

# Genesis

## Chapter 21



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**Theme:** The birth of Isaac; Hagar and Ishmael cast out; Abraham and Abimelech at Beer-sheba.

In the preceding chapter, we saw the sin that must be dealt with, confessed, and put away before Isaac could be born to Abraham and Sarah. Now in chapter 21 we have the birth of Isaac.

Some twenty-five years had now passed since Abram had left Ur of the Chaldees, and during these years he had received promise from the Lord that He would make of him a great nation (Gen. 12:2) and that He would make his seed as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16). But years went by and Abram remained childless: the promised seed had not been given and Abram was exercised and perplexed. “And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezar of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir” (Gen. 15:2, 3). To these questions the Lord returned answer, “This shall not be shine heir; but he that shall come forth out of shine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Gen. 15:4).<sup>1</sup>

**Torah Class:** Before we read this chapter, know that a quarter of a century has passed since the first few verses of Genesis 12, when Yahweh made that list of promises to Abraham..... among which was the promise that from his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Naturally, the implication was the birth of children to Abraham.....but until now, not one child had been born to Abraham’s wife, Sarah. Yes, he had a qualified heir.....a son, Ishmael, who had been born to Sarah’s handmaiden, Hagar. But the lord God never takes halfway measures.

This list of prophetic promises of God to Abraham compels me to relate to you something the Lord has shown me over the years: as concerns the understanding of God’s people about His prophecies, the mistakes men make are not that they cannot find a way relate the eventual fulfillment to the original pronouncement; the mistake is that we do not take God’s prophecies literally enough. All of Yahweh’s promises to Abraham were literal, and they were literally fulfilled. Abraham *would* have a son.....not a kind-of-son..... not a good-enough heir....but a true son and a true heir regardless of what the earthly human circumstances might seem to dictate.

And, because of the times in which we live, let me say it again: all of God’s prophecies should be taken in the most literal way. Things may be looking dark for Israel right now, but we can be assured that though the whole world continue to line up against them..... even if Israel finally tells the US government that they can’t stand much more of our help.... the Jewish people will NOT be expelled from the land. For, the prophecies tell us that once they return.....after Egypt, after Assyria, after Babylon, after the Romans have taken their land from them.... Once they return again (which they have), they’ll not be leaving. It doesn’t matter how reckless, or how ungrateful they are to the One who brought them home; this is a promise from Yahweh. We can count on it, quite literally.

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<sup>1</sup>Pink, A. W. (2005). *Gleanings in Genesis* (Page 207). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

God kept his promise and Sarai had a child: Yitz'chak (Isaac); Isaac means, "he laughs". The promise, 25 years in the making, was for a child of destiny. Or better, a child of promise. We'll examine shortly the eerie parallels between Isaac and Yahshua. It is an axiom that God's timing is as important an element to any prophetic happening, as the details of the happening itself. This is why we see the term "God's set times", or "God's appointed times", over and over again throughout the Torah, as we see that term repeated a number of times in chapter 21. In a few months we will study God's "appointed Feasts".....all of which have exact appointed times. Probably no one in here would argue that man has authority to affect or alter or abolish God's appointed times. Those appointed times are woven into the fabric of the Universe and are unchangeable. Yet, it is so curious to me that one of the most basic tenets of Church Doctrine, is that we DO have the authority and ability to change the VERY FIRST appointed time God declared; the very first appointed time that affected even how our planet was produced and then given the ability to sustain life. **NAS Genesis 2:1** *"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."* This, of course, marks the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath..... called in Hebrew, the Shabbat..... one of God's appointed times. And, as we come across these several "appointed or fixed times" we'll find something they all have in common: they have been designated by Yahweh as sanctified, as holy. We'll also soon begin to understand that it is God and God alone who declares that which is holy. Man has no authority to declare anything holy just because a date or event or a place or an activity or a man seems to be unusually good or significant. Importance or relevance in our human eyes accounts for nothing as to what is holy and what is not; for it is by Yahweh's **declaration** that WE who trust His Son have become holy to Him, and so it is with anything. We have only to **discover** from Holy Scripture WHAT His appointed times are, and then to observe them.<sup>2</sup>

**Be Obedient:** The Christian life is a land of hills and valleys," said Scottish preacher George Morrison, basing his words on Deuteronomy 11:11. Solomon expressed the same idea when he wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:4 that "[there is] a time to weep, and a time to laugh." Heaven is a place of unending joy; hell is a place of unending suffering; but while we are here on earth, we must expect both joy and sorrow, laughter and tears. You cannot have hills without valleys.

This is especially true of family life, for the same people who bring us joy can also bring us sorrow. Relationships can become strained and then change overnight, and we wonder what happened to a happy home. A Chinese proverb says, "Nobody's family can hang out the sign 'Nothing the matter here.' "

The coming of Isaac into their home brought both sorrow and joy to Abraham and Sarah. As you look at the persons involved in this important event, you can learn some valuable lessons about basic Christian doctrine and how to live the Christian life.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 21:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

## **Genesis 21:1**

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

**[the Lord visited Sarah]** That is, God fulfilled his promise to Sarah by giving her, at the advanced age of ninety, power to conceive and bring forth a son.

There are at least 11 births in Scripture in which God himself intervened: Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:21); Reuben (Genesis 29:31); Issachar (Genesis 30:17-18); Joseph (Genesis 30:22-24); Samson (Judges 13:2-5); Obed (Ruth 4:13); Samuel (1 Samuel 1:19-20); the son of a woman from Shunem (2 Kings 4:14-17); John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-13, 57); Jesus (Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:7).

We see from the above that *God is in no hurry* in the working out of His plans. Man may fret and fume, hurry and bustle, but Jehovah has all eternity at His disposal and works leisurely and with deliberation. Well for us to mark this attentively—“he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16).<sup>4</sup>

## **Genesis 21:2**

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

**[at the set time of which God had spoken]** Notice that there is a very striking similarity between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Christ. I believe that the birth of Isaac was given to us to set before mankind this great truth before Christ came. Isaac was born at the set time God had promised, and Paul says, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4).<sup>5</sup>

The birth of Christ was markedly foreshadowed by that of Isaac and this in *seven* ways at least. First, Isaac was the *promised* seed and son (Gen. 17:16); so also was Christ (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14). Second, *a lengthy interval* occurred between God’s first promise to Abraham and its realization. When we are told, “And the Lord visited Sarah *as he had said*” (Gen. 21:1), the immediate reference is to 17:16 and 18:14, but the remote reference was to the original promise of 12:7. So also was there a lengthy interval between God’s promise to send Christ and the actual fulfillment of it. Third, when Isaac’s birth was announced, his mother asked, “Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?” (Gen. 18:13), to which the answer was returned, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” and the striking analogy is seen in the fact that when the angel of the Lord made known unto Mary that she was to be the mother of the Saviour, she asked, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34), to which query the answer was returned, “With God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37): so that *in each case* God’s *omnipotency* was

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<sup>4</sup>Pink, A. W. (2005). *Gleanings in Genesis* (Page 208). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.  
<sup>5</sup>McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

affirmed following the annunciation of the birth of the child. Fourth, Isaac's *name* was specified *before* he was born—"And thou shalt call his name Isaac" (Gen. 17:19); compare with this the words of the angel to Joseph before (Christ was born—"And thou shalt call his name Jesus" (Matt. 1:21)! Fifth, Isaac's birth occurred at God's *appointed* time (Gen. 21:2) "at the set time;" so also in connection with the Lord Jesus we read "But when *the fullness of time* was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). Sixth, as we have seen above, Isaac's birth required a *miracle* to bring it about; so also was it with the incarnation of Immanuel. Seventh, the name Isaac (given unto him by Abraham and not Sarah, Gen. 21:3), which means laughter, declared him to be *his father's delight*; so also was the one born at Bethlehem—"this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Need we remark how strikingly this sevenfold type evidences the Divine inspiration of Scripture, and demonstrates that the book of Genesis—so much attacked by the critics—was written by one "moved by the Holy Spirit."<sup>6</sup>

*God has a set time* for the accomplishing of His will and the fulfilling of His word. Nothing is left to chance. Nothing is *contingent* on the creature. Everything is definitely fixed beforehand by God. "For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, *at the set time* of which God had spoken to him" (Gen. 21:2). Mark how this is emphasized by repetition—"But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee *at this set time* in the next year" (Gen. 17:21); "*At the time appointed* I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Gen. 18:14). So also we read in another connection, "For the vision is yet for *an appointed time*, but at the end it shall speak" (Hab. 2:3). Compare Gal. 4:4.<sup>7</sup>

### **Genesis 21:3**

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

**[Isaac]** The name Isaac ("he laughs"): Sarah said that God gave her laughter (v. 6), that is, joy. Her laughter of unbelief (18:12) was now changed to rejoicing through the provision of her son. Everyone who would hear about this would laugh—that is, rejoice, with her. But Ishmael turned her laughter into a ridiculing mockery of God's work...

Hebrew: laughter (Genesis 17:19,21; Genesis 21:6-7). His biography (Genesis 21:1-28:13; Genesis 35:12-20). Mentioned 132 times, 65 times apart from the passages here listed. A type of Christ (Genesis 22) and of believers (Galatians 4:28-29). See Romans 9:7,10; Hebrews 11:9-20; James 2:21.

Isaac is typical in a fourfold way: (1) of the Church as composed of the spiritual children of Abraham (Gal 4:28); (2) of Christ as the Son "obedient unto death" (Gen 22:1-10; Phil 2:5-8); (3) of Christ as the Bridegroom of a called-out bride (cp. Gen 24; see Church, Mat

<sup>6</sup>Pink, A. W. (2005). *Gleanings in Genesis* (Page 211). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>7</sup>Pink, A. W. (2005). *Gleanings in Genesis* (Page 209). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

16:18, note); and (4) of the new nature of the believer as “born after the Spirit” (Gal 4:29).

**Chumash; Sparks of Chasidus: Isaac’s Birth: A Prototype of Jewish Influence On The Nations.** Influencing the nations of the world to serve the One God is a fundamental aspect of Judaism. Both the active and passive effects of Jewish influence are evident at every stage:

- a.) Yitzchak (Isaac) was the first person to be born a Jew, so his birth was associated with a positive influence on non-Jews. Sarah had a passive effect – miracles simply surrounded her. Avraham took a more active role, by fathering non-Jewish nations.
- b.) Rambam writes that even in our times it is incumbent on all Jewish people to coerce non-Jews to observe the seven Noachide laws. Obviously, this requires an active effort to educate the nations, highlighting the importance of their mitzvos. However, it can be proven from the words of Rambam that this is followed by a second, passive phase, where non-Jews come to a heightened perception of the Noachide code themselves, without direct input from the Jewish people.
- c.) The Messianic era begins with Mashiach’s active efforts to perfect the world, including his with non-Jews, “*he will fix the entire world*”. However, at some point this will catalyze wisdom of their own accord, without the direct input of Mashiah – as Rambam states, “the entire world will only be busy with knowing God” without the need for Mashiach’s direct intervention.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Genesis 21:4**

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

#### **Genesis 21:5**

**And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.**

#### **Genesis 21:6**

**And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.**

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<sup>8</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

## **Genesis 21:7**

**And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.**

**[Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck]**

Question 40. Next question is in Genesis 21:17.

**Torah Class:** So, at the set time....set by God.....Isaac is born to Sarah. And, as had been instructed, Abraham circumcised Isaac on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after his birth.

The elderly couple was overjoyed; Abraham had just turned 100 years old, and Sarah 90, when Isaac was produced.....it was miracle enough that Abraham could sire a son at that age, or that Sarah who had NEVER, even as a young girl, had a womb that could produce life, could do so several decades after it was humanly possible.....but it was also a miracle that such an aged woman could even survive the birthing process. And, as verses 6 and 7 show, they were as astonished and dumbfounded as the hundreds and hundreds of people that now formed their clan would have been as well.<sup>9</sup>

**[children]**, though she had but one child, either by a usual enallage of the plural number for the singular, whereby the word sons or daughters is used when there was but one, as Ge 36:25; 46:23; Nu 26:8; or presaging, that having received from God a new strength, she might have more children. By her expression she showeth all mothers what their duty is, viz. to give their children suck when they are able to do it; and that neither greatness of quality, nor multitude of business, nor other difficulties and inconveniences, will be a sufficient excuse to those that neglect it.<sup>10</sup>

**Chumash; Toras Menachem: Sarah's Miracle:** Rashi describes how Sarah miraculously nursed the babies of numerous princesses to prove that she had not, "brought an abandoned child from the market." This, however poses a number of problems:

1. Surely, if Sarah would have only nursed Yitzhak it would have been sufficient proof to the assembled crowd that she had indeed given birth [as *Torah Temiah* asks]. Since God does not perform a miracle in vain what was the point of making Sarah able to nurse numerous non-Jewish babies?
2. Why did many barren women become pregnant, and the sick healed?
3. Even after she nursed an astonishing number of babies, that was still only proof that Sarah was capable of giving birth at an advanced age. Where was the proof that Avraham had fathered Yitzchak?

The Talmud solves this problem with the miraculous account of how Yitzchak's features changed to resemble Avraham. However, Rashi does not cite this solution here, presumably because he holds that he matter is self-understood already.

(Later in Parshas Toldos, Rashi does mention this miracle, but since it is not cited here, we can presume that this miracle is not required to answer the above question, because Rashi's commentary was intended to be read in order).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Old Testament

<sup>11</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

**Toras Menachem: Miracles as a Proof of Sarah's Piety:** If Sarah would have nursed Yitzchak alone, it would have been apparent that she was capable of having children, but there would be no proof that Avraham was the father. However, when she merited a stunning open miracle from God, nursing countless babies before everybody's eyes, people would have realized that Sarah was an extremely pious woman who would only have conceived a child from her husband. Similarly, the healing of the sick that accompanied Yitzchak's birth would have proved Sarah's piety to the majority of those present. Thus the further proof of Yitzchak's features changing was, generally speaking, not required.

(Nevertheless, the "cynics" of the generation were still not satisfied with the logical proof, for the nature of a cynic is to deny and ridicule even the most sound of arguments. Therefore, God performed them a visible proof, transforming the features of Yitzchak – as the Talmud states, and Rashi cites in Parshas Toldos).<sup>12</sup>

**Be Obedient: Abraham and Sarah: faith and promise (Gen. 21:1–7)**

Sarah had borne the burden of childlessness for many years, a heavy burden indeed in that culture and at that time. People must have smiled when they heard that her husband's name was Abraham, "father of a multitude." He was the father of *one* son, Ishmael, but that was far from a multitude; and Sarah had *never* given birth. But now all of her reproach was ended, and they were rejoicing in the arrival of their son.

But the birth of Isaac involved much more than parental joy, for his birth meant the *fulfillment of God's promise*. When God had called Abraham, He promised to make of him a great nation that would bless the whole world (12:1–3). Then He repeatedly promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants (17:7) and to multiply them greatly (13:15–17). Abraham would be the father of the promised seed (15:4), and Sarah (not Hagar) would be the mother (17:19; 18:9–15). The birth of Isaac reminds us that God keeps His promises, in His own way, and in His own time. In spite of their occasional failures, Abraham and Sarah believed God; and God honored their faith (Heb. 11:8–11).

Isaac's birth also meant *the rewarding of patience*. Abraham and Sarah had to wait twenty-five years for their son to be born, because it is "through faith and patience [we] inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12; see 10:36). Trusting God's promises not only gives you a blessing *at the end*, but it gives you a blessing *while you are waiting*. Just as Olympic athletes develop their skills as they practice hard long before the big event, so God's children grow in godliness and faith as they wait for the fulfillment of God's promises. Faith is a journey, and each happy destination is the beginning of a new journey. When God wants to build our patience, He gives us promises, sends us trials, and tells us to trust Him (James 1:1–8).

The birth of Isaac was certainly *the revelation of God's power*. That was one reason why God waited so long: He wanted Abraham and Sarah to be "as good as dead" so that their son's birth would be a miracle of God and not a marvel of human nature (Rom. 4:17–21). Abraham and Sarah experienced God's resurrection power in their lives because they yielded to Him and believed His Word. Faith in God's promises releases

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<sup>12</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

God's power (Eph. 3:20–21; Phil. 3:10), “for no word from God shall be void of power” (Luke 1:37, ASV).

Finally, the birth of Isaac was a step forward in the *accomplishing of God's purpose*. The future redemption of a lost world rested with a little baby boy! Isaac would beget Jacob, and Jacob would give the world the twelve tribes of Israel; and from Israel the promised Messiah would be born. Down through the centuries, some of the “living links” in the chain of promise may have seemed insignificant and weak; but they helped to fulfill the purposes of God.

You may wonder if what you do is really important to God and His work in this world; but it is, if you are faithful to trust His Word and do His will. The next time you feel defeated and discouraged, remember Abraham and Sarah; and remind yourself that *faith* and *promise* go together. God keeps His promises and gives you the power you need to do what He wants you to do. No matter how long you may have to wait, you can trust God to accomplish His purposes.<sup>13</sup>

### **Genesis 21:8**

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

**[weaned]** In those days they did not throw birthday parties. Rather they threw weaning parties. When a son was weaned, it was considered a special occasion for which a party would be thrown. In those days a son was weaned anytime between the ages of three and five.

**[great feast]** Weaning feasts were customary. See appendix A; Thirty-four Secular Feasts

**Barnes' Notes Summary 1-8:** Isaac is born according to promise, and grows to be weaned. “The Lord had visited Sarah.” It is possible that this event may have occurred before the patriarchal pair arrived in Gerar. To visit, is to draw near to a person for the purpose of either chastising or conferring a favor. The Lord had been faithful to his gracious promise to Sarah. “He did as he had spoken.” The object of the visit was accomplished. In due time she bears a son, whom Abraham, in accordance with the divine command, calls Isaac, and circumcises on the eighth day. Abraham was now a hundred years old, and therefore Isaac was born thirty years after the call. Sarah expressed her grateful wonder in two somewhat poetic strains. The first, consisting of two sentences, turns on the word laugh. This is no longer the laugh of delight mingled with doubt, but that of wonder and joy at the power of the Lord overcoming the impotence of the aged mother. The second strain of three sentences turns upon the object of this admiring joy. The event that nobody ever expected to hear announced to Abraham, has nevertheless taken place; “for I have borne him a son in his old age.” The time of weaning, the second step of the child to individual existence, at length arrives, and the

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<sup>13</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 21:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

household of Abraham make merry, as was wont, on the festive occasion. The infant was usually weaned in the second or third year 1 Sam. 1:22-24; 2 Chr. 31:16. The child seems to have remained for the first five years under the special care of the mother Lev. 27:6. The son then came under the management of the father.

### **Genesis 21:9**

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

**[mocking]** The word “mocking” (“laughing or jesting”), from which comes “Isaac” (yisòhdaq). mocking = sexual connotation here, Same word and thought in Gen 26:8 Isaac & Rebekah; Gen 39:14, 17 Potiphar's Wife & Joseph. Common in the mid east culture even today as a show of dominance.

*(Gen. 26:8-9) <sup>8</sup>And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. <sup>9</sup>And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.*

*(Gen. 39:17) And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:*

*(Gal 4:29) But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*

**Nachmanides; “mocking”** This refers to worshipping idols, murder and sexual immorality. He [Ishmael] quarreled with Isaac about inheritance, saying, “I am the first-born and will take a double portion. They then went into the field, and Ishmael took his bow and shot arrows at Isaac, just as you say, *As a madman who casteth firbrands, arrows and death, so is the man who deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, Am I not in sport?* It is from Sarah’s complaint to Abraham – *for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir*, etc. – that you learn [that they were quarrelling about eh inheritance]. All this is Rashi’s language.

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that this event took place on the day that Isaac was weaned, and Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac or the great feast. It is for this reason that the verse says, And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian – rather than Ishmael – making sport. Similarly, she said, Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for she said: “The slave who mocks his master is deserving of death or stripes, but I want only that you cast him out from before me, and that he should in no way inherit your belongings together with my son, who is the son of the mistress.” She also told Abraham

to cast out his mother as the boy was unable to leave her for he would die if he were to leave his mother.<sup>14</sup>

### **Genesis 21:10**

**Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.**

God used this incident of Ishmael's mocking Isaac to drive out the child Ishmael and Hagar, for they would be a threat to the promised seed. Earlier Sarah had mistreated Hagar (16:6); now Hagar's son was mistreating Sarah's son. Earlier Sarah caused pregnant Hagar to flee (16:6); now she caused Hagar and her 16 or 17 year-old son to flee.

### **Genesis 21:11**

**And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.**

**McGee:** After all, as far as the flesh is concerned, Ishmael is Abraham's son just as much as Isaac is. Isaac has just been born, and a little bitty baby doesn't know too much about him yet. But this boy Ishmael has been in the home for a good many years—he's a teenager now, and Abraham is attached to him. The thing is very grievous if Abraham is going to have to send him away. Again, I go back to that which we said before: God did not approve of the thing which Sarah and Abraham did, and God cannot accept Ishmael. This is *sin*. God just did not approve of it, and He doesn't intend to approve of it at all. It was a heartbreak to Abraham, but in order to relieve the embarrassment, he had to send that boy away. Poor Sarah just couldn't take it with this older boy around mocking her.

As a believer you cannot live in harmony with both natures. You are going to have to make a decision. James says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). This explains the instability and the insecurity among many Christians today. They want to go with the world, and yet they want to go with the Lord. They are spiritual schizophrenics, trying to do both—and you cannot do that. The Greeks had a race in which they put two horses together, and the rider would put one foot on one horse and the other foot on the other horse, and the race would start. Well, it was a great race as long as the horses were together. You and I have two natures—one is a black horse, and the other is a white horse. It would be great if they would go together, but they just will not work together. The white horse goes one way and the black horse another way. When they do this, you and I have to make up our minds which one we are going with—whether we are going to live by the old nature or the new nature. This is why we are told to yield ourselves: "yield yourselves unto God ... and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13). Paul goes on to say that what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, the Spirit of God can now accomplish (see Rom. 8:3–

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<sup>14</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

4). The law tried to control man's old nature and failed. Now the Spirit of God, empowering the new nature, can accomplish what the law could never do.

The character of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, begins to be revealed. This is the nature that we find manifested later on in that nation, a nation that is antagonistic and whose hand is against his brother. This has been the picture of him down through the centuries.

In the birth of Isaac, as I have already suggested, we have a foreshadowing of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. God did not suddenly spring the virgin birth on mankind. He had prepared us by several miraculous births before this, including the birth of John the Baptist, the birth even of Samson, and here the birth of Isaac. I would like to call your attention to the remarkable comparison between the births of Isaac and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The birth of Isaac and the birth of Christ had both been promised. When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees twenty-five years earlier, God had said to him, "I am going to give a son to you and Sarah." Now twenty-five years have gone by, and God has made good His promise. God also said to the nation Israel, "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son." When the day came that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was a fulfillment of prophecy. Both births had been promised.
2. With both births there was a long interval between the promise and the fulfillment. Actually, there were about twenty-five years from the time God promised it until the birth of Isaac. With the birth of Christ, you could go back many generations. For example, God had promised that there would come One in David's line—and that was a thousand years before Christ was born. This is quite a remarkable parallel here.
3. The announcements of the births seemed incredulous and impossible to Sarah and to Mary. You will recall that the servants of the Lord visited Abraham as they were on the way to Sodom, and they announced the birth of Isaac. It just seemed impossible. Sarah laughed and said, "This thing just can't be. It is beyond belief." And, after all, who was the first one to raise a question about the virgin birth? It was Mary herself. When the angel made the announcement, she said, "... How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34).
4. Both Isaac and Jesus were named before their births. Abraham and Sarah were told that they were going to have a son and that they were going to name him Isaac. And with the birth of the Lord Jesus, we find that He was also named beforehand. The angel said to Joseph, "... thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).
5. Both births occurred at God's appointed time. Verse 2 of this chapter says that at the set time which God had spoken to them of, Sarah brought forth Isaac. And regarding the birth of Jesus, we note that Paul says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).
6. Both births were miraculous. The birth of Isaac was a miraculous birth, and, certainly, the birth of the Lord Jesus was—no man had any part in that.
7. Both sons were a particular joy of their fathers. We read that "Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac," meaning laughter. This was the name he gave his son because back at the time when God made the announcement, he laughed because of his sheer joy in it all. Referring to the Lord Jesus, we read that the Father spoke out of heaven and said, "... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Both sons were a joy.

8. Both sons were obedient to their fathers, even unto death. In chapter 22 we are going to see that this boy Isaac was offered up by his father. He was not a small boy of eight or nine years. Isaac just happened to be about thirty-three years old when this took place, and he was obedient to his father even unto death. That was true of Isaac, and that was certainly true of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a marvelous picture of the birth and life of Christ in the birth and life of Isaac.
9. Finally, the miraculous birth of Isaac is a picture of the resurrection of Christ. We have already noted Paul's words that Abraham "considered not his own body now *dead* ... neither yet the *deadness* of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4:19). Out of death came life—that's resurrection, you see. After Paul emphasizes this, he goes on to say of the Lord Jesus, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). We have in Isaac quite a remarkable picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup>

### Be Obedient: **Isaac and Ishmael: Spirit and flesh (Gen. 21:8–11)**

In Galatians 4:28–29, Paul makes it clear that Ishmael represents the believer's first birth (the flesh) and Isaac represents the second birth (the Spirit). Ishmael was "born of the flesh" because Abraham had not yet "died" and was still able to beget a son (Gen. 16). Isaac was "born of the Spirit" because by that time his parents were both "dead" and only God's power could have brought conception and birth. Ishmael was born first, because the natural comes before the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46).

When you trust Jesus Christ, you experience a miracle birth from God (John 1:11–13), and it is the work of the Holy Spirit of God (John 3:1–8). Abraham represents *faith*, and Sarah represents *grace* (Gal. 4:24–26), so Isaac was born "by grace...through faith" (Eph. 2:8–9). This is the only way a lost sinner can enter the family of God (John 3:16–18).

It is worth noting that, in the biblical record, God often rejected the firstborn and accepted the second-born. He rejected Cain and chose Abel (Gen. 4:1–15). He rejected Ishmael, Abraham's firstborn, and chose Isaac. He bypassed Esau, Isaac's firstborn, and chose Jacob (Rom. 9:8–13); and He chose Ephraim instead of Manasseh (Gen. 48). In Egypt, the Lord condemned *all* the firstborn (Ex. 11–12) and spared only those who were "twice-born" because they were protected by faith in the blood of the lamb.

Isaac pictures the child of God not only in his birth but also in *the joy that he brought*. Isaac means "laughter," and this time it was not the laughter of unbelief (Gen. 18:9–15). In the parables recorded in Luke 15, Jesus emphasized the joy that results when lost sinners repent and come to the Lord. The shepherd rejoiced when he found the lost sheep, and the woman rejoiced when she found the lost coin; and they both asked their friends to rejoice with them. The father rejoiced when his prodigal son came home, and he invited the neighbors to a feast so they could share in his joy. There is even joy in heaven when sinners turn to God (Luke 15:7, 10).

Nowhere do we read that Ishmael caused great joy in Abraham's home. Abraham loved his son and wanted the best for him (Gen. 17:18). From before his birth, Ishmael was a source of painful trouble (Gen. 16); and after he matured, he caused even greater conflict in the family (21:9). The old nature is not able to produce the fruit of the Spirit, no matter how hard it tries (Gal. 5:16–26).

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<sup>15</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:87). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Note a third comparison between Isaac and the child of God: *He grew and was weaned* (Gen. 21:8). The new birth is not the end, but the beginning; and the believer must feed on God's Word and grow spiritually (Matt. 4:4; 1 Cor. 3:1–3; Heb. 5:12–14; 1 Peter 2:1–3; 2 Peter 3:18). As we mature in the Lord, we must “put away childish things” (1 Cor. 13:9–11) and allow God to “wean us” (Ps. 131) from temporary helps that can become permanent hindrances.

The mother weans the child because she loves the child and wants it to be free to grow up and not be dependent on her. But the child interprets her actions as an expression of rejection and hatred. The child clings to the comforts of the past as the mother tries to encourage the child to grow up and enter into the challenges of the future. The time comes in every Christian life when toys must be replaced by tools and selfish security by unselfish service (John 12:23–26).

Like every child of God, *Isaac experienced persecution* (Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:29). Ishmael was apparently an obedient son *until Isaac entered the family*, and then the “flesh” began to oppose “the Spirit.” It has well been said that the old nature knows no law but the new nature needs no law, and this is certainly illustrated in Abraham's two sons.

Jewish children were usually weaned at about age three, so Ishmael was probably seventeen years old at the time (Gen. 16:16). What arrogance that a boy of seventeen should torment a little boy of only three! But God had said that Ishmael would become “a wild donkey of a man” (16:12, NIV), and the prediction came true. The flesh and the Spirit are in conflict with each other and always will be until we see the Lord (Gal. 5:16–26).

When, like Isaac, you are born of the Spirit, *you are born rich* (Gen. 21:10). Isaac was the heir of all that his father owned, and God's children are “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). Abraham cared for Ishmael while the boy was in the home, but “Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac” (Gen. 25:5).

Finally, *Isaac was born free* while Ishmael was the son of a slave (Gal. 4:22). Freedom is one of the key themes in Galatians (5:1) and one of the key blessings in the Christian life (4:31). Of course, Christian freedom does not mean anarchy; for that is the worst kind of bondage. It means the freedom to be and to do all that God has for us in Jesus Christ. “No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude,” said Phillips Brooks; and that “higher servitude” is personal surrender to Jesus Christ. No one is more free than the child of God who delights in God's will and does it from the heart.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 21:8). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

### **Genesis 21:12**

**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.**

The 27th prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 21:12-13, fulfilled). Next prophecy in in Genesis 21:18. The fifth prophecy concerning Christ (Genesis 21:12 with Galatians 3:6-8,16), and another prediction of Ishmael's greatness.

**[in Isaac shall thy seed be called]** Romans 9:7; Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 11:18. Five years had passed since the event of Genesis 21:2, and thirty years had passed since that of Genesis 12:4.

### **Genesis 21:13**

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

When Abraham became distressed because of Sarah's request to oust Hagar and Ishmael, God assured Abraham that Ishmael would have a future because he too was Abraham's offspring (vv. 11-13).

### **Genesis 21:14**

**And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.**

**[bread, and a bottle of water]** Bread includes all sorts of victuals—bottle, a leathern vessel, formed of the entire skin of a lamb or kid sewed up, with the legs for handles, usually carried over the shoulder.

Read Galatians 4:22-31: When Christ, the seed, came, the old was done away. Now that the promise has come, believers are co-heirs with the promised Seed by adoption through God's grace. To go back under the Law would be to undo the fulfillment of God's promise. Those adopted by the Seed become seeds and are set free from the bondage of the Law (Gal 5:1). Just as Ishmael and Isaac were in conflict (Gal 4:29), so the flesh and the Spirit do not harmonize. The flesh struggles against the Spirit, often mocking it (Gal 5:16-18). Therefore believers are to "get rid of the slave woman and her son" (Gal 4:30), that is, to remove the threat of the flesh and "live by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16).

Paul's use of this account is marvelous (Gal. 4:21-31;). Ishmael was born by the flesh through "the slave woman" (Gal. 4:29-30). Isaac was born by the promise and was the heir. One represented bondage at Sinai, the other freedom when the promise finally came. When Christ, the seed, came, the old was done away. Now that the promise has come, believers are co-heirs with the promised Seed by adoption through God's grace. To go back under the Law would be to undo the fulfillment of God's promise. Those adopted by the Seed become seeds and are set free from the bondage of the Law (Gal. 5:1). Just as

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**[Beersheba]** on the border of Egypt, was about 50 miles S of Jerusalem and 27 miles S of Hebron. For those going southward, it was the last point of any significance in Palestine.

**Expulsion of a wife** There is a contract in the Nuzi documents that contains a clause prohibiting the expulsion of the children of the secondary wife by the primary wife. The situation in Genesis is different on two counts: first, it is Abraham who sends them away; and second, Hagar is given her freedom, which, according to one ancient law code (Lipit-Ishtar) would mean that her children would forfeit any inheritance rights.

**[sent her away]** Fountains were almost unknown south of Beersheba, and wells were rare. Only those who really knew the country could find the wells, for wandering tribes concealed their watering places from strangers. Abraham knew Hagar's own people weren't distant so she could find refuge. She knew the desert but got lost through sorrow (Genesis 21:16). From God's standpoint, the purpose of casting out Hagar and Ishmael was to keep the Messiah's line separated, and to vividly illustrate how the law of Moses was to be abolished (2 Cor. 3:5-18; Galatians 4:21-31).

**Torah Class:** In verse 8, we see that when Isaac was weaned (probably somewhere around 3 or 4 years old), they had a great celebration. But, trouble was brewing. Ishmael.....still the much loved son of Abraham..... at around 15 or 16 years old, was apparently constantly taunting the toddler, Isaac. No doubt, Hagar was also giving Sarah a hard time as well as she felt the effect of her diminished standing that began with the birth of Isaac; so Sarah insists to Abraham that Hagar and Ishmael be banished from the clan. To say that Abraham was troubled would be quite an understatement. Actually, Sarah was simply carrying out God's will.....for God told Abraham to do it, and not to be concerned for the boy's welfare; that God would bless Ishmael and keep him safe. And, besides, God says, Isaac is the one who will bear the covenant promise. Here we have another in a long

Now, just to add a little to the context of the situation.....there was very good reason that God promised Abraham that Ishmael would be divinely blessed, and divinely prospered. Law codes of this era and this area have been discovered; and the exact case we have here is discussed. Known as the law of Lipit-Ishtar, here's how it works: Abraham had the right to accept or deny Ishmael as an heir to his estate, BECAUSE Ishmael was born to a slave woman. It is obvious by all accounts that Ishmael had been accepted by Abraham as the heir-apparent of the clan. Therefore, Ishmael was to have been given the firstborn's share of Abraham's very substantial wealth; and by this, Hagar, Ishmael's mother, would also have benefited.

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<sup>17</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament.

However, because Hagar was a slave, the slave's owner had at all times the right to grant freedom to the slave. The slave, Hagar, belonged, legally, to Sarah. When Sarah went to Abraham and told him to cast out Hagar and that son of hers, Ishmael, it was Sarah's legal right to do so. However, when a slave woman was released, it was the choice of the FATHER of her children if those children were to be released along with her. Sarah could NOT legally order Ishmael out.....but she could banish Hagar. Abraham's decision to order Hagar out was not his to make; BUT.....his decision to follow Sarah's desire for Ishmael to also leave most definitely WAS entirely up to Abraham. And, when he agreed to do as Sarah asked, Ishmael's inheritance went down the drain. Ishmael and Hagar, in a moment, went from being wealthy and having authority, to being penniless and homeless.

This was not some vague legal situation that caught Abraham or any of the other players by surprise; the entire scenario we read about here is BASED on their understanding of this law. Therefore, to soothe Abraham, by His grace God promised to supply the earthy portion of the blessing that had just been taken from Ishmael. Therefore, we find that just as Isaac will produce 12 grandsons.....12 princes....called the 12 tribes of Israel, so Ishmael will also be blessed with an equal amount of tribal princes and much wealth. Ishmael received, by God's provision, every bit as much....perhaps even more.....than Isaac. But.....the one thing Ishmael could NOT have was the blessing of God to be the promised son. The heir to the covenant promise was to be Isaac.

Abraham obeys Yahweh, and sends Hagar and Ishmael away. How this must have hurt Abraham. He loved Ishmael; he had counted on Ishmael as his only begotten son for 13 years. I don't know how he did it.<sup>18</sup>

### **Genesis 21:15**

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

### **Genesis 21:16**

**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.**

### **Genesis 21:17**

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

The Angel of the Lord met Hagar in the desert (vv. 17-18) as before (16:7), and provided water from a well (21:19) as before (16:14).

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<sup>18</sup>Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

Ishmael was born when Abraham was eighty-six years of age, Genesis 16:16; Isaac was born when he was one hundred years of age, Genesis 21:5; hence Ishmael was fourteen years old at the birth of Isaac. Add to this the age of Isaac when he was weaned, which, from Genesis 21:8, (See note Genesis 21:8) was probably three, and we shall find that Ishmael was at the time of his leaving Abraham not less than seventeen 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.

**[What aileth thee, Hagar]** Question 41. Next question is in Genesis 21:29.

### **Genesis 21:18**

**Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.**

God told Hagar, as He had told Abraham, that from Ishmael would come a great nation (21:18; cf. v. 13).

**[Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.]** The 28th prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 21:18, fulfilled). Next prophecy is in Genesis 22:8. The Arabs remain a great nation and figure prominently in world affairs.

### **Genesis 21:19**

**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.**

### **Genesis 21:20**

**And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.**

**[God was with the lad]** When God is with one he will succeed (Genesis 39:2,21; Judges 6:12; John 3:2; Acts 10:38).

### **Twelve Examples of God Being "with" Men**

1. Ishmael (Genesis 21:20)
2. Abraham (Genesis 21:22)
3. Jacob (Genesis 28:15,20)
4. Joseph (Genesis 39:2,21; Acts 7:9)
5. Moses (Joshua 1:5)
6. Joshua (Joshua 1:5,9)
7. Samuel (1 Samuel 3:19)
8. David (2 Samuel 5:10; 1 Chron. 17:2)
9. Solomon (1 Chron. 28:20; 2 Chron. 1:1)

10. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:11)
11. Jesus (John 3:2; Acts 10:38)
12. Paul (2 Tim. 4:17)

**[wilderness]** "Wilderness" is found 305 times. It is generally an uncultivated place, left for pasture and natural growth, but not necessarily without cities or inhabitants (Isaiah 14:17; Isaiah 40:3; Isaiah 42:11; Matthew 3:1; Matthew 15:33; Acts 7:30; Rev. 12:6).

### **Fourteen Examples of Archery**

1. Ishmael (Genesis 21:20)
2. Esau (Genesis 27:3)
3. Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:20,36-37; 2 Samuel 1:18-22)
4. David (2 Samuel 22:35; Psalm 18:34)
5. Syrians (1 Kings 22:34)
6. Jehu (2 Kings 9:24)
7. Joash (2 Kings 13:15-17)
8. Philistines (1 Samuel 31:3; 1 Chron. 10:3)
9. Israelites (2 Samuel 1:18; 1 Chron. 5:18; 1 Chron. 12:2; 2 Chron. 14:8; 2 Chron. 17:17; 2 Chron. 26:14; Neh. 4:13)
10. Sons of Ulam (1 Chron. 8:40)
11. Job (Job 29:20)
12. Medes and Persians (Isaiah 13:17-18)
13. People of Kedar (Isaiah 21:17)
14. Lydians and others (Isaiah 66:19; Jeremiah 6:23; Jeremiah 46:9; Jeremiah 49:35)

**Nachmanides; (An Archer)** Since *kashoth* is an adjective, they have said that *rovh* is one who shoots arrows, the word being derived from the expressions: *His archers compass me round about; the archers have dealt bitterly with him,* - and *kashoth* is one who makes arrows.

A more correct interpretation is that *roveh* is a shooter, and it can refer to one who shoots arrows or throws stones or other objects, even as it is said, *Behold this heap... which I have thrown up between me and thee.* Therefore, the verse describes him further by saying that he was a shooter with the bow. In a similar sense is the verse, *And the shooters of arrows by the bow overtook him.*<sup>19</sup>

### **Genesis 21:21**

**And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.**

**[Paran]** Paran (that is, Arabia), where his posterity has ever dwelt (compare Gen 16:12; also Isa 48:19; 1Pet 1:25). Paran was the name of both a mountain and a wilderness from

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<sup>19</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

Mt. Sinai north (Genesis 21:21; Numbers 10:12; Numbers 12:16; Numbers 13:3,26; Deut. 1:1; Deut. 33:2; 1 Samuel 25:1; 1 Kings 11:18; Habakkuk 3:3).

**[his mother took him a wife]** On a father's death, the mother looks out for a wife for her son, however young; and as Ishmael was now virtually deprived of his father, his mother set about forming a marriage connection for him, it would seem, among her relatives. Ishmael lived in the desert became an archer and married an Egyptian (21:21).

Thus Ishmael became one of the fathers of the Arab nations.

See Psalm 83; how and what nations hate Israel.

**[out of the land of Egypt]** Hagar was an Egyptian given to Sarah by Pharaoh (Genesis 12:16-20; Genesis 16:3). Thus, the Ishmaelites were of Egyptian stock.

**Barnes' Notes Summary Verse 9-21:** The dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael. "The son of Hagar ... laughing." The birth of Isaac has made a great change in the position of Ishmael, now at the age of at least fifteen years. He was not now, as formerly, the chief object of attention, and some bitterness of feeling may have arisen on this account. His laugh was therefore the laugh of derision. Rightly was the child of promise named Isaac, the one at whom all laugh with various feelings of incredulity, wonder, gladness, and scorn. Sarah cannot brook the insolence of Ishmael, and demands his dismissal. This was painful to Abraham. Nevertheless, God enjoins it as reasonable, on the ground that in Isaac was his seed to be called. This means not only that Isaac was to be called his seed, but in Isaac as the progenitor was included the seed of Abraham in the highest and utmost sense of the phrase. From him the holy seed was to spring that was to be the agent in eventually bringing the whole race again under the covenant of Noah, in that higher form which it assumes in the New Testament. Abraham is comforted in this separation with a renewal of the promise concerning Ishmael Gen. 17:20.

He proceeds with all singleness of heart and denial of self to dismiss the mother and the son. This separation from the family of Abraham was, no doubt, distressing to the feelings of the parties concerned. But it involved no material hardship to those who departed, and conferred certain real advantages. Hagar obtained her freedom. Ishmael, though called a lad, was at an age when it is not unusual in the East to marry and provide for oneself. And their departure did not imply their exclusion from the privileges of communion with God, as they might still be under the covenant with Abraham, since Ishmael had been circumcised, and, at all events, were under the broader covenant of Noah. It was only their own voluntary rejection of God and his mercy, whether before or after their departure, that could cut them off from the promise of eternal life. It seems likely that Hagar and Ishmael had so behaved as to deserve their dismissal from the sacred home. "A bottle of water."

This was probably a kid-skin bottle, as Hagar could not have carried a goat-skin. Its contents were precious in the wilderness, but soon exhausted. "And the lad." He took the lad and gave him to Hagar. The bread and water-skin were on her shoulder; the lad she

held by the hand. "In the wilderness of Beer-sheba." It is possible that the departure of Hagar occurred after the league with Abimelek and the naming of Beer-sheba, though coming in here naturally as the sequel of the birth and weaning of Isaac. The wilderness in Scripture is simply the land not profitable for cultivation, though fit for pasture to a greater or less extent. The wilderness of Beer-sheba is that part of the wilderness which was adjacent to Beer-sheba, where probably at this time Abraham was residing. "Laid the lad." Ishmael was now, no doubt, thoroughly humbled as well as wearied, and therefore passive under his mother's guidance. She led him to a sheltering bush, and caused him to lie down in its shade, resigning herself to despair. The artless description here is deeply affecting.

The fortunes of Ishmael. God cares for the wanderers. He hears the voice of the lad, whose sufferings from thirst are greater than those of the mother. An angel is sent, who addresses Hagar in the simple words of encouragement and direction. "Hold thy hand upon him." Lay thy hand firmly upon him. The former promise Gen. 16:10 is renewed to her. God also opened her eyes that she saw a well of water, from which the bottle is replenished, and she and the lad are recruited for their further journey. It is unnecessary to determine how far this opening of the eyes was miraculous. It may refer to the cheering of her mind and the sharpening of her attention. In Scripture the natural and supernatural are not always set over against each other as with us. All events are alike ascribed to an ever-watchful Providence, whether they flow from the ordinary laws of nature or some higher law of the divine will. "God was with the lad." Ishmael may have been cured of his childish spleen. It is possible also his father did not forget him, but sent him a stock of cattle with which to begin the pastoral life on his account. "He became an archer." He grew an archer, or multiplied into a tribe of archers. Paran Gen. 14:6 lay south of Palestine, and therefore on the way to Egypt, out of which his mother took him a wife. The Ishmaelites, therefore, both root and branch, were descended on the mother's side from the Egyptians.

### **The Book of Enoch: Prophecy of the Animals**

89.10 And they began to beget wild animals and birds, so that there arose from them every kind of species: lions, tigers, wolves, dogs, hyenas, wild-boars, foxes, badgers, pigs, falcons, vultures, kites, eagles, and ravens. But amongst them was born a white bull. (*Abraham*)

89.11 And they began to bite one another but that white bull, which was born amongst them, begat a wild ass and a white bull with it, and the wild asses increased. (*Wild ass = Ishmael and White Bull = Isaac*)

**Torah Class:** On the verge of dying of thirst, we are told in V17 that Mal'ach Elohim calls out to Hagar: literally, Mal'ach Elohim means the messenger of God. In this case, this was either an Angelic messenger, or it was God Himself. Notice, now, that this messenger did not appear before Hagar....he simply called out to Hagar from up in heaven. There is nothing that speaks of an appearance. Notice also that we are told "God" (Elohim) heard the cry of the boy....not the cry of the mother. And, then the messenger of God says that God has heard the boy, and in the next verse says, "I will make a great nation of him". As with the 3 visitors who came to Abraham a couple of chapters ago,

this encounter is mysterious. Was this an angel or was this God? Angels usually make it clear that they are doing the bidding of God; but here the messenger says, “I will make Ishmael a great nation”. I don’t know the answer, but my opinion is that this was indeed a manifestation of God.....but in what form is difficult to ascertain.

Hagar opens her eyes, swollen from dust, sand, and tears, and sees a water well that has miraculously appeared, and mother and son are saved. A promise is made from God that Ishmael will father a great nation. This is really a reminder of a previous commitment to Ishmael, undoubtedly for Hagar’s sake. But, notice that there is NO promise of land; just a nation. And, just to be clear, in Bible terms nations are not about land or territory, they are about people groups.

After the dramatic rescue and promise, the narrative skips to Hagar and Ishmael becoming desert dwellers. They lived in the Paran desert: that is an area roughly between the southern-end of the Dead Sea to about halfway down into the Sinai Peninsula, and eastward into the area that would someday be known as Midian; or more generally, as the Arabian Peninsula. Of course, this is the area that would soon become the root of the Arab nations, but the people who lived in Paran would be what we now call Bedouins, an Arab people.<sup>20</sup>

### **Genesis 21:22**

**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:**

### **Genesis 21:23**

**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.**

Here a proof of the promise (Gen 12:2) being fulfilled, in a native prince wishing to form a solemn league with Abraham. The proposal was reasonable, and agreed to..

### **Genesis 21:24**

**And Abraham said, I will swear.**

### **Genesis 21:25**

**And Abraham reproveth Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech’s servants had violently taken away.**

Wells were of great importance to a pastoral chief and on the successful operation of sinking a new one, the owner was solemnly informed in person. If, however, they were

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<sup>20</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

allowed to get out of repair, the restorer acquired a right to them. In unoccupied lands the possession of wells gave a right of property in the land, and dread of this had caused the offense for which Abraham reproved Abimelech. Some describe four, others five, wells in Beer-sheba (7?).

### **Genesis 21:26**

**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.**

**[I wot not who hath done this thing]** The servants of Abimelech had committed these depredations on Abraham without any authority from their master, who appears to have been a very amiable man, possessing the fear of God, and ever regulating the whole of his conduct by the principles of righteousness and strict justice.

### **Genesis 21:27**

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

### **Twenty-two Man-Made Covenants**

1. Abraham with Abimelech (Genesis 21:27-34)
2. Isaac with Abimelech (Genesis 26:26-31)
3. Jacob with God (Genesis 28:20)
4. Jacob with Laban (Genesis 31:44-45)
5. Joshua with Gibeonites (Joshua 9:15)
6. Joshua with Israel (Joshua 24:25-28)
7. Jonathan with David (1 Samuel 18:3; 1 Samuel 20:8,16,42; 1 Samuel 23:18; 2 Samuel 21:7)
8. David with Abner (2 Samuel 3:12-21)
9. David with Israel (2 Samuel 5:3; 1 Chron. 11:3)
10. Solomon with Hiram (1 Kings 5:12)
11. Asa with Ben-hadad (1 Kings 15:19-20)
12. Asa with Judah (2 Chron. 15:12)
13. Ahab with Ben-hadad (1 Kings 20:34)
14. Johoiada with Judah (2 Kings 11:4,17)
15. Josiah with Judah (2 Kings 23:3)
16. Asa with God (2 Chron. 15:8-15)
17. Hezekiah with God (2 Chron. 29:10)
18. Ezra with Israel (Ezra 10:3; Neh. 10:29)
19. Zedekiah with Judah (Jeremiah 34:8)
20. Nebuchadnezzar with Judah (Ezekiel 17:13)
21. Israel with Assyrians (Hosea 12:1)
22. Judas with Pharisees (Matthew 26:15)

### **Genesis 21:28**

**And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.**

This covenant with Abimelech made at Beersheba apparently filled Abraham with gratitude and praise. In answering Abimelech's request not to "deal falsely" (v. 23) with him or his people, Abraham said simply, "I will swear" (v. 24). The meaning of "Beersheba" is probably "the well of the oath," remembering the oath sworn by the men. "Beersheba" (*be'er sheva*) Heb. comes from *shava* ', "swear," or *sheva* ', "seven," plus *be'er*, "well."

### **Genesis 21:29**

**And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?**

The similarity of the Hebrew words *sheba*, "seven," and *shaba*, "swear," seems to indicate that there is a connection between them. Accordingly, Beer-sheba may mean "well of seven" or "well of swearing," or "well of the oath." The reflexive use of the word for "to swear" means "to seven oneself" or to pledge oneself by seven sacred things. Later Israel would learn about the solemnity of oaths and treaties.

**[What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?]** Question 42. Next question is in Genesis 22:7.

*A treaty sealed with seven lambs.* Seeing that God was with Abraham, Abimelech offered to make a treaty with him. Abraham accepted, sealing the treaty with seven lambs. (Note the similarity with Genesis 26:17-33, where Isaac signed a treaty with the Philistines.)

### **Genesis 21:30**

**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.**

### **Genesis 21:31**

**Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.**

**[Beersheba]** literally, the well of swearing or of the oath, because they both sware there—mutually confirmed the covenant.

### **Genesis 21:32**

**Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.**

The Philistines (Gen 21:32) settled in Palestine en masse around 1200 B.C. However, some sea traders settled on the coast of Palestine as early as Abraham, who lived 2166-1991 B.C. Used 288 times, but only 43 times outside of Judges, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, and 1 Chronicles. Philistines came from Mizraim, the son of Ham (Genesis 10:6,13-14). They were Israel's bitter enemies, from Canaan's conquest until the Babylonian captivity.

**Torah Class:** Now, I don't want to move into the next phase of chapter 21 until we draw some undeniable and obviously purposeful parallels between Isaac.....the son of promise.....and the Messiah, the ultimate son of promise.

Here's just a few more to consider: There was a very lengthy time between the promise of Isaac and it's happening. Same thing for the Messiah. The births of Isaac and Yahshua were both miraculous: Isaac's because of his mother's age and dead womb, Yahshua's because Mary was a virgin. Isaac's name was decided by God before he was born, so was Yahshua's. God set a precise appointed time for Isaac's birth, just as He did for Jesus. There are others that we'll come to shortly.

At this point, the chapter shifts back to Abraham's relationship with that Philistine king, Abimelech. In verse 20 we see Abraham is living in Abimelech's territory..... which had been offered to Abraham some years earlier.

We see a little more determined and stronger Abraham from this point forward. Apparently with the birth of Isaac, Abraham is now more confident in the ability of the Lord to protect Him and keep His promises, and he is more satisfied that if something befalls him and he should die, he has the all-important heir, in Isaac, so that the family will move forward with the promises and blessings of God.

There was a dispute going on between Abraham's clan, and Abimelech's people, over some water wells. And, the wise Abimelech, aware that Abraham had a friend in the highest place, simply wanted to settle the issue before God again threatened him. The negotiations end successfully with the traditional B'rit (covenant) making ceremony, and Abimelech and his military commander who came with him, went back home to Gerar. Then we're told that Abraham stayed in that area for a long time.

Interestingly, the area Abimelech returned to is here referred to as the land of the Philistines. Now, whether there was very many Philistines settled, yet, and whether or not they were even called Philistines is a matter of some argument.<sup>21</sup>

### **Genesis 21:33**

**And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.**

[**everlasting God**] Hebrew: *El* (H410) '*owlam* (H5769), the Everlasting God. '*Owlam* means unending, whether used of covenants, possessions, hills, mercy, God or other subjects. '*El`Owlam* expresses God's eternal Being as well as His authorship of all eternal things, plans, and purposes in the universe.

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<sup>21</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

## **Genesis 21:34**

**And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.**

The presence of Philistines in Palestine at this period has sometimes been called an inaccuracy in the narrative, since the great invasion of the Philistines did not occur until about 1200 B.C. However, as Genesis declares (21:32, 34; 26:15, 18; etc.) there were smaller groups of the Philistines in Palestine at an earlier time.

## **Book of Jasher: Chapters 21 and 22**

### CHAPTER 21

1 And it was at that time at the end of a year and four months of Abraham's dwelling in the land of the Philistines in Gerar, that God visited Sarah, and the Lord remembered her, and she conceived and bare a son to Abraham.

2 And Abraham called the name of the son which was born to him, which Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

3 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac at eight days old, as God had commanded Abraham to do unto his seed after him; and Abraham was one hundred, and Sarah ninety years old, when Isaac was born to them.

4 And the child grew up and he was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast upon the day that Isaac was weaned.

5 And Shem and Eber and all the great people of the land, and Abimelech king of the Philistines, and his servants, and Phicol, the captain of his host, came to eat and drink and rejoice at the feast which Abraham made upon the day of his son Isaac's being weaned.

6 Also Terah, the father of Abraham, and Nahor his brother, came from Haran, they and all belonging to them, for they greatly rejoiced on hearing that a son had been born to Sarah.

7 And they came to Abraham, and they ate and drank at the feast which Abraham made upon the day of Isaac's being weaned.

8 And Terah and Nahor rejoiced with Abraham, and they remained with him many days in the land of the Philistines.

9 At that time Serug the son of Reu died, in the first year of the birth of Isaac son of Abraham.

10 And all the days of Serug were two hundred and thirty-nine years, and he died.

11 And Ishmael the son of Abraham was grown up in those days; he was fourteen years old when Sarah bare Isaac to Abraham.

12 And God was with Ishmael the son of Abraham, and he grew up, and he learned to use the bow and became an archer.

13 And when Isaac was five years old he was sitting with Ishmael at the door of the tent.

14 And Ishmael came to Isaac and seated himself opposite to him, and he took the bow and drew it and put the arrow in it, and intended to slay Isaac.

15 And Sarah saw the act which Ishmael desired to do to her son Isaac, and it grieved her exceedingly on account of her son, and she sent for Abraham, and said to him, Cast out

this bondwoman and her son, for her son shall not be heir with my son, for thus did he seek to do unto him this day.

16 And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarah, and he rose up early in the morning, and he took twelve loaves and a bottle of water which he gave to Hagar, and sent her away with her son, and Hagar went with her son to the wilderness, and they dwelt in the wilderness of Paran with the inhabitants of the wilderness, and Ishmael was an archer, and he dwelt in the wilderness a long time.

17 And he and his mother afterward went to the land of Egypt, and they dwelt there, and Hagar took a wife for her son from Egypt, and her name was Meribah.

18 And the wife of Ishmael conceived and bare four sons and two daughters, and Ishmael and his mother and his wife and children afterward went and returned to the wilderness.

19 And they made themselves tents in the wilderness, in which they dwelt, and they continued to travel and then to rest monthly and yearly.

20 And God gave Ishmael flocks and herds and tents on account of Abraham his father, and the man increased in cattle.

21 And Ishmael dwelt in deserts and in tents, traveling and resting for a long time, and he did not see the face of his father.

22 And in some time after, Abraham said to Sarah his wife, I will go and see my son Ishmael, for I have a desire to see him, for I have not seen him for a long time.

23 And Abraham rode upon one of his camels to the wilderness to seek his son Ishmael, for he heard that he was dwelling in a tent in the wilderness with all belonging to him.

24 And Abraham went to the wilderness, and he reached the tent of Ishmael about noon, and he asked after Ishmael, and he found the wife of Ishmael sitting in the tent with her children, and Ishmael her husband and his mother were not with them.

25 And Abraham asked the wife of Ishmael, saying, Where has Ishmael gone? and she said, He has gone to the field to hunt, and Abraham was still mounted upon the camel, for he would not get off to the ground as he had sworn to his wife Sarah that he would not get off from the camel.

26 And Abraham said to Ishmael's wife, My daughter, give me a little water that I may drink, for I am fatigued from the journey.

27 And Ishmael's wife answered and said to Abraham, We have neither water nor bread, and she continued sitting in the tent and did not notice Abraham, neither did she ask him who he was.

28 But she was beating her children in the tent, and she was cursing them, and she also cursed her husband Ishmael and reproached him, and Abraham heard the words of Ishmael's wife to her children, and he was very angry and displeased.

29 And Abraham called to the woman to come out to him from the tent, and the woman came and stood opposite to Abraham, for Abraham was still mounted upon the camel.

30 And Abraham said to Ishmael's wife, When thy husband Ishmael returneth home say these words to him,

31 A very old man from the land of the Philistines came hither to seek thee, and thus was his appearance and figure; I did not ask him who he was, and seeing thou wast not here he spoke unto me and said, When Ishmael thy husband returneth tell him thus did this man say, When thou comest home put away this nail of the tent which thou hast placed here, and place another nail in its stead.

32 And Abraham finished his instructions to the woman, and he turned and went off on the camel homeward.

33 And after that Ishmael came from the chase he and his mother, and returned to the tent, and his wife spoke these words to him,

34 A very old man from the land of the Philistines came to seek thee, and thus was his appearance and figure; I did not ask him who he was, and seeing thou wast not at home he said to me, When thy husband cometh home tell him, thus saith the old man, Put away the nail of the tent which thou hast placed here and place another nail in its stead.

35 And Ishmael heard the words of his wife, and he knew that it was his father, and that his wife did not honor him.

36 And Ishmael understood his father's words that he had spoken to his wife, and Ishmael hearkened to the voice of his father, and Ishmael cast off that woman and she went away.

37 And Ishmael afterward went to the land of Canaan, and he took another wife and he brought her to his tent to the place where he then dwelt.

38 And at the end of three years Abraham said, I will go again and see Ishmael my son, for I have not seen him for a long time.

39 And he rode upon his camel and went to the wilderness, and he reached the tent of Ishmael about noon.

40 And he asked after Ishmael, and his wife came out of the tent and she said, He is not here my lord, for he has gone to hunt in the fields, and to feed the camels, and the woman said to Abraham, Turn in my lord into the tent, and eat a morsel of bread, for thy soul must be wearied on account of the journey.

41 And Abraham said to her, I will not stop for I am in haste to continue my journey, but give me a little water to drink, for I have thirst; and the woman hastened and ran into the tent and she brought out water and bread to Abraham, which she placed before him and she urged him to eat, and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted and he blessed his son Ishmael.

42 And he finished his meal and he blessed the Lord, and he said to Ishmael's wife, When Ishmael cometh home say these words to him,

43 A very old man from the land of the Philistines came hither and asked after thee, and thou wast not here; and I brought him out bread and water and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted.

44 And he spoke these words to me: When Ishmael thy husband cometh home, say unto him, The nail of the tent which thou hast is very good, do not put it away from the tent.

45 And Abraham finished commanding the woman, and he rode off to his home to the land of the Philistines; and when Ishmael came to his tent his wife went forth to meet him with joy and a cheerful heart.

46 And she said to him, An old man came here from the land of the Philistines and thus was his appearance, and he asked after thee and thou wast not here, so I brought out bread and water, and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted.

47 And he spoke these words to me, When Ishmael thy husband cometh home say to him, The nail of the tent which thou hast is very good, do not put it away from the tent.

48 And Ishmael knew that it was his father, and that his wife had honored him, and the Lord blessed Ishmael.

## CHAPTER 22

1 And Ishmael then rose up and took his wife and his children and his cattle and all belonging to him, and he journeyed from there and he went to his father in the land of the Philistines.

2 And Abraham related to Ishmael his son the transaction with the first wife that Ishmael took, according to what she did.

3 And Ishmael and his children dwelt with Abraham many days in that land, and Abraham dwelt in the land of the Philistines a long time.

4 And the days increased and reached twenty six years, and after that Abraham with his servants and all belonging to him went from the land of the Philistines and removed to a great distance, and they came near to Hebron, and they remained there, and the servants of Abraham dug wells of water, and Abraham and all belonging to him dwelt by the water, and the servants of Abimelech king of the Philistines heard the report that Abraham's servants had dug wells of water in the borders of the land.

5 And they came and quarreled with the servants of Abraham, and they robbed them of the great well which they had dug.

6 And Abimelech king of the Philistines heard of this affair, and he with Phicol the captain of his host and twenty of his men came to Abraham, and Abimelech spoke to Abraham concerning his servants, and Abraham rebuked Abimelech concerning the well of which his servants had robbed him.

7 And Abimelech said to Abraham, As the Lord liveth who created the whole earth, I did not hear of the act which my servants did unto thy servants until this day.

8 And Abraham took seven ewe lambs and gave them to Abimelech, saying, Take these, I pray thee, from my hands that it may be a testimony for me that I dug this well.

9 And Abimelech took the seven ewe lambs which Abraham had given to him, for he had also given him cattle and herds in abundance, and Abimelech swore to Abraham concerning the well, therefore he called that well Beersheba, for there they both swore concerning it.

10 And they both made a covenant in Beersheba, and Abimelech rose up with Phicol the captain of his host and all his men, and they returned to the land of the Philistines, and Abraham and all belonging to him dwelt in Beersheba and he was in that land a long time.

11 And Abraham planted a large grove in Beersheba, and he made to it four gates facing the four sides of the earth, and he planted a vineyard in it, so that if a traveler came to Abraham he entered any gate which was in his road, and remained there and ate and drank and satisfied himself and then departed.

12 For the house of Abraham was always open to the sons of men that passed and repassed, who came daily to eat and drink in the house of Abraham.

13 And any man who had hunger and came to Abraham's house, Abraham would give him bread that he might eat and drink and be satisfied, and any one that came naked to his house he would clothe with garments as he might choose, and give him silver and gold and make known to him the Lord who had created him in the earth; this did Abraham all his life.

14 And Abraham and his children and all belonging to him dwelt in Beersheba, and he pitched his tent as far as Hebron.

15 And Abraham's brother Nahor and his father and all belonging to them dwelt in Haran, for they did not come with Abraham to the land of Canaan.

16 And children were born to Nahor which Milca the daughter of Haran, and sister to Sarah, Abraham's wife, bare to him.

17 And these are the names of those that were born to him, Uz, Buz, Kemuel, Kesed, Chazo, Pildash, Tidlaf, and Bethuel, being eight sons, these are the children of Milca which she bare to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

18 And Nahor had a concubine and her name was Reumah, and she also bare to Nahor, Zebach, Gachash, Tachash and Maacha, being four sons.

19 And the children that were born to Nahor were twelve sons besides his daughters, and they also had children born to them in Haran.

20 And the children of Uz the first born of Nahor were Abi, Cheref, Gadin, Melus, and Deborah their sister.

21 And the sons of Buz were Berachel, Naamath, Sheva, and Madonu.

22 And the sons of Kemuel were Aram and Rechob.

23 And the sons of Kesed were Anamlech, Meshai, Benon and Yifi; and the sons of Chazo were Pildash, Mechi and Opher.

24 And the sons of Pildash were Arud, Chamum, Mered and Moloch.

25 And the sons of Tidlaf were Mushan, Cushan and Mutzi.

26 And the children of Bethuel were Sechar, Laban and their sister Rebecca.

27 These are the families of the children of Nahor, that were born to them in Haran; and Aram the son of Kemuel and Rechob his brother went away from Haran, and they found a valley in the land by the river Euphrates.

28 And they built a city there, and they called the name of the city after the name of Pethor the son of Aram, that is Aram Naherayim unto this day.

29 And the children of Kesed also went to dwell where they could find a place, and they went and they found a valley opposite to the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.

30 And they there built themselves a city, and they called the name at the city Kesed after the name of their father, that is the land Kasdim unto this day, and the Kasdim dwelt in that land and they were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly.

31 And Terah, father of Nahor and Abraham, went and took another wife in his old age, and her name was Pelilah, and she conceived and bare him a son and he called his name Zoba.

32 And Terah lived twenty-five years after he begat Zoba.

33 And Terah died in that year, that is in the thirty-fifth year of the birth of Isaac son of Abraham.

34 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and he was buried in Haran.

35 And Zoba the son of Terah lived thirty years and he begat Aram, Achlis and Merik.

36 And Aram son of Zoba son of Terah, had three wives and he begat twelve sons and three daughters; and the Lord gave to Aram the son of Zoba, riches and possessions, and abundance of cattle, and flocks and herds, and the man increased greatly.

37 And Aram the son of Zoba and his brother and all his household journeyed from Haran, and they went to dwell where they should find a place, for their property was too great to remain in Haran; for they could not stop in Haran together with their brethren the children of Nahor.

38 And Aram the son of Zoba went with his brethren, and they found a valley at a distance toward the eastern country and they dwelt there.  
39 And they also built a city there, and they called the name thereof Aram, after the name of their eldest brother; that is Aram Zoba to this day.

## **Appendix A**

### **Thirty-four Secular Feasts (Dakes Study Notes)**

1. Abraham's feast for God and angels (Genesis 18:1-8)
2. Lot's feast for two angels (Genesis 19:3)
3. Abraham's feast for Isaac (Genesis 21:8)
4. Isaac's feast for Philistines (Genesis 26:30)
5. Laban's feast for Jacob (Genesis 29:22)
6. Pharaoh's feast (Genesis 40:20)
7. Joseph's feast for his brethren (Genesis 43:16-34)
8. Samson's wedding feast (Judges 14:10-18)
9. Nabal's feast (1 Samuel 25:36)
10. David's feast for Abner (2 Samuel 3:20)
11. Solomon's feast for his servants (1 Kings 3:15)
12. Solomon's feast for all Israel (1 Kings 8:65)
13. Elisha's feast for the people (1 Kings 19:21)
14. Elisha's feast for the people (2 Kings 4:38-44)
15. Ahasuerus' feast for his nobles (Esther 1:3)
16. Ahasuerus' feast for the people (Esther 1:5)
17. Vashti's feast for the women (Esther 1:9)
18. Ahasuerus' feast for Esther (Esther 2:17-18)
19. Esther's feast for Haman (Esther 7:1-10)
20. The feast of Job's sons (Job 1:4)
21. Belshazzar's feast for his nobles (Daniel 5)
22. Jesus' feast for 5,000 males (Matthew 14:15-21)
23. Jesus' feast for 4,000 (Matthew 15:32-39)
24. A king's marriage feast (Matthew 22:1-14)
25. Simon's feast for Jesus (Mark 14:3)
26. A Pharisee's feast for Jesus (Luke 7:36-50)
27. Levi's feast for Jesus (Luke 5:29)
28. The great feast (Luke 14:16-24)
29. A father's feast for his lost son (Luke 15:23)
30. The marriage feast (John 2:1-12)
31. The feast at Bethany (John 12:1-8)
32. Jesus' feast for his disciples (John 21:12-15)
33. Herod's feast for his lords (Mark 6:21)
34. A Pharisee's feast for Jesus (Luke 11:37)

## **PROFILE: ISAAC**

A name carries great authority. It sets you apart. It triggers memories. The sound of it calls you to attention anywhere.

Many Bible names accomplished even more. They were often descriptions of important facts about one's past and hopes for the future. The choice of the name *Isaac*, "he laughs," for Abraham and Sarah's son must have created a variety of feelings in them each time it was spoken. At times it must have recalled their shocked laughter at God's announcement that they would be parents in their old age. At other times, it must have brought back the joyful feelings of receiving their long-awaited answer to prayer for a child. Most important, it was a testimony to God's power in making his promise a reality.

In a family of forceful initiators, Isaac was the quiet, "mind-my-own-business" type unless he was specifically called on to take action. He was the protected only child from the time Sarah got rid of Ishmael until Abraham arranged his marriage to Rebekah.

In his own family, Isaac had the patriarchal position, but Rebekah had the power. Rather than stand his ground, Isaac found it easier to compromise or lie to avoid confrontations.

In spite of these shortcomings, Isaac was part of God's plan. The model his father gave him included a great gift of faith in the one true God. God's promise to create a great nation through which he would bless the world was passed on by Isaac to his twin sons.

It is usually not hard to identify with Isaac in his weaknesses. But consider for a moment that God works through people in spite of their shortcomings and, often, through them. As you pray, put into words your desire to be available to God. You will discover that his willingness to use you is even greater than your desire to be used.

### **Strengths and accomplishments:**

- He was the miracle child born to Sarah and Abraham when she was 90 years old and he was 100
- He was the first descendant in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham
- He seems to have been a caring and consistent husband, at least until his sons were born
- He demonstrated great patience

### **Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Under pressure he tended to lie
- In conflict he sought to avoid confrontation
- He played favorites between his sons and alienated his wife

### **Lessons from his life:**

- Patience often brings rewards
- Both God's plans and his promises are larger than people
- God keeps his promises! He remains faithful though we are often faithless

- Playing favorites is sure to bring family conflict

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: The area called the Negev, in the southern part of Palestine, between Kadesh and Shur (Genesis 20:1)
- Occupation: Wealthy livestock owner
- Relatives: Parents: Abraham and Sarah. Half brother: Ishmael. Wife: Rebekah. Sons: Jacob and Esau

**Key verse:**

“Then God said, ‘Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him’ ” (Genesis 17:19).

Isaac’s story is told in Genesis 17:15-35:29. He is also mentioned in Romans 9:7-8; Hebrews 11:17-20; James 2:21-24.