

What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM:

“God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

Study Number Seven – Genesis 21:1-21

In our study of Abraham, we have watched in these previous six episodes a continual separation from the Lord and a supreme separation and the test that’s coming.

It helps us understand that God intensifies the tests and the circumstances with our progress. And the intensity of those tests will grow stronger and stronger so that we might reflect more and more brightly the person of Jesus Christ.

In our last study we saw TWO THINGS in our hero:

1. He demonstrated the quality of his life by his immediate HOSPITALITY for the three visitors that came to see him.

God’s key design for believers in their witnessing opportunities is to be given to hospitality. That means we get together and we either go eat somewhere or we have others in our home. It’s a big enough issue that the requirements for leadership in the New Testament, both Titus and in Timothy say that a leader should be given to hospitality. In other words, he’s constantly reaching out to be a witness and to build a relationship.

The second thing that we noted about our hero is his:

2. INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

Here he is praying for the existence of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their future. Even with all that's gone on with Lot, the fact that Lot took those well-watered plains of Jordan and ended up in Sodom and Gomorrah, he hasn't felt any bitterness or resentment. He prayed with great, great intensity.

Remember, there were six requests. He starts with fifty. He says, "If there are fifty you wouldn't destroy it, would you?" And the Lord says, "No, far be it from me that I will destroy the righteous with the wicked." That gave all of us who are walking with God a sense of comfort. No matter how bad things get in the future, God always has His eye on His children.

But notice he moves from fifty to forty-five in the second request, and it's almost like an auction. He drops to forty, then to thirty, then to twenty, and then he ends up at ten.

And a lot of people have said, "Well why did he end at ten?" Living all these years in Sodom we would think there would be at least one or two couples that had responded to them.

There was Lot and Mrs. Lot and the two girls—that's four. And so if we take the two sons-in-law, future sons-in-law,

that's going to be six. So really all there needed to be was four more people for the Lord to refuse to destroy the city.

But the next morning Genesis 19 records the smoke is coming on the horizon. The statistics are very startling, because only three get out of the city. Mrs. Lot could not bring herself to separate and to be obedient. She turned to look back and became an instant fatality.

So we have Lot and his two daughters and they're living in a cave in the mountains. Isn't that the place where we end up when we're living in the flesh and trying to run things on our own? What a devastating, devastating commentary on their lives.

The two girls realized they didn't have any husbands or any men or any future for their lives so they got their father drunk and each took turns with him. And out of that came Moab and Ben-Ammi.

Moab became the father of the Moabites from the older daughter. And Ben-Ammi became the father of the Ammonites from the younger one.

The biography of Lot passes off the pages of scripture. May we learn well the lessons of what happens with the fruitage of the flesh as opposed to the fruitage of the spirit.

This is just an awesome, awesome illustration of the difference between the two. It also leaves us with a sense of

comfort.

In Genesis 20 Abraham hits his low spot again. He leaves and he goes down to Gerar and he lies again about his wife to Abimelech and we have the same situation we had down in Egypt.

When we get to Genesis 21, which is the ongoing part of the story, we left our hero with the promise from the Lord that at the appointed time this next year Sarah's going to have a baby. They hadn't been communicating and so she dropped a crock in the kitchen and the Lord accused her of laughing and she lied about it and that's the last encounter that the Lord has—the first and the last—with Sarah.

And so now the actual fulfillment of all of that takes place in this beautiful passage that's before us. There are some incredible, great lessons that are going to come out of it so get ready for a ride, and be open to the Spirit of God to speak to our hearts, okay?

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

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

That first verse tells us TWO THINGS that the Lord did:

1. “the Lord was gracious to Sarah”

Why does the study open that way? Was Sarah in need of grace after she lied in the tent? Would the lie that she told in the tent, abrogate the promise of God and the promise of the child to come?

All those questions go through our mind when we fail the Lord. And so there is distraught in her heart that maybe just maybe, because of her unfaithfulness, she will not get to be the one who'll be the mother of the promised child because of her lie.

Isn't it great? God just picks up where He left off with us. He's not hung up with all of this past stuff. Once He deals with it, it's gone, it's history.

Why do we continue to dredge it up and allow it to become part and parcel of our thinking on a daily basis that brings such anxiety and stress and uncertainty?

The verse opens with beautiful words:

“the Lord was gracious to Sarah.”

And then it's matched by the second greatest thing that could be said:

2. “the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised.”

They've been living in the flesh, they've been trying to help

God out, they doubted God, they quarreled with the Lord, they quarreled with each other, they've taken matters in their own hands, and the Holy Spirit comes along and with one statement says, "He did for Sarah what he had promised."

Now, can we take that to the bank ourselves? What disturbs us today? Perhaps it's age, perhaps it's little time left, perhaps it's some other distraction in our life right now that really burdens us and brings anxiety.

God says, "Hey look, I've been there, done that, I've got it handled. Just trust Me. It's going to be okay."

He said that over and over again in these covenant promises in Genesis—but they never heard it. And finally Sarah and Abraham, with their new names, now understand that God means business.

The other thing we have to understand is that when we claim a promise from the Lord, we can't just expect that it's going to be on our schedule. It's going to be on His.

The fulfillment of it will be time. There will be a gap. It happens to be twenty-five years in this one. And so we need to understand that when God does it, He does it at His appointed time, not ours. And that's a big lesson they learned back in Genesis 16.

God is a God of His word. What He says He will faithfully fulfill. He reminds us of that back in chapter 18. He said, "Is

anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.” And sure enough, now it’s next year.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not do it? Does he promise and then not fulfill?

So as we open the study, we’ve got two things that the Lord is doing for Sarah:

1. He’s gracious to her and
2. “the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised.”

Basically, she is pregnant and carrying a child. And when we get to verse 2, we understand that.

v. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

“Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age,”

And look at that last phrase and be greatly comforted:

“at the very time God had promised him.”

That wasn't Abraham's time, it was God's timing. And that's where we get into so much trouble because we equate our thinking with God's timing. And God doesn't do it that way.

And if there's one thing we learn out of this biography, we never make a mistake by waiting to be sure this is from the Lord and that it is His perfect plan.

Please learn that, would you? That God has His time and His place. Don't get bitter and resentful, don't get down and depressed because He isn't working on our schedule. Don't doubt Him. Keep on trusting Him. If we learn one thing, realize that God's faithful and He will always fulfill it.

But "God had promised at the very time."

Two things happen in verse 1:

1. the Lord is gracious,
2. the Lord did for her what he promised.

In verse 2 there's two more:

1. "Sarah became pregnant,"
2. "[she] bore a son to Abraham in his old age."

Summary statement:

“at the very time God had promised him.”

There are a lot of verses that help us understand that God does do things exactly on time. We see this first of all in Ecclesiastes 3:11:

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He makes all things beautiful in His time...

Galatians 4:4, 5

When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son...

We can't argue with that.

Remember Habakkuk had an argument with God. God wasn't doing anything. Then he found out that God was going to use Babylon and two dirties don't make a clean and he got really upset about that. And then finally after he vented on the whole thing, this is what he said:

Habakkuk 2:3

The revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

So again, we've got the confidence that God is working on His

time schedule not ours.

Psalm 102:13

You will arise and have compassion on Zion,
for it is time to show favor to her;
the appointed time has come.

The Psalmist recognized that. And then remember the big argument that took place on the Mount of Ascension? After the resurrection, it had been forty days and now Christ is getting ready to go back to glory in Acts 1. What's the very first question the guys ask of the Lord?

“Well, now that this is over, is it time for the kingdom?”

In other words, “Are we going to move right away from the resurrection into the coming eternal kingdom that has been promised to David?”

Remember the Lord's answer?

Acts 1:7

He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has placed by His own authority.

That's in the Father's hands. That's not for us to know, because He wants us to trust Him fully and completely.

And then in practically the last verse in the New Testament:

Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Faith is just looking at it through God’s eyes, that He is a lover, He is filled with grace, He has all the strength to pull it off, and all we have to do is go along for the ride and trust and know that it’s all going to work out.

What an incredible passage of scripture. There’s another great lesson from this because this very passage is quoted in a New Testament book.

What’s the big lesson we learn out of the first two verses?

GOD IS FAITHFUL.

We read in Lamentations 3: “His mercies are new every morning;” so we shout “great is Thy faithfulness.” (ref. Lamentations 3:22, 23)

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Faithful is He who calls you, and He will also bring it to pass.

That’s a great promise and a great verse for us.

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Sometimes it helps to understand biblical typology.

In the Old Testament there are stories that are examples of truth in the New Testament.

In other words, Joseph is a type of Christ in that he was sold for twenty pieces of silver, not thirty like Christ was. But the parallel is there. And there are over three hundred different parallels between Christ and Joseph.

What we're going to do is look at seven parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus Christ. Because it's so amazing to see the parallels. To us it looks like it just happened, but it's part of God's master plan.

For instance, there is a promised seed—a son is going to come. The difference is that the Son that's going to come was promised 700 years before Christ ever came.

Isaiah the prophet said:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, "God with us."

1. And so there has been a promise of a seed through all these episodes. We're going to have a seed, we're going to have a son, and on and on we've gone.

And then he's named before he gets here. His name is going to be Isaac.

2. The second parallel is there's a great lengthy interval between the promise and the fulfillment of it. In 700 years, with the birth of Christ—and in this situation, 25 years are involved—so there is a lengthy interval.

3. Third, the women's responses are very similar.

SARAH for instance in Genesis 18:12 said:

Genesis 18:12

“After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?”

In other words, this just doesn't seem possible.

And then MARY said in:

Luke 1:34

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

4. Each of them were named before they were born.

In Genesis 17 they were going to call the son Isaac. His name means “laughter.”

And in Matthew 1:21 the Lord told Joseph, “She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin.”

5. It is done at the appointed time.

At the appointed time in Galatians 4 and also in Genesis chapter 21 it told us it was the appointed time.

6. Both births required a miracle.

Old age passed the ability to have children. A virgin who has never known a man is going to have a child.

7. Each of these children were their father’s delight.

We say that with very tender passion, because God’s going to put His hand on this much beloved son and make an issue out of that son.

Those seven things are interesting parallels, aren’t they, between the two things that have happened?

Dale Carnegie said:

(A Continual Feast by Jan Karon)

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there

seemed to be no hope at all.

Dale Carnegie

(page unknown)

Abraham Lincoln said:

(A Continual Feast by Jan Karon)

Nothing in this world is impossible to a willing heart.

Abraham Lincoln

(page unknown)

We have seen that.

Part of the process of seeing God's appointed time is an interval of waiting. And for them it's been 25 years of faithful, obedience to end up in the land in the place where God fulfills the promise.

And so it is with the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

“Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.”

Now what's interesting about that? Everything we're going to see from here to the end of the study is obedience, obedience, obedience. God said it, do it. God said it, don't argue, immediately take steps to do it.

And God is going to put that on display in technicolor, bold as can be, as we watch this man take his hands off of his son and be willing to turn him completely over to the Lord.

Well, this is a time of joy and fulfillment so they name him Isaac, which says “everybody’s laughing” or “everybody’s happy.” Everybody thinks they’re crazy to have a child at 90 years of age and become a father of 100!

v. 4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.

“When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.”

There it is again! Exactly on the eighth day that was prescribed in Genesis 17—the badge of the covenant is circumcision. In eight days, they’re showing up with a knife and circumcision takes place.

Jesus is the same way. In order to qualify as our Redeemer, He must fulfill every speck and specification of the Law. So where were Mary and Joseph eight days after the birth? They were at the temple for the circumcision ritual that must take place in the fulfillment of the Law.

Obedience—and wow what an illustration of it.

v. 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son

Isaac was born to him.

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

And a woman never reveals her age, but we know that she’s ten years younger so she’s ninety years old.

One of the things Greg Laurie says about this experience is it provides a key for learning what God wants us to learn. He says:

(Losers And Winners Saints and Sinners by Greg Laurie)

This is an essential key to spiritual longevity. You must always move forward. You must always seek to grow spiritually and never look back. That’s what will keep you going. You have to follow the Lord even if your friends aren’t there with you. As the song says, “Though none go with me, still I will follow.”¹ If you are living this Christian life for others’ applause, you won’t make it. People are going to let you down. Circumstances are going to challenge you. You have to run empowered by your love for God.

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Proverbs 20:29

Gray hair is the splendor of the old.

Joni Eareckson Tada talks about an elderly gentleman that

she met.

She tells about meeting this ninety-year-old man who had written a poem and he handed it to her. She quotes the poem and then she says, “Right after I found out a few days later that he’d gone home to be with the Lord.” Listen to his testimony:

(Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings by Joni Eareckson Tada)

*They say that I am growing old; I've heard them say times untold,
In language plain and bold—but I am not growing old.
This frail old shell in which I dwell is growing old, I know full well!
But I am not the shell.
What if my hair is turning gray; gray hairs are honorable they say.
What if my eyesight's growing dim; I still can see to follow Him
Who sacrificed His life for me—upon the Cross at Calvary!*

*Why should I care if time's old plough has left its furrows on my brow?
Another house, not made with hands awaits me in the Glory Land.
What though I falter in my walk and though my tongue refuse to talk?
I still can tread the narrow way; I still can watch and praise and pray!*

*The robe of flesh I'll drop and rise to seize the everlasting prize.
I'll meet you on the streets of gold and prove I am NOT
growing old.*

(March 30)

There's a happy day on the other side and there's going to be a giant meeting in the sky. And guess what? We're going to be there. But more important to know is that Jesus is going to be there. And He can't wait to see us and the long interval between our salvation and Him getting to see us, is to show us that He can wait too. And He's waiting with bells on, excited to show us what He's been working on for over two thousand years in preparing for our arrival.

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

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

Well, she hadn't forgotten her laugh of unbelief. She's laughing, she's joyful, she's excited.

Psalm 126:2-3

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.

We cannot imagine what it must be like to be so joyful and so exuberant over the fact that God indeed has been faithful in the promise that He made to them in providing this wonderful son whose name itself means “laughter.”

We can almost see Sarah and Abraham, overwhelmed with the blessing of Isaac. Now we haven’t seen anything in what God has for us. As we walk in obedience to His truth, we maintain our confidence and trust in Him. “Come along with me, the best is yet to be.”

v. 7 And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

“And she added, ‘Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.’”

We use the phrase, “Who would have thought?” when we’re trying to express exuberance or something wonderful has happened and we couldn’t have even dreamed it up.

Ron Allen and Earl Radmacher have a little blurb on this verse:

... Wondrously, this woman of ninety (17:17) now had breasts filled with milk and her arms full with a child! In the theology

of the Bible, Isaac's birth suggests the promise of an even greater miracle, the miracle-Son, Jesus.
(source unknown)

Isaac foreshadows that glorious day when Christ came forth, born of a virgin.

When the flesh gets in the picture, it always rears its ugly head to spoil something that should have been beautiful. And the flesh is going to come out in bold relief here. It's going to be tough. There are going to be some decisions made because they determined they were helping God out, Ishmael's been born, now the flesh has to be dealt with.

He represents the flesh. Isaac represents the spirit. And the twain shall never meet. They will be in constant conflict. They're like oil and water.

v. 8 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.

“The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.”

Okay, weaning in those days was not in a month or two like we're so used to. Weaning in those days was somewhere between three and five years. Well actually the child was weaned and they had a great feast or celebration.

It's almost like when the Prodigal Son came home, the father

had the big bar-b-que and feast. This is the celebration of weaning.

So now we have two characters. We have a little guy who's somewhere between three and five and another guy who's seventeen years of age.

Let's look at Ishmael for a second. He's been daddy's star for seventeen years. They've been inseparable, they've had promises made, excitement about the future and the inheritance. They've talked about everything together. And now all of a sudden that's all over.

We have to put that in the picture to understand why this happens.

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

“But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian”

She never mentions Ishmael and she doesn't mention his mother, other than saying “Hagar the Egyptian.”

“had borne to Abraham was mocking,”

The word “mocking” means “laughing,” “jesting” or “making fun.”

He's jesting with this little boy here. He probably hardly

knows the language.

What a mess we get in when the flesh is at work. That's the illustration we should carry away from this and the pain never stops, because the flesh wars against the spirit.

Galatians 5:17

The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Why is it so hard to be righteous? It's because the old flesh within us resists that. And Satan's only entrée is through our mind and the flesh—our old nature—to get that to happen.

Now is there real warfare? Paul says:

Romans 7:15

The good that I will I do not, and that which I would not I find I'm always doing.

Why is it like this? Who'll deliver us from the body of this old death, this corpse that we're carrying around? The flesh wars against the spirit.

And that picture now is seen here in the Spirit of God picks this picture up out of the book of Genesis and carries it clear over and uses the apostle Paul to use this as a very

illustration. We'll look at that shortly.

v. 10 and she said to Abraham, “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.”

“and she said to Abraham, ‘Get rid of that slave woman and her son,’—REASON—“for that slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.””

There is no compromise between the flesh and the spirit. “The flesh has got to go!” she says. “There will be no inheritance for Ishmael, the son that has been born.”

She’s taking a pretty strong stance and she’s the one that recommended this deal in the first place back in chapter 16. And yet now she realizes the horrible consequences of all this. So we have a **DOUBLE COMMAND**:

1. “Get rid of the slave woman” and
2. “[he will not] share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

Talk about throwing the rain on the parade here. All this joyful time now has become again a time of great, great weeping, sadness, anger and separation at the end for Abraham.

Let’s look at a passage from Galatians. In it we can see the parallel between it and what’s being written in the book of

Genesis.

The apostle Paul is writing to a group of believers who have reverted back to the Mosaic Law after receiving Christ. They are saying that just receiving Christ is not enough. You've got to work really hard and keep the Ten Commandments and live by the Law. And Paul doesn't want anything to do with that.

The Law represents the FLESH. The Law was not given to make a man righteous, it was given to declare a man sinful and in need of a righteousness which he cannot provide, but that Jesus Christ will provide. And so the liberty, the freedom which is ours be set free by that he says in Galatians. It's a powerful message on the whole business of relationship and the adequacy of it.

Galatians 4:28-31

And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. [These are people that are believers—that's what he's saying] But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. [Who are the ones who persecuted the most? The Scribes and the Pharisees. Legalists to the nth degree, persecuting and ultimately coming to the place where Christ is put to death.] But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman." So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

What we have as children of God has been given to us by GRACE through FAITH, plus NOTHING. The Law was given for the purpose to drive us to Christ, to show us that God doesn't grade on a curve, that we cannot keep the Law and therefore acquire righteousness.

“All of our righteousnesses are like filthy rags,” Isaiah 64:6 says. So it's not under the Law, but grace.

Then we read Galatians 5:18-25 and he contrasts the work of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

Well, we have another separate issue here. We have the separation of Lot when had to separate from his family in Ur of the Chaldees. Now we come to this most painful separation of all—he has to say goodbye to his seventeen-year-old son.

v. 11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son.

“The matter distressed Abraham greatly “because it concerned his son.”

Seventeen years of life together now is terminated, because it's an act of the flesh rather than the fruitage of the Spirit.

If we keep on walking in the flesh and disregarding what God is saying to us in how we should conduct ourselves and how the Spirit of God should produce fruit in our lives, what's

going to happen? Well, the Bible describes it very graphically and that is everything we're going to have is going to be piled up as wood, hay and stubble. And when the Lord puts the match of judgment to it and poof! it's gone. It's only the gold, silver and precious stone, that's the fruitage of the Spirit, that will remain for a reward. (1 Corinthians chapter 3)

All that motivates us to use up every day, every opportunity, to glorify and honor Him.

Listen to what Fénelon says in his book:

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)

Never make important decisions in a state of distress. You just are not able to see clearly.

When you are calm and collected, you will find the will of God more clearly known.

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All that mess back in chapter 16 would have been solved if they would have contented themselves to be still and devoted to God. And that in His time He will fulfil what He promised them about the seed and the land.

Now we come to the fulfillment of it, and we've got some flesh stuff that has to be dealt with. And what we sow we're going to reap, the scripture says, in Galatians 6:7.

And that's what's happening to them.

v. 12 But God said to him, “Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

“But God said to him, ‘Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you,’”

Now Abraham had little to say about it, because the last time he got in trouble for listening to her and so now he's got his defenses up and he says, “Oh by the way, listen to your wife about this one.”

“Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”

That's all we need to hang onto. There are times when a man must listen to his wife. And this is one of them here.

v. 13 I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

“I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

Remember what He said? Remember when Hagar left because Sarah was giving her such a hard time? The Lord said, “You know, there is a future for the child you're carrying and I'm

going to manifest that future to you.”

Here He comes right back to her and He says, “I’ve got plans for your offspring.”

Charles Stanley said something so beautiful:

God has already taken care of the biggest problem you will ever have.

(source unknown)

And that’s the same problem on Calvary’s cross. And each of us can rejoice that that problem’s been taken care of. It’s these flesh things that really clobber us.

v. 14 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.

“Early the next morning”

Now hold onto this because, as soon as God says the impossible, Abraham is up early the next morning. He never delays or argues. He immediately implements what the Lord tells him. There’s a blessing in that.

“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.”

Where'd she go? As soon as she leaves, she's heading south. And then there is a crisis that takes place. And that crisis of course is described as she wanders in the wilderness in verse 15.

v. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes.

“When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes.”

Expecting that he was going to die, her faith has crumbled.

v. 16 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.

“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.”

And of course, the Lord hears the sobbing and we have the response.

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 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.’”

And then we have that wonderful statement:

v. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.”

“Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.”

v. 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

“Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water.”

Psalm 119:18

Open my eyes that I may see
wondrous things out of Your Law.
Open my eyes that I may see
wonderful things that You have in store.

“Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So

she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.”

It’s almost like Elijah’s servant sees the whole city surrounded with the enemy’s army. He comes back in and Elijah prays that the servant’s eyes will be opened and he can see all the hosts of heaven that are surrounding them.

1 Corinthians 2:14

The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they’re foolishness unto him...

Stanley prays:

(On Holy Ground: A Daily Devotional by Charles Stanley)

Dear Lord, open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception; enable me to taste Thee and know that Thou art good. Make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been.

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v. 20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.

“God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.”

v. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his

mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

“While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him”—WHERE?—“from Egypt.”

The place of the world and the place of the flesh. And we drop the curtain on our study.

There are twelve lessons that come out of these verses.

Lesson #1: “The Lord was gracious to Sarah” and “the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised” (verse 1).

Lesson #2: The Lord, at the appointed time, will fulfill the promises which He has made to us, even if it is 25 years later.

Lesson #3: The Lord’s timing is always perfect.

Lesson #4: He makes all things beautiful in His time.

Lesson #5: There is a joy beyond human comprehension which is ours in the fulfillment of God’s promises to us.

Lesson #6: Who would have ever thought that this happening would take place, but God is the God of the impossible.

Lesson #7: The conflict between the old and the new nature is underscored in this passage.

Lesson #8: The sorrow of sowing in the flesh in trying to help

God out is also borne out in these verses.

Lesson #9: God is ever calling us to a greater separation unto Himself.

Lesson #10: Legalistic Christianity often ends up in a marriage to the world.

Lesson #11: When we have acted in the flesh and God responds, it is going to be a very painful process to turn loose of what we have done.

Lesson #12: Abraham's continuous obedience leads to the eventual blessing by the Lord.

We conclude with this statement from Ruth Myers:

(Christ/Life by Ruth Myers)

It's in God's Word that we can find reliable and uplifting truths about ourselves, and dwelling on these truths can produce obedient, confident, and joyful living. We can think and know, "I'm clean through Christ's death on the cross. I'm free from the dominion of sin through His resurrected life. I'm competent to face life through His Spirit in me. I'm not expected to be a finished product now, but someday I will be. My destiny is to share His love, His purposes, and His glory now and forever!" Nothing gives us greater stability.

In reality, however, our lives are often shaky and faltering. We cower before our spiritual enemy; we feel

discouraged and condemned. We feel we're in a deep hole and must somehow get ourselves out before any spiritual progress is possible.

Why do we feel like this? Because we're basing our self-image on (1) Satan's lies, (2) our own past experience, and (3) our feelings—instead of on the solid, glorious, scriptural *facts* of who God is, what He has accomplished, and who we are in Him.

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Father, thank You for showing us that it's worth the wait. Lord, we know that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord hath prepared for those who love Him. And may we also add to that, for those who will wait for Him. Now we pray Lord that pure undiminished joy would be ours because we have been patient with the process and knowing that soon we shall be like You for we shall see You as You are. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM: “God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

Study Number Seven – Genesis 21:1-21

NOTES

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

v. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

v. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

v. 4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.

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

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

v. 7 And she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

v. 8 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.

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

v. 10 and she said to Abraham, “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.”

v. 11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son.

v. 12 But God said to him, “Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

v. 13 I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

v. 14 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.

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v. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes.

v. 16 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.

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.

v. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

v. 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

v. 20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.

v. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 21:1-21 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Describe what the Lord did for Sarah in verse 1.

3. What happened, according to verse 2, and when did it happen?

4. Describe the action of verses 3-8.

5. What happened in verse 9?

6. How did Abraham and the Lord handle the situation?

7. Describe Hagar and Ishmael's future in the next verses.

8. There were consequences for Abraham in being out of the Lord's will. Trace just a few of them in this passage.

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: "The Lord was gracious to Sarah" and "the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised" (verse 1).

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