

Promise Fulfilled
Genesis 21

How to use this Scripture Engagement



Pray to Begin

Before you start each lesson, ask the Lord to use it to grow you in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



Read the Bible passage

Invite God to open your eyes and deepen your understanding of His Word as you read the passage.



Study the Scripture Engagement Guide

Go through the Scripture Engagement study provided to reflect on the meaning, context, and personal application of the passage you've read.



Reflect on the Scripture Engagement Questions

After every teaching, consider the Scripture Engagement questions listed for personal reflection and application and for your small group discussions.



Listen to Dr. J. Vernon McGee's Teaching

If you'd like to hear the complete audio teaching on the passage, [visit ttb.bible](http://ttb.bible) or scan the QR code on the last page to download the THRU the BIBLE app in your own language.



Use our recommended **pause and resume icon**. This will guide you to move through the content thoughtfully and at your own rhythm.

For your consideration

How to use this Scripture Engagement

Page

2

The Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-7)

Page

4

Hagar and Ishmael Cast Out (Genesis 21:8-33)

Page

10

Promise Fulfilled

Dear God,

We thank You that You keep every promise You make. As we study this chapter, help us to see Your timing, Your power to bring life out of death, and Your wisdom in calling us to maturity and obedience. Teach us to trust You fully, to grow beyond spiritual infancy, and to walk in the freedom of Your promises.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Genesis 21 opens with **the fulfillment of a long-awaited promise.**

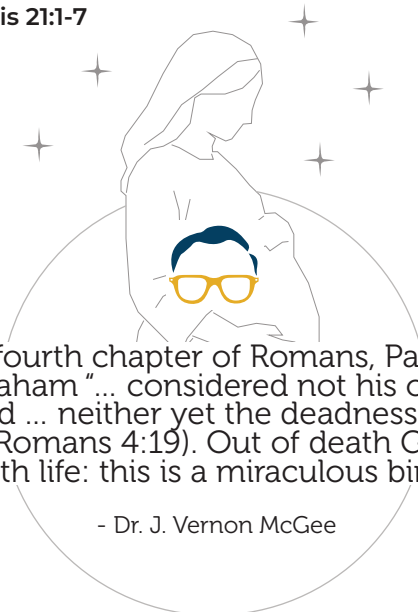
In the previous chapter, Abraham's sin had to be dealt with before **the promised child could be born.**

Now the time had come. **The Lord visited Sarah** just as He had said, and He did for her exactly what **He had spoken.** At the appointed time, **Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age.** God had kept His word.

The Birth of Isaac



Genesis 21:1-7



"In the fourth chapter of Romans, Paul writes that Abraham "... considered not his own body now dead ... neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Romans 4:19). Out of death God brings forth life: this is a miraculous birth."

- Dr. J. Vernon McGee

There is a **striking similarity** between **the birth of Isaac** and **the birth of Christ.** Isaac was born at the set time **God had promised.** In the same way, Scripture tells us that **when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son** (Galatians 4:4).

Abraham **named his son Isaac** as **instructed**, and **circumcised** him on the eighth day in **obedience to God's command.**

Abraham was **one hundred years old**, and Sarah declared, **"God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me"** (Genesis 21:6). What once **seemed impossible** had **become reality.**



This was a **miraculous birth**, a birth **contrary to nature**. Abraham's body was described as **dead** and Sarah's womb as **barren** (*Romans 4:19*). Yet **out of death, God brought life**. Long before **the virgin birth of Christ**, **God prepared mankind** for the supernatural by demonstrating that **He can bring life where there is none**.

Both **Abraham and Sarah** had to come to the place of **recognizing** they could do **nothing**. Isaac's birth was **not human achievement** but **divine intervention**.

It was a work entirely of God.

Isaac as a Foreshadowing of Christ

The parallels between Isaac and Christ are remarkable:



Both births were promised.



Both involved a long interval between promise and fulfillment.



Both announcements seemed impossible.



Both sons were named before birth.



Both were born at God's appointed time.



Both births were miraculous.



Both sons were a joy to their fathers.



Both were obedient, even unto death.



Isaac's birth from a womb considered "dead" pictures resurrection - life out of death.

God did not suddenly introduce the virgin birth without preparation. Through Isaac and other miraculous births, He was preparing mankind to understand how He works.

Isaac as a foreshadowing of Jesus





Reflection

Question 1

What makes Isaac's birth clearly supernatural rather than humanly possible?

Question 2

What does it reveal about God's character that Genesis 21:1 repeats, "as He had said... as He had spoken"?

Question 3

What situation feels “dead” that I need to entrust God's power rather than my effort?

Draw your Application



Hagar and Ishmael Cast Out



Genesis 21:8-33



The time comes when you have to make a decision as to which nature you are going to live by. You must make a determination in this matter of yielding to the Lord. You either have to permit the Holy Spirit to move in your life, or else you have to go through life controlled by the flesh. There is no third alternative for the child of God.



Joy in the household was soon **accompanied by conflict** when Sarah saw Ishmael mocking. The arrival of Isaac revealed Ishmael's true character.

This event illustrates the believer's inner struggle between **the old nature and the new nature**. Before conversion, a person lives **under the control of the old nature**. But when one is born again, **a new nature is received** and **conflict begins**. **The flesh and the Spirit do not cooperate**.

There is **no third alternative** for the believer. **One must choose which nature will rule.** Attempting to live by both results in **instability.** Like two horses pulling in opposite directions, the flesh and the Spirit cannot move together. The believer must yield to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to accomplish what the law never could.

A graphic illustration with a white background. At the top, the text "Conflict between the" is in a dark blue, sans-serif font. Below it, "Old Nature" is written in a large, bold, orange font, and "and the New Nature" is written in a large, bold, blue font. In the center, a dark blue silhouette of a person stands with arms outstretched, facing two horses. To the left is a brown horse facing right, and to the right is a blue horse facing left. The horses are stylized with flowing manes and are in a trotting or running pose. The person's head has three small yellow lines above it, suggesting a bright idea or conflict. The entire scene is set against a light gray ground line.



When my flesh and the Holy Spirit pull in opposite directions, what practical steps can I take to yield fully to God?

Sarah demanded that **Hagar** and **her son** be cast out, declaring that Ishmael would not share **the inheritance with Isaac**. Though this was **very sorrowful** to Abraham, God confirmed that, **“In Isaac your seed shall be called”** (v.12). The son born **through human scheming** could not replace the son born **through divine promise**.

Abraham obeyed. He rose early and sent Hagar and Ishmael away with bread and water. When their water was gone in the wilderness, Hagar wept, unwilling to watch her son die. But God heard the voice of the lad. The angel of God called from heaven, reassuring her. God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. Ishmael lived, grew, and dwelt in the wilderness.

Though Scripture no longer follows his line closely, his descendants remain. **The character of Ishmael foreshadows** the history of **his descendants**, a people often in conflict. Even in separation, God shows mercy. He declares that He will make Ishmael a great nation.



Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba

The chapter closes with another episode in **Abraham's life**. Abimelech **sought a treaty** with Abraham **when he recognized that God** was with Abraham in all that he did. He **desired assurance** that Abraham **would deal faithfully** with him and **his descendants**. A covenant was made at Beersheba. **Abraham planted a grove there and called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.**

Though **God had promised him the land**, Abraham remained a stranger and a pilgrim in it. He sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days. The promise was sure, the **covenant secure**. Yet Abraham lived as one passing through, trusting the God who keeps His word at the appointed time.



Would others recognize that God is with me in the way I live and lead?

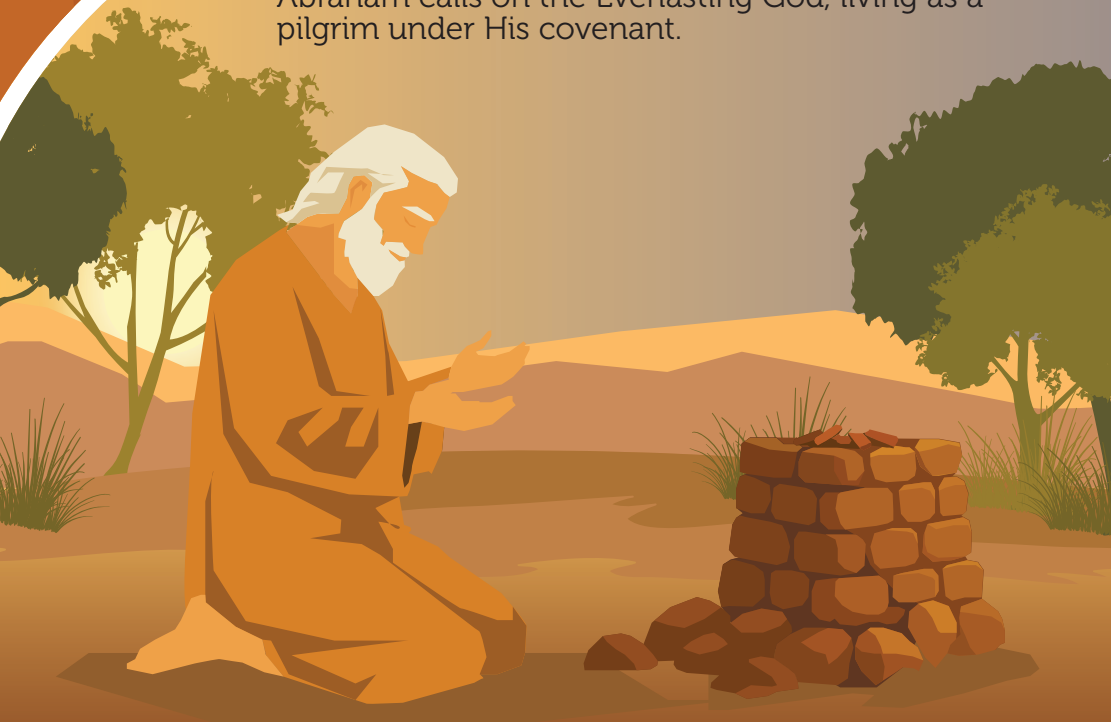


In what ways might I be living like this world is permanent instead of as someone passing through with trust of God's promises?

When God's hand is upon a life, even the nations take notice.
A testimony lived in peace speaks louder than words.



After the promise comes worship. Rooted in faith,
Abraham calls on the Everlasting God, living as a
pilgrim under His covenant.



Reflection & Application

Question 1

In this chapter, the earlier decision of Abraham and Sarah to act outside of God's promise resulted in deep pain, division, and separation within the family.

How do the events surrounding Hagar and Ishmael reveal that sin even when forgiven can carry lasting consequences that affect not only us but those around us?

Question 2

McGee compares Ishmael and Isaac to the conflict between the old nature and the new nature within a believer.

What does this illustration teach us about our responsibility to choose which nature will govern our lives, and why is neutrality or compromise not an option?



Your Takeaway

Integrating **'God's Intelligence'** in my life.

McGee's Quote



“ As a believer you cannot live in harmony with both natures. You are going to have to make a decision. James says, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).

This explains the instability and the insecurity among many Christians today. They want to go with the world, and yet they want to go with the Lord. They are spiritual schizophrenics, trying to do both, and you cannot do that.

”



Access Our Resources



Download THRU the BIBLE app and listen to audio bible teachings available in over 200 languages.

Visit ttb.bible



Discover our interactive digital flip book of more volumes in the Scripture Engagement book series on our website.

Visit ttbsa.org