

Message Ten

Two Wells—Two Sources of Living

Scripture Reading: Gen. 21:15-34

I. A well signifies the source of one's living; the two wells in Genesis 21:15-34 signify two sources of living:

- A. One well is the natural source in the wilderness of our soul; this source is represented by Ishmael, who lived in the wilderness and was joined to Egypt—vv. 19-21.
- B. The other well is the redeemed source in the garden of our spirit; this source is represented by Isaac, who lived at Beersheba and was brought to Mount Moriah—vv. 25, 31; cf. 22:2.
- C. Today there are two kinds of Christians:
 - 1. One kind is like Ishmael, living for themselves in the wilderness of their soul and being joined to the world—1 John 2:15-17.
 - 2. The other kind is like Isaac, living for God in their spirit and in the church life and being brought to Zion—Rom. 8:4; 12:4-5; 16:1; Rev. 14:1.
 - 3. Even we, real Christians, may be like Ishmael, living in and for ourselves and being joined to the world, unless, as typified by Isaac, we live in our spirit and in the church life so that we might reach God's goal—21:2; 22:16a.

II. Ishmael's well, the source of his living, was in the wilderness, a place rejected by God—Gen. 21:19-21; 25:12, 18:

- A. Ishmael's well, the source of his living, made him an archer—21:20:
 - 1. An archer is a wild hunter like Nimrod in 10:8-12, a killer in the wilderness.
 - 2. If we stay in the wilderness of our soul and drink water out of the well for Ishmael, the source of his living, we will be made an archer using the bow to kill life for building up our own kingdom, not a planter growing life for the building up of God's kingdom.
- B. Ishmael's well, the source of his living, joined him to Egypt, to the world—21:21:
 - 1. Hagar took a wife for Ishmael from Egypt, her own source, sealing him with the things of Egypt.
 - 2. There is a well, a source of living, that can make us a wild hunter who kills life and that can join us to the world.

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**III. Isaac's well, the source of his living, was in Beer-sheba—
vv. 25, 31:**

- A. Many verses in the Bible refer to this well, the divine source:
1. At Elim “there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees”—Exo. 15:27:
 - a. In the Bible a spring signifies life that flows out of God in resurrection—John 4:10, 14; 7:37-39; Rev. 22:1.
 - b. Palm trees signify life that is flourishing, rejoicing in satisfaction, and victorious over tribulation—Psa. 92:12; Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15; John 12:13; Rev. 7:9.
 2. “Then Israel sang this song: Spring up, O well! Sing to it! / The well, which the leaders sank, / Which the nobles of the people dug, / With the scepter, with their staffs”—Num. 21:17-18:
 - a. The well here at Beer typifies Christ within us—v. 16; John 4:11-12, 14.
 - b. The digging of the well signifies the digging away of the “dirt,” the barriers in our heart—our mind, emotion, will, and conscience—so that the Spirit as the living water may spring up within us and flow freely—cf. Gen. 26:15, 18.
 3. “A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon”—S. S. 4:15:
 - a. The fountain in gardens and the well of living water of the life-giving Spirit are streams from the resurrection and ascension life (Lebanon, v. 8)—John 7:38-39.
 - b. The fountain and the spring stream out from the overcomers, flowing out from what they are and from where they are.
- B. The well for Isaac was a redeemed well—Gen. 21:28-32:
1. Abraham redeemed this well at the cost of seven ewe lambs.
 2. In typology these lambs signify the full redemption of Christ, indicating that the divine living water has been redeemed, bought back, by Christ's full redemption—Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; John 19:34:
 - a. Today the whole human race is living by a source that is without redemption; we are living by a redeemed source.

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- b. The living water that we are drinking today is not natural; it is water that has been redeemed at a great cost.
- C. The well for Isaac also needed a covenant—Gen. 21:31-32:
 - 1. The covenant here, involving the redeeming of the well at Beer-sheba, is a seed of the new covenant, enacted through Christ’s redeeming blood—Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:8-13.
 - 2. Isaac drank of redeemed water, the water of the covenant; likewise, the living water that the New Testament believers drink today is redeemed and covenanted water—John 4:14; Heb. 8:10-13.

IV. “Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of Jehovah, the Eternal God”—Gen. 21:33:

- A. As the tree of life is the center of Genesis 2, the tamarisk tree is the center of Genesis 21:
 - 1. A tamarisk tree, having slender branches and very fine leaves, portrays the flow of the riches of life, the issue of the experience of the tree of life; thus, the tamarisk tree signifies the tree of life experienced and expressed—2:9-10.
 - 2. The fact that Abraham planted a tamarisk tree after making the covenant for the well at Beer-sheba indicates that the water of which he drank was flowing in a rich way—21:32-33; cf. John 7:37-39.
 - 3. The church life today is by the well in Beer-sheba; when we drink of this water and live by it, we will be like a tamarisk tree flowing with the riches of life:
 - a. The church should be at the well of an oath with a covenant and should also be full of tamarisk trees, the tree of life experienced by us—1:4; 10:10.
 - b. Our Christian life and the proper church life are both a tamarisk tree, expressing the tree of life by which we live—6:57b.
- B. There in Beer-sheba by the tamarisk tree Abraham called on the name of Jehovah, the Eternal God—Gen. 21:33:
 - 1. Here we have a special title of God—*Jehovah, El Olam*; *El* means “the Mighty One,” and *Olam*, meaning “eternal”

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or “eternity,” comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to conceal,” “to hide”:

- a. Abraham experienced God as the Eternal One, as the secret and mysterious One.
 - b. God’s existence is eternal, for He has neither beginning nor ending; He is the Eternal God—Psa. 90:2; Isa. 40:28.
 - c. The divine title *El Olam* implies eternal life—1 John 1:2; 2:25; 5:11-13.
2. In Genesis 21 Abraham experienced God as the eternal life, as the divine person who is concealed, veiled, hidden, mysterious, secret, and yet real, ever-existing, and ever-living, without beginning or ending—Exo. 3:14; John 3:16:
- a. The eternal life is the life “which is really life”—1 Tim. 6:19b.
 - b. Life is the Triune God dispensed into us and living in us:
 - 1) God the Father is the source of life (John 5:26), God the Son is the embodiment of life (1:4), and God the Spirit is the flow of life (4:14b).
 - 2) God the Father is the light of life (Rev. 21:23; 22:5), God the Son is the tree of life (v. 2), and God the Spirit is the river of life (v. 1).
 - c. The eternal life, which is the Son, not only was with the Father but also was living and acting in communion with the Father in eternity—1 John 1:1-2; John 1:1-2.
 - d. The eternal life was manifested to the apostles, who saw, testified, and reported this life to people; the manifestation of the eternal life includes the revelation and impartation of life to men, with a view to bringing man into the eternal life, into its union and communion with the Father—1 John 1:1-3.
 - e. The eternal life was promised by God, released through Christ’s death, and imparted to the believers through Christ’s resurrection—2:25; John 3:14-15; 12:24; cf. Luke 12:49-50; 1 Pet. 1:3.
 - f. The eternal life was received by the believers through believing in the Son; after the believers receive eternal life, this life becomes their life—John 3:15-16, 36a; Col. 3:4a; John 1:12-13.