GENESIS 21

The Child of Promise

1 Then Yahveh visited Sarah as He had said. Yahveh did to Sarah as He had spoken. **2** For Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at the exact time[i] that Elohim had said it would happen.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son,[ii] who was born to him, the one Sarah gave birth to for him, Isaac.[iii] **4** Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was 8 days old, just as Elohim had commanded him. **5** Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6 And Sarah said, "Elohim has made me laugh. All who hear will laugh with me."

7 And she said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have given birth to a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

8 And the child grew and they weaned him. Abraham made a great feast the same day that they weaned Isaac. **9** But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, the son whom Hagar gave birth to for Abraham, mocking Isaac.

10 Therefore, she said to Abraham, "Send this covenant[iv] servant woman and her son away. The son of this covenant[v] servant woman will not be heir along[vi] with my son Isaac."[vii]

11 Sarah's demand was very[viii] troubling[ix] to Abraham because Ishmael was also his son.

12 But Elohim told Abraham, "Don't be sad about the boy and your servant woman. Listen to Sarah's voice in all that she has said to you. For the Descendant[x] that I promised you will come through Isaac.[xi] **13** But I will also make a nation of the son of the servant woman because he is your son."

14 So Abraham rose up early in the morning. He took bread and a leather bag of water. He gave them to Hagar and put the water on her shoulder. Then he sent her and the child away. After she left, she wandered in the wilderness of Beer Sheba.[xii] **15** After the water was gone, she put the child under one of the shrubs. **16** Then she went and sat down a good distance away from him, about a bow shot.

She said to herself, "Don't let me see the death of the child."

So she sat a good distance away from him, and wept loudly.[xiii] **17** When Elohim heard the voice of the boy, the Angel[xiv] of Elohim called to Hagar out of heaven. He said to her,

"What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid. Elohim has heard the voice of the boy where he is. **18** Get up. Pick up the boy and hold him in your hand. I will make him a great nation."[xv]

19 And Elohim opened her eyes so that she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the boy a drink. **20** Elohim was with the boy. He grew up, lived in the wilderness, and became an archer. **21** He lived in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.

Covenant with Abimelech

22 Now it came to pass at that time that Abimelech[xvi] and Phichol, the chief captain of his army, spoke to Abraham. They said, "Elohim is with you in all that you do. **23** Now therefore, swear to me here by Elohim that you will not deal falsely with me, nor[xvii] my son, nor with my son's son. But as I have treated you

with kindness,[xviii] you will do the same to me, and to the people with whom you have lived as a foreigner."[xix]

24 And Abraham said, "I will swear."

25 But Abraham chided[xx] Abimelech because his servants had violently seized a well of water. **26** But Abimelech said, "I don't know who did this thing. And you never told me. Today is the first time I heard about it."

27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech. Then they both made a covenant.

28 Abraham also set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. **29** And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you set by themselves?"

30 And Abraham said, "Take these seven ewe lambs from me. They are a witness for me that I dug this covenant[xxi] well."

31 Therefore, he called that place "Beer Sheba"[xxii] because both of them made an oath there. **32** Thus, they made a covenant at Beer Sheba. Then Abimelech rose up with Phichol, the chief captain of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

33 Abraham planted a tree in Beer Sheba and called on the name of Yahveh, the everlasting El.[xxiii] **34** And Abraham lived as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines' for many days.

---

i The Hebrew מוֹעֵד (*mo-eyd*) means an appointment, fixed time, an assembly. It stresses precision rather than just chronology. Here it shows the very time when God had determined a divinely appointed event. It highlights God's precise control of all things.

ii The Hebrew is אֶת־שֶׁם־בְּנוֹ. Two maqqephs join the three words together into a single construct. This is one of the special 12,000 occurrences of the **Aleph**-**Tav**, the symbol of Jesus, the symbol of God's covenant. Isaac, the second-born son of Abraham is now Abraham's firstborn and only son (Gen 22:2). Physical birth is only the smallest least important part of understanding the word "firstborn."

iii "He laughs"

iv The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

v The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

vi The Hebrew עִם־בְּנִי עִם־יִצְחָק means "with my son, with Isaac." Sarah is using repetition for emphasis. She states, "my son" and then restricts it further to just Isaaac. It is appositional (focusing, narrowing), not additive. She stresses two things: 1) Isaac alone is Abraham's legitimate heir, and 2) Ishmael is NOT Abraham's heir.

vii Galatians 4:30.

viii The Hebrew מְאֹד (m^e-*od*) means vehemently. Synonyms include very, greatly, exceedingly, fervently, passionately, violently, intensely, much, mightily, and vigorously.

ix The Hebrew רָעַע means to experience or cause harm, distress, injury, or trouble. In the Qal, it is intransitive and expresses an internal state: "to be troubled," "to be distressed," "to be hurt," or "to be in a harmful condition." It does not inherently mean "evil" unless the context explicitly requires moral evaluation. In emotional contexts, it naturally conveys inner pain or deep disturbance.

x The Hebrew זַרְעֲךָ (seed) is a singular construct that holds a dual meaning. First, "seed" is grammatically singular, but it regularly functions as a collective referring to offspring as a whole rather than to an individual. God's promise is to all of Abram's descendants "**IN EVERY GENERATION**." Second, "Seed" refers to Jesus, the Gen 3:15 "Seed of the woman," through whom the promise is secured. He will rule the land during the 1,000 year Millennium.

xi Romans 9:7, Hebrews 11:18.

[xii] Beer Sheba means “well of the sevenfold oath.” Hagar was an Egyptian. She was in the process of going back to Egypt.

[xiii] The Hebrew is אֶת־קֹלָהּ. First, the construct emphasizes the volume of her weeping. She wept loudly. Second, a maqqeph joins the **Aleph**-**Tav** with the words “her voice.” Elohim — Jesus, the **Aleph**-**Tav** — hears her weeping. See the article “The **Aleph**-**Tav**.”

[xiv] The word “Angel” must be capitalized because of the subject “I” that begins the last sentence of this verse. Only God can make Ishmael a great nation.

[xv] Acts 3:25.

[xvi] Abimelech means “my father is king.” It is a title of a king.

[xvii] The literary technique of Polysyndeton uses multiple “nor”s (or other conjunctions) in a series. It slows the reader and gives emphasis to each item.

[xviii] The Hebrew חֶסֶד (*cheh-sehd*) means steadfast love or covenant mercy. It is all the aspects of Elohim’s love based on Elohim’s covenant faithfulness. Synonyms include beauty, favor, loving kindness, mercy, pity, goodness, faithfulness, and love.

[xix] The Hebrew גּוּר (*goor*) means “to sojourn” or “to dwell temporarily” as a non-native. It reflects the condition of living as a dependent or vulnerable outsider, often without legal rights or permanent settlement. It is closely related to the noun גֵּר (*geyr*), meaning “sojourner” or “resident alien.”

[xx] The Hebrew יָכַח means to appoint, correct, decide, or judge rightly. It often appears in legal or judicial contexts. “Chided” captures Abraham’s formal but restrained protest over Abimelech’s servants taking the well.

[xxi] The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article “The **Aleph**-**Tav**.”

[xxii] Beer Sheba means “well of the sevenfold oath.”

[xxiii] The Hebrew יְהוָה אֵל עוֹלָם means “Yahveh, the everlasting God.” A reasonable option is: Jesus, the everlasting God.