

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

The God Who Promises, Protects, and Provides – Genesis 21, part 1

21 The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised. ² And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³ Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me." ⁷ And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Genesis 21:1-7

"... as he had said ..." – Sarah and the Birth of Isaac:

_____ they have waited ...

Reminds us that God is forever _____ (despite our faltering, imperfect faith)

Shows (again) that the Covenant is _____ and can only be accomplished by _____.
(Abraham's misguided efforts at fulfilling the Covenant his way had all failed)

Teaches us that faith is not "_____". Faith is rooted in _____

Beautifully demonstrates the goodness of God's *grace* that moves us from _____ to _____ ("Isaac" = _____)

¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." ³ The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad. ⁴ Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb! ⁵ Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! ⁶ He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalm 126)

And Abraham responded in _____ by obediently circumcising Isaac ...

The Growing Threat to the Promise – **Ishmael**:

⁸ And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. ¹⁰ So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." ¹¹ And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. ¹³ And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring." ¹⁴ So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Genesis 21:8-14

The motif of "laughter" in this passage is probably telling ...

But, as Isaac grew (probably 3), Ishmael (probably around 16-17) did more than "laugh" at him.

He _____ him. (Galatians 4:29)

The *language* suggests mockery, challenge, and even "supplanting". The *context* suggests a level of seriousness far beyond "laughing at". To Sarah, Ishmael was clearly a _____ to Isaac who must be _____. (And ultimately, God consented, though Sarah's animus here is never validated.)

Also, the _____ Paul used in Galatians is about _____ (like _____ and _____). There is no way these two sons of Abraham could co-exist any longer.

Abraham's previous sin is still exacting a heavy cost ...

This whole situation grieves the father-heart of Abraham. For 13 years Ishmael had been his only son. The only healing to his broken heart is the goodness of God and the clearly expressed promise: "*I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.*"

Look at what God is doing here with the tangled mess of their lives ...

Is this not _____?

Once again, **God is faithful ...**

¹⁵ *When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷ And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation." ¹⁹ Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. ²⁰ And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.*

Genesis 21:15-21

God had not *abandoned* Ishmael; he had provided for the *resolution* of a tension that could have no other resolution.¹

Consider the _____ ...

Consider the _____ ...

Consider the _____ of God ...

¹ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*, 381.