

Genesis 21.22-34

“City of God, City of Man”

Political Season > Billboards and Posters throughout Almaty > New Political Party
Elections in Afghanistan in September > November Presidential Election in USA
CLAIMS and COUNTER-CLAIMS > Promises, Promises, Promises

How do Citizens of Heaven exercise their Earthly Citizenship?
CAN WE LIVE FOR GOD IN THE CITY OF MAN?

Bible Records several ENCOUNTERS btwn Religious and Political Leaders
Prophet ELIJAH met AHAB King of Israel
Apostle PAUL met King Agrippa
Lord JESUS CHRIST met Governor Pontius Pilate

Prophet, Father of the Faith > Abraham meets KING ABIMELECH of Philistines
Pleasant Scene > Man of God and King on GOOD TERMS / Civil and Cordial

1. Creation of Church and State
2. Common Ground between Church and State
3. Contrast between Church and State

1. Creation of Church and State

a. God's Structure 1.1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

“The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”
Psalm 24.1

God RULES the World through STRUCTURES He has ORDAINED
FAMILY / CHURCH / STATE

FAMILY

Companionship - 2.18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Conception - 4.1 “Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.”

Care - “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
1 Timothy 5.8

CHURCH

Prayer – 4.26 “At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.”

v. 33 “Abraham...(MEMBER OF CHURCH) called upon the name of the LORD”

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”
1 Timothy 2.1,2

Proclamation – v. 31 “the two men swore an oath there” > Name of TRUE GOD

“God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth”
1 Timothy 3.15

STATE

Restrain Evil – 4.15 “if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him”

9.5,6 “And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”

v. 23a “Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants.”

Reward Good - v. 23b “Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you.”

“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God... Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”
Romans 13.1-4

b. God's Servants – heads of Family, Church, State Ultimately Servants of God

FAMILY “Children, obey your parents in the Lord” Ephesians 6.1

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.” Ephesians 5.22

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church” Ephesians 5.25

CHURCH “I, Paul, have become a servant...for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness” Colossians 1.23-25

STATE “For he is God's servant to do you good.” Romans 13.4

DEMANDS RESPECT > God's Servants > POSITION not the PERSON

STATE Leader > VERY DIFFICULT TO RESPECT > Pontius Pilate
Rule of Judea – 1st Cent. - Characterized by INSENSITIVITY and BLOODSHED

Wanted to Build Aqueduct into Jerusalem > Stole Funds from Jewish Temple
When Jews Protested > Soldiers attacked protestors with Clubs and Daggers

Another Time > Soldiers murdered Galileans as Offered Sacrifices in Temple

Ordered Execution of Son of God > Washed his Hands as Show of Innocence
Jesus > TORTURED without TRIAL by Pilate's Bloodthirsty Soldiers
BUT --- JESUS HIMSELF Spoke Respectfully of Pilate's Position
"You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."

John 19.11

“We are not only subject to the authority of princes who perform their office toward us uprightly and faithfully as they ought, but also the authority of all who, by whatever means, have got control of affairs, even though they perform not a whit of the princes' office.” John Calvin

RESPECT based NOT on Person's CONDUCT or CHARACTER >
But on GOD'S CREATION STRUCTURE – Respect OFFICE God Gave Them

c. God's Standard – does being a Servant of God allow them to do anything?

Can people in Authority be Despots and Tyrants? Must we Accept Any Decree?

Elderly Anglican Pastor in Northwest Uganda > Friend and Colleague in Ministry
 Day 1972 > Limousine Pulled up to his very Modest Home > President Emerged
 President Idi Amin > wanted Pastor's beautiful Christian daughter > 4th Wife

Pastor sadly asked Me "How could I say no to the President?"

Couple years later > Presidential Motorcade (without President) Returned to House
 Hearse carried Coffin of Young Wife > Body Cut into Pieces by President Amin

How can we say that President Idi Amin acted as God's Servant?

GOD'S SERVANTS FOLLOW GOD'S STANDARDS

When those appointed by God reject God's Standards > DEVIL'S SERVANTS

Revelation > Gov't that fights Church pictured as BEAST empowered by SATAN

Apostles – Risked Lives – DEFIED Government that MOCKED God's Standard
 "(The Sanhedrin) called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach
 at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves
 whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help
 speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4.18-20

CHURCH rejects God's Word > One of Satan's Most Effective Tools for Evil

God CREATED > Family, Church, State > His Servants following His Standards

2. Common Ground between Church and State

a. Creation - Not 1st mtg btwn Abe & Abimelech - Gen 20, again in Gen 26 Isaac

v. 22 Abimelech...said to Abraham, "God is with you..."

v. 23 "swear to me here before God"

DO NOT KNOW ABIMELECH'S THEOLOGY > Not an Atheist > God-Talker
 STARTING POINT > Most Fundamental > CHILDREN of GOD our CREATOR

DESPITE ABE'S BEHAVIOR – Abimelech was impressed with Abe's God

v. 22 "God is with you in everything you do."

With 318 men Defeated 4 Kings and Rescued Lot / Sodom & Gomorrah Destroyed
 Women in Abimelech's Kingdom > Infertile > Restored thru Prayer of Abraham

DOES KZ SEE GOOD THINGS FROM THE CHURCH? / Is God with us?

2000 yrs of Church History > Every Continent > Believers MADE DIFFERENCE
 Schools, Universities, Hospitals, Libraries, Orphanages, Drug Addiction Centers
 GOSPEL MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY GOOD WORKS

IT IS ABIMILECH WHO BUILDS THE BRIDGE

v. 23 "Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you."

Does ABE ASK? – What color is your skin? How much money do you make?
 What is your profession? What language do you speak? What passport do you hold? What political party do you endorse? What is your religion? Denomination?

HE ASKS NONE OF THOSE QUESTIONS – He Immediately Agrees to PEACE
 v. 24 Abraham said, "I swear it."

Do WE BUILD BRIDGES > with ALL GOD’S CHILDREN? Common Ground
 TO LIVE PEACEFULLY IN GOD’S WORLD
 Clean Air & Water / Health Care / Jobs / Education / Future for Children

TODAY’S WORLD UNDER TERRORIST SIEGE > Open Warfare on Mankind
 Attacking Every Continent > No Matter Ethnicity, Religion, or Nationality
 ANYONE WHO DISAGREES WITH THEIR SELFISH CAUSE > ENEMY

People who want their CHILDREN to ride school BUSES without being blown up.
 People who want to shop in MARKET, eat in RESTAURANT, ride a PLANE or TRAIN,
 without walls being smeared with their own flesh & blood should UNITE

“Christianity should teach men how to be saved for eternity, but also how to live comfortably and healthily together.”
 David Livingstone

b. Communication – Abraham NOT GOOD MODEL > Too Many Churches

20.11 ABE TO ABIMELECH "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.'

SAID to MORE than HIMSELF > Abimelech & Throne Room full of Attendants
 COMMENT ERECTED BARRIERS > DID NOT BUILD BRIDGES

Allow RUMORS to DEFINE & DIVIDE US > Talk ABOUT > Never talk TO
 TOO OFTEN CHURCH IS IN UNNECESSARY CONFLICT WITH GOV'T

WITHOUT JUSTICE THERE CAN BE NO TRUE PEACE

Basis of LASTING PEACE is JUSTICE > People think something Unfair > Fight
WATER RIGHTS > Global Problem even 4000 years Later

ABIMELECH was UNAWARE of PROBLEM > No Communication from Abe
v. 26 Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I
heard about it only today."

COMMUNICATION required for SORTING OUT DIFFICULT ISSUES

Bible MUCH TO SAY > Speaking the Truth in Love > Speaking Directly, Openly

Story from Korea that shows IMPORTANCE of Clear Communication

Man in Village of CHIA LEE was going to be MARRIED > but had NO SUIT
Went to Big City > Found nice Suit > Coat PERFECT FIT > Forgot try Pants
Night before Wedding > PANTS 3 INCHES TOO LONG > Will ROLL UP
GRANDMA – Not sleep / ashamed for Grandson / Woke / Cut 3 inches / Hemmed
MOTHER – Not sleep / ashamed for Son / Woke / Cut 3 inches / Hemmed
SISTER – Not sleep / ashamed for Brother / Woke / Cut 3 inches / Hemmed
Man married in Beautiful Suitcoat / Fashionable pair of Shorts

c. Cooperation v. 31 “the two men swore an oath there” > OATH with PAGAN??

SOUNDS STRANGE – Christians cannot Partner with Eachother / DIVISIONS

Small Village in North of Scotland > Almost all Presbyterians > One Baptist Man
Baptist DIED > Family came to Presbyterian Pastor for Funeral Services

PROBLEM > Could he conduct Funeral for a Baptist?

Sent Telegram to Presbyterian Church Headquarters in Edinburgh

“Can I Bury a Baptist?” ANSWER: “Bury all the Baptists you can.”

FUNNY but often TRUE > Worse > Presbyterians cannot agree with Presbyterians
Countless CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS are Shot Down by FRIENDLY FIRE

“For every gracious, kind-spirited, forgiving Christian, I can point to a proud,
mean-spirited, judgmental one...Politicians tell me their nastiest letters come from
people who quote the Bible and claim to speak for God.” Philip Yancey

SHOULD NOT BE SO > Follow Master who was KIND and GRACIOUS

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may
know how to answer everyone.” Colossians 4.5,6

Gifts of Abe / ACT OF JUSTICE / WITNESS TO THEIR AGREEMENT
 PROMISES backed up TANGIBLE EXPRESSION of Personal Commitment

vs. 27-30 “Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a treaty. Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, and Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?" He replied, "Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well."

GIFTS > TANGIBLE EXPRESSION > Desire for PEACE and JUSTICE

3. Contrast between Church and State

KING and his GENERAL > RETURNED to Headquarters

v. 32 “After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines.”

BUT Abraham STAYED > Showed a DIFFERENT NATURE

a. Plants v. 33 “Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba”

TAMARISK > Grows in Sandy Soil > 7 meters high > Good for Man & Animals

SOJOURNER in Land > Made Capital Improvements > Concern for Whole Man
 SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY OF PLANTING A TREE

“One can’t save and then pitchfork souls into heaven...Souls are more or less securely fastened to bodies...and as you can’t get the souls out to and deal with them separately, you have to take them both together.” Amy Carmichael

To Martin Luther: “What would you do if you knew Christ was coming back tomorrow? >> Plant an apple tree today.”

LIVE EVERY DAY FULLY FOR GOD > LIKE IT WAS YOUR LAST

Jeremiah wrote to Jews carried away as captives in Babylon:

"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."
 Jeremiah 29.5-7

b. Prays v. 33 “he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God”

Abimelech talked ABOUT God > Abraham TALKED TO God > REGULARLY

CALL UPON > CONFESSION > I need You, I cannot do this alone, I am Undone
DESPERATE GASP OF A DYING MAN

CONFIDENCE > “Called upon the Name” > INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE of God
All Children of GOD by Creation > Only Jesus makes us Children by Redemption
Only Believer in Jesus knows God as ‘Abba’ Father

“The Lord, the ETERNAL GOD” > God Reveals NEW NAME for Himself

AS ABE WALKED with God for now 30 years > LEARNED MORE OF HIM

14.19 MELCHIZEDEK "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.”

15.1 “I am your shield, your very great reward”

16.13 HAGAR "You are the God who sees me"

17.1 "I am God Almighty”

FOOLISH THEORY > Different Names for God = different gods, or different authors of various sections of Genesis / Pieced together by a REDACTOR

“The truth of the matter is that the Bible is one book, given by the one true God through human writers, and that the names of God, far from reflecting diverse gods or sources, are actually names given by God Himself to reveal His true nature and attributes. There are many names for God because God is so great He cannot adequately be described by one name or even a dozen names. In fact, even the names we have do not exhaust Him. They exhaust us – we will be able to spend and eternity learning of their full implications – but they do not exhaust the Inexhaustible.”
James Boice

“the LORD, the Eternal God” > Abe 30 yrs Older > GOD EVER NEW
Everything around Abe is Changing > GOD NEVER CHANGES > Eternal God

God’s Faithfulness – Isaac, PROMISED SON – Brought Laughter of Hope to Abe

ETERNAL God > Not just our Lifetime > Our Family > Our Nation > Our Church
ALL PEOPLE > ALL PLACES > ALL TIME

c. Peacemaker v. 34 Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time

KNEW enough about HUMAN NATURE > PEACE does not Happen on its Own
ABE kept on eye on things to insure PROMISE of PEACE was IMPLEMENTED

“Blessed are the *peacemakers*, for they will be called *sons of God*” Matthew 5.9

PEOPLE IN WORLD > Peace Hoppers, Wanters, Wishers, Dreamers
SONS OF GOD > PEACEMAKERS > Know Him who is the Prince of Peace

“now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace...His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.”
Ephesians 2.13-17

PEACEMAKING is PAINFUL > Peace is made through the Cross

SEEK PEACE IN WORLD > Work Hard in World > Do not be LIKE WORLD
POWER to Effect Change for God > BEING DIFFERENT from the World

Preserving SALT > Retard Rottenness > Pleasant SALT > Flavor out Blandness
Penetrating LIGHT > Dispel the Darkness > Chase it Away

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”
Matthew 5.9-16

Genesis 21

22. At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.

23. Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you."

24. Abraham said, "I swear it."

25. Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized.

26. But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today."

27. So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a treaty.

28. Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock,

29. and Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?"

30. He replied, "Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well."

31. So that place was called Beersheba, because the two men swore an oath there.

32. After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines.

33. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.

34. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.