

Keeping His Promise - Gen. 21:1-8

11-15-15

I. God's Promise Realized - Gen. 21:1-2

1. The Lord was gracious (**verse 1**)
2. To Sarah and for Sarah
 - He promised to her - in a world in which men were dominant God gave her a promise
 - made first to Abraham now to Sarah
- Rea -do you think this was the same promise voiced twice or a separate promise to Sarah and Abraham?
3. As He said, and what He promised
 - to repeat means that God is sure to keep His promise
4. What is the promise? - that she would have a son
 - A. The reality is reported in **verse 2**
 - B. The fulfillment of this promise gave hope for future promises to come
 - 1) God promised that Abraham's descendants would be like the stars in the sky (15:5)
 - 2) a great nation (12:2)
 - C. At the "very time" - a time fixed by God
- Rea **Ideas:**
 1. So... God is faithful?
 2. Perhaps Sarah got the promise too, because she doubted?
 3. God's delay in answering His promise... what is that all about?

II. God's Promise Remembered - Genesis 21:3-7

1. The name Isaac (**verse 3**)
 - usually the mom named the children
- Rea -? - many instances in which the dad named the child... what about John the Baptist dad?
2. "Isaac" means laughter
 - both Abraham and Sarah laughed at the idea of having a child - 17:17; 18:12
 - the idea was absurd and unusual
 - each time the name Isaac was used it reminded them of "is anything too hard for the Lord?" - Gen. 18:14
3. Sarah bore him
 - makes it a sure thing... he came through Sarah
- Rea -the impossible, the miracle are highlighted... meaning that this is not a natural thing, but God is doing a work
4. Circumcision (**verses 4-5**)
 - A. By Abraham
 - B. Abraham was 100 years old
 - C. Abraham was circumcised about a year before Isaac - 17:24
 - D. Circumcision is a sign of their covenant with God

- Rea -the symbol is not the covenant... but simply a symbol of the reality
5. The birth is impossible - at least by human standards - expectations
- Rea -by making the birth so very different it highlights the work of God, not man
6. Sarah's words after birth (**verses 6-7**)
- A. Incredible joy
- Rea -to the point of laughter
- B. The name "Isaac" is appropriate
- C. Though they had been faithful, they had not received children from God
- Rea -is it possible then, to be faithful, and be denied the "desires of your heart?"
- D. The use of Hagar only worsened Sarah's pain in being childless - 16:5-6
- E. A rhetorical question... who would've ever thought?
- Rea **Ideas:**
1. So, does the laughter show a lack of faith or an expression of joy at God's work?
 2. Her conversation with herself/ Abraham shows her realization of what God has done... a sense of wonder in her words - a "wow" moment
 3. How much of this story do you think their friends and family knew? - all of it, or just parts?
 4. Is there any significance in the idea that a promise is given... then fulfilled, to a woman? - why do you think that across history the promise to Abraham has taken so much precedence, in view of the fact that there is a promise also made to Sarah?

III. God's Promise Rejoiced - Genesis 21:8

1. Egyptians nursed their children for three years
 -Isaac was likely weaned around two or three
2. Sometimes feasts were held to celebrate the weaning
 -custom of the region... or a proud dad?
3. Abraham had been despondent (15:2) but now there is a feast attitude

Rea 4. The feast celebrated transition from childhood

5. The promises were coming true... God was fulfilling His covenant
 -ramifications for Israel (the nation)
 -ramifications for the realm of humanity... Jesus was coming

Rea **Ideas:**

 1. The idea that he grew up simply marks the idea that he is a normal child... coming of age... and the miracle of God is a true, and enduring one
 2. Special: - child, covenant, family
 3. Compare the normal processes... with the supernatural
 -normal childhood, supernatural birth
 -supernatural promise... to a natural man
 -supernatural = God, involved in the natural arena = Abraham
 4. Great is thy faithfulness!