

## INTRODUCTION

### Genesis 16

We are engaged in a study of the Word of God, in the book or letter of 1 Timothy.

In 1 Timothy chapter 3, we have found the doctrine of how to know if a man is ready to be made a bishop, that is, a pastor or elder, in the church. Much of this also applies to qualification for being a deacon in the church. At 1 Timothy 3:4-5, we found that to be considered blameless, a man must rule or manage his own household well, having his children under obedience, in subjection, in submission.

This subject being so important, with such far-reaching implications, for both the church and every family, I decided do look through the Bible for more doctrine from God on a man ruling or managing his household well. The first place I found is the history of Abraham in Genesis.

Last time we learned from Genesis chapter 18 that God said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice..." I am very thankful we received that doctrine last week.

It would be handy for this sermon if what the Bible recorded next about Abraham dealing with his children were something like this:

- Genesis 21 Abraham carefully told Ishmael how to act and speak, and spanked him with the rod to convince him not to disobey
- Genesis 22 Abraham told Isaac all about creation, and the sin of Adam and Eve, and the covering God provided for the shame of their nakedness; and Abraham made sure Isaac listened to his mother and obeyed her

But actually the following chapters of Genesis about Abraham and his children say nothing like that, give no such account

- things like that appear later in the Bible, in the law God gave through Moses
- things like that appear even later, in the Proverbs God gave through Solomon
- but the Bible records no such details of how Abraham commanded his children

That certainly is no fault in the Bible. We believe the Bible is perfect, just as God intended it to be. In God's perfect word, He does not teach us details about child-rearing here in Genesis. Instead, He teaches us about ruling our own houses well by recording that **Abraham obeyed the word of God about his family.**

## BODY

### I. In The Past, Abraham And His Wife Had Followed Their Own Ideas About Their Family Instead Of What God Had Ordained

Genesis 16:1-4

- A. God had ordained at creation that a man take one wife
  - 1. you heard this read a few minutes ago
  - 2. Noah and each of his three sons had just one wife
    - a) Genesis 7:13 On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark--
    - b) 1 Peter 3:20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.
  - 3. Abraham and his brother Nahor each took just one wife
    - a) Genesis 11:29 Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah.
- B. For years Abraham had followed what God had ordained, even when his wife Sarah was found to be barren, unable to have children
- C. But Abraham's wife, Sarah, suggested something different to her husband, and he agreed to it
  - 1. this seems to have been an idea adopted from the pagan culture around them
  - 2. this sounds something like the first sin of Adam and Eve
  - 3. APPLICATION Let everyone here take care what you suggest to members of your family; they may well do what you suggested; if what you suggested was against God's law, much suffering may come of it
- D. Severe conflict in the family soon resulted, among Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar
  - 1. the Bible shows us this many times, that when people do not follow what God has ordained for the family, severe conflict ensues, including even violence within families

- E. Members of the household found themselves in very awkward positions
  - 1. Hagar was a slave, but also sort of a wife or concubine
  - 2. Ishmael was
    - a) a son of the master, but also a son of a slave
    - b) the oldest son, but not the son God had promised
  - 3. you have seen, and possibly experienced, the awkward positions people are put in when God's plan for the family is not followed
- F. APPLICATION
  - 1. if you are not yet married, determine now that you will follow what the Bible says God has ordained, rather than acting according to your own ideas that may have come from the ungodly culture around you
  - 2. if you already are married, take stock of your behavior; if you have not followed His word in your family,
    - a) confess that to God
    - b) admit it to your wife or husband
  - 3. there is forgiveness from God through Jesus Christ for all who repent
  - 4. there is help from God for all who cry out to Him for mercy

In the past, Abraham and his wife had followed their own ideas about their family instead of what God had ordained

## II. Now, Abraham Is Obeying the Word of God About His Family Gen 21:1-14

- A. It has been about 15 years since Abram and Sarai did what they did with Hagar
- B. The situation now is painful exactly because of the sinful things they did in the past in their family
- C. God now does something, for which we must worship Him when we ponder the amazing justice of it
  - 1. 15 years ago, Abraham listened to his wife telling him to do something that pleased the flesh, but was against God's word
  - 2. now Abraham must listen to his wife telling him to do something that displeases the flesh, but is God's word
- D. While we praise God for His justice displayed in this situation, we also find reason to praise Him for His mercy
  - 1. this family has been in a disordered state for 15 years
  - 2. now by God's providence and by His command, this family is restored to the order God ordained at creation

- E. Abraham does not do what his wife says just because she demands it; but when he finds it is the command of God, he does it
- F. Abraham obeys God even though it is against his natural fatherly affection (Gen 21:11)
- G. Abraham obeys God right away, early the next morning (Gen 21:14)
  - 1. the two great things about Abraham are that he believes what God promises him, and he obeys what God commands him
  - 2. that Abraham is like that is the gracious work of God in him; so we worship God for it, not Abraham
  - 3. and there is a man greater than Abraham, both in faith and in obedience, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; we are His disciples, not the disciples of Abraham
  - 4. yet it is good for us to think often of Abraham, in order to emulate him in those two things
- H. APPLICATION We are here in Genesis studying Abraham because 1 Timothy 3:4-5 says that to be considered blameless, and fit to be made a pastor or deacon in the church, a Christian man must have his children in submission. We want all the doctrine we can find in the Bible to help us understand what that means and live accordingly. So, based on what we see here in the history of Abraham, and with a view toward becoming men who are fit for service in Christ's church
  - 1. let a man not do what his wife says he should with the children just because she suggests or demands it; but let a man find out from the Bible whether what she says is right or not
    - a) if it is not right according to the Bible, do not let even your dear wife convince you to do it
    - b) if it is right according to the Bible, humble yourself and obey what the Bible says; let the fact that it came to you from your wife not stop you
  - 2. let a man do with his children what the Bible says to do, even though it is against natural fatherly and motherly affections
  - 3. when a man learns from the Bible what God says to do in his family, let him attend to it right away, not delaying at all
    - a) it is all too common to think, "I'll do that later," then never really do it at all

-In the past, Abraham and his wife had followed their own ideas about their family instead of what God had ordained

-Now, Abraham is obeying the word of God about his family.

### III. In Obeying the Word of God About His Family, Abraham Is Used by God to Communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ

- A. In the New Testament scriptures, we learn that the history of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac, in addition to being true history, also presents an allegory for understanding the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ
  - 1. I am not turning to read that now, because that would be too involved for this session
  - 2. but later you could read that; it is Galatians 4:21-31
- B. Hagar, because she was a slave woman, could not bring forth sons who would have the inheritance; Sarah, because she was a free woman, brought forth the son who had the inheritance
  - 1. Hagar represents the Old Covenant through Moses
    - a) the terms of the Old Covenant were, essentially, “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me...”
    - b) but the Bible tells us that Israel did not obey God, could not obey Him perfectly
    - c) a person can never make himself right with God by trying to follow the laws given to Israel at Mount Sinai
    - d) if a person can never be righteous before God by trying to follow the laws that God Himself gave, then certainly a person can never be righteous before God by trying to follow laws made up by men, or made up by himself
  - 2. Sarah represents the New Covenant through Jesus Christ
    - a) the terms of the New Covenant through Jesus Christ are not about having to obey God’s commands, but about Jesus Christ fulfilling all God requires, on your behalf!
      - (1) repent and be forgiven; turn from your sins to God, and find that He wipes away all your guilt
      - (2) believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved from God’s wrath unto eternal life
    - b) a person is justified in God’s sight, made right with God through faith in Jesus Christ crucified

- C. Abraham, in obeying what God said to do in his family, sent Hagar and Ishmael away.
  - 1. in so doing, He communicated the gospel in allegory
  - 2. He believed the promise of God and obeyed the will of God
- D. APPLICATION: Obey God's word about your family, and be used to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ
  - 1. directly in your family
    - a) the Bible says that a man is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
    - b) if you obey that, you will communicate the gospel to your own household directly as you read the Bible to them and tell them the truths of the Bible in various ways
  - 2. indirectly by showing an orderly family to the world around you, which
    - a) adorns and endorses the gospel to those who know you
    - b) prompts questions from others, giving you opportunity to speak
  - 3. directly in the church as a pastor
    - a) this is the most directly application of this scripture to our study of 1 Timothy 3:4-5

## CONCLUSION

In the past, you may have followed your own ideas about your family instead of what God had ordained.

Now, as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, set your heart on obeying the word of God about your family.

In obeying the word of God about your family, you may be used by God to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah: Call to Worship - Exodus 15:2

Chris: Scripture Reading - Genesis 2:18-25

Roel: Congregational Prayer

Jeff: Benediction - 2 Samuel 10:12

Rita - Prelude (please choose)

Rita - Trinity 212 "A Hymn of Glory"

Rita - Trinity 227 "O Wherefore Do the Nations Rage?"

Rita - Trinity 188 "There Is a Fountain"

**JRY:**

-unlike Eli or David, Abraham did not prefer either of his sons over the word of God

-if God says to send my son away into the desert, I will do it

-if God says to kill my son, I will do it

- I. He obeyed God's command and cast out his oldest son for persecuting his son Isaac Genesis 21:1-14
  - 1. you heard this interpreted for us in what Brother Roel read to us from Galatians 4
- B. He obeyed God's command and offered his son Isaac on the altar - Genesis 22:1-18
- II. Abraham Obeyed Whatever God Commanded Him to Do with His Children
- III. Abraham's Obedience to God Regarding His Children Painted Pictures By Which All His Children Know the Gospel of Jesus Christ
  - A. You are not saved by obedience to law, even to God's law; neither are you obligated to keep the ceremonial or civil laws given through Moses; instead, you are saved through faith in God's promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ
  - B. You do not have to make any sacrifice to be saved; God provides the sacrifice
    - 1. it is very good that you are willing to obey God and offer whatever He might require, even your own children
    - 2. but He is not made propitious toward sinners by their offerings to Him, but instead by their faith in the offering that He Himself provides
  - E. Abraham and Sarah did not need to pursue their own carnal scheme for having a son; God had promised a son, and in due time He provided the son He had promised
    - 1. likewise, you need not try to get yourself right with God by any contrivance of your own, nor by any religious system made by men
    - 2. God has promised blessing through Jesus Christ; believe in Jesus Christ and find that you will be Isaac, who is not the one sent away, but is the one who has the inheritance
  - F. The son of the slave woman must not be thought to share the inheritance with the son of the free woman
  - G.
  - H. The son of the slave woman
  - I. The Old Covenant God made through Moses at Mount Sinai is like Hagar the slave woman, in that
  - J.
  - K. Everyone who tries to be right with God through the Old Covenant made at Mount Sinai puts himself in the place of the slave, in perpetual bondage
    - 1. bondage in what ways?
      - a) disobey and be punished
      - b) never become a son
      - c) never share in the inheritance



2. this applies to all systems of trying to become righteous in God's sight by obeying rules or laws
  3. this is shown as Ishmael is called the son of the slave woman
- L. God told Abraham to put away, to get rid of, the slave woman and her son
1. when Abraham obeyed God, and got rid of the slave woman and her son, he showed forever the truth that salvation from God comes not by any works of law-keeping we can do, but through faith in His promise, given and fulfilled
- M. Abraham's obedience to God regarding his family was used by God to help all Abraham's children know the gospel of Jesus Christ
- N. You are not saved by obedience to law, even to God's law; neither are you obligated to keep the ceremonial or civil laws given through Moses; instead, you are saved through faith in God's promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ
- O. There is no salvation in trying to obey the laws of the Old Covenant given through Moses at Mount Sinai
- P. But there is salvation through faith in Jesus Christ crucified
- Q. You who are still in your sins, not in Christ
1. do not repeat spiritually the mistake of Abraham and Sarah, trying to manufacture a way to God's blessings by your own carnal efforts; this will yield only perpetual bondage to sin and death, never salvation
  2. instead, believe in the promise of God, that He provides salvation; He sends Isaac; from Him comes a New Covenant through Jesus Christ
- R. You who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified, see how unsuitable it is for you to try to mix faith in God's promise with works of Old Covenant law keeping
1. you believe that you are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, who, by His blood, has instituted the New Covenant; do not, then, seek to be blessed by obedience to the ceremonies of the Old Covenant; that is like trying to have Ishmael and Isaac share the inheritance
- S. Ishmael, because he was born by the usual natural means, could never share the inheritance with Isaac, who was the son born by faith in God's promise
1. Ishmael represents all who are trying to be right with God by any outward acts of religion, by any attempts to do better in being good

2. any attempts of yours to make yourself acceptable to God by what religion or good works you do will only make you more and more of an Ishmael to be cast out