

THE ORIGINS OF IT ALL!: A STUDY OF GENESIS

XXIV.) PURITY & PROMISE, THREAT & PROTECTION

GENESIS 20-21

A.) PURITY **PRESERVED** (20:1-18)

1.) Old **Habits** Die **Hard** (vv. 1-2)

- Don't they ever?!
- Once again, Abraham & Sarah face a situation where they come to an apparently godless region, fear for their safety and trust in tweaking technicalities to protect themselves rather than in the Lord to protect His Promise.
- **Why?**

- **What are we to learn from this?**

- As Dr. Derek Kidner observes: “*on the brink of Isaac's birth-story here is the very Promise put in jeopardy, traded away for personal safety. If it is ever to be fulfilled, it will owe very little to man. Morally as well as physically, it will clearly have to be achieved by the grace of God.*” (Genesis, pg. 137 as quoted in Ross, pg. 370)

2.) God **Protects** His **Promise** (vv. 3-7)

HOW?

a.) God **Warns** (v. 3)

b.) God **Listens** (vv. 4-5)

c.) God **Instructs** (vv. 6-7)

- v. 7 is the first appearance of the word “*prophet*” in Scripture.
- It's clear meaning here, and therefore the primary meaning that should be attached to it throughout Scripture, is that of one who proclaims God's words as inspired by Him and NOT a predictor of the future.

3.) **Integrity** Initiates **Restitution** (vv. 8-16)

- Those who have integrity before God, will be quick to follow His way s and *initiate* restitution.
- Those with integrity waste no time not only in recognizing an error/problem and confessing it, but in taking concrete action to alleviate the situation.

- Abraham, on the other hand, continues to try to justify himself through stretched technicalities. Yet, by offering a reason, he admits his own guilt.

4.) **Restitution** Is Complete Through **Prayer** (vv. 17-18)

Think Abraham & Sarah finally learned their lesson?

Yes, it appears so. Not only is this last time they play the brother-sister game, but it is the last time that we read of Abraham questioning God or His promise and provision again. In fact, I would argue, that the incredible faith and obedience Abraham demonstrates in Chapter 22 is the fruit (benefit) of his learning and growth through these previous failures!

B.) **PROMISE** (21:1-7)

1.) **Perfect** Fulfillment (vv. 1-2)

- Not only does God now fulfill His long-ago promise to Abraham and Sarah, but he does so exactly how and when He said He would!
- Of course, it was exactly according to *His* schedule and plans and nobody else's.

2.) **Obedience** Embraced (vv. 3-5)

- Similarly, Abraham follows God's instructions for his child exactly.

3.) **Joy** In the LORD (vv. 6-7)

- Earlier, Sarah laughed in doubtful incredulity. Now, she laughs in rejoicing.
- Fulfillment of God's promises should always be met with joy and mirthful wonderment – especially by the recipients of His grace and blessing!

C.) **THREAT** (vv. 8-21)

Did this situation have to be a problem? Why or why not?

1.) God Protects the **Promise** (vv. 8-13)

- Sin and its consequences tend to “echo.”
- Even when and where there has been God's forgiveness and direction, the earthly fruit of our sinful choices don't always go away.
- Nor can a divided household, or heart (Abraham) stand and prosper.
- Yet, not even such a mess of circumstances, dysfunctional family blending and sin can or will ever thwart God's Promises!

- In this case, both of His Promises – the greater one concerning Isaac, but also the lesser one He had made concerning Ishmael.

- Morris writes:

“It really was not possible for the two families to exist together, and Abraham should follow Sarah's request, even though it would go against his own personal feelings and would no doubt seem harsh to others around them. Sometimes it is necessary for God's people, if they are truly going to be in the will of God and to enjoy the fulness of His blessing, to separate completely from those who might be a source of friction and carnality, even though such separation will be difficult and will give others (who don't understand the spiritual issues involved) occasion to criticize and ridicule” (pg. 369).

2.) God Protects the **Outcast** (vv. 14-21)

- Again, we see a situation where God allows people to journey to the point where they can go no further on their own strength.
- And, at that moment when they most need Him but perhaps least imagine He is there or cares, He shows His faithfulness, grace and blessing!
- Even to the outcasts, who nevertheless turn to Him for help and refuge.

D.) **PROVISION** (vv. 22-34)

- Having received the son of Promise, Abraham now moves to better secure his future.
- He does so by agreeing to make a treaty that will provide a more peaceful existence in which to serve God in the Land of Promise.

1.) Agrees to Peaceful **Relationships** (vv. 22-24)

2.) **Restores** Peace Which Has Been **Disturbed** (vv. 25-27)

3.) Secures **Lasting** Peace (vv. 28-32)

- By obtaining rights to the well, Abraham ensures the long-term survival of His family.

4.) **Everlasting** Worship (vv. 33-34)