



A Study of the Book of GENESIS



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WEEK NINE

Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, & Isaac (Genesis 16-18; 21-23; 25)

In the Abrahamic Covenant, the Lord repeated the covenant promise to three generations. All three were promised land, many descendants, and a blessing from the Lord. Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan, and the Lord established a covenant with Him (Genesis 12:1-3). The Lord reaffirmed the same covenant He made with Abraham's son, Isaac (Genesis 21:12; 26:3-4). Later, the covenant was affirmed with Isaac's son, Jacob (Genesis 28:14-15). *Why is this important?* While all three generations demonstrated significant human weakness toward sin, God's covenant remains secure, because it is founded in God alone. Throughout the Old Testament and into the New, God is often called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a reminder that He is the God of the Covenant.

Genesis 16 – Abraham, Hagar, & Ishmael

Despite God's promise and Abram's faith, however, he still had to wait many years before Isaac would be born. Abram was 85 years old and Sarai was seventy-five. Yet, God demonstrated His miraculous providence by waiting until it was humanly impossible for Abram and Sarai to have a child before He would fulfill His word. Meanwhile, Sarai, realizing that she and Abram are aging beyond childbearing years, began to feel like they must somehow intervene to help God fulfill his promise.ⁱ

- ❖ **Hagar** (means “_____”) was an _____ maid, perhaps acquired by Sarai during their stay in Egypt.

- It was _____ idea for Abram to have a child by Hagar.

- ❖ Vs. 2 – “obtain” literally means “I shall be built,” showing the selfishness of Sarai's motivation.

- Hagar began _____ Sarai, causing her to be banished from the clan.
- God saw the whole thing and had compassion for Hagar. While she is in the desert beside a spring of water, the _____ of the _____ appears and talks to her.
 - He tells Hagar to return to Sarai and submit to her.
 - He promises Hagar that she would have _____.
 - He prophesies that Ishmael (“_____”) will be a “_____ (_____ of a) _____” (swift and untamable) who will be in perpetual conflict with “every man,” yet will dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

❖ *El Roi* – “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees”

Genesis 17:15-26 – God’s Promise of Isaac

The next 13 years pass over silence, now making Abraham 99 years old and Sarah 89. But God had not forgotten his promise to Abraham, and he reiterates His covenant in the clearest of terms. On four earlier occasions, the Lord had spoken His covenant to Abram (Gen. 12:1-3; 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:5-21), but He only used the term “covenant” (*berith*) once (Gen. 15:18 when referring to the land). Here, on the other hand, God uses the term no less than ___ times, and the adjectives attached to it are significant: _____ covenant (9 times), _____ covenant (3 times), and the covenant _____ and _____ (1 time). In every instance, it is God who is _____.

❖ **Isaac** – (*yishaq*) – “_____”

In his laughing response to God’s reiterated covenant, Abraham remembers his son, Ishmael, and intercedes on his behalf that God would bless him too. In response, God assures Abraham that He will bless Ishmael, promising that he would beget _____, thereby making him a great nation. These princes are later listed in the “generations of Ishmael” (Gen. 25:12-16).

But God repeats that His *covenant* was with _____, the unborn son of Sarah.

Genesis 21:1-21 – Isaac is Born, and Hagar & Ishmael Depart

We see Hagar again in Genesis 21. Isaac has been born to Abraham, and Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate Isaac being weaned. It was then that Sarah saw that Ishmael was either _____ or playing (*ṣāḥaq*) with Isaac. Sarah became afraid that Ishmael could take Isaac's inheritance and demanded that Abraham get rid of Hagar and Ishmael. Once again, Hagar finds herself in the desert, with only some food and water strapped to her back. She wanders aimlessly, and when they ran out of water, she sets Ishmael under a bush and steps away from him because she doesn't want to watch her son die.

But once again, God steps in. God reaffirms his promise to Hagar that Ishmael will be the father of a great nation. He remains faithful to them, and Hagar even arranges for Ishmael to marry a woman from the land of _____. God remains so faithful to Hagar through her entire life.

➤ **Genesis 28:6-9** –

➤ **Genesis 36:3** –

Ishmael, who enjoyed a close relationship with his father (17:18) and was about 14 years older than Isaac, was not Abraham's heir. Still, God promised Hagar that Ishmael's descendants would become a great nation (21:18), albeit their heritage will that of wild strife against everyone (16:12). As a result, Ishmael had 12 sons (25:13-16) who ultimately are claimed as the ancestors of the _____. Little did Abraham know that his decision would result in a bloody rivalry that has never stopped since.

***Some Important Take-Aways from Hagar & Ishmael's Story*ⁱⁱ**

1) ***God _____ and _____, even when it seems He isn't.***

2) ***God _____, even when we don't see how.***

3) ***God is _____, even when we don't know why.***

GENESIS 22 – Abraham & Isaac

Genesis 21:1-7 records the birth of Isaac, followed by the permanent banishment of Hagar and Ishmael (vv. 8-21). What follows is one of the most famous and significant stories in the life of Abraham—his sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah.

- Recall the reason why Abel’s sacrifice was more favored than Cain’s (Gen. 4:3-5). What parallels do you see between their story and the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham?
- Genesis 22:1 states that “God tested Abraham.” If God is all-knowing, what is the purpose of God’s test?
- **Genesis 22:1-10.** What does it seem that Abraham believes is going to happen to Isaac?

➤ ***Hebrews 11:17-19 –***

- **Genesis 22:11-14.** The ram is a type of Christ, a substitute for the death of Isaac.
- Genesis 22:15-19. God reconfirms His covenant with Abraham, stating that it was because Abraham “obeyed my voice” (v. 18) and “have not withheld your son—your only son” (v. 16).
- **Genesis 15:6 –** “And he **believed** in the LORD, and He **accounted** it to him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23)

Consider Abraham’s journey since Genesis 12.

- ✓ C 12-He leaves his home in Ur, but he brings Lot along.
- ✓ C 12-He goes to Egypt and lies about Sarai being his wife.
- ✓ C 13-14-He selflessly offers Lot the pick of the land, and rescues Him from captivity, which leads him to honor Melchizedek, God’s priest.
- ✓ C 16-He listens to Sarai and has Ishmael by Hagar.
- ✓ C 18-He intercedes before God on behalf of Lot.
- ✓ C 20-He goes to Gerar and lies to Abimelech about Sarah being his wife (again).

Abraham's faith ebbed and flowed, depending on circumstances. Yet, comparing with his journey up to this point with his actions Genesis 22, we see a significant change in Abraham. Abraham's faith in God, though enough for salvation, developed through various trials and circumstances along the way. Yet, when it came to the ultimate test of giving up his promised son, Abraham demonstrated how secure his faith in God had become. This is a great image of real-life discipleship!

ⁱ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific & Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1976), 328-329.

ⁱⁱ Kelly-Jayne McGlynn, "4 Powerful Lessons from the Life of Hagar," *Bible Study Tools* (blog), March 16, 2022, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/4-powerful-lessons-from-the-life-of-hagar.html>.