

Promises Promises.

III- Political promises.

Given the political climate today we can assume that all promises we come across are as flexible as the ones we see our leaders giving. The idea of a God giving and keeping his promise is radically counter-cultural.

Overarching Themes

Divine - Human relationships, Posterity, land.

The God of the AGES- the God of the Long Run

Isaac is born

The son promised to Abraham and Sarah comes into the world.

God Keeps his promises.

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV) 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 15:2-4 (ESV) But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." 4 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir."

Genesis 17:15-16 (ESV) And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Genesis 18:9-10 (ESV) They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." 10 The Lord said, "I will

surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

Ishmael and thus Hagar show lack of fear of God

Isaac(laughter) has a naming day, his elder brother Ishmael (Approx 16 years old) mocks Isaac and the occasion, and Hagar does nothing to stop this action.

Hagar is now named by God regarding her as a possession again and not a wife!

(ESV) But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman.-vs 12

God keeps his promises.

Genesis 21:13 (ESV) And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.”

Genesis 16:9-16 (ESV) The angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” 10 The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” 11 And the angel of the Lord said to her,

“Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction.

12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone

and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

13 So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.” 14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Genesis 21:17-21 (ESV) And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her,

“What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. 18 Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” 19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. 20 And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. 21 He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Genesis 25:12-16 (ESV) These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham. 13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes.

Abraham is called for a contract.

Abraham's covenant with Abimelech only guaranteed possession of a well that provides waters to sustain life. God's covenant with his people guarantees that we have the living water, that gives everlasting life to all who will trust, the saviour!

Witnessing (Gen. 21:27–32). The Hebrew word “to swear” means “to bind by seven things,” and the words “swear” (saba) and “seven” (seba) are very similar. This time the two men went beyond merely giving their oath: They made a covenant that involved slaying animals (21:27; 15:9–10). As Abraham and Abimelech walked between the carcasses of the sacrifices, they were saying, in effect, “May God do to us and more if we fail to keep our covenant with each other.” This was a serious matter. But Abraham went a step further: He set aside seven very valuable ewe lambs as living witnesses that he had dug the well and the water belonged to him. He gave the lambs to Abimelech who would then guard them carefully. They were like “receipts” guaranteeing that Abraham owned the well. The name of the well (Beersheba means “well of the oath”) was another witness to the transaction. Both men swore to uphold the covenant, and the problem was settled.

This entire transaction involved three elements: sacrifices (21:27), witnesses (21:28–30), and promises (21:31–32). You find these same elements in God’s covenant with us through our Lord Jesus Christ, as outlined in Hebrews 10:1–18. First, there is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross (10:1–14); then, the witness of the Spirit within the believer (10:15); and finally, the promise of God’s Word (10:16–18). Abraham’s covenant with Abimelech only guaranteed possession of a well that provides water to sustain life. God’s covenant with His people guarantees that we have the living water that gives everlasting life to all who will trust the Savior!

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Obedient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 93.

The tree becomes a witness of God’s work in Abraham’s life.

Significant is the fact that Abraham planted a . . . tree there and sojourned there many days (vv. 33-34), indicating his faith and security. To plant a tree in Beersheba presupposed a constant supply of water, and indicated a determination to stay in the region. God would bless the well with water, and Abraham would stay settled in the land. Dwelling under one’s tree was a sign of peaceful security (Zech. 3:10).

The passage certainly anticipated Israel’s future peaceful coexistence in the land with other tribes who would respond to the message of peace and desire to share in the blessing.

A subtle rebuke, however, is found in the story (cf. Abimelech’s rebuke in Gen. 20:9-10). Abimelech pressed for the treaty so that Abraham would not deal falsely with him (21:23). All Abimelech knew of this man was that (a) God blessed him (v. 22) and (b) he was deceptive (v. 23). This tragic contradiction called for a binding treaty.

God keeps his promises.

Abraham, not performance, not law, not circumcision, finds himself at rest with all things taken care of and plants a tree to worship God.

Abraham's faith is imputed to him, before circumcision and the law was in place.

A child of promise is born.

Galatians show it is through this Child we are to draw our history to God, grace not works!

Galatians 4:21-31 (ESV) Example of Hagar and Sarah

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. 23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. 24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labour! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband."

28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 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. 30 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." 31 So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.

Application- Rely not on our ability to be found right by keeping a set of laws, but rely on the promises of God which tell us that we are to be saved by him.

Paul's use of this account is marvellous (Gal. 4:21-31; see comments there). Ishmael was born by the flesh through "the slave woman" (Gal. 4:29-30). Isaac was born by the promise and was the heir. One represented bondage at Sinai, the other freedom when the promise finally came. When Christ, the seed, came, the old was done away. Now that the promise has come, believers are co-heirs with the promised Seed by adoption through God's grace. To go back under the Law would be to undo the fulfilment of God's promise. Those adopted by the Seed become seeds and are set

free from the bondage of the Law (Gal. 5:1). Just as Ishmael and Isaac were in conflict (Gal. 4:29), so the flesh and the Spirit do not harmonise. The flesh struggles against the Spirit, often mocking it (Gal. 5:16-18). Therefore believers are to “get rid of the slave woman and her son” (Gal. 4:30), that is, to remove the threat of the flesh and “live by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16).

Promises of God, which speak to us today?

"A. W. Tozer observes, 'Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, hoping but never certain of anything, and secretly afraid that we'll miss the 'way'.' If that describes our outlook on life, Tozer urges us instead to 'believe actively' that our heavenly Father is providing for us in ways that bring blessings to our souls. We want to see ahead and we worry about what's coming. Yet when through earnest prayer we exchange our natural concerns for trust in God's care, we breathe a sigh of relief. We won't miss his best if we place our worries in his hands.

We find many promises of God's guidance and care in the Scriptures. For instance, the Amplified Bible translates portions of Isaiah 42:16 and 45:2 this way: 'I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness into light before them and make uneven places into a plain... I will go before you and level the mountains [to make the crooked places straight]. This is the intention God has toward his people who call on him and who follow him. What's ahead for each of us? As we move into the future each day with what Tozer calls 'active believing,' God illuminates the 'way' moment by moment even when we may incorrectly think it is day by day or year by year.

Jesus says in John 8:12, 'I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life' (NLT). Our circumstances may be dark, and our faith may be dim but we must be asking the Lord to light our pathway one step at a time. Tozer says this is always the challenge as we face our troubles: 'God constantly encourages us to trust him step by step even when the way ahead remains in the dark.'" - Bill Armstrong