

# GENESIS 21

## The Birth of Isaac

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### KEYWORD

### REVERANCE

God (Plural)	Elohim (The Trinity)
God (Singular)	El
LORD	Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)
GOD	Jehovah & or Yahweh
Lord	GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai
lord	Man the Master
El Olam	Everlasting God
Bara	God creating from nothing
Asah	God making or assembling from existent materials
Beth	House
Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 - Unity between God the Father &amp; His Son Jesus (John 10:30)</li><li>• 2 - Represents union, division, and verification</li><li>• 3 - Harmony, New Life &amp; completeness (467 times)</li><li>• 4 - Creation &amp; The creative ability of God.</li><li>• 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)</li><li>• 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has</li><li>• 7 - Perfection</li><li>• 8 - New beginnings</li><li>• 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)</li><li>• 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection</li><li>• 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 &amp; "11th" - 19)</li><li>• 12 - God's power and authority (187)</li><li>• 13 - Rebellion</li><li>• 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.</li><li>• 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.</li></ul>
Keywords	"create" (bara), "make" (asah), and "form" (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 - All the three are used.

*Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need*

### PRAYER

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**Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.**

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

**Jesus let your Holy spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.**

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

**In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!**

# GENESIS 21

## REVIEW

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Genesis 21 begins with the long-awaited birth of the son, God had promised to Abraham and Sarah.

This is the child through whom God would make of Abraham a great nation in Genesis 17:6-7.

God said the name of their son would be Isaac, which means laughter in Genesis 17:19 because they both laughed in Genesis 17:17 & Genesis 18:12.

Now the time has come.

Jesus visits Sarah.

She and Abraham conceive, just as God said, just as He promised in Genesis 18:14.

At the ages of 100 and 90 respectively, Abraham and Sarah become parents.

Sarah bears Abraham a son, full of joy at the laughter He has brought to her as we will see in Genesis 21:1-7.

That joy sours, though, after Isaac is weaned.

Sarah sees Abraham's son through Hagar, Ishmael, laughing.

She seems to think this is directed at little Isaac.

Now though, Sarah furiously demands that Abraham cast Hagar and Ishmael out into the wilderness to eliminate any possibility that Hagar's son will share the inheritance with her Isaac in Genesis 21:8-10.

Abraham gets greatly displeased at Sarah's demand since he is attached to Ishmael.

The LORD, however, speaks to Abraham and assures him that He will still make a great nation of Ishmael, and so tells him to do what Sarah has asked in Genesis 21:11-13.

Abraham obeyed and sent his slave wife and son into the wilderness with some bread and water.

They soon run out of water, and Hagar put her son under the shade of a bush to die.

An angel calls to her from heaven, and says that God has heard Ishmael's voice, and He will still make of Ishmael a great nation.

Water is provided; Hagar and Ishmael survive.

Ishmael grows up in the wilderness, becoming a great archer, and eventually marrying an Egyptian woman in Genesis 21:14-21.

Abimelech, king of Gerar, approaches Abraham.

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In spite of the fact that Abraham's deception about Sarah being his wife nearly led to Abimelech's death, the king has noticed that God is with Abraham.

Previously Abimelech has given to Abraham animals, servants, silver, and the land Abraham has been occupying.

Now Abimelech would like to formalize their relationship, giving Abraham a permanent home in his region and becoming official allies in Genesis 21:22-24.

Abraham agreed to Abimelech's request to swear not to deceive him or his offspring ever again, and to deal kindly with him and his people.

Abraham insisted on including in their agreement the resolution of the ownership of a disputed well, one Abraham himself had dug.

After they both swear their oaths to bind the agreement, the place where they met is called Beersheba, which means "well of seven" or "well of the oath."

It became an important place in Israel's history in Genesis 21:31-34.

As Genesis 21 concludes, Isaac has been born and Abraham owns a well in Canaan.

The promises of God to make of him a great nation and to give to him possession of the entire land have begun to come true.

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# GENESIS 21

## GEN 21: 1

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And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

That's so much like God. He did what He said He would do. It took a long time (25 years) for this promise to come to pass, but God was faithful and kept His promises, no matter how unlikely they may seem from a human perspective.

Not only had God promised to make Abraham a great nation, He had promised specifically that this nation would come through Sarah, a vow made twice within the last year (Genesis 17:16–21; 18:10–15).

The promise of a son was not fulfilled because Abraham was perfect in his obedience, but because God was faithful to His Word.

Now the Lord visits Sarah "as he had said" and the Lord does to her "as he had promised."

Somehow, in this visiting, the Lord made Sarah, finally, able to conceive a child with Abraham.

It's interesting that, though most of God's promises about the great nation that would flow from Abraham have been made directly to Abraham, the focus of the promise's fulfillment rests on Sarah.

God maintains a relationship with her and His promise is made to and through her.

The repetition and phrasing in this verse is meant to slow us down and cause us to notice that God is faithful. He does as He says.

God's promises never fail

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## GEN 21:2

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For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

- So, God brought to pass what He had told Abraham He would do.
  - With God, there is a "set time" for all things.
  - God deals with the eternal and so has all kind of patience waiting for that "set time."
  - We deal with the temporal and so, we have problems waiting for God's "set time."
  - We, so often, try to speed up God's clock and hasten His program.
  - We try to do things before God's "set time" and that is always a mistake.
  - We jump ahead and move before God moves.
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But God's timing is perfect.

He had said within the hearing of both Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child within a year from a specific moment (Genesis 18:14).

Though Abraham and Sarah had attempted to scheme a way to gain a son through another woman (Genesis 16:1-2), God specifically meant to provide them with their own natural child (Genesis 17:15-16).

Despite their disbelieving laughter (Genesis 17:17; Genesis 18:12), that's exactly what happened.

Not only does God keep His promises, He keeps them specifically.

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## GEN 21:3

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And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

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Just as God had instructed them in Genesis 17:9, Abraham named his son Isaac, which means "he laughs."

When God told Abraham he was going to give him a son when he was a hundred years old; Abraham laughed for joy.

Being strong in the faith, he gave glory to God.

The laughter of Abraham was the laughter of joy.

Later on when the LORD was talking to Abraham, in his tent, Sarah was eavesdropping when He told him that Sarah would bear him a son and she laughed.

Her laugh was one of incredulity.

Because hers was a laugh of disbelief the angel rebuked her.

They both laughed at the prospect of having a son, so the LORD said that his name shall be called Isaac or "laughter."

Isaac brought much joy and laughter to his parents and was a blessing to them.

Now take note of the repetition of the phrases ...

*"the son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him"*

This is meant to continue to slow the reader down and force us to ponder what has happened.

Two primary points stand out.

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First, of course, God kept His promise.

- He is faithful.
- He said this would happen, and it did.

Second,

- Abraham and Sarah were old and well beyond conceiving and bearing children.
- Furthermore, Sarah had been barren for her entire life up to this point.

Genesis intends for us to fully appreciate the idea that Isaac is a miracle baby.

Isaac became a wonderful type or picture of the Messiah to come, Jesus Christ.

- Both were specially promised sons.
- Both conceptions were miraculous.
- Both were born after a period of delay.
- Both mothers were given assurance by truth of God's omnipotence (Genesis 18:13-14; Luke 1:34, 37).
- Both were given names rich with meaning before they were born.
- Both births occurred at God's appointed time (Genesis 21:2; Galatians 4:4).
- Both births were accompanied by great joy (Genesis 21:6; Luke 1:46-47; 2:10-11).

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## GEN 21:4

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And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

On the very same day in Genesis 17 when God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah...

He commanded Abraham to be circumcised, along with every male in his household, and to circumcise all future male children born to his household at eight days old in Genesis 17:10-13.

The act of circumcision involves removing the foreskin from the penis, cutting in a circle around the organ.

This ritual is deeply symbolic, echoing God's sovereignty over fertility and children, the uniqueness of His people, and the permanence of His influence.

God continued the requirement for circumcision in the laws given to Israel through Moses in Leviticus 12:3.

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Now Abraham obeys that command with this promised son Isaac, circumcising him on the eighth day of his life.

I explained why on the 8<sup>th</sup> day and not on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> day in my Episode 17. If you haven't watched it, please pick it up on our YouTube channel.

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## GEN 21:5-7

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<sup>5</sup>And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

(Abraham's age at the time of Isaac's birth is given to emphasize that this was a supernatural work of God.)

<sup>6</sup>And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

(We see a similar case in Luke 24:41, where the disciples were so overcome with the good news of Jesus' resurrection, that it is said, *They believed not for joy*.

Here, we witness Sarah's joyful emotional response.

In a play on words, she gives all the credit for the birth of Isaac to the LORD.

He has "made laughter" for her, remember Isaac's name means "laughter."

Everyone who hears her story will laugh over her or with her, or perhaps she means people will laugh "at" her.

Most scholars interpret this statement to mean Sarah believes her story will bring the joy of laughter to others.

Some suggest that perhaps she believes others will laugh, as she did, at the idea that a 90-year-old woman could bear a child.

In any case, it has happened. She has laughter, at last.)

<sup>7</sup>And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?

(Now Sarah asks, who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?)

- The implied answer is that nobody would have said such a thing.
  - The truth, though, is that Jesus said exactly that thing to Abraham.
  - He is the only one who could have predicted this moment, because He is the one who made it come to pass.
  - Despite Abraham and Sarah's own doubts in Genesis 17:17 & Genesis 18:12, and their schemes in Genesis 16:1-2
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- God has faithfully provided exactly what He said He would, in the time He said He would provide it in Genesis 18:14)

for I have born him a son in his old age.

God really restored Sarah, not only was she able to have Isaac, but she was able to nurse him.

At ninety years old she was nursing her child.

Both had laughed at the very idea of it in Genesis 17:17 & Genesis 18:12, but even though Abraham was 100 years old, the day finally arrived.

God had kept His impossible, laughable, beautiful word.

Even though Abraham and Sarah were well beyond the normal age of conception, and Sarah had been barren for her entire life, God provided them with a natural-born son.

BTW the LORD rejuvenated Abraham also as he was a hundred and thirty-seven years old when Sarah died and after this he married Keturah and had six other children by her.

## GEN 21:8

And the child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Not only was the miracle child Isaac born, he survived being weaned.

- Compared to modern times, this era would have had extremely high infant mortality rates.
- A substantial number of infants did not survive to become independent adults.
- A child who survived the helplessness of their early years, until they were no longer directly dependent on their mother for food, took a step towards surviving to adulthood.

Women of this time may have breastfed their children as late as two or three years old, so Isaac was likely a toddler on the day of this great feast thrown to celebrate his life.

Some ancients say children were not weaned until 12 years of age and some say 5 years, but the most reliable research indicates an age of 3 years.

From the speech of the mother to her son in *2 Maccabees 7:27-29*, it seems likely that among the Jews they were weaned when *three* years old:

*O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee SUCK THREE YEARS, and nourished thee and brought thee up.*

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And this is farther strengthened by 2 Chronicles 31:16, where Hezekiah, in making provision for the Levites and priests, includes the children from *three* years old and upwards; which is a presumptive proof that previously to this age they were wholly dependent on the *mother* for their nourishment.

Samuel appears to have been brought to the sanctuary when he was just *weaned*, and then he was capable of ministering before the Lord, 1 Samuel 1:22-28; and this certainly could not be before he was *three* years of age.

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## GEN 21:9

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And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

Ishmael was thirteen when Isaac was born, so he was about fifteen or sixteen at the time of the weaning celebration.

Sarah saw this teenage son of Hagar, laughing or scoffing.

No doubt Ishmael felt jealousy for this other son, Isaac, that was born.

He had the attention and love of his father for thirteen years and though Sarah always had a hard time with him; he was Abraham's son and was loved by Abraham.

Suddenly there is another little boy that is called, "laughter."

All the attention is on him and Ishmael is being pushed aside, so he is scoffing at the whole situation.

- Notice the conflict came *from* Ishmael unto Isaac.
  - Ishmael was the one **scoffing** at Isaac.
  - In Galatians 4:22-29, the Apostle Paul used this conflict as an illustration of the conflict between those born of the promise and those born of the flesh.
  - In Galatians 4, the Jewish legalists who troubled the Galatians protested *they* were children of Abraham and thus blessed.
  - Paul admitted they were children of Abraham, but they were like Ishmael, not Isaac!
  - The legalists claimed Abraham as their father.
  - Paul asked who was their *mother*, Hagar or Sarah? Ishmael was born of a slave, and born according to the flesh.
  - Isaac was born of a freewoman, and born according to promise.
  - Even so, the legalists promoted a relationship with God based in bondage and according to the flesh.
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- The true gospel of grace offers liberty in Jesus Christ and is a promise received by faith.
- Even as Ishmael and his descendants have persecuted Isaac and his descendants, we should not be surprised that the modern-day people who follow God, yet in reliance upon human strength and wisdom (the flesh), do in fact persecute those who follow God in faith through the promise.

*Jonathan ben Uzziel* and the *Jerusalem Targum* represent Ishmael as performing some idolatrous rite on the occasion, and that this had given the offence to Sarah.

However, conjectures are as useless as they are endless.

Whatever it was, it became the occasion of the expulsion of himself and mother.

Several authors are of opinion that the Egyptian bondage of *four hundred years*, mentioned Genesis 15:13, commenced with this persecution of the righteous seed by the son of an *Egyptian* woman.

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## GEN 21:10-12

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Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bondwoman and her son;

(Both Sarah and Abraham have been accused of cruelty in this transaction, because every word reads harsh to us.

Cast out; גרש *garash* signifies not only to *thrust out, drive away, and expel*, but also to divorce; (see Leviticus 21:7); and it is in this latter sense the word should be understood here.

The child of Abraham by Hagar might be considered as having a right at least to a part of the inheritance; and as it was sufficiently known to Sarah that God had designed that the succession should be established in the line of Isaac, she wished Abraham to *divorce* Hagar, or to perform some sort of *legal act* by which Ishmael might be excluded from all claim on the inheritance.)

for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

(Men, Sarah was so furious that she even refused to say their names.

She simply declares her objection in direct, impersonal terms: "The son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.")

<sup>11</sup>And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

(The word "displeased" is not often used in the Old Testament but only to express great anger.

Abraham was very angry.

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Clearly, Abraham loved Ishmael.

When God revealed that Isaac would be born within a year's time, Abraham immediately mentioned his wish that Ishmael could live before God in Genesis 17:18.

God had assured Abraham that Ishmael would be greatly blessed, but that the covenant would pass through Isaac.

Sarah, on the other hand, expressed a similar level of anger and bitterness as she did earlier in Ishmael's life in Genesis 16:4–6.

She claims to be concerned that Ishmael will interfere with Isaac's inheritance.

That's not completely unreasonable, since Abraham is obviously attached to his teenaged son.)

<sup>12</sup>And God said unto Abraham, let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

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Abraham had listened to the voice of Sarah and that was the reason that Ishmael now existed.

God promised to give to Abraham “seed” as the stars of heaven and Abraham believed God.

The very next thing that happened was Sarah gave Abraham her handmaid to take as his wife and to bear a child that Sarah would take as hers.

When Hagar became pregnant, there was a friction born between the two women that never left them.

Hagar looked scornfully upon Sarah because she was able to conceive and Sarah could not.

Sarah was despised by Hagar and the feeling became a mutual one causing friction.

This all happened because Abraham listened to Sarah.

Later she got mad at him, for the child that was born, but it was her suggestion that it all took place.

Now Sarah wants to cast out Hagar and Ishmael from the home and this is very grievous to Abraham until God said to listen to Sarah and do what she says.

Perhaps Abraham did not want to give up Ishmael because he considered the son of Hagar something of a backup plan.

If something should happen to Isaac, there would always be Ishmael.

But God did not want Abraham to trust in a backup son or in a backup plan.

God wanted Abraham to trust in Him.

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Abraham might have been tempted to reject Sarah's counsel just because it was Sarah who offered it.

Instead he sought the LORD in the matter, did what Sarah suggested, and did so apparently without feeling he merely gave in to Sarah's demands.

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## GEN 21:13

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And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

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God promises to take care of Ishmael and make a nation out of him because he is Abraham's child and God had promised to bless Abraham in every way.

This included blessing all those related to Abraham..

In Galatians, the fourth chapter, Paul, the Apostle, quotes this experience of Sarah saying,

“Cast out the bondwoman and her son.”

Paul brings an interesting kind of parallel between the child of the law and the child of the Spirit or faith.

There are always those who live after the flesh and there are always those who walk after the Spirit; but, they that are after the flesh will not inherit with those who are after the Spirit.

We are to live and walk after the Spirit.

It is by the Spirit that we become heirs of God and the son of the bondwoman will not be an heir with the child of faith.

We have a choice in our lives, whether to live after the flesh or after the Spirit.

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## GEN 21:14

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And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water,

(By the word *bread* we are to understand the food or provisions which were necessary for her and Ishmael, till they should come to the place of their destination; which, no doubt, Abraham particularly pointed out.

The *bottle*, which was made of skin, ordinarily a goat's skin, contained water sufficient to last them till they should come to the next well; which, it is likely, Abraham particularly specified also.

This well, it appears, Hagar missed, and therefore *wandered about in the wilderness seeking more water, till all she had brought with her was expended.*

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We may therefore safely presume that she and her son were sufficiently provided for their journey, had they not missed their way.

Travellers in those countries take only, to the present day, provisions sufficient to carry them to the next village or encampment; and water to supply them till they shall meet with the next well.

What adds to the *appearance* of cruelty in this case is, that our translation seems to represent Ishmael as being a *young child*; and that Hagar was obliged to carry him, the bread, and the bottle of water on her back or shoulder at the same time.

But remember Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86 years of age, Genesis 16:16;

Isaac was born when he was 100 years of age in Genesis 21:5; hence Ishmael was 14 years old at the birth of Isaac.

Add to this the age of Isaac when he was *weaned* in Genesis 21:8 when was probably 3, and we shall find that Ishmael was at the time of his leaving Abraham not less than 17 years old;

An age which, in those primitive times, a young man was able to gain his livelihood, either by his bow in the wilderness, or by keeping flocks as Jacob did.

There the mother and son walked away together into the wilderness of Beersheba, which would be in the desert region of the Negev.

Now remember Hagar was a slave that was given unto Abraham by Pharaoh while in Egypt in Genesis 12.

In this era it was not uncommon to give a slave his or her freedom.

With that freedom, however, would come the understanding that any children born to the slave, by the slave owner, would lose any claim on future inheritance.

This appears to have been Sarah's intent in demanding that Abraham cast out Hagar and his firstborn son Ishmael.)

and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and wandered **(which means she became lost)** in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

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God's solution was clear – get rid of the son of the flesh. There was to be no reconciliation with the flesh, no peaceful coexistence.

The son of the flesh must simply be put away forever.

The solution is the same in our own battle between trusting in the flesh and trusting in the Holy Spirit:

*cast out this bondwoman and her son.*

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Law and grace cannot live together as principles for our Christian life, and there is no question we belong to the free, not the bondwoman.

It may have seemed ruthless of Abraham to kick out Hagar and her son, but it was exactly what God wanted, and exactly what needed to happen.

Flesh and blood do not make the strongest bond God wants us to honor.

There are circumstances where we can do nothing other than put away family for the glory of God.

God wants us to be ruthless with the flesh in the same manner:

In Galatians 5:24 the bible says: *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* ().

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## GEN 21:15

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*And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.*

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As Hagar and Ishmael traveled away from Abraham, their supplies eventually ran out.

We're told the pair wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Abraham had given them bread and a skin of water.

If the skin was a goat skin, as was apparently common, it could have held about 3 gallons, or 15 liters, of water.

That wouldn't last two people very long in the desert, and now it was gone.

The pair were likely quite dehydrated. From a human perspective, they probably felt they had little hope of survival.

So Hagar left Ishmael under the shade of **one of the shrubs**, expecting their soon death in the wilderness.

Imagine the compassion of a mother for her child expiring with thirst, and remember that such a compassion ought all Christians to feel towards souls that are perishing for lack of Christ, perishing eternally, perishing without hope of salvation

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## GEN 21:16

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*And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.*

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It must have been a difficult experience for Hagar who was sort of a victim of circumstances.

- Now, Hagar and Ishmael are out of water and seem certain to die.
- In the previous verse Hagar put her son, about 16 years old, under the shade of a bush.
- Here, she walks quite a distance away from him and sits down herself.
- She tells herself she doesn't want to see the death of her child.
- This might indicate that Ishmael was faltering due to a lack of water.
- Or, it might simply mean that Hagar was anticipating his eventual death.
- The length of a bowshot, however, is not quite far enough away to be completely out of view.
- She doesn't abandon him.
- Perhaps she doesn't want to hear Ishmael weeping, or she doesn't want him to hear her.

In any case, this is a sad moment.

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## GEN 21:17

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And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God

(The angel of God here is the LORD aka Jesus Christ.

Up until this time we have been dealing with the angel of God or the LORD or Jehovah which is the covenant name of God to Israel.

The word Jehovah means literally, “**the becoming one**”.

God wanting to become “all” to Israel.

God revealed Himself as the becoming one to Israel and to whatever their needs might be)

called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

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The Lord had promised Abraham that Hagar and Ishmael would become a great nation.

In other words, they would survive, and Ishmael's offspring would thrive.

Now, though, God hears and arrives to save.

Specifically, Jesus calls from heaven to tell Hagar that God has heard the voice of the boy.

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Of course, God could have heard Hagar's voice, as well.

It's not clear why the angel emphasizes that God has heard Ishmael's voice.

Perhaps it was to comfort Hagar with the understanding that she was not alone in caring about Ishmael; God would care for the boy, as well.

Remember, Hagar first met the LORD, also in the wilderness, when she fled from Sarah's wrath after becoming pregnant by Abraham.

That time, she called the Lord the "God of seeing."

She said she had seen the One who looks after her in Genesis 16:13.

Now the LORD makes clear to Hagar that He will look after Ishmael, as well.

God showed special favor to Ishmael because he was a descendant of Abraham.

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## GEN 21:18-21

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<sup>18</sup>Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation,

(Though Ishmael was not the son to receive the covenant promise, God was not *against* him.)

The angel renewed God's promise that Ishmael would become a great nation.

This is the only reason Abraham agreed to Sarah's demand that Hagar and Ishmael be cast out:

God's promise to prosper Ishmael, not to destroy him in Genesis 21:12–13.

And indeed the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabic people became **a great nation**)

<sup>19</sup>And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink,

(Whether the miracle was in the creation of a water source or the revealing of an existing water source, God provided for Hagar and Ishmael just as He did when Hagar was pregnant in Genesis 16:7–13.

Spurgeon explained the likeness between Hagar and the one who needs God.

*“As in Hagar’s case, the supply of their necessities is close at hand: the well is near. Secondly, it often happens that that supply is as much there as if it had been provided for them and for them only, as this well seemed to have been. And, thirdly, no great exertion is needed to procure from the supply already made by God all that we want. She filled her bottle with water — a joyful task to her; and she gave the lad drink.”*

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<sup>20</sup>And God was with the lad;

(The idea is emphasized that God was not against Ishmael and his descendants. God **was with** Ishmael, and had a promise for his future.)

and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer,

(Though he and his mother continued to live in the wilderness, Ishmael grew and thrived.

He became an expert bowman.

This may mean he became a skilled hunter or skilled in battle as an archer, or both.)

<sup>21</sup>And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

(This is generally allowed to have been a part of the desert belonging to Arabia Petraea, in the vicinity of Mount Sinai; and this seems to be its uniform meaning in the sacred writings.

Normally, a father would arrange his son's marriage.

However, here Hagar took on that duty, finding a wife for her son among her own people in Egypt in Genesis 12:16; 16:1.

Now when Hagar first met the LORD while pregnant with Ishmael, He had revealed to her some details about Ishmael's future.

He would be a wild donkey of a man in conflict with everyone.

He would dwell over and against his kinsman, meaning his extended family in Genesis 16:12.

God had revealed even more to Abraham.

Ishmael would father 12 princes and become a great nation in Genesis 17:20.

God would not fail to keep His promise to bless Abraham's firstborn son.

This verse establishes the beginning of these promises coming true.)

A common theme of the book of Genesis is that God's plans are often fulfilled in ways we would not have expected.

They sometimes take longer to complete than we'd prefer.

Hagar's story serves to remind us that our individual stories aren't done until God's promises to us have all been fulfilled, no matter how bleak things look in the moment.

**GEN 21:22-24**

# GENESIS 21

<sup>22</sup>And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest;

(Abimelech is the king of Gerar.

He and Abraham had met under difficult circumstances, as described in Genesis 20.

In short, Abraham had lied about Sarah not being his wife in Genesis 20:2.

Abimelech had taken her for his own wife only to be struck with an illness and threatened with death by Abraham's God in Genesis 20:3–6.

After confronting Abraham about the reasons for his lie, Abimelech returned Sarah to Abraham, untouched, along with gifts of animals, servants, silver, and the land upon which Abraham was now settled in Genesis 20:8–15.

Apparently, realizing how abundantly God was blessing Abraham, now including the miraculous birth of a promised child, Abimelech set aside any lingering resentment over the incident and hopes to become Abraham's formal ally.

He brought with him the commander of his army and opened by stating flatly that it was apparent to him that God was with Abraham in everything he did.

Having spoken to God himself in a dream, Abimelech had firsthand reason to be impressed with the level of God's favor for Abraham.

Abraham had the greatest of all blessings: **the presence of God in his life.**

- I think that the greatest blessing God ever gives to a man is his own presence.
- If I had my choice of all the blessings of this life, I certainly should not ask for wealth, for that can bring no ease; and I certainly should not ask for popularity, for there is no rest to the man upon whose words men constantly wait, and it is a hard task one has to perform in such a case as that;
- But I should choose, as my highest honor, to have God always with me)

<sup>23</sup>Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son; but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

(Abimelech, king of Gerar, approached Abraham in hopes of formalizing their relationship in his kingdom.

Abimelech understood that Abraham's God was powerful and was committed to blessing Abraham in all he did.

Abimelech wanted to have a good relationship with Abraham and share in that blessing.

# GENESIS 21

To that end, Abimelech came with a request that Abraham would swear to several things by God.

First, he asked Abraham to swear not to be deceptive with him or his descendants or even those who would come after.

Abimelech had reason to be wary of Abraham's deceptiveness.

Abraham's lie about not being married to Sarah had nearly cost Abimelech his life when God struck him with an illness after taking Sarah for his own wife in Genesis 20:3–11.

On the positive side, Abimelech also asked Abraham to swear to deal kindly with him and with the land, in the same way that Abimelech had already been kind to Abraham.

The oath on such occasions probably meant no more than the mutual promise of both the parties, when they slew an animal, poured out the blood as a sacrifice to God, and then passed between the pieces.

See this ceremony in Genesis 15:18, and on Genesis 15:9; Genesis 15:10.)

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<sup>24</sup>And Abraham said, I will swear.

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Abimelech asked, in essence, that Abraham would swear not to deceive him or his descendants.

This provision is made because of the lie Abraham told earlier about Sarah, which nearly cost Abimelech his life in Genesis 20:3–11.

Abraham is also asked to swear to act kindly toward Abimelech and the land, in this case meaning the kingdom.

Abimelech seems to want to be included in, or least associated with, the blessings Abraham has obtained from God.

Now Abraham replies with what seems to be a short & blunt reply.

Anyways he swore that he would, but then he took advantage of the situation to bring up a sore point between them in the next verse.

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## GEN 21:25-26

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<sup>25</sup>And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

(Because Canaan had no significant rivers and a great reliance upon rain, a **well** was an important and strategic property.

Apparently, Abraham was in possession of a **well of water** that **Abimelech's servants had seized**.

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# GENESIS 21

The man of faith did not simply accept this wrong; he **rebuked Abimelech because of a well**.

Abimelech said he didn't know anything about it until now)

<sup>26</sup>And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing; neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.

(Here, Abimelech insists he didn't know anything about this issue.

He didn't even know which men had seized the well.

This was all new information to him.

This is similar to his claims that he was unaware of Sarah's marriage to Abraham in chapter 20)

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## GEN 21:27

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And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.

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Remember that Abimelech gave Abraham sheep and oxen when he returned Sarah to him and told him to pick out any place on his land to live.

Now Abraham is giving some back to him.

The **sheep and oxen** were probably used as sacrifices to make or cut the covenant, as in Genesis 15:7-21.

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## GEN 21:28-29

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And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. <sup>29</sup>And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

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Abraham set seven ewe lambs aside and Abimelech said, "What in the world are you doing?"

The **seven ewe lambs** were special gifts from Abraham to Abimelech to show favor and offer some compensation for his loss of access to the well.

Abraham understood his own property rights, but was not greedy or miserly.

The acceptance of the seven lambs was Abimelech's recognition that Abraham had **dug this well** and it belonged to him.

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# GENESIS 21

## GEN 21:30

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And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

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In broad terms, Abraham is offering to formally buy back his own well, in order to once and for all resolve the issue of who it belongs to.

Abimelech agreed to this, and the two swear their oaths in the following verse.

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## GEN 21:31

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Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they swore both of them.

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The taking of an oath is a significant event in the Bible.

God's Law would command His people to always keep their oaths, at any cost.

Jesus would later tell Christians to avoid taking oaths, to prevent even the possibility of breaking them.

Instead, we must be so trustworthy that our "yes" and "no" require no additional swearing to be believed in Matthew 5:34–37 & James 5:12.

So he called the place of the oath **Beersheba** which means *watering place, well of underground water*.

Some understand the Biblical name **Beersheba** as *well of seven* or *well of the oath*.

**Beersheba** would become a notable place in Israel's continuing history, and continues today as an important city in modern Israel (Beer-Sheva).

- Abraham's son Isaac dug this well again, and he built an altar in Beersheba (Genesis 26:23–33).
  - Abraham's grandson Jacob stopped in Beersheba as he left the promised land (Genesis 28:10–15, 46:1–7).
  - When Israel took possession of the promised land, Beersheba became the territory of the tribe of Simeon and Judah (Joshua 15:28, 19:2).
  - Samuel's sons were judges in Beersheba (I Samuel 8:2).
  - King Saul fortified Beersheba in his battles against the Amalekites (I Samuel 14:48, 15:2–9).
  - The prophet Elijah found refuge at Beersheba when Jezebel ordered him killed (I Kings 19:3).
-

# GENESIS 21

➤ The prophet Amos mentioned Beersheba in regard to idolatry (Amos 5:5 and 8:14).

The phrase *from Dan to Beersheba* would later become a proverbial phrase describing the entire land of Israel, from north (Dan) to south (Beersheba).

This is seen in passages such as Judges 20:1, 1 Samuel 3:20, 2 Samuel 3:10, 1 Kings 4:25, and many others.

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## GEN 21:32-34

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Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba; then Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. **(This is the first mention of the everlasting God, El Elyon)** And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

---

A solemn treaty between Abimelech, king of Gerar, and Abraham has just been completed.

Abimelech and Abraham have exchanged animals as part of an agreement for their households to treat each other agreeably.

Abraham has also claimed formal ownership of the well he dug, and which was taken at some point by men serving under Abimelech.

His symbolic price for these rights was seven sheep.

This agreement was significant enough that the name of the well's location was changed to Beersheba, meaning "well of the oath" or "well of seven."

Now Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, return home.

We're told that Gerar is located in the land of Philistines.

These Philistines may have been the forerunners to those who would later plague Israel in the time of Saul and David.

Or, the text may be saying that Gerar was in a region which would later be occupied by the Philistines.

Anyways after the successful treaty, Abraham did something that looked forward to coming decades and generations.

He planted a tamarisk tree.

A **tamarisk tree** takes a long time to grow, but Abraham knew God had promised the land to him and his descendants forever.

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# GENESIS 21

## **THE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY ARE:**

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1. God doesn't overlook people who the world considers insignificant.
  2. Hagar was a slave; many people wouldn't have cared what happened to her after she was put out of her master's house... but God cared.
  3. Repeatedly in the scriptures, we see God's kindness towards people who are typically categorized into the "lower-class."
  4. When Jesus came to the earth, He didn't spend His time with the elites of society, He spent the balance of His time with the common people.
  5. You don't have to be special in the eyes of your society to be special in the eyes of God.
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We will start from Chapter 22 next week ...

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## **IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW**

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- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
- But right now I repent of my sins
- I make you my Lord
- I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
- I need you, Jesus
- Be my savior
- So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

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## **LET'S STANDUP FOR THE FINAL BLESSING**

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Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:

- Be with you, bless you and keep you
  - May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you peace
-



# GENESIS 21

- May your heart be filled with his love
  - May you walk in the spirit
  - May you be strengthened by the work of his Holy spirit in your inner man
  - May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His word, His will and His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that's pleasing unto him
  - And may God increase your faith and your trust
  - May he work in your life in a beautiful way as he natures you and as he leads you into that path of fellowship with him self
  - May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus
  - And May the Lord and his blessings be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ
  - Amen
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