

## Genesis 21 – God Brings Peace To Abraham’s Family

(Hint: This is a set up for the test that will come in chapter 22)

### I. The Fulfillment of God’s Promised Seed (1-8)

#### A. The Son of Promise Finally Comes (1-2)

1. The Lord visited Sarah as He had said
  - a. Remember 18:10 - The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son
  - b. Sarah conceives and bears a Son – the promised son (at 90 years old)
2. Notice the emphasis on God fulfilling His Word in v. 1-2
  - a. ...as he had said
  - b. ...as he had spoken
  - c. ...which God had spoken to Him
3. Isaac’s Birth was impossibly miraculous and happened at the exact time God said it would – despite external and internal opposition.

#### B. The Obedience of Abraham (3-4)

1. Abraham Names Him Isaac (3)
  - a. God commanded that his name should be Issac in 17:19
  - b. Remember Isaac means “laughter” – because Abraham and Sarah both laughed at the thought of having a son in their old age
    - i. Abraham laughs in 17:17
    - ii. Sarah laughs in 18:12
2. Abraham Circumcises Isaac (4)
  - a. God commanded Abraham to circumcise all the males born in his house in 17:10
  - b. Isaac is the first recorded circumcision of an infant

#### C. The Rejoicing in God’s Fulfillment (5-7)

1. Abraham is 100 Years Old At Isaac’s Birth (5)
  - a. God orchestrated the birth of Isaac so He alone would receive glory for the event
  - b. At 100 years old and Sarah at 90, it is impossible that they would have a son (besides the fact that Sarah had been barren her whole life)
  - c. Isaac’s birth would be a testimony to God’s faithfulness
2. Sarah Rejoices in God’s Fulfillment (6)
  - a. Now instead of laughing in unbelief, Sarah laughs in joy that God has given her a son
  - b. She rightly understands that everyone who hears of this will laugh with her
    - i. Isaac is the promised seed – through Him God’s promise of blessing the nations will be fulfilled (in Jesus)

- ii. She understands that because of Isaac's miraculous birth, the blessing and promise of God will come to all people
- 3. Sarah Wonders at God's Fulfillment (7)
  - a. Sarah marvels that this is really happening. Who would have believed it?
  - b. Not only does she give birth to Isaac but she is also able to nurse him at 90 years old
- 4. There is rejoicing and celebration at the promised seed's arrival
- D. The Celebration of The Promised Son (8)
  - 1. The Child grew and was weaned (kids back then were weaned around 3 years old)
  - 2. When the firstborn son was weaned, it is customary for a feast to be held in celebration of the family's heir
  - 3. This is a picture of everything being good – life is wonderful – laughter is everywhere.
- II. The Removal Of A Threat To The Promised Seed (9-14)
  - A. Sarah Recognizes A Threat To The Seed (9-10)
    - 1. Sarah Sees Ishmael Mocking Isaac (9)
      - a. Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86 (16:16) – Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born and it has at least been 2 years (probably 3) for Isaac to be weaned. That means Ishmael is 15 or 16
      - b. Sarah sees Ishmael laughing at Isaac during the celebration
        - i. We are not told exactly what Ishmael was doing
        - ii. Paul tells us that he was "persecuting" him
        - iii. Gal. 4:28-30 - *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh **persecuted** him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.*
    - c. Sarah sees that Ishmael is a threat to Isaac's inheritance
      - i. The oldest son should receive a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17)
      - ii. Sarah saw that there could be a power struggle when it came time to receive the inheritance
        - Later in both Jacob's and Joseph's sons we will see conflict in determining who the rightful heir and promised seed should be.

- Ancient Near Eastern law said the son of a slave woman was entitled to part of the inheritance – this is what led Sarah to give Hagar to Abraham in the first place
- 2. Sarah Suggests Hagar and Ishmael's Removal (10)
  - a. Sarah wants both Hagar and Ishmael removed from the family and cast out
  - b. She doesn't want any threat to grow along side Isaac's claim as Abraham's seed
  - c. Are Sarah's actions righteous here?
- B. God Affirms The Removal Of The Threat (11-13)
  - 1. Abraham Was Grieved At Sarah's Suggestion (11)
    - a. Abraham loved Ishmael and was grieved about her suggestion (notice it doesn't say anything about his concern for Hagar)
    - b. As leader of the family, he would be the one to drive them out if it came to that
  - 2. God Commands Abraham To Listen To Sarah (12)
    - a. God tells Abraham not to be grieved over Ishmael but to do as Sarah has said
    - b. God give the reason why he should do so – because Isaac is indeed the promised heir
      - i. Evidently Ishmael was a threat to Isaac's inheritance
      - ii. God Confirms That Isaac Is The Promised Seed (13)
  - 3. God Assures Abraham of Grace For Ishmael (13)
    - a. God eases Abraham's mind by promising that Ishmael will not die but will be made into a great nation
    - b. Ishmael is still Abraham's son and will receive grace from God because of it
    - c. Abraham is released from worry knowing that the faithful God has also made a promise for Ishmael
  - 4. NOTE: God is addressing the Mess that Abraham Made by going down into Egypt, lying about Sarah being his sister, and later taking Hagar as a surrogate mother. – He should have trusted the promise.
- C. Abraham Sends The Threat Away (14)
  - 1. Abraham obeys the command of God the very next morning
  - 2. Abraham give Hagar provisions and sends them away
    - a. The sentence structure is a little strange causing some to mistakenly believe Ishmael is an infant
    - b. "the child" is the 2<sup>nd</sup> object of the verb "gave"
    - c. This means Abraham gave provisions and the child to Hagar – it was the provisions alone that were placed on her shoulder.

3. Hagar wanders in the wilderness of Beersheba
  - a. Beersheba is the place where Abraham currently is
  - b. At the end of the chapter we are told why it is called Beersheba
  - c. The picture is Hagar wandering aimlessly in the wilderness around Abraham's camp
    - i. She has no where to go
    - ii. She is hopeless and helpless

### III. The Fulfillment of The Promise To Hagar (15-21)

#### A. The Outcasts Lose All Hope (15-16)

1. Hagar Places Ishmael In A Place to Die (15)
  - a. Hagar quickly runs out of provisions and the situation gets so serious that they are near death for lack of water
  - b. Hagar places the child under some shrubs to die
    - i. Although it sounds like she just chunks a baby in the bushes – she actually sends the boy to lay down (probably because she knows how dire the situation is and they are exhausted from lack of water)
    - ii. “When used with a human being as its object the verb almost always refers to lowering a dead body into its grave (2 Sam. 18:17; 2 Ki. 13:21; Jer. 41:9)” – Victor Hamilton
    - iii. The picture is not that she drops an infant in the bushes, but that she is leaving her son in his grave.
2. Hagar Wept At The Thought Of Her Son's Death (16)
  - a. Hagar does not want to witness the death of her son
  - b. She goes a distance and begins to weep

#### B. The Outcasts Receive Grace From God (17-19)

1. God Hears Ishmael's Cry (17a)
  - a. Notice that is doesn't say he heard Hagar, he heard the lad's cry
  - b. Remember what Ishmael's name means?
2. The Angel of The Lord Assures Hagar (17b-18)
  - a. He asks “What Troubles You?”
  - b. He Commands Her Not To Fear
  - c. He Affirms He has Heard Ishmael
  - d. He Commands Her To Lift Up The Boy
  - e. He Promises To Make Him A Nation
    - i. All this is a reminder of the promise that God had already made to Hagar the last time she was in the wilderness (16:10-12)
    - ii. The Angel of The Lord speaks as if to say “Don't you remember what I promised?” Why are you troubled? Get your boy and go!

3. God Reveals A Well To Hagar (19)
  - a. The well had been there the entire time
  - b. She was so focused on her circumstances and downcast about the prospect of death, she didn't see her deliverance was already in front of her
  - c. God had already made her a promise.
- C. Ishmael Grows And Marries (20-21)
  1. Ishmael Grew And Became a Bowman (20)
  2. Ishmael Takes a Wife From Egypt (21)
- IV. The Establishment Of A Covenant Of Peace (22-34)
  - A. Abimelech Seeks An Alliance With Abraham (22-24)
    1. Abimelech Recognizes God's Hand On Abraham (22)
      - a. This is the same Abimelech as in the previous chapter
      - b. He can see God's blessing on Abraham and desires to make alliance with him
    2. Abimelech Requests An Oath of Good Will (23)
      - a. Abimelech has been deceived by Abraham in the past and takes steps to ensure it doesn't happen again
    3. Abraham Swears To The covenant (24)
  - B. Abraham Addresses A Stolen Well (25-26)
    1. Abraham Tells Abimelech of A Well Seized (25)
      - a. Abraham still has some problems in the land
      - b. Some men had taken a well that he dug
    2. Abimelech Does Not Know Who Took The Well (26)
  - C. Abraham And Abimelech Make A Covenant (27-31)
    1. Abraham Gives Sheep and Oxen To Abimelech (27)
    2. Abraham Sets Seven Lambs Apart As A Testimony (28-30)
    3. The Place of The Well Is Called Beersheba (31)
      - a. Beersheba means "well oath"
  - D. Abraham Dwells And Worships In Peace (32-34)
    1. Abimelech Returns To Philistine Land (32)
    2. Abraham Worships God in the Land (33-34)

The Point here is that now everything is good. The threat to Isaac's inheritance has been removed and now the path is clear for the promised seed to flourish. Also, the obstacles in the land have been removed. Abimelech is now in covenant with Abraham and has promised that their water supply will remain in tact. Things are looking up. There are no more problems and finally they are resting in the blessings that God had been promising them for 25 years...until God asks Abraham to do something unbelievable in chapter 22.