

Genesis

Memorize the TRUTH!

Lesson 10 God Fulfills His Promise Genesis 20–21

Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.”
Genesis 21:8

God Protects Sarah – Genesis 20:1-7

Day 1

1. a. Review Genesis 12:11-20. How is this situation similar?

b. Sarah was 90 years old, yet she was desired in a harem. What does this suggest God may have done to prepare Sarah to bear a child?

c. How could this have threatened the legitimacy of the son God had promised?
2. How did God rescue Sarah from this situation?
3. What did God do in this passage to confirm that Abraham was still the one He had chosen to bless and to be a blessing to others?

Learn the TRUTH!



After long years of waiting, Abraham and Sarah were blessed by the arrival of Isaac. While Abraham and Sarah were not perfect in their faithfulness to God, God remained faithful to them. As you study this week, thank God for staying faithful to us even when we fail to be faithful to Him (2 Timothy 2:13).

God Shows Mercy – Genesis 20:8-18

Day 2

4. a. How did Abimelech respond to God's command?

b. What does this tell you about his heart?
5. a. What excuses did Abraham make when Abimelech asked why he lied?

b. Share about a time that your faith wavered because circumstances were uncertain or threatening. What was the outcome?

The Promised Son
Genesis 21:1-7

Day 3

6. a. How old were Abraham and Sarah when the son God promised was born?

b. How long had they waited for this child after he was first promised? Genesis 12:1-4

7. a. Describe Sarah's feelings after the miraculous birth of her child.

b. The name Isaac means laughter. Why is this name especially appropriate for this child?

Ishmael is Sent Away
Genesis 21:8-21

Day 4

8. a. What was Ishmael's attitude toward Isaac?

b. How does this fulfill what was predicted in Genesis 16:12?

9. What did Sarah perceive was a threat to her son?

10. Why did God overrule Abraham and support Sarah in this matter?

11. How was God merciful to Ishmael and Hagar?

Treaty With Abimelech
Genesis 21:22-34

Day 5

12. a. What did Abimelech say about Abraham?

b. What did he ask of Abraham?

13. How has your relationship with God affected your relationships with your family and friends?

Live the TRUTH!

God used Abimelech, a pagan king, to deliver a reprimand to Abraham. Abimelech showed more integrity than Abraham. Abraham's deception was a bad reflection of the life of a worshiper of God in the eyes of the neighboring tribes. What does that mean to you? Are you living a godly life outwardly? If you have a Jesus sticker on your car, you might think twice before you cut someone off in traffic. If you wear a cross around your neck, think about that before you are rude to a store clerk. The "neighboring tribes" are watching!

Commentary Genesis Lesson 10

Soon after God's announcement of Isaac's birth but before Sarah becomes pregnant, Abraham is living in a region of the Negev controlled by the Philistine king Abimelech. Sarah is a striking woman, and Abimelech covets her for his harem. He feels free to take her because Abraham has resorted to his half-truth of claiming that Sarah is only his sister, as he did 25 years earlier in Egypt. Abraham has again placed Sarah in a difficult position.

God moves immediately to maintain the purity and security of the couple's marriage by appearing to the Philistine king in a dream. In the dream, God reproves him in language that strikes terror in his heart: "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife" (20:3, English Standard Version). Although Abimelech does not know God, he understands that he is accountable to heaven for his actions. In his own defense, Abimelech pleads that both Abraham and Sarah lied to him. God acknowledges the truthfulness of this claim, adding that Abimelech's failure to violate Sarah was due to God supernaturally restraining him. Abimelech must return Sarah to Abraham. Though Abraham has sinned, God is not reluctant to identify him as a prophet, the first use of the term in the Bible and its only use in Genesis. God tells Abimelech that Abraham "will pray for you and you will live."

Again, a pagan rebukes Abraham, the worshiper of God, for his dishonesty. Abimelech calls Abraham to account for his lie in strong language: "How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done."

Abraham offers three excuses. First, he feared for his life. Second, Sarah actually is his half sister. Third, he had requested that Sarah lie as a demonstration of her love. Certainly none of Abraham's reasons would impress God, but Abimelech refuses to contest them and determines to compensate Abraham. As in the case of Pharaoh 25 years earlier, Abimelech's gifts are lavish: livestock and slaves and the invitation to live anywhere he likes within the king's domain. The king vindicates Sarah's honor by giving Abraham 1000 shekels of silver "to cover the offense" of taking her into his household.

As God promised, Abraham the prophet prays for Abimelech. The females of Abimelech's household had lost their ability to conceive the moment that Sarah came into the harem. Abraham's prayer releases God's healing, and Abimelech's household returns to normal. Also, Abraham's marriage is restored to normal at this crucial point. Though Abraham was unfaithful, God remained faithful (2 Timothy 2:13).

After 25 years of waiting, "the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised." The longed-for son at last arrives, and at the very time God had predicted. In keeping with God's word, the boy is named *Isaac*, which means *he laughs*. At the proper age of eight days, he is circumcised and made a child of the covenant.

Check It Out:

Sometimes a way of handling a problem can become so familiar that, when the problem recurs, we slip right into our old ways without a thought. Abraham apparently did just that. Too often a shock is needed to jar people out of their sinful habits. In this instance, God's shock treatment was to rebuke Abraham through a pagan king. Will God have to allow a shock treatment to awaken us to any habits that have caused us to depart from His ways?

Many people take God at His word in simple faith. Others find that learning to trust God is a never-ending process. Sarah seems to belong in the latter camp. When she first hears she is to become a mother, Sarah laughs with a skeptical snicker, reluctant to believe what God has said. Now that Isaac has actually arrived, her laughter is transformed to genuine joy. Sarah's experience displays the grace of God: "Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as He had said." She initially stumbled at the promise of God despite His many past favors, but eventually recognized her own unbelief and overcame it.

Genesis 21:8 moves the story of Isaac ahead several years: "The child grew and was weaned." Weaning typically takes place between the ages of three and five, so this is a milestone. Abraham sponsors an enormous feast, and sometime during the festivities Sarah notices Ishmael, who is about 16 years old, "mocking" Isaac in some way. After the guests leave, she issues an order 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." Abraham is "distressed," but he is surely relieved when God assumes full responsibility for Ishmael's welfare: "I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

Abraham provides Hagar and Ishmael with food and water and sends them away. The exiled family roams the inhospitable region of the Negev around Beersheba. Finally, exhausted and without supplies, they stop to die. Both begin to weep. It is then that God speaks, assuring Hagar that Ishmael not only has a future, but a distinguished one: "I will make him into a great nation." Then God reveals a nearby well; its water will revive them. Isaac would become a man of distinction, living along the western edge of the Promised Land and eventually marrying an Egyptian woman.

Because God is blessing Abraham, Abimelech seeks a treaty to guarantee peace between them. He asks for an oath before Abraham's God that the prophet will deal truly with him. While they are talking, Abraham calls attention to a problem: Abimelech's servants have seized a well that Abraham dug long ago, denying his claim and refusing to allow his flocks and herds to drink there. Abimelech claims no knowledge of this and soon restores the well. The two leaders draw up a second agreement over the well in question. The location is named Beersheba, meaning, well of the oath. The section closes by noting that Abraham stays in the area for a long time.



Like Abraham, we are to live as travelers through this world while possessing a strong attachment to another homeland. Abraham was promised the entire land of Canaan, but died owning very little of it. "By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:9-10).

Consider your future, sojourner: One day you will reside in heaven, no longer a resident alien on earth, but home forever with God. And won't it be great to share experiences with Abraham?



Where does our citizenship really lie? How should our lives be in contrast to those of non-believers?

Philippians 3:17-21