



Genesis – 21:8 -21:34  
**Cast Out the Bondwoman!**  
(Lesson #30)

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**“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.”**

**Vs 8** - So the child continues to grow and mature, and ultimately the child is “weaned.” Theologians tell us this generally happened around the age of 3-5.

By way of reminder: *“Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.” (Ge 16:16 ESV)*

Abraham is now 100 years old, this means that on the day of this great feast **Ishmael was approximately 17-19 years old.**

Before we read the next verses, Ishmael has been Abraham’s only son for 14 years, then along comes Isaac.

As we might imagine, Isaac, who they likely called the miracle child, was also the child promised to and born of a woman who had passed through menopause and he (Isaac) quickly became the **center of attention.**

Our minds can imagine how life changed for Ishmael. I say all this so that we are able to get into **Ishmael’s skin** for a moment.

And here today, Abraham and Sarah made a **“great feast”** a great banquet. You should imagine **hundreds in attendance** and that is just from Abraham’s household!

**This is many years back:**

*“When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.” (Ge 14:14 ESV)*

You should be picturing a massive banquet! All in honor of the promised son (3-5) years old at this point.

**Vs 9** - Sarah observed that Ishmael was laughing. The Hebrew word brings with it the idea of **mocking** or **making sport.**

This 17-19 year old boy (young man) Ishmael was in some way “mocking” Isaac on this festival day.

Now we all get this was “not right” but I think we can all, to some small degree understand the jealousy and envy that welled up in young Ishmael’s heart. As you might imagine this did not set well with Sarah!

Equally, we can imagine that she realized this will not likely to get better with time, but only get worse.

Equally, we suspect that this is a weakness in her character. Maybe not, and we surely do not want to make any concrete judgements.

But we are reminded, when we go at things in our own strength there are always consequences. **This is a consequence of Sarah and Abraham’s moment of weakness.**

**Vs 10** - At some point, whether during the feast or some time after, we cannot be sure. But Sarah tells Abraham: **“Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”**

She began to pressure Abraham, that this “slave woman” and the “son of this slave woman” must go.

They both must be “**cast out**” they both must be **driven out**, they must be **driven away**, they must be **expelled!**

He cannot be an heir, in any way, with Isaac! Abraham’s entire inheritance must go to Isaac, and none can go to this “**son of a slave woman.**”

The thing that strikes me is how quickly **she has forgotten:**

*“And Sarai said to Abram, “Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.” (Ge 16:2 ESV)*

Ishmael, in Sarah’s plan, was to be a child that she would obtain by Hagar.

She sees both of them in a much different light and now!

**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.”**

**Vs 11** - Abraham had a totally different take on this whole matter. Afterall Ishmael was still Abraham’s son.

This whole matter displeased Abrahah, the whole matter **grieved Abraham.**

Here’s the reality, I suspect that Abraham felt like he was stuck between a rock and a hard place. He really had no idea what to do.

**APPLICATION:** It is here, when Abraham is grieving and confused, that God shows up. The same is true for you and I, it is often in our grieving, that God shows up:

*“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2Co 1:3-4 ESV)*

Here, Abraham is distressed and as we will see God steps in.

**Vs 12** - Once again, God comes to Abraham, we are not exactly sure how. But in some matter Yahweh came to Abraham and said to him:

**First**, he tells him not to be displeased (**do not be distressed**) about the boy of your slave woman. This is the same Hebrew word, God tells him, **do not grieve about the boy.**

**Second**, and initially this is a little surprising, but Yahweh tells Abraham, to **do whatever Sarah says to you.**

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum in his commentary on Genesis writes: *“Then came the divine instruction: In all that Sarah said unto you, hearken unto her voice. This is the only time a husband is told by God to hearken to or obey his wife.”*

**This is true, but I will add:** Most of the time, when Sandy provides her opinion, it is very insightful, wise, and compassionate. So, we should never ignore our wife’s thoughts and opinions. There are times, when the Lord allows her to see the **preferable future** in a way that **God does not show me.**

Then **God tells him why:**

**Point #1** - It is through Isaac that **your offspring shall be named.** Your offspring, to whom the **unconditional covenant** has been made will not come through Ishamel but through Isaac.

**Point #2** - Equally, although it is unlikely he understood it, **the promise of the coming seed** (singular) who would bless the nations, is not through Ishamel, but through Isaac.

**Point #3** - So, in the largest and most important sense, Sarah is absolutely correct. **Isaac's inheritance will not be shared in any way with Ishamel**. Ishmael was the work of Abraham and Sarah's unbelief. Isaac is the work of Yahweh's promise!

Although we do not know **her heart**, the end result was in keeping with **God's plan**. In Isaac shall Abraham's offspring be blessed. In Isaac shall the world be blessed!

**It is worth noting the way Matthew's account begins:**

*"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Mt 1:1 ESV)*

**Vs 13 - Point #4** – Do not worry about removing Ishmael from the premises, for **"I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman..."**

Here a promise that will **echo through** and **forever change history**. Namely, the promise to make **a nation of Ishamel**.

God will do this **because Ishamel is Abraham's son**. God said, I will bless him, because he comes from your body!

But **this blessing** will have **unfortunate consequences**. **Sin always does!**

By the way, I hope you see this is yet another predictive prophecy here in the Old Testament!

**IMPORTANT POINT:** The conflict between Sarah and Hagar, between Isaac and Ishmael, is picked up by Paul in the letter to the Galatians. **Time permitting**, we will look at that at the end of our lesson.

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*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.*

**Vs 14** - We are not sure how much time has passed, but it was likely not much. Ultimately, Abraham arises early he **takes bread** and a **skin of water**, and he gives it all to Hagar, putting it on her back.

He then placed Ishamel under Hagar's authority and sent her (them) away.

**If this has a familiar ring to you:**

*"22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever — " 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken." (Ge 3:22-23 ESV)*

Now, I assume that Abraham believes he is providing Hagar with enough food and water to get her to the next village. He knows that God has promised that Ishmael shall live.

So, he does not need to pack a U-Haul, but he provides at least enough to get them to the next village.

This is possibly difficult for Isaac, but sin has consequences. But in spite of that, God has promised good.

Now Ismael at this point is **(17-19 years old)**.

She leaves Abraham and Sarah, she departs and then we are told something that we did not expect. She wanders in the wilderness of **Beersheba**. **Theologians call this a Proleptic.**

This was not part of anyone's plan. She got **lost** and is now **wandering** in the desert!

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Archaeology has uncovered many settlements at the time of Abraham and in the vicinity of what would become known as Beersheba.

**OK, one more point:** Keep this place, Beersheba in mind. For when she got lost in this area, that was not likely the name of it. More on that in just a moment.

**Vs 15** - So Hagar is **lost in the wilderness**, wandering in the desert, and ultimately the water runs out. This is the **worst thing** that could happen! It is possible the food has run out too, but let's be honest, the **water** is the critical thing for survival in a desert!

Reading between the lines (Rich's sanctified imagination), it appears the boy **succumbs to the heat first**. We do not know why, maybe he skipped taking water to ensure his mom drank, we cannot know for sure.

But we read, the water gone, she put her child **under one of the bushes**. Water gone, Ishmael seemingly overcome by dehydration, she gets him out of the sun and places him under a bush.

Ismael appears to be at the **point of death**.

How can God's promise to make a nation of Ishmael be fulfilled if he dies here in the desert?

Having **run out of water in the desert**, sensing that she is **without hope**, she places Ishmael under one of the bushes, to likely keep him out of the sun, recognizing that **they will simply die here**.

**She is truly without hope.**

*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."*

**Vs 16** - Having placed the child under a tree, she sits down opposite him, a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot.

She moves this far, for **she does not want to watch her child die**. As she sat opposite him, she **lifted up her voice and her tears**.

She is without hope. It appears, as she lifts up her voice, she is praying. Praying to the God of Abraham, praying to the God she has been hearing about since she entered Abraham's service.

Here in a **moment of desperation**, she is **weeping and she is praying**. She is at the end of her rope, she cannot go any further and Ishmael is going to die, right here!

**Vs 17-18 - But God...** Notice carefully, **God "heard the voice of the boy."**

And God, hearing the voice of the boy, we then read **the Angel of God** called to Hagar "from heaven."

Most theologians believe that this is another **Theophany** or a **Christophany**, a pre-manager appearance of the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

It appears not only was **Hagar praying**, but **Ishmael was praying** and God “**heard the voice of the boy.**” Now God **hears everything**, what we are being told is that God “**acted**” on behalf of the cries of Ishmael!

**These are the words that change everything. I do not care what the situation is, I do not care how dire the circumstances. If God gets involved, things can change on a dime!**

Immediately the **Angel of God**, the angel of Elohim, calls from heaven to Hagar and asks Hagar a question, of which He does not provide time to answer: “*What troubles you, Hagar?*”

Following this rhetorical question, he says: “**Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.**”

**Four distinct things** (three declarations and one command):

- 1) **Fear not...** Wow, have we heard that before. This keeps coming back around.

**APPLICATION:** I do not mean to keep beating this drum, but you and I should not fear!

- 2) God has “**heard**” **the voice of the boy**. But she is not an Israelite, she is not a Jew, she is not a Christian. True, but God loves everybody!
- 3) Go **grab the boy by the hand**. The point is you take hold of him, **he is not dying today**.
- 4) **FOR...** I will **make him** into a **GREAT nation**.

What **God had told Abraham**, he **now tells Hagar**. God had already promised this to Abraham, It is possible that Hagar did not know this (although she could have), but for sure **she does now**.

From **hopelessness and despair** to **joy, happiness** and **confidence**. From watching your son die, to hearing the creator of the universe tell you that this boy will become a great nation.

**APPLICATION:** Sandy often says **God can turn things around on a dime**, and so here in the life of Hagar and Ishmael He sure has!

*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.*

**QUICK THOUGHT:** Once again, we see God comforting the distressed. It is the nature of our God!

**Vs 19 - Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water.** It seems, that the well of water had always been there she just could not see it. Maybe the answer for her survival has always been there but she just **simply could not see it**.

**APPLICATION:** I was in a condition very much like this. I, for whatever reason, I could not see the need for the gospel, like Hagar, it was there, **but I could not see it**.

**APPLICATION:** “*Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*” (Joh 3:3 ESV)

**APPLICATION:** “*17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might*” (Eph 1:17-19 ESV)

One more point. God provided for Hagar exactly what she needed.

Our God is our provider, it is not our job, our intellect, or our employer. **It is God!**  
She went and filled the skin and then gave the boy some water to drink. In an instant **everything changed!**

**Vs 20 - Elohim** was **with the boy!** It is interesting to note that God's covenant name is not used, but instead the name that points to his power as creator.

The boy grew up, from boy, to teenager, to man and **Elohim** was with the boy. He lived in the wilderness...

**Vs 21** - He lived in the wilderness of Paran and he became an expert in the bow. His **mother took a wife for him**, from the **land of Egypt**. She is from Egypt.

It is likely that she was picked up while Sarai and Abram were in Egypt, if you remember we were told:

*"15 And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels." (Ge 12:15-16 ESV)*

Also, if you remember when the whole falling out occurred with Sarah, she fled in the **direction of Egypt**:

*"6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her. 7 ¶ The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur." (Ge 16:6-7 ESV)*

As we might guess, she goes back to the **familiar** and **obtains a wife for her son Ishmael**.

So you see it now, although it will come back around. The promise that Ishmael would become a nation is fulfilled and we read about it in Genesis 25:

*"12 These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham. 13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes." (Ge 25:12-16 ESV)*

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**22 At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do. 23 Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity, but as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned."**

**Vs 22 - At that time**, around the time that all this is going on... So how much time has passed we cannot be sure. **More on that in a second.**

Yes, the **King of Gebar**, that we ran into when Abraham moved from Hebron, from the oaks of his colleague Mamre. **At a minimum** it has been **4-6 years** since we last ran into Abimelech (adding in the time of **Sarah's pregnancy** and **Isaac's weening**).

**Abimelech** (the king) is accompanied by **Phicol** (the commander of his army). Phicol's name means "**strong.**" So, something brought the king out with the commander of his army to visit Abraham.

We do not know the full story, but for sure it served one purpose and that was for the King to attempt to enter into a covenant with Abraham.

Again, Abraham is a rich and powerful man and getting richer and more powerful by the day!

Abimelech comes to Abraham and pitches what appears to be the reason he came. He says to Abraham two things:

**First - God is with you in all that you do!**

This is a **stunning declaration** and makes us at least wonder **if Abimelech has become a believer**, a follower of Yahweh. But for sure it serves as a reminder that the God who cannot lie promised to bless Abraham.

**APPLICATION:** If you have placed faith in Jesus Christ, if you have believed in God. This is true for you and I. God has **blessed us** and **God is with us!**

**Second – Vs 23 - Swear** that you will not **deal falsely** (to lie or cheat) with me, swear by **GOD אלהים ('elohiyim)**.

**Swear** that you will not deal falsely with my descendants (offspring) or my posterity (progeny).

**But instead:** As I have dwelt kindly with you, please promise to deal kindly with me.

*24 And Abraham said, "I will swear." 25 When Abraham reproved Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized, 26 Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today." 27 So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant. 28 Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock apart.*

**Vs 24 -** Abraham, responds, I will swear! Abraham, it appears, quickly agrees to enter into a covenant with Abimelech and says: I will swear, I will make that pledge, I will provide that promise.

**Vs 25 -** When, is probably better translated “then” or left completely out, for there is no Hebrew word there. Then, Abraham reproved Abimelech. The idea is to reprove or rebuke.

So Abraham took this opportunity to rebuke Abimelech for an event that had happened. Namely, at some time in the past, Abraham had drilled a well. Something that is critical in the desert, and Abimelech’s men had seized it.

Although we do not know the details of the event, we know it happened and we know that Abraham is taking this opportunity to rebuke Abimelech for what his men had done.

**Vs 26 -** Abimelech responds: In summation, **I had no knowledge of this event, and you have not told me about this thing**, and in fact **I have heard nothing about this, until today!**

**The unstated point** here is Abimelech, seems to return the well, saying I had no knowledge that my men had taken anything from you.

**Vs 27 -** Abraham responds! Here Abraham takes sheep and oxen and gives them to Abimelech and they enter into a **covenant**. So he gives him back at least a part of the gift that Abimelech had given him in **Gen 20:14**.

They are entering into a covenant of peace and of justice. I built a well, in the land, your servants came and took it. This is a **horizontal covenant (man-to-man)**.

Did they practice a ceremony similar to what we say God do in Genesis 15? We do not know. **There is no indication**. Here, it seems, Abraham gives sheep and oxen, to Abimelech

**Vs 28 -** Then Abraham, sets these seven ewe lambs apart from the gift he had given Abimelech. Can you picture this in your mind? We see the number seven and of course this captures out attention. It is the **number of completeness**.

*29 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?" 30 He said, "These seven ewe lambs you will take from my hand, that this may be a witness for me that I dug this well." 31 Therefore that place was called Beersheba, because there both of them swore an oath. 32 So*

*they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army rose up and returned to the land of the Philistines.*

**Vs 29** - Then Abimelech asks Abraham, what is the meaning of these seven lambs? Up until now, in whatever ceremony they did Abimelech had no questions.

**Vs 30** - These seven lambs that I have provided, you are to take from my hand, and they are to serve as a **witness (for me)**, that **I dug this well**. Now this seems a little strange to us.

**Vs 31** - So the place was likely called something different, but here it is **renamed Beersheba**.

Beersheba means “**well of the seven**” or the “**well of the sevenfold oath**”, so the place was renamed based on this oath the Abraham made to Abimelech and Abimelech made to Abraham.

**INTERESTING POINT:** Abraham, has been given a token in the land of Israel, a downpayment if you will. This well, the well of the sevenfold oath. **This is like a downpayment.**

**Vs 32** - **So they made a covenant at Beersheba.** Then Abimelech the king and Phicol the commander of his army rose up and returned home, back to the **land of the Philistines**.

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*33 ¶ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. 34 And Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines.*

Then in the area now renamed the “Well of the sevenfold oath” Abraham planted a tamarisk tree, and there once again, now many years since he came in the land, many years since he had been justified by faith, many years since God had made an unconditional covenant with him.

He plants a tree, seeming to say, God I believe you are going to give this whole place to me and my descendants.

He called upon the name of Yahweh the everlasting God. **He is worshipping Yahweh!**

**It has been said that worship is a response to God’s truth, God’s promises. Abraham, responded to what God was showing him!**

There in Beersheba - He called upon **Yahweh** the **עולם (‘owlam) אל (‘el)**.

**Yahweh, the “everlasting God.” The God of eternity!** Unlike anything else in the entire creation. Yahweh is the “everlasting” the “eternal” God!

Abraham had entered into a covenant with a king, but he recognized the greater truth that **Yahweh had entered into a covenant with him** and He had been working to keep his end of the covenant this entire time!

**Vs 34** - Thus Abraham **sojourned** “many days” in the **land of the Philistines**. **Why did he move south?** We do not know. **Why did he leave the area of Hebron?** We do not know.

But he stayed, he dwelt in the land of the Philistines “**many days.**” So we get the sense that Abraham will leave this place, although he will sojourn, he will stay there many days.

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