

*God's answer will come, but your quick solutions may just cause problems.*

***And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.*** - *Gen. 21:2*

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### **Sources -**

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included which are from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and word definition's are taken from the excellent source, the e-Sword Bible computer program found at <http://www.e-sword.net/index.html> unless otherwise indicated.

### **Introduction -**

In Genesis chapter 21, we will finally see the birth of Abraham and Sarah's promised son Isaac. The promise had been given years before, and they were both advanced in years at that time. Quite a few years passed between that original promise, and the birth of Isaac. Subsequent prophesies added a little more detail, but their son was still not born. They finally became so desperate that Sarah asked Abraham to father a son through her servant girl Hagar. The boy's name was Ishmael. But now we will see that the waiting is finally over. The son of promise, Isaac, has been born at last. But shortly a rift will develop between the sons, and their mothers. Sarah will demand that Hagar, and Ishmael be cast out immediately, and God will agree with her. This will cause resentments, that trouble the Jewish people, and their allies in the northwestern countries to this day.

### **Lesson Text - Genesis 21 -**

1 And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did to Sarah as he had spoken.

2 And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.

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

**Strong's Definition from the Pocket e-Sword Bible program -**

H3327 Isaac - יִצְחָק yitscha^q yits-khawk' From H6711; **laughter (that is, mockery)**; Jitschak (or Isaac), son of Abraham: - Isaac. Compare H3446. (emphasis mine)

**Comments -**

**God had told Abraham that he was to call his son Isaac, because the name means laughter, and Abraham had laughed outright at God's promise that Sarah would still conceive in old age, and bear him a son.**

**But God not only promised Abraham that Sarah would bear him a son, but also that his descendent's through her would be vast in number, and powerful. Her descendent's through that son, Isaac, would become nations, and kings over nations of people. We forget that. Remember that Israel, when united together, was only the one kingdom, composed of the twelve tribes. Abraham's descendants through Isaac were destined to move outward from the land of Israel, and become other nations, and kingdoms of people.**

*Gen 17:4 It is I: behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of a multitude of nations.*

*Gen 17:5 And thy name shall no more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of a multitude of nations have I made thee.*

*Gen 17:6 And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.*

*Gen 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.*

**Abraham could believe this. However, he saw it as being fulfilled in his existing son Ishmael. But when God continued, and told him that these descendants, and kings He spoke of would all come through Sarah, his barren wife, Abraham fell flat on his face, and laughed out loud. He couldn't believe it. They were both old, and well past the bearing, and rearing age.**

*Gen. 17:15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.*

*16 And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her.*

*17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*

*18 And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!*  
*19 And God said, Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.*

**Then Abraham pleaded with God to give the promises to Ishmael his son, who was already there. As we say, "a bird in the hand, is worth two in the bush", and Ishmael was already born. God flatly refused to do this, and told Abraham that his wife Sarah would bear him a son who would inherit these promises, thereby showing that these great promises of a powerful and plentiful people, that God here spoke of, would not at all see fulfillment in the sons of Ishmael, nor even in the later sons of the third wife Keturah. They would come only through Sarah's yet to be born son.**

**Remember that God had just told Abraham in verse 4 of this chapter, that the covenant that He spoke to him about, involved giving Abraham a huge body of descendants, and royal lines to rule.**

*Gen 17:4 It is I: behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of a multitude of nations.*

**And now God is telling Abraham that these descendants would come only through Sarah; not Hagar, and Ishmael.**

*19 And God said, Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.*

**So again, the large body of descendants, and the kings, and royalty that God spoke of in verse 4, and here again, only a few verses later in 19, are not fulfilled in the descendants of Ishmael, nor in the descendants of the wife Abraham will have after Sarah dies. They will be fulfilled only in the descendants through Isaac, the son of Abraham, and Sarah.**

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

5 And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6 And Sarah said, God has made me laugh: all that hear will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who would have said to Abraham, Sarah will suckle children? For I have borne [him] a son in his old age.

**Comments -**

***...she said, Who would have said to Abraham, Sarah will suckle children... - Sarah had laughed at God's promise, and then denied it. And Abraham had laughed outright, and fell on his face, unable to believe it. But God had said He would do this thing, and He did, having the last laugh. Now Abraham, and Sarah were able to laugh with joy themselves, over the fulfillment of their lifelong dream of finally having a son of their own.***

8 And the child grew, and was weaned. **And Abraham made a great feast on**

**the day that Isaac was weaned.**

**9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.**

**Strong's Definition from the e-Sword Bible program -**

Verse 9 “mocking” - H6711 קחצ tsâchaq *tsaw-khak'* A primitive root; to **laugh outright** (in merriment or scorn); by implication to *sport*: - laugh, mock, play, make sport.

**10 And she said to Abraham, Cast out this handmaid and her son; for the son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son -- with Isaac.**

**Comments -**

*And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking – According to Strong's definition for the Hebrew word H6711 Ishmael must have laughed outright at Isaac. Isaac's name is Strong's number 3327, which means laughter, and it is derived from this very word H6711 which means to laugh outright.*

Remember that Sarah was childless, and had told Abraham to go in to Hagar; and Ishmael was born. And now Ishmael, the first born, is laughing at Isaac, the son of promise, whose very name comes from the word to laugh. This couldn't be allowed to go any further. Sarah knew that Hagar, and Ishmael had to go.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham`s sight because of his son.

12 And God said to Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy handmaid: **[in] all that Sarah hath said to thee hearken to her voice, for in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee.**

**13 But also the son of the handmaid will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.**

**Strong's Definition from the e-Sword Bible program -**

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Verse 8 “Isaac” H3327 Isaac - יצחק yitscha^q yits-khawk' From H6711; laughter (that is, mockery); Jitschak (or Isaac), son of Abraham: - Isaac. Compare H3446. (emphasis mine)

**Comments -**

*And God said to Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy handmaid: [in] all that Sarah hath said to thee hearken to her voice... for in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee - Sarah's statement that he would not inherit with her son, indicates that Hagar, and Ishmael had had that hope of inheriting the estate, and the promises from Abraham's God to bless him, and give him descendent's, and kingdoms. And now this little Isaac was the center of attention; treated like a prince. And Ishmael made it clear what he thought of this new son. And in a moment they were cast out, without a clear future. Now Ishmael's*

descendent's, and his culture, still feel that rage today. And interestingly, Israel, and the nations, and kingdoms, of the northwest, that God has blessed so much, and used to take the Bible to the world, feel that conflict today.

*...for in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee – Again the distinction is made clearly, that the covenant, the descendants, and the kings that God refers to here are not from Ishmael, but from Abraham, and Sarah's son Isaac only.*

*But also the son of the handmaid will I make a nation... - But Ishmael has been blessed because he is Abraham's son too. He has been blessed greatly. But never to the level of power that Isaac is blessed. And that is the difference. Ishmael's kingdom is not the everlasting one that will be used to teach the world God's ways. That will never happen. The kingdoms of Isaac, and Ishmael are not equal, and never will be. Isaac's descendants will be a higher power, and a lasting kingdom for God's use.*

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a flask of water, and gave [it] to Hagar, putting [it] on her shoulder -- and the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

15 And the water was exhausted from the flask; and she cast the child under one of the shrubs,

16 and she went and sat down over against [him], a bow-shot off; for she said, Let me not behold the death of the child. And she sat over against [him], and lifted up her voice and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad. **And the Angel of God called to Hagar from the heavens, and said to her, What [aileth] thee, Hagar?** Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad there, where he is.

18 **Arise, take the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make of him a great nation.**

#### **Comments -**

*....What [aileth] thee, Hagar?* - There's a practical thought here for us all. God won't always get there as quick as we want. But if we are His, he will get there in His time, to help, and to meet that need.

*....for I will make of him a great nation.* - I heard a fellow try to emphasize one time, that Ishmael was to be blessed too. And he will be great. That's true. In fact, he has been blessed. He is powerful this very day, and also wild in his nature. Uncontrollable, by others, and maybe by his own self. God promised Hagar these things back in chapter 16, when she had fled from the mistreatment of her mistress Sarai.

*Gen 16:9 And the Angel of Jehovah said to her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.*

*Gen 16:10 And the Angel of Jehovah said to her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.*

*Gen 16:11 And the Angel of Jehovah said to her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because Jehovah hath hearkened to thy*

affliction.

**Gen 16:12** *And he will be a wild-ass of a man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell before the face of all his brethren.*

*Gen 16:13* *And she called the name of Jehovah who spoke to her, Thou art the \*God who reveals himself, for she said, Also here have I seen after he has revealed himself.*

*Gen 16:14* *Therefore the well was named Beer-lahai-roi: behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.*

**But with that uncontrollable nature, Ishmael could never ultimately become a lasting stable society, that would rule over God's people, and plans. Today, the countries descended from Ishmael, or controlled by his descendent's, their culture, and religion, aren't politically stable. But the large nations in the northwest, that have supported Israel, are stable, wealthy, and very powerful. Interestingly, Jeremiah saw the people of Israel returning, in the last days, from the far north, with their brethren of Judah, and not from the area of Ishmael's progeny in the Middle East.**

*JJer 3:14* *Return, backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you, and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.*

*Jer 3:15* *And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

*Jer 3:16* *And it shall come to pass, when ye are multiplied in the land and become fruitful, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, Ark of the covenant of Jehovah! neither shall it come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it ; neither shall it be done any more.*

*Jer 3:17* *At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem; and they shall no more walk after the stubbornness of their evil heart.*

*Jer 3:18* *In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel; and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land which I caused your fathers to inherit.*

*Jer 3:19* *And as for me, I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee the pleasant land, the goodly inheritance of the hosts of the nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from following me.*

**And interestingly, the progeny of Ishmael today, have an intense jealousy for the northwestern countries, and for the Jewish people, now back in the land of Israel. Yes, Ishmael will be blessed, and have power. He has it right now. He controls much of the oil that fuels the west's engines today. But his power, technology, and money, and military backing are from the same northwestern countries he hates.**

19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the flask with water, and gave the lad drink.

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

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

**Comments -**

*....his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt – So Ishmael's descendants are connected with the children of Ham, which controlled Egypt. But there is some lineage from the descendants of Shem, through Abraham.*

22 And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech, and Phichol the captain of his host, spoke to Abraham, saying, **God is with thee in all that thou doest.**

23 **And now swear to me here by God that thou wilt not deal deceitfully with me, nor with my son, nor with my grandson. According to the kindness that I have done to thee, thou shalt do to me, and to the land in which thou sojournest.**

24 And Abraham said, I will swear.

**Comments -**

*....God is with thee in all that thou doest – Abraham's neighbors could see that in all the problems he might occasionally have, he still came out of top. His God watched out for him, and blessed him greatly in ways the other nations could not count on. He now had a descendant through his wife, even in his old age. And so they feared that if they provoked Abraham, he might retaliate, and his God might give him the victory over them. So they asked for a peace accord; a mutual defense agreement, just as we do today. The more things change, the more they stay the same. And Abraham agreed to it. My brother had an interesting question on this in a study one Sunday morning. He asked if this could be why the people of Israel never really did gain full control over the Philistines of this area, later when they returned to capture the land of Canaan?*

25 **And Abraham reproveth Abimelech because of a well of water that Abimelech`s servants had violently taken away.**

26 **And Abimelech said, I do not know who has done this,** neither hast thou told me [of it], neither have I heard [of it] but to-day.

**Comments -**

*And Abimelech said, I do not know who has done this... – Who knows if Abimelech really was aware of it or not. But Abraham accepted his statement.*

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

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

29 And Abimelech said to Abraham, What [mean] these seven ewe-lambs, these which thou hast set by themselves?

30 And he said, That thou take the seven ewe-lambs of my hand, that they may be a witness to me that I have dug this well.

31 Therefore he called that place Beer-sheba, because there they had sworn, both of them.

32 And they made a covenant at Beer-sheba. And Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the captain of his host, and returned into the land of the Philistines.

**33 And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the Eternal God.**

**Comments -**

*And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the Eternal God.* – I think it is interesting that Abraham's places of worship, and dealings with God are often around trees, or groves. The Israelites later on followed the religious practices of their neighbors, and worshiped in groves. That practice was widespread, even into Europe. But Abraham surely dwelt where it was pleasant to be in the land, and that was where God would meet with him. He wasn't encouraging pagan practices.

**34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines` land many days.**

**Comments -**

*And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines` land many days* – Now God gave him peace, and he dwelt there among the Philistines, as an honored warlord, or prince of sorts.

**Conclusion -**

In Genesis chapter 21, we have seen the birth of Abraham and Sarah's promised son Isaac. They had been promised his birth years before They were both advanced in years at that time. And so they waited, but no son was born. They became so desperate that Sarah advised Abraham to father a son through her servant Hagar. The son's name was Ishmael. But now the waiting was over. The son of promise was finally born. But we have seen that not long afterward, at Isaac's weaning, Abraham's first son, Ishmael, laughed at Isaac. Sarah was furious, and demanded that Hagar, and her son be cast out. She was determined that Ishmael would not inherit along side of her son of promise, Isaac. As we saw, Abraham was very hurt by this demand, but God sided with Sarah. And that strife between the sons of Abraham trouble the world to this day.