

***“The Foundations of Our Faith Revealed, Theme by Theme, Genesis —  
The Sovereignty of God, Part 2”***

***Review: “The Promise of a Son to Abraham, and the Fulfillment of that Promise,  
Assures All Believers of God’s Absolute and Final Sovereignty Over His Work***

- ***The Gift of a Son, Prophesied — Can Satan or Sin Destroy the Plan of God?***
- ***The Gift of a Son, Promised — And There are Many Challenges***

***The Sovereignty of God over his creation is established so clearly in the book of beginnings, Genesis.***

- ***The truths we find written in God’s word are essential for our understanding as believers: What God has done, what he is doing and what he has said he will do in the future, are all central for our faith and our lives? Indeed, God’s sovereignty is manifested in his word and his work, in his word AND his work — this is most important. How’s it manifested in Genesis? Last time we saw how it was manifested in several ways:***
- ***The Gift of a Son, Prophesied: Can Satan and Sin Destroy the Work of God?***

- ***Satan’s work to thwart the purpose, plan and work of God goes back to the heavens and also then the earth. The Lord created all things, the universe, the world, the earth, life on earth, mankind in Adam and then Eve. Satan did his work as well, in instigating Eve and Adam to sin, and then continued on the Long War Against God with a focus on the Promise of the Coming Redeemer — chapters 1-3. God’s response is a judgment on satan with an implied blessing to come through the Seed of the Woman:***

***Gen. 3:15*** And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

- ***Of course, this verse and its promise set the stage for the entire Bible and the Long War Against God. All show God’s sovereignty over all of creation and over humanity — but especially over God chosen people. And, admittedly some intersections are more influential than others as we shall see in today’s study in Genesis. A quick overview of some of those intersections would include these:***
- ***Cain and Abel and Seth and their descendants — chapters 4 & 5***

- *Noah, the Ark, and the Flood (chapters 6 - 8) and promise to never destroy the earth again with a flood, but his absolute Sovereignty over mankind is again so clearly revealed here. Again, satan has failed!*
- *Ham's sin and Canaan's curse — chapter 9*
- *The descendants of Noah through Shem, of Japheth and of Ham down to Nimrod are listed here along with Babel's tower and its judgment with the division of peoples and languages to Abram and Lot and their trek to Haran — chapters 10 & 11*
- *And finally, there was The Gift of a Son, Promised with so Many Challenges*
  - *So as the Lord God brings forth his plan, one step at a time, with satan opposing in any way he can. But even satan can prevent the purpose of God from being accomplished, for GOD IS SOVEREIGN:*
    - *God calls out some Shemites from the rest of their brethren — chapters 11 & 12 as Terah.*

*Now we have reached that great chapter where Abram is justified by faith and the promises of a son, a great family and heritage, and the land are renewed — chapter 15:*

*Gen. 12:1-5 [the land promises are given with implied descendants and therefore a son]*

*1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:*

*2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

*3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

*4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

*5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

- *They dwelt for a time in Haran (named after Lot's father who had died in Ur) until Terah had died, then they departed into the land of Canaan, the land of promise. Gen. 11-12 is the introduction to the sacred history of the Patriarch Abraham and the story of the wonderful promise as we have just seen. Abraham's story (Abram's, before the son is given) is full of surprises:*
- *Abram goes to Egypt because of the famine and gives Sarah to Pharaoh, but God protects her — chapter 12*
- *Abram and Lot separate — Lot goes to Sodom, Abram remains in the land of promise — chapter 13*
- *Lot is captured by the a group of kings that took Sodom & Gomorrah captive but Abram and his servants are victorious over them delivering Lot to the King of Sodom's restored domain; Melchizedek, "the priest of the most high God" comes to fellowship with and encourage Abram and offers him the blessings of Almighty God. This, again, shows God's sovereignty, doesn't it? — chapter 14. But now we have reached the great 15th chapter where we need to dwell today:*

**Gen 15:1-7 [the great section on Justification quotes by Paul]**

**1** After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

**2** And Abram said,

**3** And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

**4** And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

**5** And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

**6** And he believed [in] the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

**7** And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

- *What is truly important though is not the gift of the land by the one who owns it all, but what is written here in verse 6, "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness". This is not about physical things like land and riches, but about relationship.*

***Abraham's response is most interesting. The whole conversation is astounding and wonderful indeed:***

- ***First the statement by the Lord (Verse 1):*** “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”
- ***Then Abraham's response (verse 3), and then the Lord's response (Verses 4 & 5):*** “This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” ***Note that this is a sacred promise of the Lord God who is sovereign over all the world, mankind, and therefore the history yet to come. There is so much here, isn't there?***
- ***Then Moses's comment in verse 6 and finally the Lord's renewing of the Land Promises in verse 7 must be carefully considered. A new restatement of the promise is given in Chapter 15 with additional assurances as well:***

***Gen 15:12-15 [the prophecy of the 400 years of bondage in Egypt]***

**8** And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

**9** And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

**10** And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

**11** And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

**12** And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

**13** And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

**14** And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

**15** And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

- *These including verses constitute a summary of a greatly expanded land grant that has never been even close to fulfillment, even in the days of Solomon. It's fulfillment awaits the time of the Millennial Kingdom. But the Sovereign Lord God had spoken to Abraham and his seed with these words written here. AND WHAT AN ENCOURAGEMENT THEY ARE TO ALL OF US!! GOD IS SOVEREIGN, AMEN!*
- *Paul went to get lengths so many centuries later to write this about it in Romans, chapter 4 with that great dissertation on salvation by grace alone without works citing the Genesis 15:5-6 verses. Most wonderful indeed!*
- *So again and again we have seen how the Sovereignty of God is so clearly revealed in really every chapter in Genesis. Amen and amen.*

#### **Our Outline Today: The Sovereignty of God in Genesis: What Hath God Wrought?**

- **What Hath God Wrought? Abram and Sarai Fail Regarding the Promise**
- **What Hath God Wrought? The Promise Renewed and a New Name Is Given**

#### **I. What Hath God Wrought: Abram and Sarai Fail Regarding the Promise:**

- *The Challenge of Ishmael begins as Ishmael, the Son of Doubt and Confusion Takes Center Stage — chapter 16. Here we see that both Abram and Sarai prove their unfaithfulness regarding their hope and promise of a son as Sarai gives her Egyptian maid over to Abram. Abram receives her and a son is conceived:*

**[READ ] Gen. 16:5-7**

**5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.  
6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.**

**7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.**

- *So the Lord has mercy on Hagar! This has a great impact on the future generations of those in the Middle East, especially the Arabian peninsula. Are these perhaps the Muslim peoples today?*

**[READ ] Gen. 16:8-16**

8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

**13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?**

**14 Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.**

**15 And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.**

**16 And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.**

- *Yes, there is a strong emphasis here on God's sovereign rule over humanity and his called out people. But I will comment specifically on the name of the well. An additional question, though, would be regarding who might have named the well. Was it Abraham, perhaps, based on Hagar's testimony? It seems so.*

*The meaning of the name is also an interesting subject indeed. Some commentators think that the meaning cannot be that Hagar testified simply that she was seeking the Lord that sees all, that sees everyone, even Egyptians running from their mistresses in the desert. Rather, the meaning seems to be that she was still living even after seeing the Lord God himself!!*

*The translation in that case would be rather this: "Do I see, here, even after the Vision? Or, "Do I live, after seeing God?"*

- *Later, Isaac will dwell at this well. I wonder whether Ishmael or at least Hagar did not reside there before Isaac considering what we have just read. We read of Isaac in chapter 24:*

**Gen. 24:58-64**

58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou *art* our sister, be thou *the mother* of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.

63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming.

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

- *Praise God. Isaac has supplanted Hagar indeed at the well Lahairoi! And it was there that Rebecca first saw her new counterpart in life, Isaac, and there that he first saw her. Wonderful. To see God and live. Amen.*

## **II. What Hath God Wrought, The Promise Renewed and a New Name Is Given!**

- *The Lord God renews the promise of the seed, changes Abram's name to Abraham, and the covenant sign of circumcision is given — chapter 17*

*Summarize ... bold only*

*The names have meanings. Abram means "exalted father" while Abraham means "Father of a multitude"! In verse 15 we also read that Sarai's name will be changed to Sarah. Sarai means "princely" while Sarah means "princess"! God was engraving both Abram and Sarai, for adding the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet adds grace. For 5 is the numerical number of grace in the Bible.*

**Gen. 17:1-10, 15-19**

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

...

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name *be*.

16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

- *Moving ahead now into the next chapter, chapter 18, what do we find? That the angel of the Lord (and two others) now sovereignly appear to Abram and again renews the promise, and, in addition, foretell the destruction of Sodom. Abram reacts to this with some arrogance it seems as he now begins to reason with the Lord over that most remarkably — chapter 18*

**[READ ] Gen. 18:1-8**

1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;



**2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,**

**3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:**

**4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:**

**5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.**

**6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.**

**7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.**

**8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.**

**[READ ] Gen. 18:9-17**

**9 And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.**

**10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent door, which was behind him.**

**11 Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old *and* well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.**

**12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?**

**13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?**

**14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.**

**15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.**

...

**16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.**

**17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;**

- ***Sovereignty, sovereignty, sovereignty! It is in every section here, is it not?***

- ***Regarding now this matter of Sodom and Gomorrah, such a wealth of scripture is revealed here about the sovereignty of Almighty God! For Lot and his family apart from his wife will be delivered from Sodom before it is destroyed by fire — chapter 19:***
  - ***This “negotiation” of Abraham with the Lord God seems astounding to me. We will not read it today but you should when you can read it over carefully. Abraham does not succeed in changing God’s plan for Sodom. Abraham wanted God to spare the city because Lot dwelt there. The Lord, however, cared for Lot (who was a believer according to 2 Peter 2:7) and delivered him instead, along with his two daughters. Much evil followed that which we will not consider today and which would affect the history of the nation of Israel down through the years, you will recall.***
- ***So again we see that God is sovereign. Amen.***
- ***Then follows the issue of Abimelech with Abraham’s challenge giving Sarah over to that King — but God sovereignly protects her — chapter 20.***
- ***Next time we will plan on starting right here with chapter 21 where we shall see how the Son of the Promise will be brought forth by the power of Almighty God and how even then, Hagar and Ishmael will continue to be right in the center of the sacred story. But again, God’s absolute sovereignty over mankind and his people will be found written on every page of Genesis:***

***[READ ] Gen. 21:9-10***

***9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.***

***10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.***

### **Conclusions and Application:**

- ***Again, what must we conclude? It is simply this, that the Sovereignty of God is written on every page of Genesis.***

**NEXT TIME:**

- *The Gift of a Son, Provided — The Son of the Promise is Given in Due Time*
- *The Gift of a Son, Challenged — Hagar and Ishmael Continue to Threaten God's Plan for his people*
- *The Gift of a Son, Preserved — Isaac's Sacrifice is Abraham's Great Test*
- *The Gift of a Son, Projected — What about the Sand and the Stars?*