



## Lesson 14

# THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

### Story Elements

- **TEXT:** Gen. 21:1-21
- **Setting:** circa 2000 B.C. in Gerar and Beer-sheba
- **Main Characters:** God, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Ishmael, and Hagar
- **Plot:** Isaac is born when Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 90.
- **Key word(s):** “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” (v 6)
- **Climax:** *Genesis 21:10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.*

### Laughing

- 1) (vv 1-5) As God had promised (12:2; 15:4-5; 17:7) a son was born to Abraham and Sarah “at the set time.” Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 when the promised child finally arrived some 25 years after God’s initial promise (*cf.* 12:4). Notice Abraham’s obedience to the commands of God in the birth of his son:
  - a) His son was named Isaac (which means \_\_\_\_\_) just as God had said. (17:19)
  - b) His son was circumcised on the \_\_\_\_\_ day, just as God had commanded. (17:12)
- 2) (vv 6-7) Sarah expressed her joy by recounting how her secret laughter of amazement (18:12-15) has turned to \_\_\_\_\_ laughter of delight and wonder.
- 3) (v 8) When Isaac was \_\_\_\_\_ (at about two years of age) Abraham celebrated by hosting a great feast.

### Mocking

- 4) (v 9) The teenaged Ishmael did not take kindly to his toddler half-brother and treated him cruelly. Sarah caught Ishmael mocking Isaac and demanded that Abraham send “the son of this bondwoman” away - along with his mother. James Murphy notes: “Rightly was the child of promise named Isaac, the one at whom all laugh with various feelings of incredulity, wonder, gladness, and \_\_\_\_\_.”<sup>1</sup>
- 5) (vv 11-13) Abraham’s heart was heavy with the grief that comes with family turmoil, but God spoke to him and assured him that Ishmael and Hagar would be \_\_\_\_\_, even in their exile.

### Crying

- 6) (vv 14-16) Early in the morning, Abraham gave Hagar and Ishmael food and water and sent them away.

<sup>1</sup> Murphy, James G. *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis*. Boston: Estes and Lauriate, 1873. Print.

- a) They wandered in the wilderness of \_\_\_\_\_ until the supplies were depleted.
- b) Knowing that they would soon die of \_\_\_\_\_, Hagar placed Ishmael under a shrub and left him to die. Overcome with hopelessness, she walked away, unable to endure the agonizing cries of her dying son.
- 7) (vv 17-19) But God heard their plight, and the angel of the LORD came down to Hagar, saying, “Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.” This was a reminder of God’s promise made to Hagar before Ismael was born (*cf.* 16:11). The God who named the child Ishmael (which means *God shall \_\_\_\_\_*) had heard the boys dying cries.
- a) The angel told Hagar to go to Ishmael and hold him because he would \_\_\_\_\_, and God would raise up from his descendants a great nation of people.
- b) Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. Hagar and Ishmael were saved. Matthew Henry noted, “Many that have reason enough to be comforted go mourning from day to day, because they do not see the reason they have for comfort. There is a well of water by them in the covenant of \_\_\_\_\_, but they are not aware of it; they have not the benefit of it, till the same God that opened their eyes to see their wound opens them to see their remedy.”<sup>2</sup>
- 8) (vv 20-21) Ishmael grew to adulthood with the blessing of God. He and his mother dwelt in wilderness of Paran, which is in the Sinai peninsula. Hagar took a wife for Ishmael from the land of \_\_\_\_\_.

## Application

- 9) (vv 22-34) The last part of the chapter is not incidental, but a special detail that gives us the full theme of chapter 21: \_\_\_\_\_ . Isaac was the first of the promised seed, and Beer-sheba was the first of the promised soil. After 25 years of sojourning in Canaan, Abraham officially owned a piece of it – the well he dug in Abimelech’s country.
- 10) Paul tells us that the events of Genesis 21 can be allegorized, that is, they are historical events that teach deeper spiritual truths. (*cf.* Gal. 4:24-31)
- a) Isaac, the child of promise, is like the Christian who is \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ and heir to all the Father’s estate.
- b) Ishmael, the child of the bondwoman, is the like the unbeliever who is born a slave to \_\_\_\_\_ and disallowed from the Father’s estate.

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### Answer Key

Key Word(s) “laugh” | 1. a) laughter; b) eight | 2. public | 3. weaned | 4. scorn | 5. blessed | 6. a) Beer-sheba; b) thirst | 7. hear; a) live; b) grace | 8. Egypt | 9. God keeps his promises | 10. a) born free; b) sin

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<sup>2</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.