

2024 BIBLE STUDY SERIES
THEME: “GET YOUR HOPES UP!”

JULY 31, 2024

KINGDOM-LED RELATIONSHIPS: SIBLING RIVALRY
COMPROMISED FAITH CREATES GENERATIONAL RIVALRIES
BETWEEN HUSBANDS, FIRST AND SECONDARY WIVES,
AND THE SEEDS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

(SARAI AND ABRAM/SARAI AND HAGAR/ISHMAEL AND ISAAC)

PART II - Genesis 21:1-21; and 25:5-11

Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Introduction
- Outline
- Exploring the Text
- Checking for Understanding
- Life Application

Reflection Question

A. How does fickle [inconsistent, indecisive, indeterminate] faith affect our ability to trust God?

B. Briefly explain how your choices and actions during the pandemic showed your faith and trust in God to be steadfast or shaky.

Important Emphasis

Who has your Ear? This is a question we need to reflect on, or we will operate on reflex as opposed to the revelation of the Word of God. We are put in a position to decide whose voice we will heed. In this text, there is a focus on the Voice of Humanity vs. the Voice of Heaven or God.

When we ignore the Voice of God or when another voice is more influential in our lives than God's we will find ourselves in a rivalry against God instead of in reconciliation with God.

Let us consider:

(The) Message in the Situation- Angel said I will greatly multiply your descendants

(The) Moving in the Situation- Beyond this Messy situation God is Moved by the cries of this Egyptian Maiden.

(The) Manifestation in the Situation- Ishmael's hand will be against everyone.

What are the current conditions that are illumined in this pericope or scriptures? We have Battles, Hurts, Conflicts, and Disappointments yet this sets a stage for an encounter with God.

Names are important

Ishmael – God Sees

Isaac- Laughter

Both of these young men have a name that communicate the marvelous works of God in bleak circumstances.

Key terms

Abram/Abraham
 Afflicting/Affliction
 Angel of the Lord
 Authority
 Barren
 Beer Lahai Roi
 Beersheba
 Bered
 Bitter Fruits
 Blessing(s)
 Bondwoman
 Canaan
 Circumcision
 Conceived
 Concubine
 Conflict
 Descendant
 Despair
 Despised

Discouragement
 Dissatisfaction
 Faith
 Faithful
 Faithfulness
 Faithlessness
 God
 Hagar
 Heir
 Humbling
 Inheritance
 Isaac
 Ishmael
 Kadesh
 Laughed/Laughing
 Mistress
 Mocking
 Nation(s)
 Obedient

Offspring
 Parna
 Patience
 Power
 Promise(s)
 Pride
 Rivalries
 Sarai/Sarah
 Secondary Wife
 Seed
 Slave Woman
 Surrogate Mother
 Take Note
 Trusting God
 Visited
 Waiting on the Lord
 Weaned
 Wilderness

Introduction

Satan constantly seeks to undermine our trust in God's promises by tempting us to doubt; discouraging us in times of conflict, pain, and struggle; fostering dissatisfaction in our hearts; promoting fruitless rivalries; and making even God's abundant provision seem insufficient. Satan's goal is to divert our focus from God's faithfulness and lead us away from Christ.

We must recognize God's faithfulness over Satan's attempts to create chaos and confusion. Patience and unwavering faith will carry God's people through the inevitable challenges brought about by fruitless rivalries. The example from Genesis 21:1-21 shows the intricate nature of God's sovereign grace towards humanity. ***Be encouraged. God is always faithful to fulfill his promises--often despite our fickle or shaky faith and our attempts to take matters into our own hands.***

OUTLINE II – Despite Fickle Faithfulness, The Child of Promise Arrives**A. The Birth of Isaac (Gen 21:1–7)**

1. Sarah Conceives and Bears Isaac (Gen 21:1-2)
2. Abraham Names His Son Isaac (Gen 21:3)
3. Isaac Is Circumcised at Eight Days Old (Gen 21:4)
4. Sarah's Joy and Relief (Gen 21:5–7)

B. Inheritance Conflicts and Rivalries (Gen 21:8–21)

1. Sarah Objects to Ishmael and Hagar's Presence (Gen 21:8–11)
2. God Reassures Abraham About Sending Hagar and Ishmael Away (Gen 21:12–13)
3. Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away (Gen 21:14)
4. God Provides for Hagar and Ishmael in the Wilderness (Gen 21:15–21)¹

C. Isaac--The Bridge to the Promise Fulfilled (Gen 25:5-11)

1. Abraham gives gifts to all his sons (Gen 25:5-6)
2. Isaac and Ishmael bury their father Abraham Gen 25:7-10)
3. Isaac is blessed by God after Abraham's death (Gen 25:11)

EXPLORING THE TEXT (Genesis 21:1-7)**A. The Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-7)****1. Sarah Conceives and Bears Isaac (Gen 21:1-2)**

¹Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised. ² So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. (NASB 1995)

The Lord “took note” of Sarah (v.1) The phrase “*take note*” means to “pay special attention to.” The King James Version reads “And the Lord *visited* Sarah...” **In its Etymology of the word means to “entrust”. God is entrusting her with this promise.** This also shows that the Lord treated Sarah in a special way. God cared for her and was _____ or kind toward her. This was in much the same way that the Lord was toward Hannah who was also _____ before giving birth to Samuel (**1 Samuel 2:21**).

The Lord did for Sarah as He had promised (v. 1) This passage indicates that the long-awaited promise made to Abraham was about to be _____. The patriarch, Abraham, was in his hundredth and Sarah was in her ninetieth year when Isaac was born to them. God delayed the promised event to strengthen Abraham's faith and to highlight the supernatural nature of the gift of the heir to the promises.

¹ Mangum, Douglas, Miles Custis, and Wendy Widder. 2013. [Genesis 12–50](#). Lexham Research Commentaries. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham...at the appointed time...

(v. 2). Not only was Sarah's pregnancy impossible by human resources alone, but the birth was at the "very time" promised² The fact of and the timing of this miraculous birth was spoken directly to Abraham by God in **Genesis 17:18-21; and 18:9-10, 14.**

Isaac's birth fulfills God's promises to Abraham, demonstrating the trustworthiness of God's word even in challenging circumstances. The birth of Isaac to an elderly couple highlights the fulfillment of long-term promises, emphasizing that "nothing is too difficult for the Lord." (18:14)

2. Abraham Names His Son Isaac (Gen 21:3-4)

³ *Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.*

Abraham was **obedient to** God's commandment (17:19). The baby born through his wife Sarah was named Isaac.

3. Isaac Is Circumcised at Eight Days Old (Gen 21:4)

⁴ *Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.*

Abraham circumcised his son Isaac—He dedicated the child to God by administering the seal of the covenant which was circumcision. The child was circumcised on the eighth day precisely as the Lord had directed (**Gen 17:10-12**).³

4. Sarah's Joy and Relief (Gen 21:5-7)

⁵ *Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with 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."*

² Mathews, K. A. 2005. [Genesis 11:27-50:26](#). Vol. 1B. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³Ibid.

God has made laughter for me. The joy of the aged couple on the birth of their long-promised son could not be contained. Both Abraham and Sarah had *laughed in unbelief* in the days of promise (**Genesis 17:17-18; 18:9-15**) now they *laughed in joy* as God had “the last laugh.” The baby, born at the time God promised, was named Isaac (meaning “he laughs!”). Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me” (21:6).

Sarah refers here to the circumstance mentioned in **Genesis 18:12**; and she seems to use the phrase “to laugh” in this place, not in the sense of being incredulous [disbelieving, unconvinced, or doubting] but to express such pleasure or happiness as almost to suspend the reasoning faculty for a moment, it justifies the observation in Genesis 18:12. See a similar case in Luke 24:41, where the disciples were so overcome with the good news of our Lord's resurrection, that it is said, “They believed not for joy.”

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT (Genesis 21:1-7)

1. How did God show his faithfulness in Genesis 21:1-7?
2. What did Abraham and Sarah name their baby? (21:3)
3. What did Abraham do when he and Sarah's baby was eight days old? Why? (21:4)
4. What did Sarah say God had done for her and all who would hear about it? (21:6-7)

EXPLORING THE TEXT (Genesis 21:8-13)

B. Inheritance Conflicts and Rivalries (Gen 21:8–21)

1. Sarah Objects to Ishmael and Hagar's Presence (Gen 21:8–11)

⁸ *The child [Isaac] grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.* ⁹ *Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.* ¹⁰ *Therefore she said to Abraham,*

“Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.” ¹¹ *The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son.*

Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

In Eastern countries, this is always a season of domestic festivity, and the newly weaned child is formally brought, in the presence of the assembled relatives and friends, to partake of some simple dishes. Isaac, attired in the symbolic robe, the badge of _____, was then admitted heir of the tribe [Rosenmuller].

Sarah sees the son of Hagar *mocking* her son Isaac. Ishmael _____ Isaac, causing a tense atmosphere during the weaning celebration. This incident is noted in Scripture as symbolic of the ongoing rivalry between the flesh and the Spirit, according to Paul's interpretation in **Galatians 4:29**. **This mockery has an undergirding theme that Ishmael was the elder brother which gave him the right to the inheritance.**

She [Sarah] said **“Drive out this maid and her son.** The eviction of a maid and her son to maintain _____ in a household, citing divine will as the reason for the actions taken.

2. God Reassures Abraham About Sending Hagar and Ishmael Away (Gen 21:12–13)

¹² *But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants [seeds] shall be named.* ¹³ *And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also because he is your descendant [seed].”*

Do not be distressed. The Lord knows all things and is concerned about the deepest cares of his people (**1 Peter 5:7**).

Through Isaac, your descendants [seeds] shall be named. God instructed Abraham to grant Sarah's request because it is *“...in Isaac, your seed will be called”* (**21:12**). It was not that God did not love Ishmael and his mother or that he liked Sarah's attitude. God was acting to bring order out of the disorder caused by the sin of impatience and to protect His plan for our salvation. God knew that no good training in faith would be possible in a family that was full of this type of rivalry and conflict.

I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation. God did not ignore Ishmael's needs. He had plans for him too. The Lord said that Ishmael would also be blessed. (21:13).

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT (Genesis 21:8-13)

5. What caused Sarah to become so angry with Hagar and her son Ishmael? (21:8-10)
6. What did Sarah tell Abraham to do about Hagar and her son Ishmael? (21:10)
7. How did Sarah's demand concerning Hagar and her son Ishmael make Abraham feel, and why? (21:11)
8. What did God counsel Abraham to do about Sarah's demands concerning Hagar and her son Ishmael? (21:12)
9. What did God tell Abraham about his son Isaac? (21:12)
10. What did God tell Abraham about his son Ishmael? (21:13)

EXPLORING THE TEXT (Genesis 21:14-21)

3. Abraham Sends Hagar and Ishmael Away (Gen 21:14)

¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Abraham...took bread and a skin of water for Hagar and Ishmael's journey (21:14). God's promise enabled Abraham to do what had to be done.

Theologian, Adam Clarke, explains that the custom at the time was to start with enough provisions to carry you to the next well or village. The _____ Abraham gave to Hagar and Ishmael should have been _____ for the first leg of their journey. However, Hagar, not knowing where to go, wandered in the desert of Beersheba and missed a well, leading to a water shortage.

4. God Provides for Hagar and Ishmael in the Wilderness (Gen 21:15–21)⁴

¹⁵ When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, “Do not let me see the boy die.” And she sat opposite him and lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷ God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. ¹⁸ Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” 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 lad a drink. ²⁰ God was with the lad, and he grew, and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

What’s Up in the Wilderness?

- Water used up (v. 15)
- Hagar is ready to give up (v. 16)
- Hagar begins to look up (v. 16)
- Hagar lifts her voice up (v. 16)
- An angel told her to rise up (v. 18)
- An angel commands that she lift her son up (v. 18)
- God opened her eyes up (v. 19)
- God was with Ishmael as he grew up (v. 20)
- With the help of his mother Hagar, Ishmael married up (v. 21)

⁴ Mangum, Douglas, Miles Custis, and Wendy Widder. 2013. *Genesis 12–50*. Lexham Research Commentaries. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT (Genesis 21:14-21)

11. What happened to Hagar and her son Ishmael? (21:14)
12. Who helped Hagar survive in the Wilderness? (21:15-19)
13. What became of Ishmael? (21:20-21)

BRIDGE FROM ABRAHAM TO FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE**C. Isaac--The Bridge to the Promise Fulfilled (Gen 25:5-11)**

1. Abraham gives gifts to all his sons (Gen 25:5-6)
2. Isaac and Ishmael bury their father Abraham Gen 25:7-10)
3. Isaac is blessed by God after Abraham's death (Gen 25:11)

⁵ Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; ⁶ but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east. ⁷ These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸ Abraham breathed his last and died at a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people. ⁹ Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, ¹⁰ the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife. ¹¹ It came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi.

1. Abraham gives gifts to all his sons (Genesis 25:5-6)

The final section of the Abraham account closes with its central theme of an heir. “_____” (*bārak*) in 25:11 as the keyword of the Abraham narrative back references the thematic thread of the patriarchal promise (e.g., **12:1–3**; **22:17–18**). The descendants of his second wife, Keturah, who have the least claim on Abraham's inheritance, are named and treated succinctly (vv. 2–4, 6).

- Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac (while he was still living).
- Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines.

- The chief part of the inheritance went to Isaac (which included land).
- The other sons (Ishmael included) migrated to "the East country," that is, Arabia, but received each a portion of the patrimony [birthright, endowment], perhaps in cattle and other things; and this settlement of Abraham's must have given satisfaction since it is still the rule followed among the pastoral [rustic, arcadian] tribes.

2. Isaac and Ishmael Bury Their Father Abraham (25:7-10)

Isaac and Ishmael, who are crucial to the theme of heir in the foregoing chapters, are mentioned next at the funeral of their father (v. 9).

Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him—Though Ishmael and his mother had been expelled from Abraham's family on the account of Isaac, yet, as he was under the same obligation to a most loving affectionate father as his brother Isaac, if any _____ remained, they agreed to bury them on this occasion, that both might dutifully join in doing the last offices to a parent who was an honor to them and to human nature: and, considering the rejection of Ishmael from the inheritance, this transaction shows his character in an amiable point of view; for though he was a wild man, (see [Genesis 16:12](#)), yet this "wild man" tag appears to be more characteristic of his habits of life than of his disposition.

3. Isaac is blessed by God after Abraham's death (Gen 25:11)

Isaac alone is twice designated the sole recipient of his father's possessions (vv. 5, 11).⁵

Life Application:

- What key principles from the Kingdom-Led Relationship Bible Study Series will you apply to your life today?
- What one person can you share this Bible Study material with?

⁵ Mathews, K. A. 2005. [Genesis 11:27–50:26](#). Vol. 1B. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

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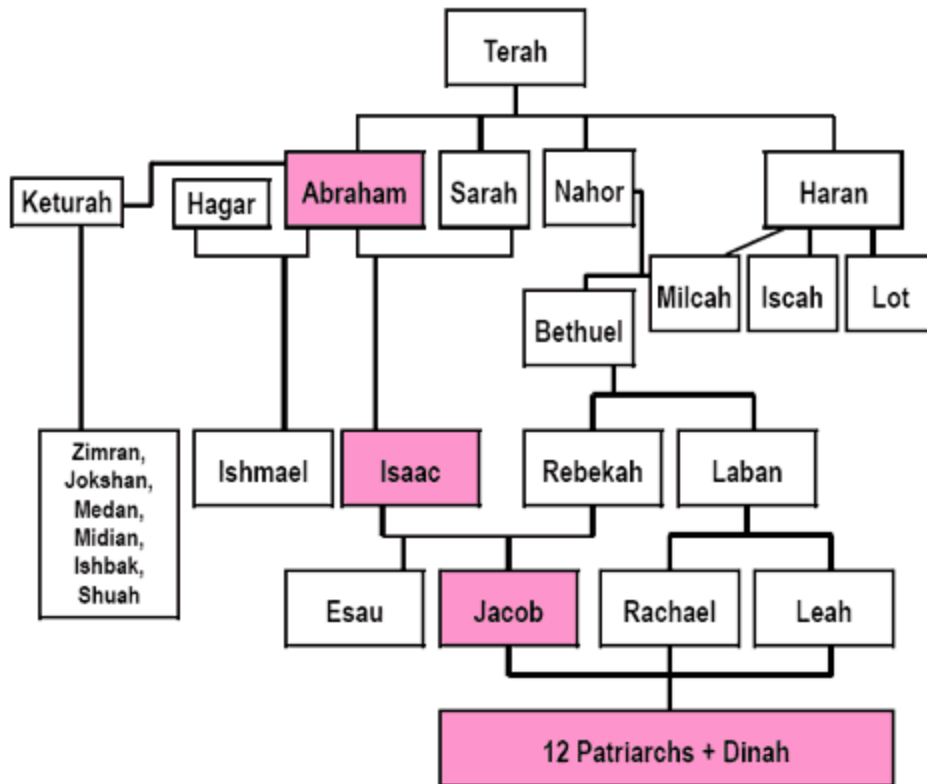
In due time Ishmael became the father of the Arab nations. But have things changed to the point that God is no longer with the descendants of Ishmael? Certainly not. God is as much the God of the Arabs as he is the God of the Jews. The problem is not with God's attitude but with the failure of his people to appreciate both the blessings and the limitations God has set. The Lord's blessing for Ishmael was to become a great nation, while for Isaac it was to inherit the Abrahamic covenant.

Today, there is much tension between Arabs and Jews concerning the land of Israel. It cannot be denied that Israel was Isaac's inheritance, but it is also true that it is wrong to expect Ishmael to live in the desert forever. These two brother nations must learn to negotiate so that all can share in the abundance that God supplies.

At a spiritual level, Paul uses the tensions and rivalries between Hagar and Sarah, and between Ishmael and Isaac, to illustrate the tension between the law of the letter and the law of the Spirit ([Gal 4:22-31](#)). Believers are 'sons in freedom'. They obey God, not because they must, but because they love to.

Africa Bible Commentary, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor. Copyright © 2006, 2010, and 2022 by ABC Editorial Board.

Abraham's Family Tree



Hagar Flees from Sarai into the Wilderness

