

Introduction:

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- Good Evening Arising Church!
- One of the most debated topics in religion and politics worldwide is unsurprisingly Israel's ownership and right to much of the land we call "the middle east" today. (SLIDE and keep it up until the next slide)



- This is shocking considering Israel's history in this land is one of the greatest recorded items in world history!
- Today, Israel occupies only a fraction of the Land promised to Abraham. Despite being surrounded on all sides. This outlook may appear dismal; but we cannot forget the way in which God promised this land to Abraham.
  - Genesis 15:17-19 (NIV) **17** When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. **18** On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi[e] of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— **19** the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, **20** Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, **21** Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”
- God made a covenant with Abraham, a unilateral oath to give Abraham's descendants all the land you see here. This was given to

Abraham at a time where this land was occupied by and surrounded with enemies and peoples greater and stronger than he was.

- The setting in Abraham's day is not so different than today; and time after time God has continually protected and provided for His covenant people against any Satanic Stratagem.

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## Stratagems of Satan

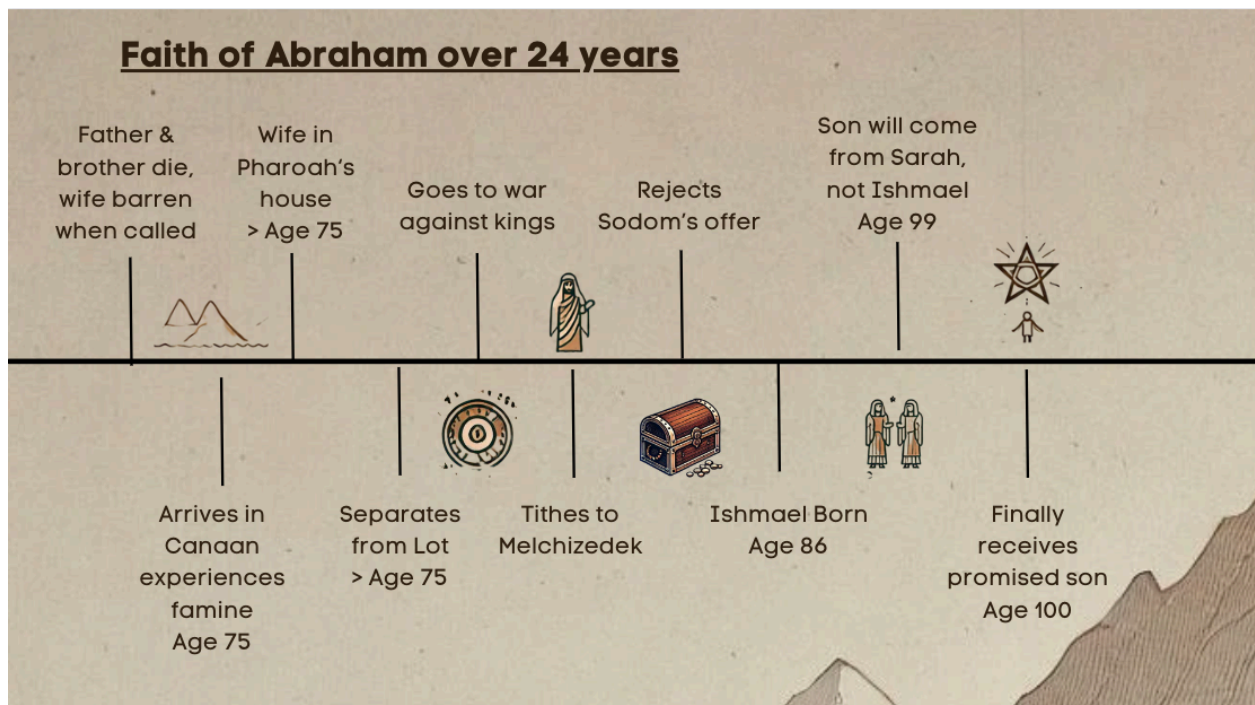
- Corruption of Adam's line - **Genesis 6**
- Abrahams Seed - **Genesis 12 & 20**
- Famine - **Genesis 50**
- Destruction of male line - **Exodus 1**
- Pharaoh's Pursuit - **Exodus 14**
- The Population of Canaan - **Genesis 12:6**
- Against David's Line - **2 Kings 11**

- Satan is nothing like our God. He knows only in part and since the beginning has attempted to sabotage God's plan and nation, but to no avail.
- Whether it was demonic giant offspring, famine, or infanticide; God's people are always preserved. This was true then, is true now, and will always be true.
  - **Proverbs 21:30 (NIV):**  
"There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD."
- This is not the only facet of God's covenant with Abraham. In chapter 17, God deepened His Covenant with Abraham by adding a sign that

he and his descendants would carry around with them for generations.

- No, it was not a hat, or some specific garb. It was the removal of part of the man's penis! Let's read the scripture!
  - **Genesis 17:10-12 (NIV)** This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. **11** You are to undergo circumcision, and **it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.** **12** For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised
- Abraham is the father of the Faith, and for good reason. His people would forever bear this sign that they are God's chosen people, the nation through which the redemption of the whole world will come. But this would not come about without its obstacles.

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- Just as in the generations before him, there was constant Satanic Stratagem at work against Abraham:
  - The death of family members

- Famine in the Land God led him to
  - Wife taken by Pharaoh
  - Family Separation
  - Multinational Kings capturing his nephew
  - Having to win a war against those multinational Kings!
  - God's judgment on all the land around you!
  - Another King taking your wife!
- Abraham's life was full of unfavorable and dangerous circumstances that gave him only one option: depend on the Lord! But this was a journey he chose, and one that made him into the hero of our faith.
  - Many of you love to see your own life in Abraham's story, but the reality is: there is a lot more LOT in you than you care to admit. Most Christians today have a life of initially joining into a faithful families mission, only to sabotage it with selfish ambition and friendliness to the world. Leaving many Christians like Lot, sitting in a cave somewhere fading into obscurity.
  - But, despite the failures it is so easy to see, Lot did show faithfulness in moments, and did stand up for righteousness. So, take heart Church! If you can hear us tonight, there is still time for you as well to show faithfulness in difficult circumstances and stand up boldly for righteousness.
  - Despite the many difficulties we mentioned, the most difficult struggle Abraham endured was struggling to produce sons. We found this out from his introduction into the story; that despite their efforts, Abraham and Sarah could not have children.
    - **Genesis 11:29-30** 29 Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah. **30 Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive.**
  - This became the greatest challenge and question Abraham had for the Lord. After an incredible victory in chapter 14, Abraham still had fears, and he begins to ask the Lord for answers to his dilemma. This

question is the seed of Abraham's fears and his response is the fruit of righteousness.

Genesis 15: 2-6 **2** But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit[c] my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** And Abram said, "**You have given me no children**; so a servant in my household will be my heir." **4** Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, **but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.**" **5** He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring[d] be." **6** Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

- Despite the bareness Abraham and Sarah had experienced for years, Abraham believed the Lord and it was credited to his as righteousness. This was not the first time Abraham believed the Lord, Abraham had been believing and trusting Him for years. Even with the difficulty of his situation, he did not let it deter him in his belief.
- After years of having no son, Abraham's desire is finally fulfilled. Through the suggestion of Sarah, Abraham takes Hagar the Egyptian as a wife and together they conceive a son who will become Ishmael. What an incredible day for Abraham. But, it was not for Sarah. Hagar the Egyptian began to despise Sarah and gloated her "blessing" over her. Sarah in response mistreated Hagar to the point of Hagar fleeing back towards Egypt.
- When it seemed as if she was going to die, The Lord appeared to Hagar and spoke these things to her, you should remember this slide

**(READ SLIDE)**

# Hagar & Ishmael

- I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count (v10)
- You are now with child and you will have a son (v11)
- You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery (v11)
- He will be a wild donkey of a man (v12)
- His hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him (v12)
- He will live in hostility toward all his brothers( (v12)

- We would like to draw attention to the last bullet on this slide. From before his birth the Lord makes Ishmael's destiny clear. He will live in hostility toward all his brothers.
- Tonight we will see Ishmael's destiny begin to manifest. Ishmael, like his mother before him will treat those in his family, namely his young brother, with hostility. It seems as though the sins of parents are not so easily eradicated in one generation.
  - Abraham lies about his wife 2x - Isaac does once
  - Hagar despises and gloats over Sarah, tonight Ishmael will "mock" Isaac.
- These two brothers were destined to be at odds, and they are from the early years of Isaac's life. These actions have generational impacts. But despite the hostility Ishmael puts between himself and his brother, both of these sons have a promise from God. Look at this slide

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## Seven Pre-Named Sons

1. Ishmael	Genesis 16:11	God Hears
2. Isaac	Genesis 14:19	Laughter
3. Solomon	1 Chronicles 22:9	Peace
4. Josiah	1 Kings 13:2	God Supports
5. Cyrus	Isaiah 44:28-45:1	Heir
6. John the Immerser	Luke 1:13	God's grace; mercy gift
7. Jesus	Matthew 1:21	Yahweh is Salvation

- Ishmael and Isaac are both named by God, but they were not born in the same manner, nor were they given the same destiny. Ishmael was the son who was first, but he is not the firstborn of the covenant. Both sons receive a blessing, but only through Isaac will God's covenant people come.

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## Seven I WILL'S...for Ishmael

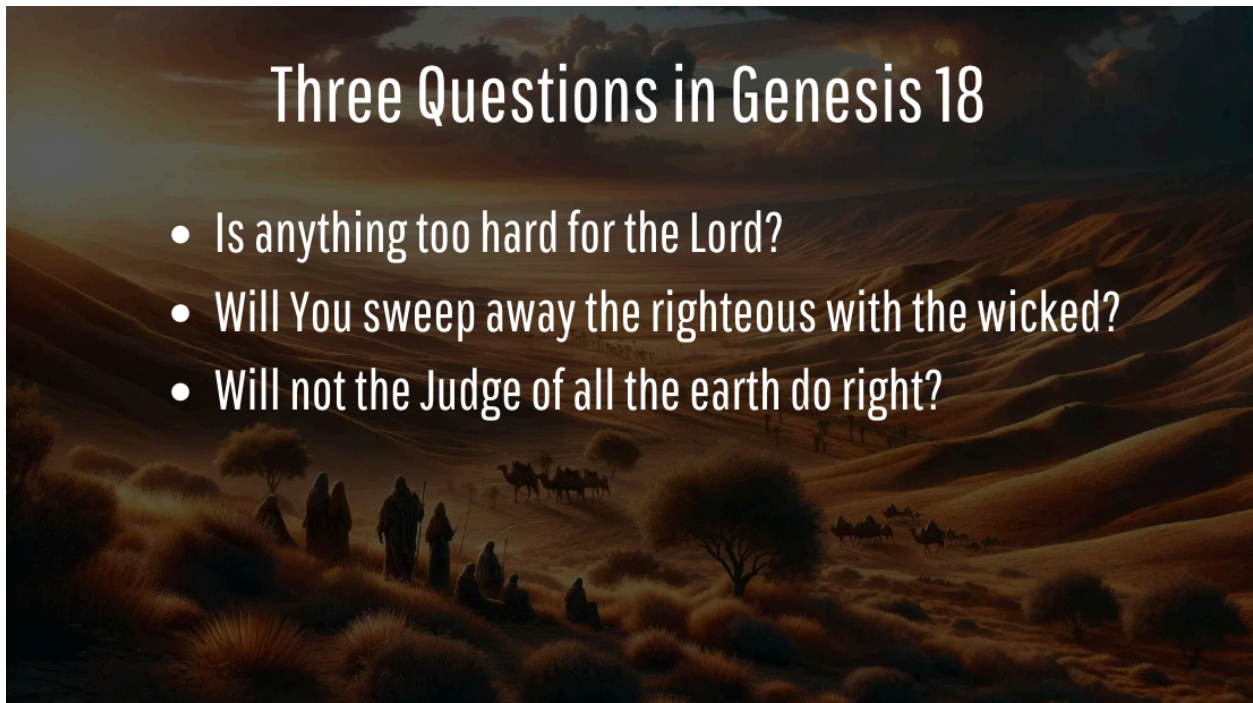
1. I will indeed bless him (17:20)
2. I will make him fruitful (17:20)
3. I will give him a multitude of descendants (17:20)
4. He will become the father of 12 princes (17:20)
5. I will make him into a great nation (17:20)
6. I will make him into a great nation (21:13)
7. I will make him into a great nation (21:18)



- Ishmael will be blessed, fruitful and a great nation; and his destiny from the beginning was still to be cast away and to have everyone against him. Although he is not the custodian of the Covenant as his father thought he was for so many years, he will return one day to bury and honor his father
- Isaac on the other hand has a much different destiny. As you will see tonight, the sun is beginning to set on Abraham's story. In the next four chapters Sarah and Abraham will both die. Starting tonight the story is shifting to Isaac, the custodian of God's covenant.
- After this chapter, the Bible will almost exclusively focus on the descendants of Abraham and Isaac, despite Abraham having several more sons AFTER Isaac! This does not mean the other sons are not loved, or that God does not have plans for the other sons. This choice did not come about because of something Isaac did that the others sons did not! God's choice was not based upon merit or accomplishment, after all, Isaac was chosen before he was even conceived!
- There is something sinful in many of you in the room that get's squeamish skeptical when you read of God's sovereign choice in instances like Isaac over Ishmael, or Jacob over Esau, or perhaps viewing God's judgment on men, women, and children in places like Jericho.
- We are all confronted with the question: "*Will the judge of all the earth do right?*"
- God is the creator of Heaven and Earth. He is perfect in all He does. The choices he makes are always just and right. There is still more conviction to be strongly rooted in each one of us concerning this eternal truth. Consider these verses, commit them to memory, write them on notecards.
- When we strive to live a life like Abraham, it's going to require a faith that holds firm to these convictions despite any circumstance we could ever find ourselves in :

- **Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV)**  
"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."
- **Psalm 145:17 (NIV)**  
"The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does."
- **Job 34:12 (NIV)**  
"It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice."
- **Zephaniah 3:5 (NIV)**  
"The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame."
- *"Will the judge of all the earth do right"*. This is a question all honest believers ask, in fact, inside the heart of every man is all three honest questions that Abraham is confronted with in his journey:

(SLIDE)



- The second and third question's are answered by God's dealing with Lot and the cities of the plain. God will not sweep away the righteous with the wicked. He preserves the righteous even in the midst of judgement.
- Tonight, we will finally get to answer the first question: *Is anything too hard for the Lord?*
- All of Abraham's life and waiting is culminating in tonight's chapter. Last week we saw powerful prophetic patterns that were being established, you should remember this slide:

(SLIDE)

Abraham & Israel: Prophetic Pattern

1. Both elected to produce the promised son and bring salvation to the world
2. Both stumble along the way but God keeps them from falling
3. Both delivered by the mighty hand of God
4. Both pray for the healing of the nations
5. Both receive offerings from the kings of the earth
6. Both receive the promised son
7. Both receive nations seeking to be in covenant with the God of Israel

- The journey God has taken Abraham on, God will also take the nation that will come from him through. Genesis is not only the seed book for Biblical Doctrine, but also prophecy. We will continue to see anticipatory parallels in the life of the patriarchs, and tonight that parallel brings us to the receiving of the promised son, and the receiving of nations seeking to be in covenant with the God of Israel.

- As Eduardo comes up to read our passage tonight and pray, understand this: Tonight is a night to rejoice!
- Nothing is too hard for the Lord, he always fulfills his promise. Let conviction and faith rise up in you. As God was faithful to produce a son in Abraham and Israel, he is faithful to do the same in your life!
- And, if we desire to have the kind of faith we are reading about; that same God will also ask of you, the same he asked of Abraham, and Israel in next week's chapter.

## Main Exposition

### Genesis 21:1–34 (NIVUK84)

**21 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.**

- Our text tonight begins by highlighting the fact that God was gracious just like He said He would be and He did just what He said He would do, at the very time He promised to do it.
- Think about these 3 profound statements:
  - He was gracious just like He said He would be
  - He did exactly what He said He would do
  - At the very time He said He would

Do you recall exactly what He said in Genesis 18:9-10?

- **Genesis 18:9-10** 9 They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” 10 The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

- "About this time next year". This word in the LXX is "Kairos" and so is the word for "time" in Genesis 21:2.
- Let's revisit our previous slide about the two different ideas for time that we see in the Greek Septuagint.

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Genesis · Chapter 18

Verse

"Look, *she is* in the tent." <sup>10</sup> He said, "When **turning back**, I will come to **you** corresponding with this **time** next year,<sup>8</sup> and Sarah,<sup>h</sup> **your** wife, will have a son." Sarah<sup>i</sup> heard at the door of the tent, **being** behind it. <sup>11</sup> Abraham<sup>i</sup> and Sarah<sup>k</sup> were elders, **advanced** in days. Sarah<sup>l</sup> ceased menstruation.<sup>j,m</sup>

Surface	g with this	time	next year,
MSS	← τοῦτον,	τὸν 8 καιρὸν	εἰς 11 ὥρας, 12
MSS Trl	touton	ton kairon	eis hōras
Lemma	οὗτος	ὁ καιρός	εἰς ὥρα
Lemma Trl	houtos	ho kairos	eis hōra
Morph	RD-ASM	DASM NASM	P NAPF
Sense			

**5550 χρόνος – time (in general)**, especially viewed in sequence (a "succession of moments"); **time in duration in the physical-space world**, sovereignly apportioned by God to each person.

Verses: Matthew 2:7/Luke 1:57/ Acts 1:6/Acts 17:30/Romans 7:1/Galatians 4:1/Jude 1:18

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**2540 καιρός – time as opportunity.** 2540 /kairós ("opportune time") is derived from kara ("head") referring to things "coming to a head" to take full-advantage of. 2540 (kairós) is "the suitable time, the right moment (e.g. Soph., El. 1292), a favorable moment" (DNTT, 3, 833).

Verses: Matthew 8:29/Mark 13:33/John 7:6/Ephesians 5:16/Galatians 6:9-10/Revelation 1:3/Revelation 22:10

- You will recall The Angel of the Lord tells Abraham that next year is THE year, but He still uses the phrase - About this time.
- Notice how the Lord indicated that the time was near, but still left out specifics. You would have thought since he was forecasting a birth he would tell them the date or the month! We are spoiled with being told every detail and date in our day removing all opportunity of faith!
- We have been fascinated by the difference between the way we view our timing and God's timing. His timing for when things occur seems to be tied to certain things being completed, where as our focus seems to be on a specific date.
- Consider this verse to express this thought:
  - **Revelation 6:10-11 (NIV 1984)** 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge

the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood? 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

- This verse is a great representation of the difference between the way man thinks and the way God thinks. Man says how much longer as in "number of days, months, years, hours, minutes" these are often our questions. The difference in the approach to time can be seen in the Lord's response: "until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed".
- It is not a number of hours that stands in the way but rather things that must be accomplished before it is time.
- We often try to plan our lives around an arbitrary number of days, weeks, or months expecting time itself to accomplish the will of God in our lives but it is rather specific actions that must be done that bring about His will.
  - **Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV 84)** "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
- Even harvest time is not a specific hour. While the expectation is that it will occur within a window of time, if no seeds are planted there will be nothing to harvest. Specific actions are what bring about results in God's timing.
- Sarah and Abraham have not grown weary, they have not given up and they have finally reaped the harvest of the promised son who has come in the Lord's timing, just as He said.
  - **Psalm 127:3 (NIV 1984)** "Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him."

- Surely they have received the reward for patiently trusting as they walk in humble obedience.

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

- Just as God had done what He said would, Abraham obeyed God's command to name the boy Isaac.
  - **Genesis 17:19 (NIV 1984)** "Then God said, 'Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.'"
- The name given to Isaac is quite ironic linguistically; remember how both Abraham and Sarah laughed when they found out they would have a son together?
  - **Genesis 17:17 (NIV 1984)**"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?'"
  - **Genesis 18:12 (NIV 1984)**"So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, 'After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?'"
- Do you all remember the question in chapter 18 "is anything too hard for the Lord"?

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## Three Questions in Genesis 18

- Is anything too hard for the Lord?
- Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked?
- Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

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- This was regarding whether or not it was possible for Sarah to conceive Isaac. Well, God has answered the question right here!
- The promise of a son through Sarah made Abraham laugh, it made Sarah laugh and "He laughs" is the name that will be given to their son. Their initial laughter was in disbelief that this could really happen...But now their laughter comes from a joy that others will share in.

We want to show you something that we will continue to build on in the coming weeks:

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Name	Meaning	Sources
Adam	Man	Smith's Bible Dictionary
Seth	Granted, Appointed, Compensated	Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Unger's Bible Dictionary, McClintock & Strong Encyclopedia
Enosh	Mortal	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
Kenan	Possessor, Purchaser	Smith's Bible Dictionary, Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary
Mahalalel	The Praise of God, Blessed of God, God Shines Forth	New Unger's Bible Dictionary (*Blessed and Praise can be the same word), Nelson's Bible Dictionary
Jared	Coming Down, Descending	Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary, New Unger's Bible Dictionary
Enoch	Initiating, Teaching, Dedicating	McClintock & Strong Encyclopedia (*Initiate and teach can be the same word), New Unger's Bible Dictionary
Methuselah	His Death Brings/Sends	Fausset's Bible Dictionary, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
Lamech	Strong, Vigorous, Powerful	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, McClintock & Strong Encyclopedia
Noah	Comfort, Rest, Peace	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, New Unger's Bible Dictionary, Smith's Bible Dictionary

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- Do you guys remember this slide? The meaning of the names from Adam to Noah...you remember the story they told?

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Man was granted, appointed, or compensated with mortality. The possessor and purchaser, the blessed of God, the praised of God, shines forth. He comes down, descending, to teach, initiate, and dedicate. His death brings or sends strong, vigorous, and powerful comfort, rest, and peace.

- Abraham's name means "the father of many (nations)". Isaac's name means "He laughs". Jacob's name means "supplanter".

- The Lord is the one who changes Abram's name to Abraham.
- The Lord is the one who gives Isaac his name.
- Jacob's name means supplanter. His name is changed to Israel in Genesis 32:28.

There is a narrative that is being revealed between the lines of the text. God is speaking a message to all of creation through the names of these patriarchs.

Even Jacob's name tells a story. Jacob means supplanter which means to supersede and replace like someone who comes and removes someone from a throne and sits in it himself. Even as He changes Jacob's name to Israel which means "Prince with God" the message is clear, no power in heaven or on the earth or under the earth will prevail over Him.

Every time you hear the phrase, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" In addition to remembering the covenantal relationship with the family, you should also hear, that God Himself will supplant every power that man sets up in opposition to Him as He installs His King.

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## The God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob

Name	Meaning	Source
Abraham	Father of many	Nelson's Bible Dictionary, New Unger's Bible Dictionary
Isaac	Laughter	New Unger's Bible Dictionary
Jacob	Supplanter (to supersede & replace)	New Unger's Bible Dictionary

**"The Father of many (nations) laughs because He is supplanting"**

- This is the beginning of God building Abrahams family but it is also the building of God's name, His character, reputation and body of work on the earth. Adonai chooses to identify himself as The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
  - **Exodus 3:6 (NIVUK84)** 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.
- 500 years later He reveals Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  - **Jeremiah 33:25–26 (NIVUK84)** 25 This is what the LORD says: 'If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed laws of heaven and earth, 26 then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.' "
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- 1300 years after Abraham God still remembers the covenantal relationship with Abraham just as He does His covenant 3300 years before that with the day and the night.
  - **Matthew 22:32 (NIVUK84)** 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."
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- 2000 years after Abraham Jesus Himself identifies His Father as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His relationship with them is alive and ongoing.

- **Acts 7:32 (NIVUK84)** 32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.
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- It is easy to miss how monumental the arrival of Isaac is, and how important his name is. He is not just any son, his name reveals more of the character of God; and even after Jesus' time on earth, His followers continue to identify His Father as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- This is actually a prophetic picture of what God will do with Israel. The plan of God for Israel looks laughable to the world but in the end Israel will be laughing in enjoyment of God's divine ability to produce what no man could and Satan could not stop.
- It is God who gets the last laugh. (Psalm 2, Rev 20)

- **Psalm 2:1-4 (NIVUK84)**

1 Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth take their stand  
and the rulers gather together against the LORD  
and against his Anointed One.

3 "Let us break their chains," they say,  
"and throw off their fetters."

4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.

- The rest of the scriptures will expose Satan as continually stirring up the nations to rebel against God's plans, the Lord in turn laughs at their plans.

- **Psalm 37:12-13 (NIVUK84)**

12 The wicked plot against the righteous  
and gnash their teeth at them;

13 but the Lord laughs at the wicked,  
for he knows their day is coming.

- At no time do the plans of the wicked cause God worry or anxiety because He knows the end from the beginning.

- **Psalm 59:8–10 (NIVUK84)**

8 **But you, O LORD, laugh at them;**

you scoff at all those nations.

9 O my Strength, I watch for you;

you, O God, are my fortress, 10 my loving God.

God will go before me and will let me gloat over those who slander me.

- Our confidence in this world comes from the power of God who knows the end from the beginning. He will vindicate His name and His people.

- **Revelation 20:7–11 (NIVUK84)** 7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

- In the end, the Father of many nations will sit enthroned with no one to oppose Him with all of His enemies under His feet.

The Father of many nations, laughs, because he is supplanting. He is installing his Prince of God... over every rebellious spiritual power existent in the world

He:

- Supplants Egypt
  - Supplants Assyria
  - Supplants Babylon
  - Supplants the Islamic Caliphate
  - Supplants the Kingdoms of this World and establishes the Kingdom of God on earth through His promised son!
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- Our God laughs at his enemies... he laughs at the trappings of our weaknesses... He laughs because He has already determined His plan and it can not be stopped. He will be faithful to it... He will use the barren... the weak... and He will transform them. He will overcome the world with those who trust in Him.

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

- Just as Abraham obeyed the Lord in naming His son, so he also obeyed in circumcising him on the 8th day.
  - **Genesis 17:12 (NIV 1984)**"For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring."
- It is important for us to highlight a difference between Isaac and Ishmael here.
- While Ishmael was the first son to be circumcised and was also circumcised on the same day as Abraham, Isaac is the first son to be born after Abraham's circumcision making him the first son to come through the covenant of circumcision.
- He is also the first son to be circumcised on the 8th day after his birth.

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

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

- We are continually impressed with God the healer with whom nothing is impossible! He is able to heal Sarah's body even to the point of being able to nurse a baby, remember she is 90!

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- But here she is nursing a baby.
- On top of that, look at her attitude in producing this child at such a potentially "inconvenient" stage in her life. She knows that this will be a unique miracle that others will rejoice in as well.
- She is overjoyed that she has born Abraham a son. What a beautiful example from the mother of the faith. Her heart here is not to complain but to laugh with joy at the goodness of God and celebrate the gift she is able to give her husband.
- Sarah, like Abraham is flawed, but she has grown over the years especially in this area. Remember in Genesis 16...

- **Genesis 16:2 (NIV 1984)** "So she said to Abram, 'The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her.' Abram agreed to what Sarai said."
- But now she is thanking God for what HE has done. Healing has happened in more than just her body.
- Let's keep moving forward in the text:

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

- We have a lot that we need to cover here to properly understand what is about to happen.
- Let's first get clear as mud on how old Isaac is here.
- I'm going to show you a slide that you may not be able to read, but you will be able to refer to it later on in the notes which will be on the app. While it does require some math to solve this problem, we love math and believe the scriptures give us some answers:



Then the Lord said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. Gen. 15:13

This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. Gal. 3:17

But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit...Gal.4:29



- You may remember this slide from Genesis 15. We added some scriptures that we want to walk you through.
- Remember in Genesis 15:13 God gives Abraham the promise: "*Then the LORD said to him, 'Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.'"*?
- Abraham is 75 years old when he receives this promise.
- Galatians 3:17 gives further clarity:
  - **Galatians 3:17** "What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise."
- 430 is the time elapsed from when Abraham receives the promise (that God gave him when he was 75) until the time when the law was given on Mt. Sinai. The Septuagint confirms this from Ex. 12:40.
- - **Genesis 15:13** "Then the LORD said to him, 'Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will

be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there."?

●  
(READ THE SLIDE)

## GREEK SEPTUAGINT

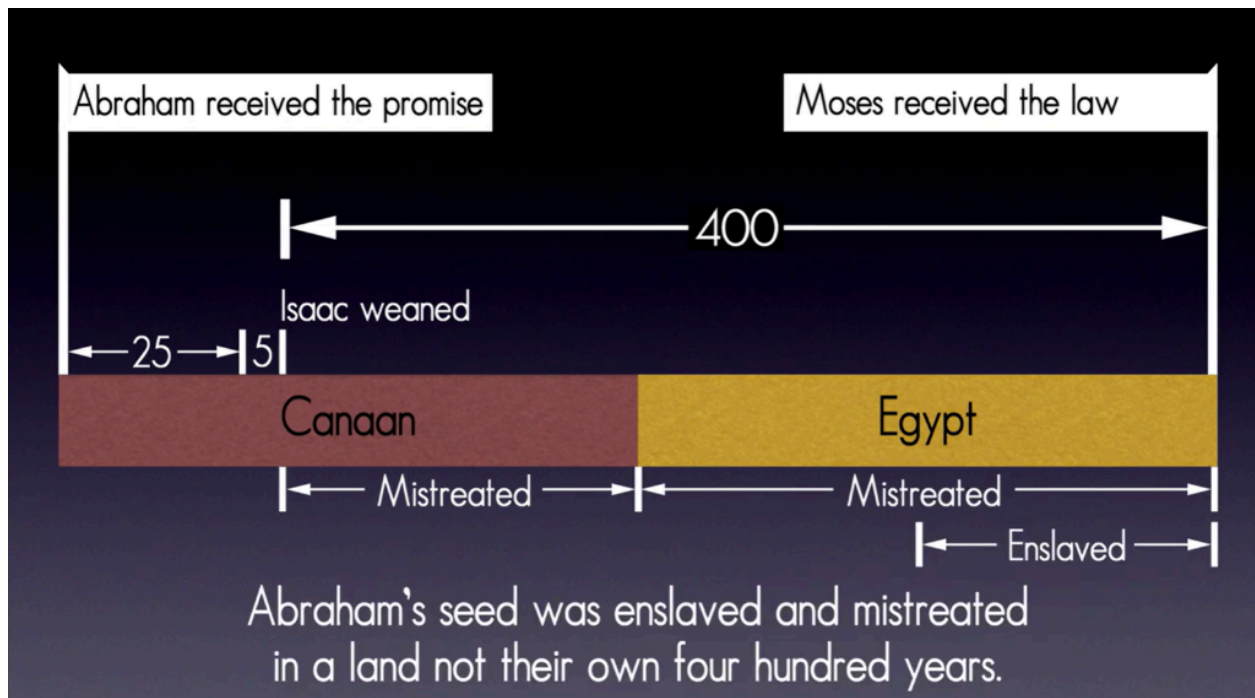
“And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Chanaan, [was] four hundred and thirty years.”

-Exodus 12:40 (*Greek Septuagint*)

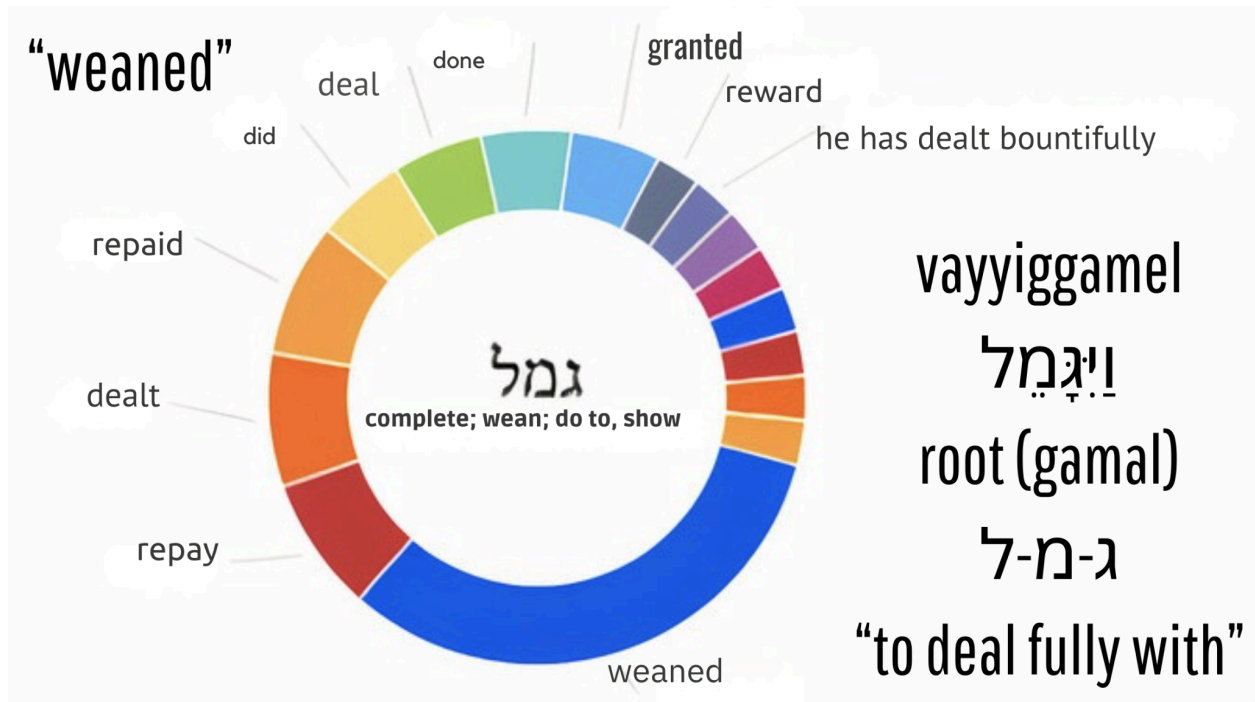
- Now as we saw in our text tonight Abraham is 100 years old when Isaac is born, meaning that he is 25 years into the 430 year timeline that Galatians 3:17 lays out.
  - While the text tonight does not specify that what Ishmael was doing to Isaac was persecution, Galatians 4:29 does:
    - Galatians 4:29 "At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now."
- Paul is specifically speaking about the interaction that happens between Isaac and Ishmael on this day when he was weaned.

- Since this is the first identifier of the persecution that Abraham's descendants would receive, then it initiates the 400 years of mistreatment.
- If Abraham was 25 years into the 430 years between the promise and mt. Sinai when Isaac was born; and there is a 5 year gap between Isaac's birth and the start of the mistreatment, that would make Isaac 5 years old.

(SLIDE)



- Now, with all of that being said, there was only one commentator that we could find that agreed with the conclusion that Isaac was 5 on this day so for now, just to be safe...we will say that he was between 2-5 years old. But personally, we are pretty certain he's 5...might be younger...but probably 5...or not...:)
- Now let's focus for a moment on this word "weaned".



- Vayyiggamel (H1581) is the word that is used here to highlight the moment when Isaac moved away from being nourished by his mother's milk to eating solid food only. It's true that in our culture where you can buy baby food in abundance at every gas station and grocery store makes it odd to hear about someone continuing to breast feed until their child is 5, it's not hard to see the wisdom in continuing to supplement a child's nutritional needs with free food that your body produces when you live in the wilderness in 2000 BC.
- However the root word "Gamal" (H1580) adds some nuance to this word that is worth mentioning.
- The root means to complete or deal fully with and could also be described as completing a specific period of development.
- I don't know anyone in America that has held a feast because their 18 month old is no longer breastfeeding...but if Abraham is celebrating that his 3, 4, or 5 year old is moving on to a more mature stage in life as a young boy, no longer a baby, then the boy that Ishmael is about to mock is more developed than the infant we might tend to picture as

we read through this story.

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

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

## Isaac = Laughter

- Abraham laughs - Gen. 17:17 / Sarah laughs Gen.18:12 (#6711)
- Gen 21:6-7 - 6 Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” (#6711)
- Genesis 21:9 But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking (#6711)

- There is a lot of word play going on here. There are the laughs that come from disbelief, the laughter that comes from joy, but then also the mocking that seems to be taunting, deriding, ridiculing or perhaps something even more harmful.
- Let's explore some usages of this word to try and capture a broader understanding.
  - **Genesis 26:7–9 (ESV)** 7 When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he feared to say, “My wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me

because of Rebekah,” because she was attractive in appearance. 8 When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife. 9 So Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, she is your wife. How then could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I thought, ‘Lest I die because of her.’”

**METZAHEK**  
מְצַחֵק  
**#6711**  
**CARESSING,  
ENTERTAINED,  
JESTING,  
LAUGH,  
LAUGHED, MAKE  
SPORT,  
MOCKING, PLAY**

- The same word is used here and in this context it does not seem that the gentile saw Issac "Laughing" with Rebekah and knew it was his wife not his sister. Siblings laugh and joke all the time and there would be nothing unusual about that. What the gentile king saw was much more explicit and conclusive in his mind than seeing "laughter" in the distance. The NIV and several other versions translate laughing here as "caressing".
- Let's look at another:

- **Genesis 26:8 (LSB)** Now it happened, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window and saw, and behold, Isaac was **caressing** his wife Rebekah.
- Let's look at another instance
  - **Genesis 39:10–18 (ESV)** 10 And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. 11 But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, 12 she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. 13 And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, 14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, “See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to **laugh** at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. 15 And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house.” 16 Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, 17 and she told him the same story, saying, “The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to **laugh** at me. 18 But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house.”

(SLIDE)

METZAHEK  
 מְצַחֵק  
 #6711  
 CARESSING,  
 ENTERTAINED,  
 JESTING,  
 LAUGH,  
 LAUGHED, MAKE  
 SPORT,  
 MOCKING, PLAY

- Laugh is the same word here but it is impossible to think of this simply as ridicule...Joseph goes to prison for essentially being accused of rape.
- Let's look at another instance:


(SLIDE)

METZAHEK  
 מְצַחֵק  
 #6711  
 "SO THE NEXT DAY  
 THE PEOPLE ROSE  
 EARLY AND  
 SACRIFICED BURNT  
 OFFERINGS AND  
 PRESENTED  
 FELLOWSHIP  
 OFFERINGS.  
 AFTERWARD THEY SAT  
 DOWN TO EAT AND  
 DRINK AND GOT UP TO  
INDULGE IN REVELRY."  
 EXODUS 32:6



- In Exodus 32:6 the word is used again in reference to the immorality that was occurring at the base of Mt. Sinai.
- We are learning more and more to take context into consideration as we consider what the authors intended meaning is.
- Let's return to what Paul has to say about this matter in Galatians.
- (SLIDE)

GALATIANS 4:28-29  
 NOW YOU,  
 BROTHERS, LIKE  
 ISAAC, ARE  
 CHILDREN OF  
 PROMISE. 29 BUT  
 JUST AS AT THAT  
 TIME HE WHO WAS  
 BORN ACCORDING  
 TO THE FLESH  
PERSECUTED HIM  
 WHO WAS BORN  
 ACCORDING TO THE  
 SPIRIT,



- **Galatians 4:28–31 (ESV)** 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh **persecuted** him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” 31 So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.
- Paul did not seem to think it was merely a joke but considered whatever was being done to Isaac by Ishmael to be persecution.

\*\*\*The best scholars in the world (Jewish and Christian) are divided because of the overwhelming usage of the Hebrew word that **merely means to laugh or play together** (mostly in an innocent way but that could also be used referring to ridicule). The Greek just means to mock or make jokes about someone.

However the context and other usage make it certainly possible that more nefarious things were going on.

- While we may not be able to conclusively say exactly what happened that day...that may not be the point.
- We see how Sarah responds: **“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.”**
- We know that Ishmael at this point is likely 19 years old and as young as 16 and Isaac is likely 5 or a little younger.
- However look at Abraham's response: **The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son.**
- If what Ishmael had done was so utterly repulsive, would righteous Abraham have been so torn in his spirit about what to do? Especially considering that Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul over the sexual immorality in Sodom.
- Consider also these facts:
  - Genesis 23:1 tells us that Sarah died at 127 years old, approximately 30 years later, making Abraham around 130. We learn from Genesis 25:1-6 that Abraham has 5 more sons:
    - **Genesis 25:1-6** 1 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.3 Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the descendants of Dedan were the Ashurites, the Letushites, and the Leummites.4 The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.5 Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. 6 But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his

concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

- Abraham didn't just send Ishmael away because of his mocking Isaac and he didn't just send Ishmael away because Sarah had a problem with Hagar...The focus was now turning to Isaac even though Abraham may not have been completely aware of this initially.
- Since Isaac was the promised son through whom the blessing came, sending away the other son with a blessing ensured the eldest son's inheritance (in this case, eldest son of Abraham and Sarah).
- Abraham's faith was undoubtedly strengthened by what God said in response to Abraham's distress.

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

- Essentially the God who has led Abraham thus far, reassures him and even reinforces what Sarah demanded stating that he will take care of Ishmael because he came from Abraham.
- This entire sequence of events from the celebration of Isaac being weaned, to the mocking that comes from Ishmael, to the reaction from Sarah, and God's confirmation of the actions Abraham should take seems very abrupt, but it is the will of God for Ishmael to be sent away and the focus to be on Isaac.
- Let's start back at verse 10 and continue in our study

**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.”**

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

- These verses contain what is possibly the most difficult moment of Abrahams life up until this point. Remember, when Abraham sees Ishmael, he does not see all that you and I read into his name. When you read Ishmael, you may think of Islam but that didn't unfold for another 2500 years. Abraham looked at him and simply saw a son.
- Recall how Abraham responded when God told him Ishmael would not be the promised son.
  - **Genesis 17:18 (NIV) 18** And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”
- You may look at this situation and relate it back to the first time Hagar was sent away. After all, in that instance it did not seem to bother Abraham to see Sarah mistreat her.
- There are certainly parallels we could draw out. But there is a glaring difference. Last time, Hagar ran away, and she was merely with child. Parents think about the two differences here. Imagine the heartache you would endure if your child ran away. It was certainly cause worry and stress, many of you have faced this. But now, imagine they did not run away, but you made them leave. That is an entirely different experience.
- Secondly, when Hagar ran away, there was no relationship between Abraham and his child to be. There was undoubtedly hope and excitement and concern as there is with any parent waiting for a birth. But it is something entirely different sending away your sons whom you love, who is becoming a man before your eyes, whom you have taught, cared for, loved and protected all these years.
- The text clearly says how difficult this was for Abraham *"The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son"*. As we discussed earlier, what Ishmael was doing to Isaac is widely debated. Whatever has happened, has distressed Abraham greatly possibly in more ways than one. If your older son has mistreated your younger

son, the reality that your son was capable of doing those things would be unsettling. But, what is more distressing is the idea of sending him away because of it.

- We also know it is difficult because Abraham hesitates to listen to Sarah, something he has also shown before to not do. He did not hesitate to marry Hagar or let Sarah mistreat Hagar. But this time he does. We also know that it is not always advantageous for a man to listen to his wife. That is after all the beginning of God's chastisement of Adam
  - **Genesis 3:17 (ESV)** 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'
- Although both women give word to their husbands, Abraham and Sarah is different. In the case of Adam and Eve, Eve gives direction for Adam to follow: "eat the fruit". Adam without question obliges and is thus condemned. Is the conclusion thus "never listen to anything you wife says?". No, because here in Genesis 21 Abraham does listen to Sarah, so what is the difference. Well, as you can see, in light of direction coming from his wife, Abraham does not immediately act, but instead waits on the Lord to either confirm or refute her suggestion.
- Husbands are unequivocally responsible for the direction of their home, that is why when Sarah suggests this, Abraham hears from God first before affirming. Once he does affirm, it is not only the suggestion of Sarah, but the judgment of Abraham who heard from God what the right action was.
  - **James 1:5 (NIV):** "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."
- Rashi comments that it was the voice of the Holy Spirit within Sarah to make this judgment. This would not be the last time a righteous

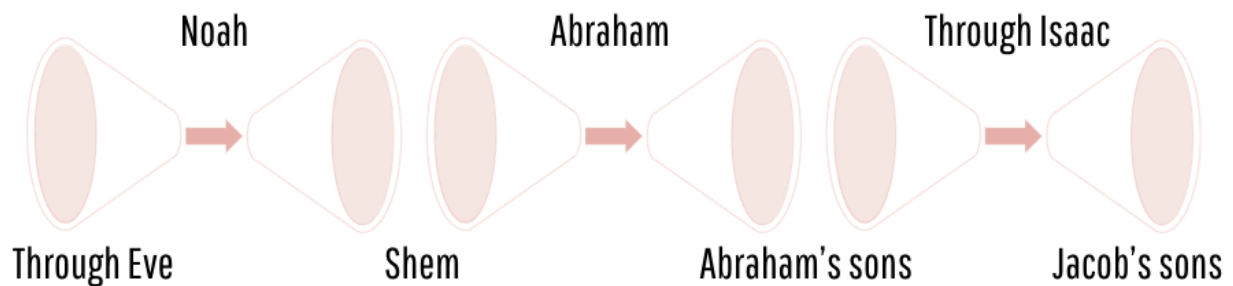
wife was used by God to speak the truth and act according to the Spirit for her family. Abraham's descendent Moses would also have a wife who acted righteously.

- **Exodus 4:24-25 (ESV)** 24 At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" 26 So he let him alone
- Zipporah sees the judgment of God on her husband and possibly her son also. She wastes no time and acts. The Lord honors her action and spares Moses.
- Another descendent of Abraham would meet a woman that became his wife because of her righteous action for her family.
  - **1 Samuel 25:23-24 (ESV)** 23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant.
- Abigail, acts and saves her household in light of her husband Nabal's wicked actions. This act is accepted by David and once judgment falls on Nabal, David married Abigail.
- God uses righteous women to act on behalf of their family. Sarah for Isaac, Zipporah for Moses and her son, and Abigail for her household.
- Regardless of Abraham or Sarah's decision or opinion: Hagar and Ishmael needed to leave. This was brought upon by the "mocking" done by Ishmael, but nothing could have stopped God from bringing about this action. As we mentioned earlier, God foretold Hagar that he would be hostile towards his brothers. Secondly, this is not only

the destiny of Ishmael, but all of Abraham's sons who did not come from Sarah.

- In a few chapters we will find out that Abraham had more sons through another wife after the death of Sarah, and near Abraham's death we see their destiny as well.
  - **Genesis 25:1-6** Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. <sup>2</sup> She bore him **Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak,** and **Shuah.** <sup>3</sup> Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. <sup>4</sup> The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. <sup>5</sup> Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. <sup>6</sup> But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.
- Only Isaac would remain with his father, near his death he sent away his other sons just as he did Ishmael many years earlier. Regardless of Ishmael's actions, he had to be sent away. Sarah was used by God to suggest the removal but God would have done it one way or another. Even after Sarah is dead and gone Abraham comes to the same conclusion. Any threat to Isaac had to be removed.
- It may be difficult to accept this truth, but it is nonetheless the truth. We have come to another narrowing of God's sovereign choice that will ultimately result in Christ. You should remember our funnels from 10 weeks ago, here is a new version for you

(SLIDE)



- Initially, the one who was foretold to crush the head of the serpent was to come through Eve. As it pertains to offspring, that is a wide qualifier.
- Next, out of the descendants of Eve, it would come only through Noah, one man out of the whole world, a narrow qualifier.
- From Noah's sons, the next qualifier would be a descendent of Shem - narrow
- From Shem, it would widen and narrow to Abraham
- From Abraham, it had to be a son from his own body! This could have meant any of his 8 sons
- From Abraham's sons, it had to be Isaac through Sarah, a narrow qualifier.
- In the coming weeks we will see it was come through Isaac's sons, of which he had two.
- This should serve to show the beautiful sovereignty of our God. You know from previous teachings that this eventually leads us to Christ and the salvation of Israel and Gentiles who desire to dwell in the tent of Shem and worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.



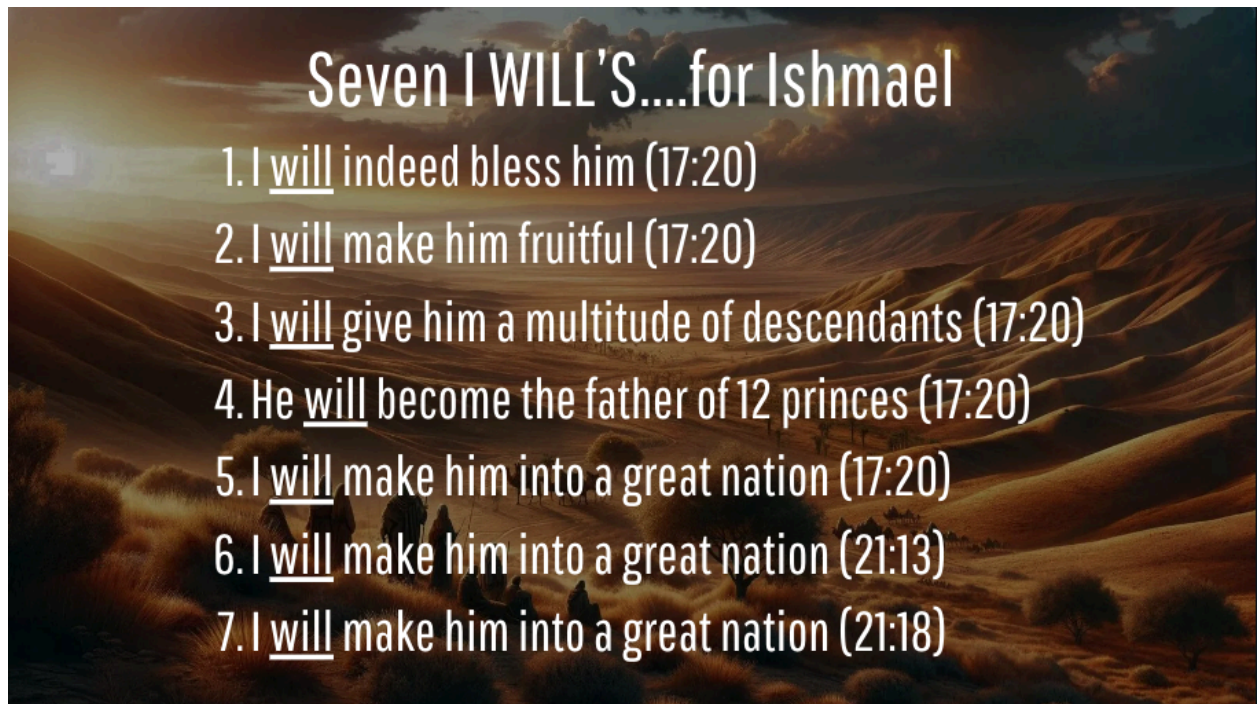
- Later in this chapter we will see an anticipatory parallel concerning this very mystery, but for now we must move on in the text.

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

**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.**

- Despite God's sovereign choice to remove Ishmael from the family of Abraham; God does not annul or renegotiate the promises he has made to Hagar concerning Ishmael. Before, The Lord spoke these promises to Hagar, but now they are reaffirmed to Abraham, and the Lord adds another reason or qualifier for why Ishmael has these promises, "*because he is your offspring.*"
- God has blessed Ishmael not because of his merit or accomplishment, but only because he was Abraham's son. Let's briefly review the promises given to Ishmael

**(READ SLIDE)**



- Not much will be said of Ishmael going forward, the story is centering exclusively around Isaac and the decedents who would ultimately lead to the Messiah.
- Paul comments on the contrast between Sarah and Hagar and Isaac and Ishmael that we have been discussing in Galatians 4 as we mentioned briefly earlier, lets read the passage:
  - **Galatians 4:21-31 (ESV)** 21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, **one by a slave woman and one by a free woman**. 23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. 24 Now this may be interpreted **allegorically**: these **women are two covenants**. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. 25 Now **Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem**, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 **But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother**. 27 For it is written,
 

“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;  
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!  
For the children of the desolate one will be more  
than those of the one who has a husband.”
- <sup>28</sup> Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. <sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” <sup>31</sup> So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.
- There is much we could dissect concerning this passage. As much as we would love to take the time to dispense the silly conclusions many commentators come to that lead them to disregard the perfect law of

the Lord given at Sinai and erase a prior covenant God made with his people.

- For now, we will merely remind you of an important passage in our study in Romans, we called it the Master Key to Interpreting Romans
  - **Romans 9:30-32 30 (ESV)** What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; 31 but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone
- Remember, Paul makes it clear that the covenant or law given to Moses was not the problem, it was the way in which Israel pursued righteousness through that covenant and law - by works; when, as Paul also makes clear, the original design of every covenant and the law was to approach it by faith.
- So, when Paul compares Hagar and Sarah to two covenants, the covenant at Sinai and the newer covenant, he is comparing the approach to righteousness through those covenants, not the covenant in and of itself.
- We could explain this in ad nauseum, but we would rather focus on the implications present in this chapter. Paul here is making clear the true distinction between Hagar and Sarah. It has less to do with the specific womb from which the son came, but the manner in which the father and mother believed and trusted God for the son to be come about. The Son had to come from Sarah, not because of any merit of her own, but because by having a child through Sarah, it required faith in a promise given by God. Sarah was barren and had no way to have a son unless God supernaturally intervened. This would require as we have been reading, great faith from Abraham and Sarah. In contrast, there was no faith required in the birth through Hagar, why? Because she was not barren and able to produce children without any difficulty.

- Isaac is the promised son, his birth required a supernatural testimony built on the faithfulness of God and the faith of his parents.
- All of this would foreshadow another promised son who must come through a supernatural birth and a descendant of Abraham.
  - **Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- We would love to discuss the theological connections to the Torah in Paul's writings more, but they are not in our purview for tonight, let's keep reading.

**15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bow-shot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob.**

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

- At first reading and without following the timeline it would be easy to think that we were talking about Ishmael as if he were a baby or a toddler. After all, consider some of this language:
  - Abraham set's the food on water on Hagar's shoulders
  - Hagar puts the boy under one of the bushes
  - She says, "I cannot watch the boy die"
  - Lift the boy up and take him by the hand
- Remember that Ishmael is now conservatively between the ages of 16 and 19 years old.
- We can likely rule out the possibility of some disability because of the later text in verse 20 which says he becomes an archer and lives in

the wilderness. As well as the fact that he fathers 12 sons according to the promise in Genesis 25.

- It is very possible that Ishmael is simply distraught over the situation that he and his mother find themselves in seemingly, as a result of his actions. Imagine the deep emotional turmoil of what is going on in this moment.
- Verse 14 says she went on her way to wander in the desert of Beersheba. Hagar has been here before. In the desert, a situation that seems hopeless...needing a miracle.
- From the onset, absent of divine intervention, to Hagar and Ishmael this quite possibly felt like the sentence of death.
- In the desert a bush would provide shade from the brutal sun.
- If Hagar places her son there and walks 100 yards away (approximate distance of a bowshot) so that she doesn't have to watch him die and begins to sob...it is clear she has given up all expectations that she will be saved.
- In verse 17 something happens...
- God hears Ishmael.

## Ishmael= God hears

- Genesis 16:11: "The angel of the LORD also said to her: 'You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery.'" GOD HEARS HAGAR
- Genesis 17:20: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation." GOD HEARS ABRAHAM
- Genesis 21:17: "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 HEARS ISHMAEL

- In Genesis 16:11 God heard Hagar on behalf of Ishmael.
- In Genesis 17:20 God heard Abraham on behalf of Ishmael.
- And now in Genesis 21:17 the voice of the boy who was named for God hearing now reaches heaven and heaven responds.
  
- We want to pause for a brief moment and make something clear before we go into this next section. Remember, Moses is writing this book and has the benefit of 400 more years of history watching god move through this covenant family before he writes Genesis. The names of God that are used in the text are either what these people called God, what God called Himself, or what Moses refers to God as to communicate a message.
- Consider this passage:
  - **Exodus 6:3 (NIV 84)** "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD [YHWH] I did not make myself fully known to them"
  
- YHWH appears several times in the stories of the patriarchs but it becomes clear that this is because Moses understands how He related to the family of Abraham.
  
- The Angel of God responds to Hagar to calm her fears, but something has changed that is easy to miss.

## YHWH

- Genesis 16:7 "The angel of YHWH"
- associated with the covenanted family of Abraham (Ex. 6:2-4, 19:5-6, Deut. 7:9, Jer. 31)
- Reveals Himself again and again to the descendants of Abraham in the covenant as YHWH
- Gentiles acknowledge YHWH after encounters with Israel (Rahab, Nebuchadnezzar, Naaman etc)

## Elohim

- Genesis 21:17-19: "The angel of Elohim"
- Universal name for God Gen. 9:8-17, Ps.19:1
- Hagar no longer in the covenant family but still under the universal care of Elohim
- Blessed for Abraham sake

- In Genesis 16:7 Hagar encounters the angel of YHWH facing death in the desert while she was technically still within the family of Abraham. He directly speaks to Hagar and gives her promises and blessings. The Lord chooses to reveal Himself as YHWH the covenant keeping God to Abraham and his descendants generation after generation.
- In Exodus 3:13-15 "I AM WHO I AM" instructs Moses to tell the Israelites that "YHWH, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you."
- Deuteronomy 7:9 says, "Know therefore that the LORD [YHWH] your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments."
- After gentiles encounter God through the Israelites like Rahab, Nebuchadnezzar, Naaman, and even the sailors aboard the boat with Jonah, they acknowledge YHWH as the true God.
- However Elohim is used to describe God in a more general sense emphasizing His role as Creator and sovereign over all creation.

- This is Genesis 1:1 In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.
  - **Psalm 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of Elohim; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.
  
- This moment is important for Hagar. She has been removed from the household of Abraham. Her son will not be the one to pass down the covenants and now it seems as if they will die in the desert.
- But the universal care of Elohim saves her and her son.
- What a powerful realization that she is not left alone but is still under the watchful eye of Elohim, looking after and tending to the cries of the afflicted...and even all this life saving care that she and her son receive, is still on account of God's relationship with Abraham.
- In verse 17 the angel of Elohim called to her and said, "What's the matter?"
- We find this question to be slightly humorous. We picture Hagar sitting in the desert with an empty skin of water, no food, 19 year old son distraught under a bush, both waiting to die, homeless under the hot sun...and the Angel of God says, "What's the matter?"
- Hagar turns and says, "Hello?"
- But the question from the angel of Elohim is not disingenuous or unaware, God is not insecure about the future of Hagar or Ishmael. He has already spoken blessings that secure both of their future.
- The answer seems to mirror that of a confident parent whose child is distraught over their present situation.
- Hagar is learning just how serious God takes the promises He makes.
 

She thinks the boy is about to die, but God has already declared some things that have to happen first.



## Seven I WILL'S...for Ishmael

1. I will indeed bless him (17:20)
2. I will make him fruitful (17:20)
3. I will give him a multitude of descendants (17:20)
4. He will become the father of 12 princes (17:20)
5. I will make him into a great nation (17:20)
6. I will make him into a great nation (21:13)
7. I will make him into a great nation (21:18)

- If these things haven't happened yet then Ishmael cannot die.
- Has he been fruitful yet? Then God is not done
- Has he had 12 sons yet? Then He's not ready to die
- Is it clear that he has been blessed? Then there is still more God is wanting to do.
- The angel of God is telling Hagar not to be afraid because God already spoke what was going to happen.
- You see, when we read this story, you might have a tendency to feel bad for Hagar and Ishmael.
- You might question what exactly it is that Ishmael did to merit being kicked out of Abraham's house...it may not seem fair to you.
- But consider the song we will be singing on the other side of eternity.
  - **Revelation 15:3 (NIV):** "They held harps given them by God and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: 'Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.'"

- You have to ask yourself what is it in your own heart that needs God to prove why His judgments are right.
- Look, if it was clear in the text then we would wrestle with it, but in the absence of information our trust in God should rise to calm any fears.
- When judgments are handed down by God through righteous men it is tempting to want to know all the details so that you can judge for yourself whether or not men are right or wrong, but in reality it is a lack of trust in God.
- Hagar at least has the excuse of not having the Bible to examine to see that God is faithful to His words over the millennia...She is reminded not to be afraid and the promise previously given over Ishmael's life is restated, both to Abraham who is in distress and to Hagar who is also distraught.
- If the Lord's answer to both Abraham and Hagar was do not be afraid, do not be in distress, how do you think we should read this story?
- How do you think we should react to His judgments in general?
- The best thing you can do in moments where the judgments of God are difficult to understand is not to observe your circumstances and be distraught.
- It is not to give up hope and go wait to die.
- It is to remember what has been written in the heavens, that is eternal and unchanging...this is what will build your faith and your hope...otherwise you will go from one situation of distress and feeling sorry for yourself to the next.
- We are not saying that Hagar and Ishmael's situation wasn't hard, we are saying the angel of God's immediate response is Don't be afraid, God hears.

- And we, unlike her, DO have testimonies over the course of millennia of God's faithfulness. And we know that when we see Him we will be saying, "just and true are your ways" so our response now should be certainty in His faithfulness.
- The apostle Peter has a good reminder for us in this:
  - **2 Peter 1:19 (NIV):** "We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."
- Let's return to the text to see how the Lord resolves this situation:

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

**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.**

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

- From this place of distress, Hagar is told to lift the boy up and take him by the hand.
- Her eyes are opened and she sees a well of water.
- Hagar and Ishmael seem to discover this well, but the one they have to thank for the provision is Abraham, and it takes God opening her eyes to see it.
- This will go on to be the story for the generations to come. Nations will be blessed because of the life saving wells in the desert of this world. As God opens their eyes, they will realize that Abraham and his household dug these wells and did the hard work of making them accessible.
- Once again, God has saved Hagar and Ishmael's life in the desert.

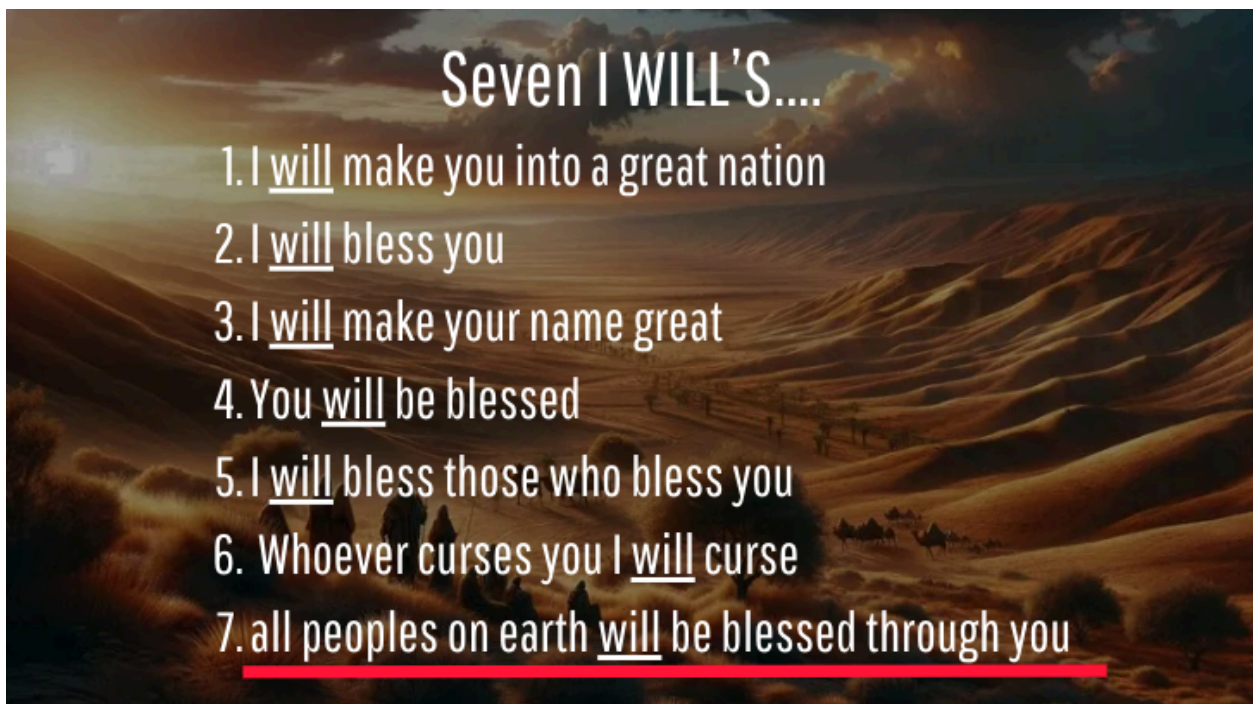
- Verse 20 and 21 go on to show Ishmael moving from a distraught boy ready to die crying under a bush to a skilled man thriving in the desert building a family of his own.
- And why is this possible? Because God was with the boy as he grew up and was faithful to His word.
- This familiar passage is appropriate for Hagar and Ishmael.
  - **2 Corinthians 1:8-10** we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. **9** Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. **10** He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.
- The focus will now fully turn to the promised son of covenant and away from Ishmael, but remember God remains faithful to Ishmael on account of Abraham and we will see him again. We encourage you to go back and listen to the series we did on Ishmael in may of 2023. For now let's get back to the unfolding story with Abraham.

**22 At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. 23 Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you." 24 Abraham said, "I swear it."**

- Here we are reintroduced to Abimelech. After last week's encounter there is still a relationship between the two of them! That is a miracle! We found it a little humorous that this time he brought the commander of his army!

- The event from the previous chapter seemed to leave a mark on Abimelech as it concerns Abraham, and the Lord! Abimelech is able to recognize that God is with Abraham in everything he does.
- We would like to draw your attention to the request Abimelech makes, *"swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you."*
- To us, that sounds like a pretty big ask! Swearing that you will not deal wrongly with Abimelech or his descendants and show them kindness as aliens in the future. To swear to show kindness to one man is one thing, that could be done, but all his descendants?! Remember, Abimelech is currently in the land the text describes as "the land of the Philistines" in verse 32!
- And, Abraham agrees, he swears he will! What kind of man could make such an oath?
- Only a man with a promise from God that he and his descendants would bless the whole world! Let's revisit our slide

(SLIDE)



- God promised that He would make Abraham bless all people on earth. When Abraham swears to Abimelech to show kindness and not deal falsely he is not standing on his own merit or ability, but on God's.
- Notice that this is not an oath that Abimelech makes in return, or one that Abraham asks him to make, it is completely unilateral (sound familiar?)
- This is an oath that not only Abraham lives out, but God upholds through his nation.
  - **Leviticus 19:33-34 (NIV)** "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God."
- In God's perfect law, He commands that the descendants of Abraham treat foreigners well and not mistreat them. Before Abraham's descendants were foreigners in Egypt, Abraham was a foreigner in the land of the Philistines and throughout Canaan! This law would command Abrahams descendants to show kindness to aliens, possibly even those residing in the land Abimelech currently ruled.
- We could take the time to trace Israel's history with treating foreigners with kindness, but we do not have the time. But, we do want to briefly show you that even thousands of year later, God is still helping Israel honor this oath.
- The conflict between Israel and the Philistines is all throughout the scriptures. That conflict has evolved over time into the current conflict in the Middle East.
- The word Palestine is derived from the Latin and Greek terms for Philistine in Hebrew.
- Now, you cannot necessarily trace the lineage of those living in Gaza or the West Bank to the Philistines of Abraham's day, but one thing is still true - they are living in the same area. And today, Palestinians

are welcome and safe to live within Israel's borders in complete alignment with Abraham's oath.

- Abimelech did not make such an oath to Abraham, and it shows today in the treatment of Jews in the land of the Philistines.

**25 Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized. 26 But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today."**

- Despite the cordial agreement prior, there is conflict within the relationship. The servants of Abimelech have "seized" a well. We are about to find out that this is a well Abraham dug. It is impossible to know if Abimelech is being truthful, it sounds a little dodgy to us, but it is inconsequential to the point.
- The point is: Abraham dug the well, but Gentiles have seized it as their own. It was not their well, they did not put in the work to dig it, they merely came along after it's completion and claimed it was there's as Abraham was away and are now drinking from it. This bothered Abraham and he will pay to reclaim it.
- Can you think of anything else that Abraham and his descendants have dug up, worked for and while they were away was seized by Gentiles to claim as their own?
- Too many theologians, pastors and churches worldwide have committed the same sin of Abimelech's servants and seized the well of salvation that Abraham's descendants dug and claimed it as their own. In our day Abraham's descendants at large have walked away from the well, Praise God we get to drink from it, but we don't get to seize it.
  - **Romans 11:17-18 (NIV) 17** If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **18** do not consider yourself to be

superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.

- Our church is waking up to the reality of the Israel-Dependent Gospel. It's our duty and calling as Gentiles who have drank from the well Abraham dug to live a life worth envying to the descendants of Abraham who have not.
  - **Isaiah 51:1-2 (NIV)** "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the **quarry from which you were hewn**; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many."
- We are cut from the quarry of Abraham, we drink from the well he dug. From the quarry came the rock that is Christ, and from the well came the Living Water that is Christ.
- We may not know who started to seize the well of Abraham in the generations behind us, but let us be the generation that securely proclaims, "this well was dug by Abraham".

## **27 So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a treaty.**

- In verse 27, Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a treaty, or as the ESV says, "covenant." You have heard us talk about this before. Back in Genesis 15, we showed you this slide:





- 
- You'll remember that the Hebrew phrase for this is Karat Berit (Kuh-Rot Buh-reet), which literally means "to cut a covenant."
- During Abram's day, covenants or agreements between two parties could and would most often be ratified using animals that were cut in two and arranged with a path in between. The two parties would then pass by each other back and forth between the animals with the understanding each party was saying "if I break the terms of this covenant may I be like these animals".
- The shedding of blood and the passing between the animal halves solidified the seriousness of the agreement. The unspoken message was clear: breaking the covenant would invoke judgment, mirroring the fate of the sacrificed animals.

Now look at Verse 28:

**Genesis 21:28 Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, 29 and Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?"**

**30 He replied, “Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well.”**

- In the narrative, Abraham sets apart seven ewe lambs from his flock. This action strikes Abimelech as odd, who asks about the meaning behind this unusual action. It's clear that this act deviates from the norms of a typical covenant ceremony. After all, they had already established a peace treaty, so these lambs must symbolize something beyond the usual terms of agreement.
- The Bible only mentions the use of seven ewe lambs in this specific instance, not before or after it in the entire Bible. The number seven carries symbolic weight, representing completion. This suggests that the covenant being established here is not only special but also signifies a new level of commitment unlike any seen before.
- Just so you don't have to take our word for it about the number seven, take a look at this slide. This is by no means an exhaustive list of how the number seven is used in the Bible...that list would be very long...here is a sample:

**(SLIDE)**

# SEVEN IN THE BIBLE

1. **Creation Story (21 patterns of Seven)**
2. **Gen 7:2 Seven clean animals on the Ark**
3. **Ex 25:37 Seven Lamps of the Menorah**
4. **Josh 6:3-4 Seven times marching around Jericho**
5. **Prov 9:1 Wisdom's seven pillars**
6. **Matt 18:21-22 Forgiveness (Seventy times Seven)**
7. **Revelation (At least 14 patterns of Seven)**

1. **21 times in the creation story (that we could count) there were patterns of seven used.**
  2. **Gen 7:2 Seven clean animals on the Ark**
  3. **Ex 25:37 Seven Lamps of the Menorah**
  4. **Seven Times Marching Around Jericho (Joshua 6:3-4)**
  5. **Wisdom's Seven Pillars - Proverbs 9:1 "Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars."**
    - a. The "seven pillars" represent the fullness and stability of wisdom, suggesting that true wisdom is solidly established and fully complete.
  6. **Matthew 18:21-22 - Forgiveness Seventy Times Seven (actually "seventy sevens")**
    - a. The use of seven here signifies the complete and limitless nature of forgiveness
  7. **At least 14 times in the book of Revelation is there patterns of seven**
- There are instances where seven lambs were sacrificed but not seven EWE lambs. A ewe lamb is a young female with the potential to bear offspring, probably less than a year old. Setting them apart

and giving them away signifies a profound sacrifice. Abraham is not just giving up these seven lambs but also the countless descendants they could have produced. It's a costly offering, symbolizing an everlasting commitment to the covenant.

- At the heart of this unique covenant is a well, a source of life in the desert. Abraham offers the ewe lambs as living testimony that he dug the well. These lambs remain alive, mirroring the well's life-giving water. It's a beautiful image, testifying to the hope and abundance that this covenant represents.
- Let's take a moment to consider the challenges of digging a well. It's backbreaking work, and we speak from experience. We've tried it ourselves on the property, even with power tools we couldn't get it done, we had to get a massive drill on a truck to come and dig down just 70 feet...this was twice that...Abraham has us beat. You see, you can dig a hole in the ground but can't force water to appear. It's a humbling reminder that while we can exert effort, ultimately, it's God who provides the life-giving water. To ancient people, this was almost mystical. They even hired diviners to locate water sources!
- Think about it: how long can a person survive without food? With determination, some can fast for weeks. But without water? Just a few days. That's why water holds such profound significance in the Bible. It represents the very source of life, a precious gift from God.
- When we carefully examine the Scriptures, we see that water is consistently associated with three core concepts: salvation, the intimate love between a man and woman, and physical life itself. These three elements are intertwined, each essential for human existence.
- Let's keep going, because the symbolism and the meanings of what happens here gets even deeper. (Pun intended?) ;)

**31 So that place was called Beersheba, because the two men swore an oath there.**

**(READ THE SLIDE)**

BE'ERSHEBA (be'er-she'ba; "well of the oath," or "of seven"). A city in the southern part of Palestine, about midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the southern end of the Dead Sea

Vos, H. F. (1988). Beersheba. In M. F. Unger & R. K. Harrison (Eds.), *The new Unger's Bible dictionary* (Rev. and updated ed.). Moody Press.

(SLIDE)



- This is the location on a map so you can see it. Knowing this well's importance, Abraham wanted to secure the well he had dug. He offered **seven** lambs as a tangible witness to his claim, and the place

was named Beersheba. Beer means well, and Sheba means **seven**, so Beersheba can be interpreted as "well of **seven**" or "well of the **covenant**." This name serves as a lasting reminder of the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech and what happened here.

**32 After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.**

- Do we have any horticulturists in here today?
- Abraham could have picked any tree, but he chose a tamarisk tree. This tree is rarely mentioned in the Bible. The tamarisk is one of the few evergreen trees in that region and stands as a year-round beacon. Abraham created a living landmark in a world without billboards or neon signs, proclaiming, "Here is water! Here is life!"
- It was a signpost pointing to salvation. Just as he had sacrificed seven precious ewe lambs, a unique and costly offering, just as he did something that had never been done before, Abraham now marked this place for all generations. The evergreen tamarisk shouts a timeless message: "In every season, there is life-giving water here."
- Are you starting to see the deeper meaning unfold?
- Isaiah 12:3 says, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."
- Abraham is the first among the men who marked the way to salvation. It would always be faith in Yahweh God. It would transcend seasons. God has always wanted the nations to join the Well of Salvation, so Abraham, God's friend, marked the well.
- In the fourth chapter of John, Jesus said, "You Samaritans worship what you do not know. Salvation is from the Jews." The well of salvation is found in Israel. It's found in a man named Jesus. Do you know what the southernmost border of Israel is? It's Beersheba. Where the well of Salvation was.
- Do you know what the northernmost border of Israel is? It's Mount Hermon. While there is not total consensus, it is highly likely that is where the Mount of Transfiguration occurred. What an amazing thing!

The southern border of Israel would be the well of salvation. The northern border would be when you got to see who Jesus is. It is almost like, from beginning to end, God wanted to reveal Jesus to Israel from the depths to the heights. God's plan has always been to bless one man so that he might bless the nations through him.

- Revelation 21:6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.
- This well is the same area (Desert of Beersheba) (Gen 21:30) of the well that Hagar's eyes were opened to see, and that sustained Ishmael in the desert earlier in Gen 21
- This is only the second well mentioned in the Scriptures (the first being in Gen 16:14 - Beer Lahai Roi means well of the Living One who sees me) when Hagar was told to return to Sarah.
- The well at Beersheba represents the well of salvation entrusted to the Jewish People through Abraham's heir.
- Both wells involved Ishmael in some way, but both wells were under the supervision, administration, or direction of the true heir, Isaac.
  - **Gen 26:18 NIV84**  
18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.
- The Philistines never honored the covenant but again and again broke it.
- The reason was the same every time... "they saw that Yahweh was with" Abraham or Isaac, and they tried to oppress them.
  - **Gen 26:23-25 NIV84** 23 From there he went up to Beersheba.  
24 That night the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for

the sake of my servant Abraham." 25 Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

- The Lord continually renewed the courage of the Patriarchs by assuring them that He would bless them despite the opposition.
  - **Gen 26:28-33 NIV84** 28 They answered, "We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, 'There ought to be a sworn agreement between us' — between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the Lord." 30 Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 31 Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace. 32 That day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, "We've found water!" 33 He called it Shibah, and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.
- The point is that Beersheba has a rich history of men of God withstanding the enemy for no other reason than the Lord being with them. It was the southern boundary of Israel and an important reminder that the army, their abilities, or their government were not the source of their protection. They are the People of God, and He is their King. When they honor Him, He protects them from all harm.
- Back in **Genesis 21:33** Let's focus on the name of the LORD, "Eternal God".
- "El Olam," the Eternal God is the first time this name of God has been used in the Bible. Having secured the well at Beersheba, Abraham plants an evergreen tamarisk tree beside it. This tree is green and steadfast through every season. It's a powerful symbol next to a



wellspring of life-giving water, pointing to the One who is the source of all life eternal.

- This Eternal God can also be translated as the God of the universe or maybe in a better way, as the God of the world to come. What does this mean? It speaks of a world transformed, a world made new according to God's perfect design. It speaks of the Messianic Age, a millennial reign of peace and righteousness. Imagine a new heavens and a new earth, where a redeemed humanity dwells in harmony. Divisions between Jews and Muslims fade away, and conflicts cease. Isaiah describes it as a day when enemies become friends and even weapons of war are transformed into plowshares.
- This is the glorious hope that our faith proclaims. It's the promise of resurrection into an eternal body, walking on a renewed earth where death and sorrow are no more. It's the hope Israel has always clung to, the hope of the twelve tribes, and the very heart of the Feast of Tabernacles, which we will celebrate soon.
  - Isaiah may be recalling this story when he uses this name of God in one of the most quoted verses in the Bible:
    - Isaiah 40:28–31 (ESV)
- 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The **LORD is the everlasting God**,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.  
29 He gives power to the faint,  
and to him who has no might he **increases strength**.  
30 **Even youths shall faint and be weary,**  
**and young men shall fall exhausted;**  
31 **but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;**  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
**they shall run and not be weary;**  
they shall walk and not faint.

- This is the heritage that Abraham left his sons, even his sons in the faith today. Trust in the everlasting God to give you the life-giving water of the Spirit that we talked about on Sunday to renew your strength and allow you to run and not grow weary.
- Let's put some of the imagery together.

(SLIDE)

# WELL OF BEERSHEBA

1. Revelation of “The Eternal God” - “El Olam”
2. Digging of the Well for Water
3. Planting of the Tamarisk Tree
4. Seven Ewe Lambs

**Speaks a message:**

- **Our faithful acts Today provide for our children in the days to come. (Genesis 26:17-18)**

- A revelation of the "The Eternal God" = "El Olam" = first occurrence
- Digging of the well for water that can only be supplied by God
- Planting the tamarisk tree = a show of faith that God would provide a continual supply of water from this well
- 7 Ewe Lambs, a perfect sacrifice that lasts through all generations
- **These all speak a message: We must clearly mark the well spring of salvation for generations to come**

### **Gen 26:17-18 NIV84**

17 So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. 18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names

his father had given them.

- Let's look at the last verse of the chapter tonight.

**34 And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.**

- Abraham is living in/under Gentiles knowing that it is his inheritance. We want to show you a few pictures from Modern day Israel that we took when we visited the very site of the well of Beersheba.
- This is the well that Abraham dug 4000 years ago.

(SLIDE)



- The amazing thing, that hits home when you visit this site is that from this position you can see two modern cities. One is the Modern Jewish city of beer sheva and the other is the modern Arab city of Omer. And right in the center of both cities is the well that Abraham dug.
- Still to this day, the legacy that Abraham left is to bring salvation to all people. His promised son Isaac and his son Ishmael.

(SLIDE)

# Jewish city of beer sheva



(SLIDE)

# Arab city of Omer



(SLIDE)

## Well of beer sheva in the middle



While God's covenant and promises were passed down through Isaac, God still loved and cared for Ishmael. This is reflected in the story of Hagar and Ishmael finding the well in the desert, saving their lives. The well represents a shared heritage between Jews and Ishmael's descendants, even though the custodianship of the covenant was given to Isaac's descendants.

- The deep-seated tensions and misunderstandings between Jews and Muslims are fueled by the enemy's lies, twisting historical events and interpretations of Abraham's story. These lies have poisoned hearts and minds, perpetuating a false narrative of rejection. Yet, there is hope for healing.
- The well of Beersheba is a symbol where both Jews and Muslims can begin to dismantle the walls of hostility through encountering Jesus, the true well of living water, hearts can be transformed. As Jesus declared,  
"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (**John 4:13-14 ESV**)

- In Jesus, the promised seed from the lineage of Isaac, Muslims can discover the profound truth that they were never rejected. Instead, they find acceptance, love, and a place in the family of God. Through Him, the ancient wounds of division can be healed.

## Closing

- As we come to a close tonight, we want to acknowledge that we have covered some difficult concepts in this chapter:
  1. The mocking and persecution of Isaac from his brother
  2. The removal of Ishmael from the house along with his mother
  3. The dramatic moment in the desert
  4. And conflict between Abraham's descendants and the surrounding nations
- In all of this, one thing becomes more and more clear
  - **Romans 8:28 (NIV):** "...in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
- The degree to which this is proven out in Abraham's life is remarkable.
- Abraham though he is in extreme distress over family issues, is comforted by the counsel of God and follows through on it immediately.
- Abraham is faithful to God even in letting go of Ishmael at roughly the age of 18...parents around the world can be comforted by Abraham's example of trust in God to let go of him and believe that what God has spoken He will do.
- God hears the cry of the afflicted in their distress. Even when you are seemingly living in the consequences of your actions, you cannot see the bigger picture of God's plan for your life...if you will listen to His

voice and let Him open your eyes you too will be able to drink deeply from the well. Let's remember this verse:

- **Revelation 21:5-6 (ESV)** And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." **6** And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.
- And finally, as you persist and sacrifice to establish your family as a life giving spring in the desert, it is a battle worth fighting. It is a conflict worth engaging in. Of course there is resistance, of course the enemy will try to seize the well but be like that evergreen tree that stands as a reminder through every season that there is life right here for the thirsty to come and drink.