

Genesis 20-21

Worldview: The Providence of God Means There is No “Plan B”

Part 1: Abraham’s Lousy Plan – Genesis 20

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” – Albert Einstein

Points to remember:

1. Abraham again showed a lack of trust in the Lord by deceiving Abimelech.
2. This passage is the first reference to a prophet of God.
3. Abraham misjudged the people – see Genesis 20:11
4. A partial truth is a lie – see Genesis 20:11-12
5. God prevented a negative outcome from Abraham’s negative action. According to Abraham’s actions, Sarah would have been the wife of two other men.

Question: Why did Abraham leave Hebron?

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Heb 11:8-10)

He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance." When they were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!" (Psa 105:8-15)

Part 2: Mocking Isaac – Genesis 21:1-21

Points to remember:

1. The Lord keeps his promises – to Sarah and to Hagar
2. Faith is demonstrated in obedience
3. Age does not factor into God’s plans – neither in the case of Sarah nor Ishmael
4. God prevented a negative outcome from Ishmael’s negative action. According to Ishmael’s actions, he would have died in the desert.

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband." Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. (Gal 4:21-31)

Part 3: Treaty with the Inhabitants – Genesis 21:22-34

Points to remember:

1. Abimelech's fear of the Lord provides peace to Abraham
2. Abraham's provision comes from God
3. God prevented a negative outcome from Abraham's negative action. Abraham's actions would have resulted in no wife and no well.

Part 4: Understanding God's Providence

These things must be true...

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (Psa 103:19)

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, (Act 17:26)

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; (Dan 2:20-21)

He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away. (Job 12:23)

all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Dan 4:35)

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (Pro 16:9)

In order for these things to be true...

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (Eph 1:11)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Rom 8:28)

"The Providence of God is the great protector of our life and usefulness, and under the divine care we are perfectly safe from danger." Charles Spurgeon

Next Week: Genesis 22-23