

Genesis 21.1-21 “Promise Delivered – Problems Discovered”

BABY Boy Cambridge entered World – Little Prince George Albert Louis

NEWS Show > Joy of Birth > Sadsness Death of DIANA – Not see Grandchild!

HIRED for Great JOB – EXHAUSTED by WORK No Time or \$ for Vacation!

Marry Person of DREAMS – Stops you DREAMIN by High Volume SNORING

1st Child – Amazing GIFT! – POOPS All DAY & CRIES All NIGHT!

BICF ZGC – New Digs!! – No Subway Sandwich – and SAME OLD Preacher!

Life quickly Changes > Joy turns to Sorrow > from Birthdays to Funerals

1. Life’s Constant Changes

a. From Laughter – Birth of “Isaac” GREAT JOY = ‘**he laughs**’

Joyous BIRTH ENDED Year of PAIN and UNCERTAINTY >

SADDNESS: Sodom GONE > Lot MISSING > Abimelech more RIGHTEOUS

v. 6 Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."

1) Joy of New Life – Not long until a Baby captures Your HEART

“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.”
John 16.21

2) Joyous End to a Long Wait – Sarah Dreamed of Motherhood for 80 years

TIRED OF WAITING > Year Earlier age 89 > Almost LOST HOPE

“Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Genesis 18.11,12

LAUGHTER of UNBELIEF > God Rebuked Her for Lack of Faith

With her son as a living reminder that God can do anything, she will probably never again laugh when God makes such a seemingly impossible promise.

Samuel Ngewa

ABE REMINDED OF HIS SENIORITY MORE TIMES THAN HE WISHED

v. 2 “a son to Abraham in his old age”

v. 5 “Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him”

v. 7 “a son in his old age.”

“Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many” Isaiah 51.2

ABE Just GETTING STARTED > Had SIX MORE SONS > Lived until age 175

3) Joy of Shame Lifted

God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." Genesis 17.15-17

Sarah > Princess?? > NO DESCENDENTS, NO DYNASTY, NO PROSPECTS
Her SLAVE GIRL has MORE DIGNITY, Has a Son BY her OWN HUSBAND
GOD BROUGHT LAUGHTER > But this Sunshine was followed by a Storm...

b. to Lament “everyone who hears about this will laugh with me” NOT QUITE
Great Celebration > HAWAIIAN BABY LUAU > Kalua Pig, Lomi Salmon,
Sashimi, Poke, Opihi, Poi, Rice – got CHOKE BROKE DA MOUTH GRINDS!
Fun, Food, FACEBOOK: Other side of Tent > Hagar & Ishmael STINK LOOKS

v. 9 “Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking”

SARAH’S BIG SMILE Quickly Turned to BITTER SCOWL

IMAGINE!! > 15 Yr. Old Big Brother Picking on 3 Year Old half-Brother!!

“That woman” & “her son” > NOT Going to Spoil MY Party > or My Son’s Life

Sarah PUTS ON the PANTS OF THE HOUSE AND COMMANDS ABE -

v. 10 "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

Hagar and Ishmael - QUICKLY SENT OFF SOBBING

vs. 14-16 “Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob.”

Life's Constant Changes –Storm Clouds Quickly Came - Party was Rained Out

2. Lord's Continual Care

a. In Delight v. 6 Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter”

v. 1 “Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.”

Probably Felt to Sarah like God IGNORING or FORGOTTEN His Promise

30 years > Almost 11,000 Nights of Wondering > 11,000 Days of Waiting

What are you Waiting for God to Do? Become Tired of Waiting? Given Up?

After 70 long years the Lord brought back the Exiles from Babylonian Captivity:

“When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy...Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”
Psalm 126

We MAY WAVER in our Faith > God NEVER WAVERS in His Fulfillment

“By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.”
Hebrews 11.11.12

b. In Distress – God is Faithful in Sunshine and in the Storms

GOD’S POWER WORKS WHEN WE FINALLY GET WHAT WE HOPE FOR

God ALSO is Working When we Get what we DREAD – Hopes are DASHED

HEBREWS 11 – Heroes of Faith – In Life AND DEATH

“...the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. *Others* were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.” Hebrews 11.32-40

THINGS WERE NOT PLEASANT FOR HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

v. 14 “in the desert of Beersheba” > NO WATER, FOOD, HELP or HOPE

ABE: 318 Soldiers to Rescue Lot > Sends Woman & Son ALONE into Desert??

But God was true to Ishmael’s Name = GOD HEARS

v. 17 “God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.”

GOD HAD A PLAN FOR ISHMAEL TOO v. 13 “I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

v. 20,21 “God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.”

We are dedicated to seeing peace and reconciliation come for the Arabs and Jews. It is our firm conviction that peace can only be achieved for these two peoples when they have a true heart change... The only peace that can truly be achieved is through Jesus Christ. “Hope for Ishmael” Ministries

c. Right on Time v. 2 “at the very time God had promised”

30 Yrs EARLIER 12.2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you”

THANK GOD HE does NOT GIVE US ALL THE DETAILS > We would Quit!

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6.34

WHEN ABE WAS 99 – SARAH WAS 89 - “My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you *by this time next year.*” Genesis 17.21

“Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you *at the appointed time next year* and Sarah will have a son.” Genesis 18.14

We BELIEVE God Will Do Something: WONDER, What is He WAITING For?

Sometimes Like Sarah – WE Make Plan B – Get a Hagar to Help God Out

“God does not need to consult anyone in formulating his plans, and he does not need any help from anyone in carrying them out” James Boice

GOD IS LORD OF TIME > ALL TIME > PERFECT TIME

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.” Ecclesiastes 3.1-8

d. For our Good and God’s Glory

R U Thinking of 2016 Olympic Games? 1st Time in South America > BRAZIL

Athletes who Compete – From OUR Many Nations – Busy ALREADY!

ENDLESSLY TRAINING: Months, Years, Some LIFETIME

Events End in Seconds, Most Eliminated in Qualifying Heats, Go Home Empty

Christian Life > Life Long Marathon > ALL GET Victory Wreath will not Perish

Rewards are Eternal > Glory never Fades > Kept secure in Heaven Forever

“give thanks *in* all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus”

1 Thessalonians 5.18

NOT *FOR* all Circumstances, NOT Thank For Train Crash, Stillborn Baby, etc

Thank God that IN that Earthquake He has a Purpose > for Good and Glory

HORRIBLE – HIDEOUS – UNIMAGINABLY TERRIBLE > God is Good

God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines, Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break, In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face. William Cowper, 1774

3. Life's Challenging Choices

a. Surprise Sarah's Great Joy > Abraham ALSO Joyful > Long, Difficult Wait

BOTH DOUBTED WHETHER THIS DAY WOULD EVER COME -

“Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?"

And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Genesis 17.17,18

ABE's Affection for Ishmael – & Hagar? > Constant Companion > PROUD

Loved Isaac > But a Young Baby spends most of his time with Mom

Sarah > 15 years of FEELING JEALOUS > Regretting her Plan with Hagar

NOW – She had HER SON – Wants Hagar & Ishmael GONE FOREVER

All this NOT SURPRISING > What is SURPRISE – God AGREES WITH Sarah

b. Speculation – Not Told WHY God sends them away > Hypothesize...

1. Friction between Sons Increase > if Abe's House is anything Like Mine

Ishmael the ARCHER might soon be making Isaac a TARGET

2. Ultimate Test is Coming > call to Sacrifice Isaac > NO OTHER OPTIONS

Separation from Ishmael > PREPARATION for Separation from Isaac

3. Friction with Sarah > Abe had BRAGGING RIGHTS – 2 Sons!! + Concubine

4. Theological Reason > Renewed Call to FAITH ALONE – not trust in Works

Commentary on Paul's Allegory about these women in Galatians 4 –

“Hagar, the slave woman, stands for the old covenant enacted at Sinai, while her son Ishmael, stands for Judaism with her center at earthly Jerusalem. This is one form of religion. On the other hand, Sarah, the free woman, stands for the new covenant enacted on Calvary through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and her son, Isaac, stands for all who have become part of the church of the heavenly Jerusalem through faith in Christ's sacrifice. On the most superficial level, Isaac and Ishmael were alike in that both were sons of Abraham. But on a more fundamental level they were entirely different. In the same way, Paul argues, it is not enough to claim Abraham as one's father. Both Christians and Jews did that. The question is: Who is our mother and in what way are we born? If Hagar is our mother, then we are born of purely human means and are still slaves. If our mother is Sarah, then the birth was by promise, and we are free men.” James Boice

c. Struggle > Abe called to Follow by Faith > Naked, Blind, Painful Faith

Promise Delivered & Problems Discovered > Real Life STRUGGLE of Faith

Great JOY over ISAAC AND Great JEALOUSY over ISHMAEL



For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 1 Corinthians 13.12

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.
1 John 3.2

NOW – We KNOW we are God's Kids, but we live in World of CHAOS

NOT YET do we See Face to Face > Full Revelation of His Glory & Wisdom

At THIS POINT in STORY don't know WHY God sends Hagar & Ish AWAY...

Michelangelo / Criticized by Church Leaders as Worked in St. Peter's Rome -

“Even if I were able to make my plans clear to you, which I am not, I am not obliged to do so. I must ask you to do your best to help me, and when the work is complete, my plan will be understood”
Michelangelo

If cannot understand plan of Great Artist > how can fathom ways of Great God?

NOTHING BAD about Hagar & Ishmael > Loved, Blessed, & Protected by God

Walk with God > Difficult PARTINGS > Reject the Good > Cling to the BEST

CALLED to Leave > Home, Friends, Family, Jobs, Churches, Professions

ALL GOOD AND IMPORTANT > God has Something Better for You

PERHAPS YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH SUCH A CALL RIGHT NOW!?

I can only urge you to CHOOSE HIS BEST

RADICAL Call of JESUS – He Meets those Satisfied with the Good...

“As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Luke 9.57-62

How can Jesus be so Insensitive?? > All these are GOOD & Necessary Things

We need Houses to Live In > Keep the Rain Off our Heads

We need our Family > Show our Respect > Honor our Traditions

Somehow these things became Obstacles > Jesus says CHOOSE THE BEST

“The new will that had begun in me – and made me want to be free to worship and enjoy you, God, the only certain joy – was not yet strong enough to overpower the old will that had become tough with age. So there were now two wills battling it out inside me, one old, one new; one carnal, one spiritual; and in this conflict they ripped my soul to pieces”
Augustine of Hippo

Abe NOT TRUST his Feelings: Did Not feel Good, but he did it PROMPTLY

v. 14 “Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar...and then sent her off with the boy”

PATTERN OF PROMPT RIGHTEOUS OBEDIENCE

TOLD TO BE CIRCUMCISED > Him and all Men in Household

“On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household...and circumcised them, as God told him” Genesis 17.23

TOLD TO SACRIFICE ISAAC > before he could Rationalize and Relativize

“Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac” Genesis 22.3

d. Security > what Guarantees do we have in Life? What can we hold on to?

This Promise Fulfillment CAN SEEM to Take Forever > Tired of WAITING!

4000 year old Story of Abraham > God KEEPS HIS PROMISES

PROMISE of ANOTHER Son of Abraham > Greater than Isaac

First Made way back in Garden of Eden

God warned the Lying Serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
Genesis 3.15

This Birth also MIRACULOUS: Not Elderly Couple > Young Woman, Virgin

She was amazed: "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God...For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1.34-37

HIS MOTHER ALSO FILLED WITH JOY: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name...remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."

Luke 2.46-54

GOD IS OUR ONLY SECURITY > We Hold onto His Word by Sheer Faith

All Hagar & Ishmael HAD > Separated from Abraham BUT NOT FROM GOD

Abraham built Altars > many in his travels > All of Life is SACRED

Abraham lived in Tents > as a sojourner > All of Life is TEMPORARY

“Abraham is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”

Romans 4.17-21

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Genesis 21

21:¹ The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. ² And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me.” ⁷ And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.” ⁸ And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” ¹¹ And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, “Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. ¹³ And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.” ¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. ¹⁵ When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, “Let me not look on the death of the child.” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷ And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” ¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. ²⁰ And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

1. Do you know the difference between laughing at God (18:12) and laughing with God (21:6)? How can we do better at getting it right?
2. How would you explain this divine expulsion (vs. 10-12) to a Muslim friend that sees Ishmael as a “father of faith”?
3. Note God’s nearness to this desperate mother and son (vs. 17-20, 16:7-13). Is this abandonment or simply another plan for a different favored son?
4. How have you experienced this mix of joy and sorrow in your life? How has the hand of God been clearly evident in both?