

Jan 09, 2022



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
God secures our hope in His unchanging character

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Father God, thanks for inviting us to know and rely on Your unchanging character as the source of our eternal hope

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God
(Ps 146:5 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Dec 18, 2017)

Series: Justice, Law, History

UNIT 2: God the Source of Justice

NEXT WEEK

Justice and Fairness
(Exodus 23:1-12)

Injustice and Hope Genesis 21:8-20

Lesson Background and Introduction

When God called Abraham and Sarah (then Abram and Sarai) to leave Ur, he promised to bring them to the land he would give them and to make Abraham's family a great nation (Genesis 12:1-3). Abraham entered Canaan at age 75, and he was told that this was the land that God planned to give to Abraham's descendants (12:7). After Abraham and his nephew Lot went their separate ways, Abraham was again told that all the land he could see would be given to his descendants (13:15). Yet Sarah was unable to conceive a child (Genesis 11:30). She sought to overcome her barrenness by asking Abraham to impregnate one of her slaves (16:2-3). Sarah's logic in this seems strange to us. Why would a wife willingly allow her husband to have an intimate relationship with another woman? This seems to be a recipe for disaster! But the logic of this practice, common at the time, went something like this: "If my slave produces a child, that child will be mine, just like his mother is my property." Hagar had a difficult life. But as Ishmael's name reminds us, God hears! Abraham's God, who loved both Isaac and Ishmael, is the Lord of all creation. He cares for all people, and he keeps his promises. He hears all cries of injustice, and he responds with a message of hope. That message must be preached, taught, and lived by his people before the watching world, which is desperate for a better story than the divisions that so often define our lives. When we hear, the world might begin to believe that God also hears.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Mistreated - God promised Abraham and Sarah a child, the start of a mighty nation, blessing the whole earth. But as the years passed, Sarah grew old and the possibilities of conceiving a child grew slim. So, she came up with a plan to give her maid servant, Hagar, to Abraham. After he slept with Hagar, she conceived and gave birth to a son, Ishmael. When Ishmael became a teenager, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah and they had a son who they named Isaac. That made the relationship between Sarah and Hagar very strained. On the day Sarah weaned Isaac, she observed Ishmael making fun of her son. Sarah demanded Abraham put Hagar and her son out of the house. Distressed at the thought of Ishmael leaving, Abraham sought God's counsel. God instructed him to obey his wife. So, Abraham supplied Hagar with as much food and water as she could carry and set them off in an unknown direction. Hagar wandered in the desert. Before long, she and her son ran out of food and water. Devastated and fearing Ishmael's death, she placed Ishmael under a bush while she sat and sobbed. God heard the boy crying, and interrupted Hagar's negative thought by asking her from heaven, What's the matter? Do not be afraid He reminded her of His earlier promise to make her son into a great nation.

Rescued - God open Hagar's eyes to His provision: a well of water. Imagine the joy as she filled her bottle and served it to her thirsty son. As Ishmael grew, God stayed by his side. He became an archer, lived in the desert, and had a family. Jehovah had a plan for Ishmael, just as He promised.

Hope - It is easy to think incorrect thoughts concerning ourselves and God. We yell at Him, saying, "You've abandoned me," or "Why did You put me in this situation?" or "How can you let that happen?" Yet God will come to the side of His children in times of crisis and even rebellion. He's committed to always offering a future and a hope.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Injustice through Conflict (Gen 21:8-11)

Conflict among children

- Conflict among children starting with Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-8)
- Conflict among children like Esau and Jacob (Gen 27:41)
- Conflict among children over Jesus (Matt 10:34-39)

Conflict among adults

- Conflict because of being foolish (1 Sam 25:23-34)
- Conflict because of evil desires (James 4:1)
- Conflict because of seeking power (Matt 20:20-24)
- Conflict because of following different people (1 Cor 1:10-12)
- Conflict because of cheating (1 Cor 6:7-8)

Hope through God's Intervention (Gen 21:12-13)

Intervention of encouragement

- Encouragement during affliction (Ps 10:17-18)
- Encouragement that leads to unity (Rom 15:5)
- Encouragement from being united with Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Phil 2:1)
- Eternal encouragement (2 Thess 2:16)

Intervention of promises

- God is faithful to His promises (Ps 145:13)
- Promises of peace (Ps 85:8)
- Promises that have been tested (Ps 119:140)
- Promises made "Yes" in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)
- Promises that allow participation in the Divine Nature of God (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Hope through Obedience (Gen 21:14-16)

Obedience immediately

- Obedience must not be delayed (Luke 9:61-62)
- Many times immediate response is required to receive results (Acts 9:34)
- Consider each moment as an opportunity to be obedient to God (Ps 90:12)
- Obedience from a willing heart (Matt 4:18-20)

Obedient through trials

- Trials are to influence obedience (Ps 119:67)
- Obedience in trials aid in receiving God's inheritance (Heb 11:8)
- Obedience in trials to test what's in the heart (Deut 8:2)
- Obedience in trials to purify (Job 23:10)
- Obedience in trials proves faith genuine (1 Peter 1:7)

Hope through God's Deliverance and Plans (Gen 21:17-20)

Deliverance through prayers

- Answered prayers because God's eyes are on the righteous (Ps 34:15)
- Answered prayers because God promises to answer even before speaking (Isa 65:24)
- Answered prayers because God promises to fulfill answers and seeking (Matt 7:7-8)
- Answered prayers because of obedience (1 John 3:21-22)

Deliverance through revelation

- Revelation through Jesus (John 14:9-10)
- Revelation of God's will (Eph 1:9)
- Revelation through the prophets (Rom 16:25-26)
- Revelation through the Church (Eph 3:10)
- Revelation of righteousness through faith (Rom 3:21-22)
- Revelation of God's wrath (Rom 1:18-20)

Plans of maturity

- Maturity through perseverance (Phil 3:9-14)
- Maturity through relying on God (2 Tim 4:7-8)
- Maturity through throwing off everything that hinders (Heb 12:1-2)
- Maturity through seeking God's power to overcome the world (Rev 3:11-12)
- Maturity through the testing of our faith (James 1:12)
- Maturity through having a goal to win an imperishable crown (1 Cor 3:12-14).

Plans for family blessings

- Blessings of a family that keeps the ways of God (Gen 18:18-19)
- Blessings of a family that serves God (Josh 24:15)
- Blessings of a family that is devout and God fearing (Acts 10:1-2)
- Blessings of a family through children (Prov 17:6)