastern nations. There's no practical solving it. It is truly a spiritual war between the promise and the flesh.

In fact, one of the things the antichrist will do is broker a peace treaty (which will fail) between the offspring of Isaac and the offspring of Ishmael which will usher in the seven years of the tribulation. A study for another time.

:14-16

Abraham gets up early in the morning to do as Sarah had commanded with the son of the flesh and the bondwoman...

something we saw him do in the next chapter when it was time to deal with God's instructions on the son of the promise

Ever have a really tough situation keep you up all night? Or one that when you do sleep you get up and do it right away to deal with it? I believe God gave Abraham rest with that word the night before, but I'm sure it was all Abraham could do in the morning. He didn't take his time getting out of bed or sleep in or read the paper first...

He gave them bread and water. He definitely cared for them, but man, what was that situation like...can you imagine? Saying goodbye to your teenage son? All the years of joy with him and family strife? The sun just coming up in the wilderness. The cool air of the morning, but knowing how hot it will get, they have nowhere to go, no one to take care of them...How do you deal with that other than know that God said he's going to be a nation.

So you know he's going to survive, but it is not going to be an easy survival, at least at first.

Wandered in the wilderness of Beersheeba
 Beer-sheba = "well of the sevenfold oath"
 a city at the south edge of Israel

We'll see where it gets its name soon after, but a place today Beer Sheva halfway between the Gaza Strip and the Dead Sea.

The water was used up

How long did this take?

Survival lingo - Three minutes without air, three hours without shelter, three days without water, three weeks (or so) without food

She placed the boy under the shrubs...he was obviously dehydrated, heat stroke maybe. He wasn't doing well and she thought he would die as she would soon too. Gave him some shade at least.

She was hopeless. Helpless. Alone in the wilderness.

Her boy was dying. Her life had come to nothing. All she did was be obedient to her mistress (although she should have said no, maybe she had a thing for Abraham or maybe she didn't and was just allowing it to happen because she was a slave)

Now the boy she loved was dying and she couldn't bare to see it.

How unbelievably sad and grievous is this situation, too.

She sits a bowshot away (I love this term, can we bring it back? You can forget adopting the metric system, I want bowshot units). It depends on the type of bow, but maybe a few hundred yards, maybe less given the technology of their day. Although perhaps around that time even farther, the absolute range of an ancient composite bow being 7-800 yards but effective range of about half of that.

She couldn't bear to hear his cries. Whatever it was, it was far away enough to not hear them crying or perhaps for him to not hear her crying as well. How awful a situation. Can you imagine?

She wept aloud. The tears of a mother. Such grief.

Reminds me of Hannah praying for a child, weeping, sobbing uncontrollably at the altar...yet Hagar didn't seem to be crying out to God here...she had been burned by the people who had faith in God. I'm sure at some point she said "What, my boy isn't the son of the promise?" Do you think she believed Isaac was really more special than her boy? The resentment.

:17-21

Even if Hagar couldn't hear the voice of the Ishmael, God did.

Maybe Ishmael was just crying for his mom. Maybe he was crying to God? Maybe not...either way, God heard him.

Mat 18:10 NKJV - "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

God cares about children.

The angel of God calls to her out of Heaven

Who is the angel of God?

Could this be a theophany/Christophany?

I sure think so. This is Genesis, God and Man (woman) afterwall

Usually when an angel comes we get a name or a physical manifestation on earth, a study for another time...

Basically, Hagar, no need to cry, everything's going to be ok. Do not be afraid.

I love how God's message to us is always right to the thing that is most ailing us.

God opens her eyes and she sees a well of water...was the well always there, was it a miracle? She either physically couldn't see it because of her tears or spiritually couldn't see it because of all the turmoil and seemingly not having a relationship with God prior to this.

It's cliché, but the answer is usually right in front of us.

I think that's why people deny God so often, they cannot see, even though He is obviously right in front of him.

What's the solution to school shootings? God.

What's the solution to social turmoil? God.

What the solution to everything? Crying out to God.

But we his people barely do it, why do we expect the world to see it?

If my people...would humble themselves and pray...

God allowed Hagar to be humbled for her to see Him and his provision and promise for her and Ishmael.

21:20 GOD WAS WITH THE LAD

I don't believe God is with the modern Arab nations the way He is with Israel - in the sense that Israel is the apple of his eye, his promised land...but tell me, is God against them? As nations in action against Israel, sure, but as people, individually before him? No, he desires them!

Look throughout the Bible. Nebuchadnezzar, a Babylonian king, the Queen of Sheeba, foreign kings in Israel's day, God wants to reach them all. It's just he chose Israel to be the ones to carry the torch that they might come to the truth.

Interesting that he becomes an archer when his mom was a bowshot away

This kid is warrior at heart. Do we not see this throughout history?

It's sad, tragic, that throughout history the bitterness has remained and even created a twisted faith. Islam claims Abraham as their father, but instead that Ishmael was the favored son.

See the consequences here? See the opportunity for the enemy to come and twist God's word?

Interesting that his mom took a wife for him from Egypt...that's where Abram and Sarai had gone a few times prior. A place they shouldn't have gone all the time.

Now, quickly, as we close, we're going to see how Beersheeba gets its name

:22-27

This was probably not the same Abimelech of Genesis 20. Abimelech was the title of a ruler among the Canaanites, not a specific name.

He sees that God blessed Abraham and was with him. It was obvious. Abraham's life, influence, wealth, was a supernatural blessing. (Think of the favor on Joseph's life being evident as well)

It's evident when God blesses us. People will see it.

BUT, i think he knew a bit of Abraham's past, or at least Abraham's past of lying to get out of things hasn't left him. Maybe Abimelech knew Pharaoh and Pharaoh told him God is with Abraham but man, Abraham lied to me a few times...not a bad guy, but seriously...be careful.

Abraham used this opportunity to bring up a political land-grab dispute between their people (a well is obviously a big deal where there isn't much water)

Pretty honorable that Abraham didn't go to war over it prior. Reminds me of how Abraham dealt with Lot with his and Lot's servants were fighting.

Was Abimelech telling the truth or just willing to concede here for the sake of the treaty. But you have to think that the whole reason this came up is because of the well issue. Like Abraham, make a treaty with me instead of attacking me over this well.

I don't know for sure, but you know how bargaining still is the big deal in the middle east. And you know how politics work...

:28-32

Seven, a number of holy perfection.

Using it as a witness for the well.

Beersheeba - well of sevenfold oath (bahh = seven, sheeba = sheep...KIDDING, but you won't forget it now, will you)

Phicol, a commander....return to land of the Philistines. We know that these treaties don't last for generations...

:33-34

Abraham likes trees...as we've seen. Praying to the Lord by the Terebinth Trees at Mamre, hanging out by the tree with the Lord and the two angels visit...now he plants some. Basically a grove. A garden, a place to spend with God.

I'd love to have land and plant trees. Beautiful. Wood. Shade. So much good in it.

Here's a name of God,

The LORD, the everlasting God

long duration, antiquity, futurity, for ever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world

ancient time, long time (of past)

(of future)

for ever, always

continuous existence, perpetual

everlasting, indefinite or unending future, eternity

**Despite all the change, all the family trouble and heartbreak, all the politics
Abraham knew that God didn't change. God always was, is and will be.**

Do you? Will you trust him today, in the midst of your situation?

He will be with you. Let him open your eyes to it.