

Genesis 21

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. I had a pastor that I knew some years ago in Minnesota, and he was invited to Haiti to minister with a missionary there.

Those people, some of them would hike on foot out of the mountains down to where the church was at four or five hours one way.

And if a church service would only last an hour, they felt cheated. And he was used to preaching for half an hour, and they, no, no, no, no.

You've got to go more. And he would preach for two or three hours, and the people were very, very happy. But a different type of scenario for us in this day and age.

We watch our time pretty close. A couple of weeks ago, we had my niece and her family here, and we went to Amicalola Falls and hiked the trails.

[1 : 10] And then there's a roadway that goes up toward Brother John, has some property there where we've had men's campouts, and a church called High Shoals Baptist Church.

You've sang there, haven't you? Well, there's no electricity there unless they fire up the generator. And there's no water in the building. There's a fountain that flows permanently on the outside, apparently a spring there.

There's a little building on one side over here and a little building on the other side there, and you know what those are for. Pretty rustic. But that church has been there for 150 to 200 years.

High Shoals Baptist Church. And can you imagine for those people coming out of the mountains and gathering for a service, and if it only went for a half hour or an hour, they probably felt cheated.

And it was an effort for them to come, and when they came, they wanted to hear the truth. And so tonight we gather in a little bit of a unique circumstance, not something that we necessarily planned for, but just delighted to have the opportunity to fellowship.

[2 : 26] You are a joyful people for my wife and I. We enjoy our fellowship with you guys. It's a very unique place here. We all know that.

But the fellowship is very unique as well, very special, very sweet. And so it's a delight for me to have you be here to share in this midweek service.

I'd like to have you take your Bibles and turn to Genesis chapter 21. I believe this is where the last message was left off.

We know that a lot of these chapters in recent moments here have dealt with Abraham and Sarah. Certainly one of the most unique circumstances is when Sarah says to Abraham, we're up in years, we have no children, and it was so critically important for couples to have children.

It was so hard when no child would arrive. And so she, in her desperation, told Abraham to take Hagar, her maiden, and have a child with Hagar, and then that child would be like Sarah's child.

[3 : 50] But it never really worked that way, did it? A very, very, very difficult time arose in the life of Abraham.

We are at Genesis chapter 21, and I'd like to have you follow along as I begin reading with verse number 9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking.

Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son. For the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy bondwoman.

In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice, for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation because he is thy seed.

[5 : 26] And Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder and the child and sent her away.

And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. The water was spent in the bottle and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

She went and sat down over against him a good way off, as it were, a bow shot. For she said, Let me not see the death of the child.

And she sat over against him and lift up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar?

Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him in thine hand, for I will make him a great nation.

[6 : 35] And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer.

And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. Some of you know the experience of watching a child reach the age of 18, graduate from high school and head off to college.

And some of you remember the time when you watched the taillights disappear down the lane, down the street, turn the corner and disappear out of sight.

Twice that happened for my wife and I. Our one son graduated from high school on a Sunday afternoon, two o'clock, and at eight o'clock that night he was headed to boot camp.

The other boy headed off to college in the fall. Hard times. You're so used to having them around the house. You go in and look in the bedroom and the bedroom is empty.

[8 : 03] The space where they sat under your table, or they sat at your table, that's empty. It's adjustment. It's an adjustment. Life is such that for the 18 years that you have the child, you ought to be preparing yourself and preparing the child for the time that they leave.

It's a natural part of circumstance that a child should leave home. And if you don't prepare yourself or you don't prepare the child, it just becomes more difficult down the road when that experience happens.

Just a little bit of advice. When this circumstance happened, we know for a fact that when Abraham was given the commandment to circumcise his family, at that point in time, Abraham was 99 and Ishmael was 13.

And a year later, Sarah had Isaac. So at the time of where we're reading at, Isaac has been born.

Ishmael is 14. Abraham is 100. Now, if you look back just a couple of verses where we did not read just above, in verse number 6, Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh so that all that hear will laugh with me.

[9 : 38] And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah would have given children suck? For I have borne him a son in my old age. And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

There was a big celebration. They had a party for this little boy who was now at this stage of his life and not unusual for a child to nurse from its mother for a year or two or three.

So it's very possible that at the point that Ishmael has to leave with his mother, he could be 14, 15, 16, maybe even 17 years of age.

We don't know that, but that's a possibility. We know that he was at least 14. He was a teenager. What a day it was for Abraham to have this party, this celebration.

All the eyes would be upon this little boy, maybe, you know, if he was two or three at the point when he was weaned from his mother.

[11 : 02] This little guy running around the life of the party, everybody enjoying the little guy, everybody's laughing, and he's hooping and hollering, and what a joyful time. And off to the side stands Ishmael.

And Sarah glances over, perhaps, and sees Ishmael mocking. And the word carries this idea that it was a sneering, ridiculing type of a snicker on his face.

You remember, his mother did that. When Hagar realized that she was with child and that Sarah had no children, she despised Sarah.

Sarah was despised in her eyes. Here it carries over to the boy that now in Sarah's eyes, Ishmael despises.

He mocks. You know, I would think that a boy that's 14 years old, he has no brothers or sisters, he gets a brand new baby brother. Now, it's a half brother, but don't you just love it when a new little brother or a new little sister arrives in the family?

[12 : 29] At least for a little while until they get in your stuff. But not so much for Ishmael. Ishmael apparently is looking at ah, if I'm the only son, I inherit everything that's Abraham's.

It all comes to me. But now a boy is born to Sarah and he will be the heir of all things.

And a boy 14, 15, 16, however old he was, knew the traditions of how things were in the family.

And on this particular day, he is seen by Sarah as mocking. Now, whether it happened that exact same day or if it was the next day, but could you imagine that if it were the same day and you've got this celebration, you've brought in some friends from the neighborhood and to celebrate what's going on with the life of Isaac, he's now reached this stage in his life where he no longer needs to be so close to his mother and this was a great day.

And if it were this day and Sarah sees him mocking, she blows the lid off the party or whenever this happened and says to Abraham, cast out this bond woman and her son.

[14 : 32] Can you imagine that her voice was such that there was no question what she meant? Now, she had been a pretty decisive lady at times. She made the decision that Hagar should have a child by Abraham.

She made that decision. And after she made the decision and it didn't go so well, then she wanted Abraham to fix it. If you go back to chapter 16, verse 3, and Sarah Abraham's wife took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan and gave her to her husband Abraham to be his wife.

And he went in unto Hagar and she conceived and when she saw that she had conceived her mistress, that is Sarah, was despised in her eyes.

And Sarah said unto Abraham, My wrong be upon thee. It's your fault, Abraham. My wrong is on you.

I have given my maid into thy bosom and when she saw that she had conceived I was despised in her eyes. The Lord judged between me and thee.

[15 : 59] For Abraham said unto Sarah, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand to do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarah dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

And as the story goes, the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness by the fountain in the way of Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarah's maid, whence camest thou, and whither wilt thou go?

And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarah. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, now, you understand when you find the references in the Old Testament, the angel of the Lord, this was not just an angel.

The angel of the Lord is a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ himself.

[17 : 13] We call it a Christophany. This was Christ himself that was speaking with Hagar at this point, the angel of the Lord.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

And he will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

I don't know if that's quite so exciting. You're going to have a child, and he's going to be a wild one, and he's going to be fighting with everybody around him, but he will be a great man.

He will have lots of family. But in this story, Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham, and then she finds herself despised by Hagar, and Sarah says, my wrong be upon you.

[18 : 33] You do take care of this, whatever needs to happen. That was a bad day. But it got worse. It got worse.

So you find here back in chapter 21 that Sarah says to Abraham, it's time for Ishmael and for Hagar to be gone.

Now notice there in verse number 11, and the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

I tend to think that Ishmael was Abraham's pride and joy. Now he had a little one, he had a little toddler running around and no doubt that was great joy for he and Sarah, but he loved that boy.

And this was very grievous. Let me read something for you here from another commentator. While the birth of Isaac was a happy event for Abraham and Sarah, it was also distressing.

[19 : 50] The prospects and expectations of Ishmael are suddenly shattered. He had grown to youthful vigor, confident that he was to inherit the great wealth and power of his father.

Now the true heir appears. Ishmael is moved to mad hatred, proud and impetuous. He does not conceal his chagrin. On the occasion of a great feast given in honor of Isaac, he is guilty of insolence of mockery and insult.

Sarah saw Ishmael mocking. This participle comes from the same root as Isaac. Remember Isaac meant to laugh?

The same root word is the word that's used here of mocking, of the kind of laughter. laughter. The intensive form of the participle here indicates that this was not simple laughter but ridicule.

Since Ishmael was 14 years older than Isaac and therefore the eldest son of Abraham, it was natural for him to consider himself the heir, but it was not to take place.

[21 : 05] What a time for Abraham. On the one side he had thrown a party for Isaac being weaned of his mother.

Can you picture the little guy running around but off to the side Hagar and Ishmael and Sarah has had enough of both and she demands of Abraham cast out this bond woman and her son.

God walks into Abraham's thoughts and tells him not to let it be grievous in his sight to part ways with Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham rose up early.

Now when it says that he rose up early it doesn't say he slept that night. didn't say that he woke up early.

He rose up early. I kind of surmised that probably for Abraham it might have been one of those sleepless nights. So times where there was so much joy and pride and excitement but now the prospect of sending Hagar and Ishmael away to never see them again weighed heavy upon him.

[22 : 34] He rose up early in verse 14 and he took bread and a bottle of water and gave it unto Hagar.

Bread and water. Abraham was a wealthy man. Abraham had flocks and he had servants and he had a lot of things.

But when he sends away Hagar and Ishmael they get bread and a bottle of water. no camel on which to ride.

No donkey. Not even a couple of sheep to start his own flock. A loaf of bread and a bottle of water.

He was planning on being in the air. Now I don't know for sure how it was but there was a separation that took place and I picture this.

[23 : 44] You'll be able to hear me. That as Ishmael and Hagar slowly walk away I picture Ishmael maybe looking back at his dad.

I don't know. It was not a good day. for Abraham and God honored the command of Sarah when she said cast out the bond woman and her son and God got into the thoughts of Abraham and said to Abraham don't let this thing be grievous in your sight.

How could he do that? God I'll tell you how. In chapter 17 verse 1 when Abraham was 90 years old and 9 the Lord appeared to Abraham and said unto him I am the almighty God walk before me and be thou perfect and I will make my covenant between me and thee and will multiply thee exceedingly and Abraham fell on his face and God talked with him saying as for me behold my covenant is with thee and thou shalt be a father of many nations Abraham knew what it was to be obedient and to walk with his God no matter what may come now

I don't know who the next preacher will be down the road but not too far down the line in Genesis comes a situation where Abraham now takes Isaac on a trip to offer a sacrifice know what I'm talking about and Isaac is going along with his dad and he realizes they're going to offer a sacrifice but he said dad where's the lamb where's the lamb and Abraham says the Lord will provide the Lord had said to Abraham offer Isaac and he did not hesitate he did not argue he did not say no I got rid of Ishmael I sent him away as you said but not my son Isaac too no we don't find that don't find that now I'll leave that for somebody else to expand on but

Abraham learned to obey and to walk with God no matter what happened cast out this bond woman and her son and don't let it be grievous in your sight I can't imagine how his heart had to ache I can't imagine but he did it he did it now God is a God of grace and mercy and we read how that God even blessed Hagar and Ishmael in these circumstances and how the boy grew and I would that I could tell you that they had learned Abraham's faith and that they were likewise people of faith and that some day

[27 : 38] Abraham one day Abraham and his son Ishmael were reunited but I gotta tell you folks my understanding of scripture I don't think that it's there I don't think that they knew the faith of Abraham and I don't mean to be judgmental but I think that when Abraham watched his son and Hagar walked away that was probably the last time that he ever saw now all of that what's the lesson in this for us we've got to go to the New Testament aren't you glad that we got all kinds of time we're just going to go on and on here actually I'm getting close let you out early if you all take me for a dish of ice cream somewhere we're in good shape

I want to take you to Galatians chapter 4 and beginning with verse number 22 I want to read this passage to you and I want to explain how all of this comes to have an impact upon each of us this is Paul writing and God gives Paul some tremendous insights into some theological happenings both relative to Old Testament history and how they apply to the New Testament and how they apply to us as believers I'm at Galatians 4 beginning with verse 22 for it is written that Abraham had two sons the one by a bond made the other by a free woman for he who was of the bond woman was born after the flesh but he of the free woman was by promise which things are an allegory for these are the two covenants the one from

Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage which is and that's Hagar for this Hagar is Mount Sinai and Arabia and answereth to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children but Jerusalem which is above is free which is the mother of us all for it is written rejoice thou barren that bear us not break forth and cry thou that travail is not for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband now we brethren as Isaac are the children of promise but as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit even so it is now nevertheless what saith the scripture cast out the bond woman and her son for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman so then brethren we are not children of the bond woman but of the free what has

Paul been talking about in previous chapters in Galatians there is that problem even amongst the Galatian Christians of wanting to go back to the old Judaistic ways of doing a works type of salvation oh it's wonderful to put our faith in Christ but I've got to do my part here's this allegory Hagar was a slave a bond woman she is the picture of Israel under the law she is as it says here Sinai for this Hagar verse 25 is Mount Sinai in Arabia and the covenant there was Israel if you will keep my commandments I will be your

God and I will be your protector and all of those things that was a bilateral covenant that was a conditional covenant bilateral means there's two sides if you will do your part then I will do my part that was the Sinaitic covenant it was a works related system you have to have all of these laws and you have to keep all of these laws and it was burdensome even the Jerusalem that is there now in verse 25 it says and answer to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children it's a grievous thing to have to live under these this system of law but if you are like

[33 : 15] Abraham and become a person of faith then you are set free from the law you are of the free woman you are of the new Jerusalem verse 26 but Jerusalem which is above is free which is the mother of us all we have a new relationship through Jesus Christ who is also from the lineage of Abraham and Isaac and the question has come in verse 9 of chapter 4 but now after that ye have known God or rather are known of God how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements where until you desire again to be in bondage why do you want to go back and be under the law that's the question so here's the point cast out this bond woman with her son get rid of it are you having doubts on your salvation get rid of it cast it out you you don't have to be under the law and worry about all of these things cast it out get rid of it throw it out

Abraham did it with Hagar and Ishmael God told him it's it's something you need to do cast out this bond woman she's a bondage you should never have gone in unto her even though your wife had said it you should not have you should now you've got the problem now you gotta cast her out with her son if you continue under the works type of situation and you cannot put your faith in Jesus Christ alone and keep it there you are going back to bondage now some of you were raised Baptist and became Christians as Baptist you accepted Christ as your Savior and you have not had the heaviness of a works type of religion

I grew up and since we're not recorded and probably wouldn't make any difference anyway I grew up Lutheran as did others probably here Lutheran teaches you that your sins are washed away in your baptism when you are baptized as a baby the minister says the words I baptize you in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit and he pours the handfuls of water over your head you see in pictures the descending of the of the dove which is symbolic of the holy spirit and that is the washing away of your original sin they understand that in sin did my mother conceive me as

David said it and so I'm born in sin but by baptism it washes away the original sin that covenant of infant baptism is good until you reach the age of accountability and at the age of accountability which is about 12 or 13 you go through confirmation classes and on a Sunday morning you are all dressed in your white robes and red carnation and you stand in front of the church and there you take your confirmation vows and in those confirmation vows they're very similar to your baptismal vows in those confirmation vows the first one it asks you do you believe in the triune God and you as a class or whatever as individuals respond yes I believe now not so bad yet do you believe in the triune

God yes I believe do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways yes I renounce them okay fine you're saying that I don't want the devil to be a part of my life that's okay the third one says do you promise to abide faithful to the church and the taking of the sacraments and several other things that are listed there and you say yes by the grace of God I promise I got saved when I was 18 and a half years old so I was a ways past it my sister got saved a week or two after I did and she had to take confirmation and lengthy story but anyway when she took her confirmation vows she had told my folks I can't take the vows because I don't believe these things and my folks were upset and they said you will take your confirmation and she said that when the rest of the group answered do you promise to abide faithful to the church and the taking of the sacraments and they said yes by the grace of

[38 : 57] God she said no in her mind by the grace of God she was in her confirmation class a little struggle for me I was still in Bible college I wasn't home for any of that one of my Bible college professors gave me a verse from the Old Testament that talks about if a father disavows his daughter and forces her to make a vow that that that that it shall not stand if it's the vow that she doesn't want to take and so he gave me that and it's Old Testament and it was some comfort to know that yeah my folks forced her to take her confirmation vows but in her mind she said no and it's not in her mind she said no and it anyway for those who take them seriously they have covenanted in their mind with God to be faithful to the church and to the taking of the sacraments and all these things here's the statement folks cast out the bond woman and her son what do you suppose that means or signifies and her son that means her seed that means the generations to come you can't leave any seed that will take you back in again you've got to get rid of it all you can't hold anything to yourself and I would say to you if you have any semblances of your old religion of your old faith still hanging around your house get rid of them cast out the bond woman get rid of anything that would possibly you have your mind to draw you back when I was a pastor in Minnesota we had a I was in a town of 389 people very small we had a church of about 50 60 folk wonderful people there was a lady down the street she was from Japan she married a man who had been in the Navy and and he had met her in Japan and married her and brought her back and she would come to church very faithful her name was Hiroko Hiroko Sailor she married a sailor his last name was Sailor how about that anyway Hiroko Sailor would come to church and she would cry and she was so tender hearted go by to visit her husband sold drugs sold drugs sold drugs in the area and he had nothing to do with us we go by and see her and she had this little shelf thing on a table with a couple of doors and if she was really lonely for her family and hurting she could find for herself some comfort by going to her Shinto God maybe

I don't know the right things I don't know the right things I don't know the right things there but she had kind of both things she wanted to be in the church and she had prayed and made her profession but she wanted to kind of have the comforts of that old religion she could open those doors up and see her old statues and very very very hard for some of those people to cast out the bond woman that's in their life if you've not been there spiritually speaking in your life you don't know what some people go through if a man or a lady leaves their Lutheranism or Catholicism or Buddhism or being a Muslim or just what it is that they might be it's very hard for some of them to cast out the bond woman this is it folks of all the story that was relative to Ishmael and Hagar the last thing was cast out the bond woman and her son and God said to Abraham don't let it be grievous to you don't let it get in your way don't let your emotions take over cast out the bond woman and folks this is now something that Paul talks to heavily in the New Testament to his own people to the Jews don't go back under the law cast out the bond woman some of you are still under the law get rid of it be done with it some of you are still worried about trying to figure out how can I make sure that I'm saved and can I do enough good works to make sure that I'm saved get rid of it you the only point that you need is faith in Christ well you wonder have I got enough faith I'm sure that there were probably moments that Abraham maybe in his own mind had some wonders of how can these things be happening to me why is this happening you have to solidify as Abraham as Abraham had done in his life he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness simple faith it's what it is it's what it is just believe faith is just believing what God says he will do now it's easy for some of us and hard for others I don't know why that is but it boils down to this just cast out these old ways that you had in the past they're no good for you cast them out there have been days where even in the New Testament the new believers brought their old idols and their old books and had a burning didn't they remember that Max they burned they had a fire somehow in your mind cast out the bond woman or it will be a rope around your neck cast out the bond woman be children set free be children of the promise do it let's pray our father how we thank you and praise you for the work that Jesus did for us on Calvary we are so grateful that by his death

and resurrection the chains of sin and death and hell have been broken from us we've been set free we've given to us liberty in yourself and father tonight we want to thank you anew and afresh for the joy of knowing you through your son Jesus the joy of knowing that that the sins are gone the guilt is gone the fear of dying the fear of of hell the fear of judgment is gone you have set us free father how thankful we are for a God who has been like you so gracious and kind so merciful that you would love sinners like us and father tonight help us with what we need to be doing in our lives of getting rid of the chains that are still about us lord guide us in the things that maybe we don't even realize that we're doing that we might be living the life of the freedom that you have created for us father bless us and help us we need you in Christ's name we pray amen