



MESSAGE/SERIES:

Series: Biblical Beginnings

Message: "Laughter of the Lord"

Text: Genesis 21:1-21

DATE: October 11, 2020

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK:

(These verses will help you understand themes within as you read our core text as scripture proves scripture)
Genesis 21:1-21, Isaiah 28:16, Romans 4:19-20 (faith of Abraham), Genesis 17:21, 18:14 (God has set a time for all things), Galatians 4:4, Psalm 126:1-12, Hebrews 11:11, Leviticus 12:1-3 (Timing of Circumcision), Hosea 1:4, 2:22 (Significance of a name), Galatians 4:29-30, Romans 9:7-9 (Children of Promise), Genesis 16:11 (God heard Ishmael), Genesis 16:12 (Ishmael's people), **Romans 4:19-21**

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

*"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."*

*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.*

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.”**

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 21:1–21.

BACKGROUND & OTHER STUDY HELPS:

[EIGHT DAYS] “Initially the eight-day waiting period distinguishes Isaac from Ishmael, who was circumcised at age thirteen. Subsequently, it serves as a determination of the infant’s viability and may be tied to the period of uncleanness after the birth (Lev 12:1–3).”

Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ge 21:4.

[WEANED] There was a huge difference in present practices for the timing of a child stopping to nurse. “Children are suckled longer in the East than in the Occident—boys usually for two or three years.”

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 28.

[SANCTIFICATION] Being set apart from the world and to Christ. “Sanctification begins with conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is at that very moment that a person begins to experience holiness. A changed life is the essential fruit of conversion.

Sanctification continues to progress in this life by the process of growth (2 Peter 3:18). Every challenge to dedication or separation from sin that is addressed to Christians is evidence of the fact that the New Testament treats sanctification as being progressive and involving growth.

Sanctification will be complete at the resurrection. The spirit will be completely sanctified at death. At the resurrection, sanctification will be complete so far as the body is concerned. After death, we will be completely holy. We will never again have anything in our personality that will not be compatible with God and acceptable to God.”

F. Leroy Forlines, *Biblical Systematics: A Study of the Christian System of Life and Thought* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 181–182.

- **Positional Sanctification:** “Positional sanctification means to be positionally set apart for God. Positional sanctification is with a view of experiential sanctification. The thought here is similar to that of electing a person to be president of an organization. He is elected to serve. At the moment the former president’s term expires, he is president positionally on the basis of being elected.”

F. Leroy Forlines, *Biblical Systematics: A Study of the Christian System of Life and Thought* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 181.

- **Progressive Sanctification:**
 - “First, progressive sanctification is salvation from the power of sin. Progressive sanctification means that the believer can be free from the power of sin (Rom. 6:1–14).
 - Secondly, the purpose of progressive sanctification is to bring the believer’s experience into conformity with his position. Positionally, the believer is thoroughly sanctified.
 - Thirdly, progressive sanctification is to counteract worldliness (Rom. 6:22; 12:1).
 - Fourthly, progressive sanctification is to promote spiritual growth (2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 3:18).
 - The fifth thing is that progressive sanctification means that the believer is being conformed to the image of the Son of God, to be more and more like the Messiah (Phil. 1:9–11; 2 Pet. 1:5–8).
 - The sixth thing about progressive sanctification concerns the two means of sanctification: First, the believer must present his *members as instruments of righteousness*, which means a dedication of the physical

body for God's use (Rom. 6:13). A second means is by *the washing* of the Word of God (Eph. 5:26).

- The seventh thing about progressive sanctification is that it is still God's work (Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:17; Titus 2:14).
- Eighth, progressive sanctification will not bring perfection in this life. The believer will become more and more righteous, more and more conformed to the image of the Son of God, but he will never reach perfection in this life.
- Ninth, on the basis of positional sanctification, the Scriptures encourage believers to live holy lives. In Scripture, progressive sanctification is the reason for admonitions to holiness (1 Thes. 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:15–16).
- The tenth thing about progressive sanctification is that it consists of two processes. First, there is the gradual removal of pollution and corruption of the believer's human nature (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:14). And secondly, there is a gradual development of the new life consecrated to God (Rom. 6:4–5; Gal. 2:19; Col. 2:12; 3:1–2)."

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Messianic Bible Study Collection*, vol. 105 (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1983), 14.

OUTLINE:

I. (v1-7) LAUGHTER FROM THE LORD TO HIS PEOPLE

In this text we see God take the dead womb of Sarah, advanced in years, promise to bring life to her womb again and then bring life. Ultimately this is a picture of regeneration where God brings eternal spiritual life to a spiritually dead soul. (Romans 4:19)

- A. (v1-2) The Lord fulfilled the promise that He had promised Sarah
 1. *Previously in **Genesis 17:16-17** The Lord promised Abraham a Child by Sarah*
 - a) Abraham laughed and was overjoyed at the promise of God for a Son
 2. *Previously in **Genesis 18:9-15** The Lord approached Sarah through Abraham and the tent door to make the promise to her of a Son*
 - a) Sarah laughed and was in disbelief at God's promise
 3. The timing of God's promise being fulfilled was divine= An appointed and **predetermined time**

- B. (v3) Abraham marked the Joyous occasion of his promised son's birth with the name Isaac (Hebrew) literally meaning "laughter"
1. *This Joy was the Joy of the Lord as it was His gift when all else felt it was impossible*
 2. *Abraham named Isaac as The Lord had told him (Genesis 17:19)*
 - a) The Lord **had planned to bring great joy to Abraham & Sarah** (today to those who trust and believe in Him)
- C. (v4) Abraham obeyed God and circumcised Isaac on the eighth day as He had been commanded
1. *An **acknowledgment/memorial of God's covenant** by circumcising Isaac*
 2. *By contrast, Ishmael was not circumcised until he was thirteen years old as he was not the recipient of God's covenant promise*
 3. *God is always righteous and just owing us nothing.*
- D. (v5) Time and Greatness was marked when God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and Sarah in their very old age (Abraham 100 yrs old)
1. *In old age to amplify the supernatural God and not man (an impossible feat for man)*
 - a) Biologically impossible for Sarah and Abraham to conceive a child & even very difficult to carry to term in Sarah's old age
- E. (v6-7) "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."
1. *Sarah- The past view of God's promise (cynicism and unbelief)*
 - a) God often turns our unbelief into joy and great faith in spite of our unfaithfulness to Him)
 2. *Sarah- The present view of God's promise*
 - a) God had won her over and built her faith through His faithful actions and His goodness
 3. *Sarah- Perspective of others view of God's miracle*
 - a) The world cannot understand God's miracles nor his promises and they do not have faith in our God
 - b) The world has a selfish view of God's plan that often treads on their own desires (conflict of the gospel with man's desires

It is not until we are born again (revelation of Isaac) that we learn what a horrible and vile thing the flesh is (revelation of Ishmael)...

-Author Pink

II. (v8-14) LAUGHTER FOR THE LORD AND HIS PEOPLE

God defends His people and God separates His people from the world in the process of sanctification. Isaac had to be separated from Ishmael. God had chosen Isaac and in order to grow him in spirit, he needed to make His call clear to Isaac and to Ishmael. When Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away Ishmael forfeited all rights and his inheritance. Isaac is a shadow or foreshadowing of Christ.

- A. (v8) “the **child grew and was weaned**. And Abraham *made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.*”
 - 1. *Abraham celebrated Isaac’s beginning to eat solid foods (2-3 years old)*
 - 2. *Abraham connected the growth of the physical Isaac to the promise of the Spiritual growth and blessings upon Isaac’s life as he grew up*

- B. (v9) “Sarah **saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian**, whom she had borne to Abraham, **laughing**”
 - 1. *Ishmael laughed at Isaac*
 - a) **laugh**, קִחַץ (*sā·hāq*) i.e., make a guttural sound related to irony or humor, often with the associative meaning of mocking or reviling (Ge 17:17; 18:12, 13, 15; 21:6+); (piel) (Ge 19:14; 21:9+)
 - (1) Ishmael would have been the heir of Abraham if not for Isaac-- Anger filled Ishmael’s heart
 - (2) Ishmael most likely reflected his mother’s view (Ishmael influenced by the negativity around him)

(3) Little is known about Ishmael's nature until God reveals His will for Isaac

C. (v10) Sarah wanted justice

1. *Commands that Abraham deal with Hagar & Ishmael*

a) This all stemmed from a decision Sarah made in Genesis 16 to send Hagar to Abraham

D. (v11) "And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son."

1. *Abraham didn't like the fact that tension was among his sons and the two mothers of his sons*

2. *Abraham loved Ishmael and didn't want him to suffer because of the sin of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar*

E. (v12) "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.**"

1. *God speaks peace to Abraham in the middle of family turmoil*

a) God pleads with Abraham... Do not be vexed or worried or broken to pieces due to this conflict between wife and slave woman and His two sons

2. *God tells Abraham to do what Sarah has asked him to do*

3. *God had **predestined Isaac to be the vessel/the lineage by which Jesus would be brought to the world***

F. (v13) "And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also because he is your offspring."

1. *God promises to take care of Ishmael because of Abraham (common grace extended because of a believing parent)*

2. *This was not a promise to save/regenerate Ishmael but rather earthly blessings (undeserved grace even though only common)*

G. (v14) Abraham was obedient to the Lord and served his wife's desires sending Hagar away

1. *Abraham didn't send Hagar away in anger*

2. *Abraham did provide for Hagar and Ishmael before they left (God's grace through believers)*

a) We are to care for the world even though we must separate ourselves from them in a close sense

- b) **2 Corinthians 6:14** (We cannot be closely partnered with the world or we will be lead down a bad path)
 - (1) *The Yoke of Oxen was a hardwood brace that went around 2 oxen's necks making them both go in the same direction*
- c) We must recognize that God's direction and will is prime in our lives and we must protect God's mission

III. (v15-21) LAUGHTER LOST AND FOUND FOR THOSE TO WHOM GOD MADE PROMISES

- A. (v15) "When the **water in the skin was gone**, she put the child under one of the bushes."
 - 1. *Hagar was out of options and she prepared for the worst*
- B. (v16) "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."
 - 1. *Hagar could not watch the death of her son so she places him in hear but not in eyesight (under a bush)*
 - a) Representative as humanity does all he can do for his children but ultimately sometimes it is not enough
 - b) *Abraham sent resources but the resources ran out*
 - (1) *Hagar administered the resources but eventually they ran out*
- C. (v17) "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."
 - 1. God responds to the prayer of the believer (Abraham had asked prior)
 - 2. God is faithful to do as He says not based on man but based on His will and promises (nothing good in Ishmael or Hagar)
 - 3. God heard the prayer of Ishmael (not chosen of God but blessed of God in an earthly sense)
 - 4. God responds to Hagar (not chosen of God) in a display of His faithfulness to His own character and to His follower Abraham
 - a) Believers prayer are important
 - b) God hears all prayers (believer and unbeliever)
 - c) God responds to the prayers of believers

d) God responds to prayer that is in line with His will

D. (v18) “Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for **I will make him into a great nation.**”

1. God restates a promise to Hagar that He had already told Abraham (Genesis 21:13)
 - a) God had promised to bless Ishmael (Arabs today are great in number because of God’s promise)
 - b) Most Arabs are not followers of Christ (common grace that they live with earthly blessings in the present)

E. (v19) “**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.”

1. God was kind to Hagar and Ishmael
2. God opened Hagar's eyes to see His provisions (we cannot see the obvious unless God shows us in life)

F. (v20-21) “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.”

1. *God was with Ishmael looking after His promise to him but there is no indication that Ishmael knew God in a personal sense*
2. *God being with a man or a nation does not always indicate a relationship but rather one-sided attention by God alone*
 - a) We must separate the opening of Spiritual eyes unto a relationship with God from His common grace and mercy on the world
 - b) This indicates that all earthly blessings are from God yet they are many times unacknowledged
3. God caused Ishmael’s influence in the world to increase- God is Sovereign in all thing and in all appointments

Meditation Moment:

1. How would you summarize the Laughter of the Lord for the Believer? (eternal and earthly sense)
2. What are the differences between the blessings on Isaac and the blessing on Ishmael?
3. How do we see both of the blessings (for the believer & unbeliever) today in our world? (Common vs Special grace)
4. Was the blessings of Isaac more about Him of the promised seed of Christ?
5. When applying basic Biblical context we know that just because the Jewish people were the chosen vehicle for which Jesus would come, it did not mean they were all saved or chosen as individuals. How does this thought change our view of the church and being a member of the church?

-----Message from Pastor Michael-----

Church,

There are some very deep theological truths in this passage that we cannot miss and if we get these truths it will change our view of salvation, God's purposes, the church, and God's common grace extended to the world. The Muslim/Arab world is blessed because God chose to bless man in spite of his fallen state. I often think about the overflowing blessing that God has on the lost world because of Jesus in His true church... reflect on that and let Him use these truths to rest in His grace.

Love in Christ,

Pastor Michael

