

SALT Church

Genesis 21

“The Last Laugh”

April 8, 2026

“In the Beginning”

Recap Genesis 20

- “When Heroes Stumble” was the title of the Genesis 20 teaching.
 - Abraham found himself facing another pagan King name Abimelech.
 - As before Abraham refused to tell the truth about his beautiful wife Sarah, claiming that she was his sister.
 - But God...
 - God stepped in and did not allow the pagan King to touch Sarah.
 - The result was she was kept for the promised son whose name was to be Isaac.
 - In chapter 20 we saw King Abimelech shine while our hero Abraham could do nothing but make excuses.

Now in chapter 21 Moses, under the power of the Holy Spirit, reminds us that God the Father always keeps His word.

Genesis 21

1 The Lord kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. 2 She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son

for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would.

- The way that this worded sounds like there was a special place in God's heart for Sarah and all the pain and sadness that she had suffered.
 - For "the Lord kept His word and did for Sarah."
 - "She became pregnant"
 - And in Gods perfect timing she gave Abraham a son.

Now as we move forward, we need to remember a few important details:

- Abraham is 100 years old
- Sarah, although very beautiful, is 90 years old.
- Ishmael would be 15 to 16 years old.

3And Abraham named their son Isaac.

- Isaac = "Laughter"
 - Both Abraham and Sarah laughed last year when Jesus said that they would have a son approximately a year from His visit.
 - And I am sure there was a lot of laughter during this pregnancy.
 - 90-year-old lady pushing through her day with all that comes with carrying a baby.
 - It must have been a sight.
 - Laughter was the perfect name for this son of Abraham and Sarah.

4 Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded.

- I am assuming he was the 1st baby circumcised on the eighth day according to the Lord's command.

5 Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

- What a mess!

6 And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter.

- Amen Sarah!

All who hear about this will laugh with me.

- Some laugh with fear!

7 Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

- God is good all the time.
 - Not because He followed through at such a late age but because He had a plan.
 - This boy was special
 - Born to special parents at a late age.
 - Much like John the Baptist parents.
 - Only God could pull this off!

Laura and I had a daughter when we were in our 20's

- We had our son in our 30's
 - I think our son got a better version of us that our daughter did.
 - Age can do that to you.
 - Can you imagine the wisdom that Abraham passed down to his son.
 - What a blessing for Isaac.

⁸ When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned,

- 2-3 years old

Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion.

- We don't do this in today's world
- However, we do celebrate when diapers aren't needed!
- This is a big deal in Abraham's day
 - His son was growing up!

⁹ But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of her son, Isaac.

- This was a very bad idea!

Side note

Yitschaq: Isaac

Transliteration: Yitschaq

Pronunciation: yits-khawk'

Phonetic Spelling: (yits-khawk')

KJV: Isaac

NASB: Isaac, Isaac's

Word Origin: [from H6711 (צחק - laugh)]

tsachaq: To laugh, to mock, to play, to jest

Pronunciation: tsaw-khak'

Phonetic Spelling: (tsaw-khak')

KJV: laugh, mock, play, make sport

NASB: laugh, laughed, make sport, caressing, jesting, mocking, play

Word Origin: [a primitive root]

1. to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn)
2. (by implication) to sport, laugh, mock, play, make sport

1. laughter (i.e. mockery)
2. Jitschak (or Isaac), son of Abraham

Can you see why I named tonight's teaching "***Last Laugh***"

Everyone seems to be laughing

¹⁰ So she turned to Abraham and demanded, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won't have it!"

- I can't imagine the pain that Abraham felt in this moment.
 - He and Sarah had made a horrible mistake.
 - She was the one who came up with the bright idea that Abraham should sleep with her maidservant so that he could have a son.
 - Now she has another bright idea to get rid of the problem.
 - I don't think it was one of her best moments.
 - There is nothing noble about pushing a woman and her teenage son out into the wilderness.
 - The consequences of that sin are still felt even today as the descendants of Ishmael still feel rejected.

I wonder if Abraham thought about just getting them away from Sarah for a while.

- I wonder if he thought his position as the leader of this group was threatened.
- Here was a man who defeated 5 Kings, rescued Lot, and returned everything back to the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and yet when Miss Sarah says “***she’s got to go along with her donkey son***” Abraham does what most men would do.
 - He sends her and his son on there way.
 - But not because Sarah tells him too!

¹¹ This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son.

- He loved Ishmael, I wonder if he ever saw him again.
 - The consequences of sin can be felt for a lifetime.

¹² But God told Abraham, “Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted.

¹³ But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.”

- Abraham was still paying the high price of a very bad decision.
- ***But God...***
 - God stepped in and helped Abraham because of His great love for His servant Abraham.
 - He reassures Abraham that He will make sure that Ishmael is taken care of.

- He also reminds him that it must be this way in order for Isaac to fulfill his destiny.

14 So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a container of water, and strapped them on Hagar's shoulders. Then he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba.

- I'm not going to lie to you, I struggle with this.
- Here is a man with many animals and Abraham does give her and his son a couple of donkeys or horses to ride and carry things.
- Perhaps God told Abraham to do it this way so that her faith could grow.
 - He straps food and water on her shoulders, meaning they are heavy.
 - What about 16-year-old Ishmael?
 - I don't know about you, but this is not a shining moment for Abraham and Sarah.
 - What a mess!

15 When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush.

- In my mind he was always a lot younger than 16.
 - Perhaps he has some type of disability

16 Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards away.

- In the Hebrew it is a “bow shot away.”
 - I cannot imagine

“I don’t want to watch the boy die,” she said, as she burst into tears.

- She must be one tough lady, to outlast a 16-year-old boy.
- But she is not tough enough to stay by his side.

¹⁷ But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, “Hagar, what’s wrong?”

- Laughter has now turned into crying.
- Ishmael is crying
- Hagar is crying
 - Do you remember what “Ishmael means?”
 - God hears
 - They needed God to hear in this moment
 - God does hear
 - Then God steps into their sorrow

Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.¹⁸ Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.”

- I wonder if she thought the heat was getting to her “I would”
- Did you notice an angel speaks to Hagar and God speaks to Abraham.
 - That’s interesting to me

19 Then God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well full of water. She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink.

- Good Mama's do that you know
 - They take care of their baby's 1st then they drink

Water is an amazing thing.

- Did you know it has absolutely no nutritional value?
- And yet we all die without it.
 - In fact, most of you is water. (70%)
 - Think about this, all the water that has ever existed still exist.
 - Meaning we just keep cleaning and re-drinking the same water over and over again.
 - In a weird way we are just drinking our ancestors.
 - But Jesus does not offer us the same old water
 - He offers us living water
 - Water that leaves us completely filled.
 - Never thirsting again

Genesis 21:20

20 And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He became a skillful archer, 21 and he settled in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt.

- It is interesting to me that Moses used "bow shot away" earlier
 - Now we see Ishmael becoming a skillful archer. (Neat)

- It will be a while before we see Ishmael again but his influence and jealousy will be passed down from one generation to the next.

²² About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham.

- We must ask ourselves why King Abimelech and his army commander would travel to see Abraham.
- Nothing is said but it seems logical that Abrahams camp is getting larger.
 - It's time to make sure that the man of God doesn't attack.

“God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do,” Abimelech said.

- Even Pagans can see God at work in other peoples lives.

²³ “Swear to me in God’s name that you will never deceive me, my children, or any of my descendants.

- That had to sting just a little bit

I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you are living as a foreigner.”

- It is amazing what God can do
- Here is a King saying to a guy that lives in a tent city “I have been loyal to you.”

²⁴ Abraham replied, “Yes, I swear to it!”

25 Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had taken by force from Abraham's servants.

- Things have changed in Abraham's heart
 - he seems to have grown more confident as a leader.
 - This was the perfect time to bring up such an issue.

26 "This is the first I've heard of it," Abimelech answered. "I have no idea who is responsible. You have never complained about this before."

- The King sounds more than ready to resolve this issue.
 - It is clear the king does not want an issue with Abraham

27 Abraham then gave some of his sheep, goats, and cattle to Abimelech, and they made a treaty.

- Diplomacy at work
 - We must keep in mind the hand of God in all of this.
 - Abraham and his crew are foreigners and King Abimelech owes Abraham nothing.
 - The Kings men know this to be true and they can't understand why their king would give so much respect to this man called Abraham.
 - But we understand.
 - God had spoken to King Abimelech and this pagan king and he was smart enough to understand that Gods hand of protection was on this man.

- To go to war against Abraham was to go to war against God.
 - God said He would bless those that blessed Abraham and curse those that curse Abraham.
 - God was keeping His word.

28 But Abraham also took seven additional female lambs and set them off by themselves. 29 Abimelech asked, “Why have you set these seven apart from the others?”

30 Abraham replied, “Please accept these seven lambs to show your agreement that I dug this well.”

- Wells are the difference between life and death
- The King accepts the gift and agrees that they belong to Abraham.

31 Then he named the place Beersheba (which means “well of the oath”), because that was where they had sworn the oath.

- I wish we did more of this sort of thing
- I think it would do our hearts good to be reminded of what God had done for us by looking at a tree or a giant rock that marked the spot where God intervened.

32 After making their covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech left with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the land of the Philistines.

- This will not be the last time we see King Abimelech as Isaac will eventually have another encounter with this pagan king.

33 Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he worshiped the Lord, the Eternal God. 34 And Abraham lived as a foreigner in Philistine country for a long time.