

Genesis 21

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Preacher: Calum Jack

[0:00] You want to turn with me or look up on your device, that passage that Ailey read for us earlier, Genesis 21. If you're new, it's our custom at Cornstone to just work our way through books of the Bible.

We've been working our way through the book of Genesis. We've reached chapter 21. I want to thank you for your grace towards me last week that nobody after the service mentioned about my pronunciation of the king's name.

I can only assume that you thought, oh, Callum, you know, he's been, you know, he studied theology. He must know the Hebrew and the pronunciation of that. Well, I wish that were true.

The problem is that if you put the wrong emphasis on the wrong syllable, you end up with a very different kind of word. My only defense is that I am actually a tchuchter, okay?

I'm from the west coast of the highlands, and we do pronounce things differently, and when you come across a word, you kind of default. You know, instead of saying Bernays, you say Bernays, you put the emphasis at the end of the thing, so, you know, Abimelech becomes Abimelech.

[1:05] So, if I get it wrong, I just, you know, I'm sort of defaulting to my inner tchuchter, so I apologize if that's how it goes. That's just the way that we roll. Good.

Thank you for your grace to me. Although, I have to say that, led by my wife, the community group was not so gracious on Tuesday night when they pointed it out. Anyway.

Going through the chapters of Genesis, in many ways, feels a little bit like an, you know, an alpine road. There are so many twists and turns, ups and downs, and so on.

As in the life of Abraham, and his sort of trying to walk by faith and following the Lord, and so on.

And I guess what has been helpful in some ways is that as we've gone through it, actually, Abraham's life, in some ways, doesn't look that different from our own.

His journey of faith bears kind of resemblance to our own. We, too, have, you know, highs and lows. We can be fickle and faithful.

[2:13] We can have great leaps forward in faith and trust, and then great steps back and setbacks in faith. We can be lifted up at some times and find ourselves humbled at other times.

At times, we find ourselves overwhelmed, maybe dieting, asking questions like, where is God in all of this? Why hasn't he turned up?

Why am I having to wait so long? Why has this happened? And I think even the most accepting of us can find ourselves sort of doubting the plan, his purpose, his timing, his sovereignty, in the midst of the twists and turns, the ups and downs, and the frustrations of our own fickleness at times, can't we?

And I guess, to be kind to Abraham and Sarah, you know, we have the advantage of being able to look with hindsight on their lives and with this kind of bird's eye view that Scripture gives to us.

But they're living it out in real time, not knowing always what's ahead, the kind of twists and turns, you know, lots kind of being captured by the kings of Saurab, you know, the kings from the north and so on.

[3:21] But are seeking to walk faithfully before the Lord in that circumstances. And, you know, again, the kind of similarities with ourselves.

We don't know the things that are around the corner. And so we're trying to kind of walk by faith and not by sight, not always knowing what is ahead.

But what has been lovely, as we've kind of looked through the book of Genesis, is to see the way that God deals with those who are seeking to walk by faith and not by sight, and making a muck of it, and so on.

Now, of course, Abraham is a particular place in salvation history, but he's still a child of God, as we are. And we are, you know, Scripture may explain that, you know, the children of Abraham, that we walk by faith and not by sight like he did.

And what we've seen is God kind of unfolding a revelation of himself, who he is, and how he is to be understood, and what he can be to the people of God in the circumstances that they face, that we face.

[4:32] And today is yet another chapter full of kind of twists and turns, where we see the Lord just unveiling another aspect of his character, of who he is in verse 33, that he is the Lord, the eternal God, Yahweh el-Olam.

He is the God who Malachi tells us, chapter 3, verse 6, does not change. Who the writer of the Hebrews, 13, 8, tells us is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And whilst, you know, there are sort of kinks in the road of our discipleship, some of them of which we are creating for ourselves, some of the things that just happen to us, and whilst we're experiencing these things, he is unfazed by them.

He knows that they're occurring, but they don't faze him in the way that they faze us. He is still able to work sovereignly in the midst of all the mess.

And actually, I hope that just as we think on who he is, like I mentioned at the beginning, that actually, that thought is able to bring us great comfort in our situations.

That he is the one who is the eternal God, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That what he promises, he will do, as we'll see later on. And that he is with us.

[5:50] And that he is steadfast. And that he is sure. And that he is trustworthy. And actually, that that is a greater comfort than some of the other alternatives.

The atheistic world, for example, which is godless, tells us that the universe ultimately is cold and impersonal, and cares not whether we live or die.

Or compared to the other major religions, where the gods of these religions are capricious and unpredictable, offer no assurance, or even the gods or the idols that we fashion in our own hearts are not able to produce what they promise.

But we worship a god, the true god, the only god, who is eternal, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And promises to be with us.

And promising his presence. Promising his help. Who is unfazed by the certain, you know, running around as somehow kind of sweating in the way that we are by circumstances.

[7:04] But it is the eternal God. And that is what the kind of thing that I want us to keep in mind as we're looking at this chapter. That hope will resonate in our hearts.

And God will be ministering to you in your situation. God knows and he is with you. And whilst we feel, you know, somewhat broken by the situation, he stands steadfast with us.

And we're able to lean on him. But there are, I guess, in a sense, three acts within this passage. So as we look at Yahweh el Olam, we are looking at God eternal.

We see that this eternal God provides grace to believers, verses 1 to 6. Even grace to mockers, verses 8 to 20. And then grace to the nations, verses 22 to 34. So first of all, grace to believers. Verse 1. Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah, as he had said. And the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age.

[8:04] At the very time that God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded him.

Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, God has brought me laughter. And everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. And she added, who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?

Yet I have born him a son in his old age. So here we see that note of grace. The Lord was gracious. That's the kind of melody note of this passage.

As you've seen, I've included in the titles today. And notice the emphasis on the Lord and what he is doing in these first verses.

He is the one who is gracious. He is the one who has done for her what he promised. He is the one who is true to his word. He is the promise keeper.

[9:10] The eternal God keeps his word. What he says, he does. What he promises, he will pull through on. That is the God before whom we worship and with whom we walk with.

I wonder if that resonates deep in your heart. Do you hear it in your head, but you're not, you know, it doesn't feel, it's resonating in your hearts.

Well, this morning, I encourage you to let that resonate in your heart as well as in your head in the circumstances that you're facing. That he is the gracious one. He is the steadfast one.

What he says he does and what he promises he will pull through on. You see with Abraham and Sarah, they had to wait a long time for this. Genesis 12, 7, God promised that to your offspring I will give this land.

And it's now 25 years or so later. In 25 years, if you think of that in terms of the scope of your life, for some of you aren't even 25 years old here this morning. But for us, you know, we moved to Stirling, more Ann and I, 21 years ago.

[10:17] And you look back and think all that has happened, you know, Cameron was born in Aberdeen, but our two children were born here. Our kids all went to playgroup here, nursery here, primary school here, secondary school here.

Two have gone to university. One's now married. All in that period of less than Abraham and Sarah had to wait. It's a quarter of a lifetime. And they have been all that time.

They had a promise and waiting, waiting, waiting as the years, actually the decades have gone by on the promise being fulfilled.

And they've struggled with it. They've run out of patience with it. They've taken matters into their own hands through it. They've fluffed it up big time in the midst of it. But at just the right time, when there was no humanly possible way for it to happen, when it was unquestionably anything other than miraculous, it happened.

That nobody could question that God has done this. This is God's promise and he has pulled through on it. It happened. It happened. If, as we mentioned previously, remembering is an important dynamic in our Christian life, then another has got to be waiting, hasn't it?

[11:42] Waiting. We live in an instant culture. We are not used to waiting. You can order on Amazon. Other providers are available. And it can come the next day. We're not used to waiting.

Waiting. But actually, the scriptures tell us it's an important spiritual discipline. Waiting. Waiting on the Lord. Waiting on his timing.

Waiting on his way. Waiting on his will. Psalm 27, verse 14, I read it through the week in my quiet time, just reminded me of that when it says, the psalmist says, Wait for the Lord.

Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. Isaiah says, those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength.

Those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength. There's a discipline, isn't there? To waiting on the Lord in one area of life, whilst actually the rest of life is kind of, is going on.

[12:47] Waiting for guidance. From the one who the psalmist, Psalm 23, tells us, is the shepherd who will lead us. Waiting for provision.

It might be accommodation or finances. Workers for your mission organization. The right people at the right time. Waiting on the one who said, Matthew 5, ask, seek, knock, and it will be given.

Waiting for his return. That's guaranteed, but it will be in his time. It might be that you feel, you know, later on in life, you're waiting for him to take you home.

Wondering why you're still here. When we wait on the Lord, Psalm 20, 37, verse 18, says that he is the one who has numbered the days of the upright.

We will be here until the day that he calls us home. And so we wait on him patiently. You might be waiting for test results. Then as you do that, look to him, claim his peace.

[13:49] Philippians 4, 7 tells us that pass is understanding. Or his promised presence. The one Hebrews 13, verse 5 tells us will never leave us nor forsake us. He might be waiting for a relationship, waiting for family life to begin.

Well, pray biblical prayers whilst you're waiting. Wrestle, you know, with those things like the psalmist, yes. And like Jesus, he prayed, Lord, if only this cup could be taken from me.

But get to the point that he did, that the psalmist often does. Of resolution where you're able to say, Lord, not my will, but yours be done. Wait on the Lord.

Wait in such a way as not to be preoccupied by it and paralyzed by it. So we're almost able to think about nothing else. But as we begin to bring these things to the Lord and just wait patiently in that area, we're still able to function in the other areas of life as we patiently give it into his hands and his timing.

And it's true, it's easier to wait, isn't it? When we know the one with whom we are waiting. And as we see here and reminded here in these first verses, we're waiting on the one who is the sovereign God.

[15:08] The sovereign God. He delivers on what he promises. He does what he says he will do. All at the right time.

All under his perfect control. And in his perfect way. He is the one. We often talk about the illustration of the tapestries they used to do. I don't know if they still do them up at the castle. But when they did, you could go and look on one side and you just saw a mass of threads of different colors. And you had no idea what on earth was going on. But you looked at the other side and there's fantastic tapestries.

He is the one who is able to hold all the threads, not only of our lives, but everyone's lives and the whole world and the whole universe. To produce something that is for his glory and for our goods. He is the sovereign Lord. We are waiting on the one who is able to keep his promises like he has done here for Abraham and Sarah. And yes, we might have to wait longer than we are comfortable with.

[16:12] But in the waiting, we remain steadfast. We remain faithful to him. Because he is the eternal God who is steadfast and faithful and will do what he says.

He is the one who has done it for Abraham and Sarah. He is the one who did it for the, who was true to his word. Even when the people of God were sent into exile and said, I'll bring you back in 70 years.

And 70 years later, he brought them back. He is the one who promised right back in Genesis. The one who would crush Satan's head. And all through the scriptures, one would be the line of David born in Bethlehem and so on.

And at just the right time, he came just as God promised. Because he is the one who is faithful and steadfast and eternal and sovereign.

And his promises to you and I are many and they are great. I will never leave you nor forsake you.

[17:24] I, the one who have begun a good work in you, will see it through to completion on the day of Christ Jesus. His promises to us are many and they are great.

And we must hold on to them when, you know, in our fickleness, when we think we've blown it. When we think we don't deserve it.

We can look to the one who has promised that if we confess our sins, then he is faithful and true and will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And give us a fresh start with him. Because of the power of the cross and that dynamic in our lives. And so our days are not spent kind of running away from God thinking, I've blown it, thinking, you know, I don't deserve this. But we're able to bring it to him and say, Lord, you're the sovereign. You know everything. And mercifully, you've given us the scriptures and seen the kind of the fickleness of the walk of the folks that are trying to walk by faith by you.

[18:25] And you remain faithful to them and you will be faithful to me. That's, you promised that. That's, bless you, thank you. And in that way, we're able to keep that sort of our walk with the Lord dynamic and vital.

Not kind of thinking somehow, giving in to the lie that he doesn't love us, that he doesn't care about us because of our stupidity at times. That's exactly what Satan wants.

Let's not fall for the lie. But hold to the truth. But the waiting is over. After all these years for Abraham and Sarah. And we see in these early verses, there's just sheer joy, isn't there?

The word, you know, Isaac means he laughs. And in a sense, it's a bit of a kind of play that they laugh somewhat scornfully about the idea that they would have a child. But now they're laughing with delight.

God has given them the child that he promised. There's just sheer joy in Sarah's tone. And she's saying others are sharing in that joy with her. And actually, you know what?

[19:31] The work of the Lord in us is meant to bring us joy. You know, Nehemiah 8.10 says, The joy of the Lord is our strength.

The Lord's, it's the Lord's joy in us is our strength. Of course, the well-known phrase from the Shorter Catechism, what is our chief end?

It is to glorify God. And what? And enjoy him. Or by enjoying him. Forever. You know, we're working through the book of Philippians in the evening service.

And, you know, what is it that Paul says there? He says, Rejoice in the Lord. In case you didn't get what I just said there, rejoice. I'll say it again. Rejoice in the Lord. Always. Always. Always. That joy at times may work out in sort of vibrancy and overflowing. But at other times, it might be that just deep assurance when things are hard.

[20:31] That we still have the joy of our salvation. The joy of heaven that awaits. The joy of his presence with us. And his many promises to help us and sustain us. The shepherdly care over us.

And that fulfillment of the promise in Abraham and Sarah's life and its subsequent joy brings a sort of flesh, fresh flush of obedience.

And the obedience of faith in Abraham. He names him as God requested back in Genesis 17 verse 19. He circumcises him at eight days old as God instructed him in chapter 7, that same chapter.

And we see in that passage, the children of believers are given the sign of the covenant. Well, what are we to make of all of this?

Well, just as I've been saying, God reveals himself as the one who keeps his words. The one who works sovereignly.

[21:32] Whilst the nations rage, his purposes are unstoppable. Unlike us, you know, who have to kind of rush around and try to get things done and, you know, have a sweat on if you like to get it done and are anxious and fretting.

He is unfazed. He continues to act justly, rightly, sovereignly and in his own time. And just the very present, the thought of who he is, as well as the reality that brings to our lives, should help us to find comfort in whatever circumstances we find ourselves.

Whether it's, you know, we're struggling in our own personal lives or family situation. Leaning on him. Or whether we're concerned about the world situation.

Whether nations rage, regimes change, economic crisis come and go. That we have our trust in a higher throne who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

But also in this passage, we should see a shadow of what is to come. When a long-promised child, long-awaited for, is born in miraculous circumstances, brings joy to the world and joy to us.

[22:51] As we delight in his saving purposes being worked out in our lives. And as we learn to wait upon him, trust in him. So we see in this chapter, first of all, grace to believers.

The grace of this God who has come into our lives so wonderfully. But also there's grace to mockers.

This next section, verses 8 onwards, raises a little consternation, doesn't it? You know, even Abraham, verse 11, is greatly concerned by Sarah's suggestion. And I guess part of us sort of thinks, Sarah, I forget to say, it was your poor choices way back in the earlier chapters.

And Abraham's cowardly kind of following that has got everyone to this kerfunktel in the first place. Let's read on, verse 8. The child grew and was weaned.

And on the day Isaac was weaned, Abraham held a great feast. But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar, the Egyptian, had born to Abraham was mocking.

[24:01] And she said to Abraham, get rid of that slave woman and her son. For that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac. And again, we sort of think, is this Sarah kind of in a normal emo, just sort of overreacting?

Or was there a sense in which, though her heart attitude might not have been right, she was sensing some actual, something that actually was really there?

Was there an element of danger in the tone of his mocking? Earlier on, you know, God had said of Ishmael that he will be a sort of wild as he grows.

And certainly the apostle Paul sees something of that when he talks about it in Galatians 4, that he uses the word persecuting. Was Ishmael casting expressions on the father?

Oh, it's just Abimelech. There we go. Was he laughing at the parents that they were so old? Was he kind of mocking and thinking, oh yeah, he's going to be the one who errs.

[25:11] Well, we'll see about that. Is there a sense in which, you know, we remember last time there was sibling rivalry recorded in the scriptures. It ended in bloodshed with Cain and Abel.

Did the mocking trigger the misery that she experienced when Hagar mocked her because of her infertility? Whatever her heart and her motives, actually there may well be something right about what she's saying, as we'll see.

And actually, you wonder if Sarah is evoking what was probably a local custom around the time. There's evidence from that area that there was a law that slaves could be given their freedom.

But if that slave had born a child, that the child would no longer be eligible for an inheritance. That was the price of their freedom.

So in a sense, what Sarah is doing is saying, set her free. Give her her freedom. And of course, this all feels foreign to us. And that's because it is. It's a different time.

[26 : 20] It's a different culture. And we know that none of what was happening here was what God had intended. He certainly had intended that Abraham had married Hagar and so on.

But God is still able to work in the midst of it. In the tapestry of kind of the mix of threads that we create. He is still able to work sovereignly for his glory and for our gates.

Verse 12. But God said to him, do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to what Sarah tells you because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

I will make the son of the slave into a nation also because he is of your offspring. And there's a kind of sober moment, isn't it? And what we discover next is that because of the mocking, the rejection of the child of promise, it leads to an exclusion from the inheritance to come.

And we also keep in mind that God had promised Ishmael, not just in this passage, but in previous passages, that yes, he would be a sort of wild donkey of a man, but also he would be father of a nation. Verse 14.

[27 : 35] Early the next morning, Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bow shot away, for she thought, I cannot watch the boy die. And as she sat there, she began to sob.

God heard the boy crying. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, what is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.

Lift the boy up, take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation. Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert, became an archer. And while he was living in the desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt. What's going on here?

[28 : 37] What can we observe? There's lots in there, but one of the things I think that we can observe is something that we've noted before. Here's an example of what theologians, divines have called common grace.

If you're new to looking at all of this, common grace is God's general care for all humanity. Jesus talks about it in Matthew chapter 5, verse 43 to 45.

Let me just read that section or you want to flick it to it with me. Matthew 5, 43. Jesus says, you have heard that it was said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemy, pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your father in heaven. He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. That's the verse that associated with common grace. He sends sun to rise on the evil and the good, rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Common grace is his general good for all humanity. Common grace elements here is that God provides for those who are rejecting the sun, who are not acknowledging him and live, if you want, almost as enemies of him by rejecting the sun.

[29 : 50] There's no prayer. There's no trusting. Even though there's a promise already been given. And even though Ishmael is rejecting God's plan, he has cursed the promised sun.

God is showing kindness. And so for us being shaped by the gospel, Jesus in Matthew 5 tells us that we are to be like the Lord in these matters.

We're to love our enemies, those who persecute us. And that, you know, we're to love our neighbor. And that might be our physical neighbor, our work colleague, who is giving us a hard time.

It might be public figures who are vicious about our faith. We're to love and to pray for them, as Jesus says. And in that way, we're showing common grace, as Jesus says, as your father in heaven does.

As well as offering saving grace through the Lord Jesus. Yes, there is also a time where Jesus says about not throwing pearls before swine.

[30:53] But as those who have received undeserved love, we are also to show undeserved love, Jesus is telling us. But stepping back and seeing what these first 20 verses foreshadow, there's something else that they show, don't they?

That there are two responses to the child of promise. There are two responses to the one who was long promised. And there are two responses, yes, to Isaac here, but also to Abraham's greater son, to the Lord Jesus Christ, aren't there?

There are those who are rejoicing at his birth. And those who long for his coming. And then there are also those who mock his coming. Mock who he is.

Mockers who are separating themselves from the inheritance that is to come by their own choice. And here's a solemn part of this passage, isn't it?

It's not only solemn for Ishmael, but Jesus makes it really clear that it is solemn for all who will reject him. That as you reject him out of our choice, we are choosing to face the consequences of our own sin at the judgment.

[32:20] Where without receiving Christ, we will cut off from the promised inheritance. That which is for all who believe, for heaven. And by our own choice, choose a place of separation.

Choose hell. The place of separation from blessing. The place of curse, rather than the place of blessing. And we've seen this choice again and again.

It's all through scripture. We've seen it again and again in scripture. The choice that Adam and Eve had in the garden. Of the tree. Choose the covenant of life or the covenant of death. Cain and Abel in the field.

He could have, God spoke with them, choose life. But he chose the covenant of death. Moses, throughout Deuteronomy, encourages the people to choose life. Ultimately, choose Christ.

Don't reject the promised son and therefore face the consequences of our rejection of him. To find ourselves rejected by God and ultimately facing an eternity without him in hell.

[33:16] And people may sort of, if you're new to this, thinking, oh, Callum, you're speaking about hell here. I thought this was sort of more in church. We didn't speak about those kind of things.

But, well, interestingly, Jesus speaks about it much more than he speaks about heaven. Because of his great concern that we wouldn't go there, but we would receive him as savior.

But even here, in this passage, we're seeing how God shows grace to mockers. Not just common grace, but saving grace.

Think how, you know, Paul, for example, persecuted the church, stood by, holding the jackets, if you like, of those who were stoning Stephen, giving approval to what they were doing in their murderous act.

He's a mocker of the kind of ultimate nature. And yet God showed him grace. Even though he was rejecting the promised son, God showed him grace.

[34:20] And there was still the ability to come and to receive Christ as savior. And to find himself included in the inheritance that was to come. Not cut off from it.

I was a mocker before I became a Christian. But he showed me grace. Many of us might experience ourselves in a similar thing that we, at one time, had been mockers.

But God, we experienced the grace of God and he turned our lives around. And find ourselves as children of the promise. Children of awaiting the inheritance that was ours.

And in a similar vein, the witness of God's witness here actually is going out to the nations.

It's not that Abimelech becomes a believer. But he is a God-fearer. And a historicity of this incident is enshrined actually in the name Beersheba, which still exists today.

[35:22] It's known as the capital of the Negev. But as we see the passage move on, we see God giving grace not only to mockers, but also to the nations. Verse 22. At that time, Abimelech and Phicol, his chief honcho, if you like, the commander of his forces, said to Abraham, God is with you in everything you do.

Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely. In other words, like you did before with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I've shown you.

Abraham, verse 24, says, I swear it. In verse 25, Abraham complained to Abimelech about the well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized. But Abimelech said, I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me. I only heard about it today. Verse 27. So Abraham bought, brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech and to the two men. And the two men made a treaty. They cut a

covenant, in other words.

Abraham set apart seven new lambs from the flock. And Abimelech asked God, what is the meaning of these seven new lambs that you have set apart by themselves? He replied, accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well.

[36 : 37] So this place was called Beersheba, the well of seven or the well of oath. Because the two men swore an oath there. That's the origin of the name Beersheba. So Abraham was promised a land.

He was promised a son. He was promised a nation. And we begin to see the beginnings of that. He's in the land that God promised here by this well.

He has a son that was promised. And here he was also promised to be a blessing to the nations. The nations are being blessed because of his witness. See, surrounding the birth of this child, there's a covenant that brings peace, isn't there?

Surrounding the birth of Abraham's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a covenant that brings peace for those who receive him as Savior and Lord. The great shalom in our souls. The wonderful shalom of God bringing peace to heart and to mind, to soul and to being. The end of our futile striving and the beginning of our receiving from God.

[37 : 40] And it's not a cheap grace as is shown here. Abraham brings up the issue of the well that needs to be reconciled. But notice also that Abraham pays the price for the covenant. And in doing so, he's foreshadowing what is to come.

Christ, his greater son, will bring, will establish, will cut a new covenant in his blood. Paying the price for his establishment. Offering not a cheap grace, but where our transgressions are exposed and the price is fully paid for them.

Not by us, but by him. By God himself, through this eternal covenant established by El Eolan, the eternal God. And verse 32.

After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commanders of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree.

It's a tree that hopefully in your community groups needs to be well watered. But also is evergreen. It just, it is always flourishing.

[38 : 48] He planted a tree in Beersheba. And there he called on the name of the Lord, the eternal God. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

As we reflect over the passage, what we've seen is God revealing himself as the kind of God that he is. The one to whom we can look as we seek to walk by faith and not by sight. Actually, throughout the chapters, these early chapters of Genesis, he's been revealing himself in different names, hasn't he?

First of all, chapter 1, Elohim. El, if you're new to this thing, means God. And Elohim means creator God, mighty and strong. Chapter 2 reveals himself as Yahweh, the name given to his covenant family, the great I Am who dwells among his people.

In chapter 16, El Roy, the God who sees. Chapter 17, El Shaddai, the all-sufficient one. Here in chapter 21 is El Olam, the God eternal who does not change, who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

And what we're seeing in these chapters is grace abounding from this great God to the chiefest of sinners who will come, to the ficklest of followers like Abraham and you and me, offering a covenant where there is joy and where there is peace, where there is the shalom of God.

[40 : 08] Let's pray.

God our Father, thank you for the way in which you are revealing yourself through these scriptures to us.

Thank you for the way in which you are bringing to us both challenge and comfort. Challenge to wait upon you, to hold you to your promises.

Jesus, but comfort to know the God on whom we are waiting and with whom we are walking. Thank you that you are the gracious God who deals kindly and faithfully with us in our fickleness.

Who yes, like Abram had to give account before Abimelech for his shortcomings and his sin. It's not a cheap grace but you offer to us great grace and we bless you and thank you for the way in which you are revealing yourself to us help us Lord as we seek to walk by faith and not by sight to lean on you and to trust in you the one who is the sovereign God the eternal God who never changes who's the same yesterday today and forever and who promises to be with us never ever to forsake us we

ask it in jesus precious name amen