



Genesis 21:1-34

# FAITHFULNESS ACCORDING TO GOD

After twenty-five years, in God's "fullness of time," God gave to Abraham and Sarah His promised son. God is never late with His promise. Abraham had to learn the ways of God as well as the nature of God. **This always takes time!** God knows what it will take to develop the character of the one He would trust with eternal things. Too much is at stake for God to entrust eternal matters and consequences to an immature person of faith... This is always serious with God. Whatever it takes for a child of His to develop an essential character that God can trust, God will do. When extensive time passes between a promise given and the receiving of God's promise, too many break off the relationship, or fail to continue and obey, or begin to make demands of God, and therefore cancel what God would have done. It is never that God cannot do a mighty work but that He chooses not to when the character is not in place. When character is not in place, God works on the heart.

—Henry Blackaby (1935-2024)

**FINALLY!** After twenty-five years and many ups and downs, Abraham and Sarah hold the promised son, Isaac (aka Laughter), in their arms. Abraham is 100 years old; Sarah is 90. Isaac's birth is a miracle of God's faithfulness and power. Abraham and Sarah laugh with uncontained joy! But there is still so much for them to learn about God and themselves on this journey of faith. There is much for us to learn too.

## GOD'S GOODNESS GIVES US REASON TO REJOICE! (21:1-7)

- The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ Sarah.
- The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ His Word.
- The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ them joyous Laughter!

*You have turned for me my mourning into dancing!  
You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness,  
That my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent.  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever!* —Psalm 30:11-12

## GOD'S PLAN MAY BRING US TO A PLACE OF PAIN. (21:8-14)

- Ishmael \_\_\_\_\_ at Isaac (cf. Gal. 4:29).
- Sarah \_\_\_\_\_ at Abraham.
- Abraham \_\_\_\_\_ the whole situation.
- God \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham to let Ishmael go.

*Long-looked-for comes at last! ...  
Few in the OT were brought into  
the world with such expectation  
as Isaac was, not for the sake of  
any great personal eminence...  
but because he was to be a type  
of Christ, that seed which the holy  
God had so long promised and  
holy men so long expected.*

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

**Visit.** Heb., *paqad*, "to attend to, visit." "It describes a divine intervention in someone's life that shapes or alters destiny." (Ross)

*Of all the things God created, I am  
often most grateful He created  
laughter.* —Charles Swindoll

*Only here is anyone said to be  
"very displeased" [ra'a]. This brief  
sentence gives a glimpse of Abra-  
ham's deep love for Ishmael... The  
word order delaying the mention  
of "the child" [21:14] until the last  
possible moment conveys Abra-  
ham's great reluctance to part  
with Ishmael.* —Gordon Wenham

*Abraham [may have] limited her  
provision in order that she might  
not go far from his house.*

—John Calvin (1509-64)

## **GOD’S MERCY MEETS US IN TIMES OF DESPERATION.** (21:15-21)

- Hagar reaches the end of her rope.
- Ishmael nears the end of his life.
- God \_\_\_\_\_ their cries for help (cf. 16:11).
- God opens her eyes to the provision near her.
- God blesses and protects Hagar and Ishmael.

## **GOD’S PEACE EMPOWERS US TO PURSUE PEACE.** (21:22-34)

- Abimelech sees God’s hand in Abraham’s life...but he also still remembers Abraham’s duplicity.
- Abimelech seeks a covenant of peace with Abraham.
- Abraham tests Abimelech’s sincerity with the mention of a well that Abimelech’s servants had seized from Abraham.
- Abraham and Abimelech cut a covenant together.
- Abraham provides an additional gift of peace to Abimelech.
- Abraham calls the place *Beersheba*, the well of the oath.
- Abraham calls on the name of the Lord, *El Olam*.

## **GOD’S SON CONFRONTS US WITH A CRITICAL CHOICE.**

Isaac is a type (foreshadowing) of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. His birth is miraculous, dependent on God’s promise and power, coming in the “fullness of time,” and yet overlooked in the eyes of the world. His innocence, obedience, and willing sacrifice in Genesis 22 also foreshadow the coming sacrifice of God’s only Son, Jesus.

Just as Isaac (laughter) provokes three kinds of responses in Genesis, so the person of Jesus Christ provokes three kinds of responses:

- The laughter of doubt
- The laughter of mockery
- The laughter of joy!

*Often in the trials of life we fail to see the divine provisions God has made for us. We open our hands to receive what we think we need instead of asking Him to open our eyes to see what we already have. The answer to most problems is close at hand, if only we have eyes to see.* —Warren Wiersbe

*“God heard the lad” highlights Ishmael’s central role in the narrative. His behavior led to their expulsion and his prayer to their salvation.* —Gordon Wenham

*It is ironic that the two things Abimelech knew about Abraham were that God was with him and that he was not altogether trustworthy.* —Allen Ross

*In 21:22-34, “Abraham” and “Abimelech” each occur seven times. “Seven ewe lambs,” “swear,” and “Beersheba,” all possessing the same letters of the word “seven,” (sh-b-a) each appear three times.* —Kenneth A. Mathews

*The Everlasting God is the unchanging, unchangeable, inexhaustible Being, Who spends and is unspent; Who gives and is none the poorer; Who works and is never wearied; Who lives and will never die.* —Alexander MacLaren

*Every Jew is a miracle, descended from Isaac, who was born to Abraham and Sarah long past the age of parenthood. Jesus was a miracle baby born of a virgin. The true Church is made of people born again through faith in Christ. The Bible is a miracle book written by divine inspiration. We are part of the miracle business; we are the supernatural work of God.*

—Vance Havner