



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 31



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

ISAAC IS BORN, AND HAGAR AND ISHMAEL ARE EXPELLED

INTRODUCTION

Gen 21:1 "And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken." ²For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. ³And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. ⁶And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. ⁷And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age. ⁸And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. ¹¹And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. ¹²And 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. ¹³And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. ¹⁴And 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. ¹⁵And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. ¹⁶And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: 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. ¹⁷And 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. ¹⁸Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. ¹⁹And 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. ²⁰And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. ²¹And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." (Genesis 21:1-21)

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

At the appointed time, just as the Lord had said, He visited Sarah, and she had the promised son. In accordance with the Lord's commandment, Abraham named the son Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day. When the child was weaned, a feast

was prepared for him. It was at this time that the enmity between Ishmael and Isaac was revealed; Ishmael was seen mocking Isaac. Unwilling to endure this situation, Sarah told Abraham to cast Hagar and Ishmael out of their house. Though this saddened Abraham, the Lord directed him to do as Sarah

had said. After being expelled from the house, it appeared as though Ishmael was going to die from lack of water. God heard the cries of the lad, and sent an angel to assure Hagar that Ishmael would be all right, declaring God would make a great nation from him. The Lord then opened Hagar's eyes to a well,

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

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where she drew sustaining water. God was with Ishmael, and he dwelt in the wilderness, becoming a mighty archer.

THE NATURE OF GOD BEING REVEALED

Throughout the book of Genesis the nature of God Himself is intentionally being made known. Some of the things made known to this point are as follows.

- ➔ That He makes things happen (creation, the imposition of death, the expulsion from a place of blessing, Cain becomes a wanderer, the builders of Shinar are stopped, a flood destroys all of life saving those in the ark, the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, and a birth under impossible circumstances).
- ➔ He delivers the godly (Noah, Abraham, Lot).
- ➔ He will not tolerate disobedience (Adam and Eve).
- ➔ He will not receive something from a

defiled person (Cain).

- ➔ He accepts offerings from an acceptable person (Abel).
- ➔ He gives adequate warnings (Cain, the world in Noah's day, Abimelech).
- ➔ He thwarts the working of those who proceed without Him (Shinar).
- ➔ He chooses whom He wills (Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham).
- ➔ He rejects whom He wills (Cain, Canaan, Ishmael).
- ➔ He knows what is in the heart of people (Cain, The world in and after the flood).
- ➔ He does not hide what He is going to do from those He has accepted (Noah, Abraham, Lot).
- ➔ God does what He promises to do (Adam/Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah).
- ➔ He will not overlook the abuse of His people (Abraham/Abimelech, Lot/Sodom, Ishmael/Isaac).
- ➔ Ultimately, the rejected and the accepted cannot dwell together (Isaac and Ishmael).
- ➔ He reveals things as His people are walking by faith (Noah, Abraham).
- ➔ He blesses some people because of other people (Noah's family, the progeny of Abraham).
- ➔ He blesses some people because of the prayer of others (Abimelech

because of Abraham's prayer).

THE PURPOSE OF GOD BEING MADE KNOWN

- ➔ The demise of the devil through the Seed of the woman (Gen 3:15).
- ➔ The determination to bless the world (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).
- ➔ The raising up of a special nation among whom the Savior would be born (Gen 12:2; 18:18).

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE BEING MADE MANIFEST

- ➔ There is an enmity between the world and the saints (Cain/Abel, Noah/world, Lot/Sodom, Isaac/Ishmael).
- ➔ The righteous are vexed by ungodliness (Lot/Sodom).
- ➔ Ultimately, the righteous and the wicked must be separated (Cain/Abel, Noah/world, Isaac/Ishmael).
- ➔ God will not accept substitutes for His choices (Adam/Eve, Cain, Eliezer, and Ishmael).
- ➔ The righteous live by faith (Abraham).

THE CULTURING OF THE SOUL

In a very real and effective sense, there is a culturing of the soul that takes place when a person ingests the Word of God. This culturing involves a deliverance from the world's manner of

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thinking, and a corresponding acquaintance with God's way of thinking.

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Living By Every Word of God

It is for this reason that no child of God can afford to remain in a state of Scriptural ignorance. There is no substitute for a working knowledge of the Scriptures, for man ,lives “by every word of God” (Lk 4:4). This life does not come from occasionally snacking on the Word, or finding texts that have to do with this or that. For want of a better term, I am using the word “working knowledge” – i.e. knowing how to use the Word of God (2 Tim 2:15).

The ‘living’ of reference involves a number of things.

- First, when hearing preaching and teaching, what is said is sifted through ones personal treasury of Scripture. When something theologically flawed is said, it will at once conflict with the Word that is known, warning the hearer to listen with caution.
- Second, in the time of temptation, the Holy Spirit will work through the Word, which is His sword, pricking the conscience of the one being tempted, and alerting him to the sure jeopardy that occurs when God’s Word is violated.

➤ Third, when dealing with people, there are often circumstances and questions that need to be addressed. When the individual has a working acquaintance with Scripture, he will be able to determine the legitimacy of a question, as well as providing an intelligent answer.

Of course, when a person lacks an acquaintance with Scripture, they are put to a disadvantage in all of these cases.

It ought to be said that **the Lord will protect those who are beginners in Christ**. We do not have a lucid view of how long this may be. It probably varies with different people. However, during that elementary stage spiritual life, it is imperative that the person be subjected to sound and thorough Scriptural teaching. This, of course, is found within the body of Christ, where the appropriate gifts have been placed by the Lord Himself (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:12). These gifts ensure the maturity of spiritual understanding.

GOD VISITED SARAH AS HE HAD SAID

Gen 21:1 **“And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken.”**

Here again, we are being acquainted with the Divine manner. **God works in accordance with His word**—i.e. **“as He had said . . . as He had spoken.”** Another expression is, **“as He hath promised”** (Ex 12:25; Deut 1:11; 12:20; 26:18; Josh 23:10).

This confirms how highly God has exalted His word. As it is written, **“Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name”** (Psa 138:2). This has particular reference to, but is not limited to, the promises, or commitments, of the Lord. **You might call such words declarations of His purpose and intent.** When God affirms a promise, or declares His purpose, He has put His name on the line, so to speak. The

outcome will confirm His trustworthiness and integrity. If God does not do what He has promised, He cannot be trusted. **However, if He always does what He declares He will do, then it becomes a transgressing insult not to trust Him.**

THE LORD VISITED SARAH
“And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said. . .” Other versions read, *“took note of Sarah as He had said,”* ^{NASB} *“was gracious to Sarah as He had said,”* ^{NIV} *“dealt with Sarah as he had said,”* ^{NRSV} *“came to Sarah as he had said,”* ^{BBE} *“came to help Sarah and did for her what he had promised,”* ^{GWN} *“remembered Sarah as He had said,”* ^{JPS} *“took note of Sarah as he had said he would,”* ^{NAU} *“treated Sarah as he had said,”* ^{NJB} *“looked after Sarah as He hath said,”* ^{YLT} *“was good to Sarah,”* ^{CEV} *“came to Sarah, just as he had said,”* ^{ISV}

and “visited Sarah exactly as he said he would.” ^{MESSAGE}

This word is the fulfillment of the promise made about one year earlier to Abraham: *“At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life; and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son”* (Gen 18:10,14).

This had particular reference to Sarah conceiving the promised child, and is the point of references in Hebrews: *“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed”* (Heb 11:11).

THE LORD DID UNTO SARAH
“and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken.” Other versions read, *“the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised,”* ^{NASB} *“did to her as he had undertaken,”* ^{BBE} *“did unto Sarah as He*

had spoken," ^{JPS} "doth to Sarah as He hath spoken," ^{YLT} and "kept his promise." ^{CEV}

This particularly refers to the actual birth of Isaac – the appointed outcome of the conception. This also was according to the promise of God. "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed" (Gen 17:19). And again, "lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son"(Gen 18:10). And yet again, "Sarah shall have a son" (Gen 18:14).

Both the conception and the birth of Isaac were wholly owing to the Lord. So there would be no doubt about the matter, God waited until Abraham was impotent because of age, and Sarah was not only barren, but past the age of bearing children. In addition to this, it was sufficient time after Abraham's

What God "did unto Sarah" enabled her to conceive, carry the child full term, and safely deliver the child.

experience with Abimelech to confirm the father was Abraham. As further confirmation, during Abraham's stay in the vicinity of Abimelech, a curse had been placed upon Abimelech and his house – so that no children were conceived there during the stay of Abraham. God had closed the wombs of all of the women in Abimelech's household – and the womb has particular reference to with conception.

What God "did unto Sarah" enabled her to conceive, carry the child

full term, and safely deliver the child.

The Amazing Practicality

It is important to see that God can so work in men as to cause them to be able to do something they could not otherwise do – that is, could not do on their own. This is how we are to understand the affirmation, "For it is God which *worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" (Phil 2:13). This is something that needs to be more fully grasped. It is uncomely for professing Christian's not to see this.

SARAH BARE A SON AT THE SET TIME

"² For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him."

The Spirit uses the kind of language that especially appeals to faith. This is to be compared with relating something that was truly miraculous, but was **not** directly related to a promise. Examples would be the parting of the Red Sea Ex 14:16; , Joshua commanding the sun to stand still (Josh 10:12), the feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:21), and the stilling of the tempest (Mk 4:23). There is no question about the Source of these miracles. **However, they were not directly related to a specific promise, or the revealed purpose of God. Therefore, they did not induce faith.**

This by no means is intended to demean miracles. However, God has not magnified His miracles, but His Word. Even when people believed, having witnessed great miracles, it is, written, "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6).

Even the order in which hearing and seeing is listed shows the priority of the Word. I am careful to say I am, speaking of priority.

All of this is said to emphasize that the record of Sarah conceiving and giving birth to Isaac is not to be seen primarily as a miracle – although it was surely that. **Rather, it is to be seen as the fulfillment of what God promised.**

When the Scriptures speak of what God is capable of doing, it is stated in such a manner as to stress His will, or purpose.

➔ "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor 9:8).

➔ "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph 3:20).

➔ "Wherefore He is able also to save

them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

➔ "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4:12).

This is why it is wrong to **emphasize** the miraculous, and present God primarily as a miracle Worker – although He is that, indeed. That He works miracles cannot be denied. That He desires to known primarily for the working of wonders, is emphatically denied.

Thus, the miraculous birth of Isaac will be presented as the outworking of God's purpose, and the fulfilling of His promise.

AND SARAH CONCEIVED A SON

"For Sarah conceived . . ." There were two wondrous things wrought in the birth of Isaac. **First, the conception was strictly owing to a Divine visitation.** Sarah's body was not capable of conceiving. There was no functioning

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biological apparatus present for this to happen.

In this regard, Sarah has some resemblance to Mary, the mother of our Lord. She also had a miraculous conception, on an even higher scale. Sarah conceived by Abraham, which was another miracle. Mary, however, conceived God's "Holy Child" (Acts 4:27,30) "of [or by] the Holy Spirit" (Matt 1:20) ^{NKJV}

herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised" (Heb 11:11). Other versions read, "and she bore a child." ^{NKJV} Later versions omit this perspective, ascribing the faith mentioned to Abraham, and omitting the reference to Sarah giving birth– i.e. "By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father

"the time," at which spiritual maturity takes place. As it is written, "For when **for the time** ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb 5:12). Other versions read, "by this time," ^{NKJV} "by now," ^{GWN} and "You have had enough time." ^{ERV}

The fact that this was written to a number of people indicates that there is a general time period in spiritual life in which a person should reach maturity. The precise amount of this time is not mentioned, and no man must take it upon himself to define such a period. However, it is obvious that "newness of life" is intended to mature, so that a person is able to communicate the truth to others—i.e. particularly within the context of the body of Christ (Eph 4:16; Col 2:19).

For this spiritual adulthood not to be reached within a reasonable period of time, would be like Sarah not conceiving and giving birth at the time specified by the Lord. I realize this parallel can be pressed too far, but it seems to me that there must be some thought given to the cause for continued spiritual immaturity and its contradiction of the revealed purpose of God (Eph 4:12-16). **Appointed times are a reality, even though not revealed.**

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AT THE SET TIME

" . . . and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him."

The word "bare" is a reference to the actual birth of the child, meaning "BRING FORTH . . . DELIVERED . . . TO BEAR, BRING FORTH, BEGET, GENDER, TRAVAIL " ^{STRONG'S}

Bearing a child commences with travail, and consummates in the delivery of the child. The process of conception and bearing is described in Hebrews: "Through faith also Sara

because he considered Him faithful who had made the promise" (Heb 11:11). ^{NIV/ NRSV/GWN/NAB}

The "set time" was announced about a year earlier by a heavenly messenger: "But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee **at this set time in the next year**" (Gen 17:21). And again, "At **the time appointed** I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Gen 18:14).

An Application

A "set time" can be equated to

ISAAC IS NAMED AND CIRCUMCISED AS GOD HAD COMMANDED

" ³ And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. ⁴ And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵ And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him."

ABRAHAM CALLED HIM ISAAC

"And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac."

The naming of the child was in response to a Divine directive: "thou shalt call his name Isaac" (Gen 17:19). That instruction was given about one year before Abraham actually named the child – when he was ninety-nine years old (Gen 17:24). **It was not repeated, and it was not given to him in writing.** The epoch of the destruction of the cities of the plan took place between that time and the time of our text. **Yet, Abraham did not forget what he was to name the child birthed by**

Sarah. The name "Isaac" means "laughter," ^{HITCHCOCK} or "laughing." ^{SMITH'S}

Both Abraham and Sarah "laughed" when it was revealed that Abraham would father a son through Sarah (Gen 17:17; Gen 18:12). Abraham "laughed" in the sense of rejoicing, while Sarah laughed out of doubt, and was faced with that fact by the angel – even though she, like Abraham, had laughed within herself. **Now, every time they said Isaac's**

name, they would be set to rejoicing at the wonder of his birth, as well the promises that were related to it (Gen 17:19,21).

ABRAHAM CIRCUMCISED ISAAC ON THE EIGHTH DAY

“And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.”

God’s commandment was not grievous to Abraham. Therefore he did not forget it, and carried it out precisely as it was described to him (Gen 17:12). This is the manner of believing. **Not only does faith believe what God has said, it obeys what He commands, never murmuring as Israel of old, or refusing to believe as they did** (Deut 1:32).

Remember that faith is being lived out in the person of Abraham, who never questioned what God said, or refused to obey what he commanded.

ABRAHAM WAS AN HUNDRED YEARS OLD

“And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.”

The patriarch first was directed by God when he was seventy-five (Gen 12:4). Shortly thereafter God spoke to him of his “seed” (Gen 12:7). God later told him he himself would beget the child (Gen 15:4). Still, not knowing that Sarah was going to give birth to his

the promised child (Gen 15:4). Twenty-four of those years were marked by a total ignorance of the fact that Sarah would be the mother of the promised child (Gen 17:15-17).

Faith does not deteriorate with time, as all natural resources do. It is

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child, Ishmael was born when Abraham was eighty-six years old (Gen 16:16). Then, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God announced to him that Sarah would have the child, and that he was to be named “Isaac” (Gen 17:19-21) – twenty years after the promise.

Now, at the birth of Isaac, Abraham is one hundred years old. His faith had carried him along for twenty-five years. For 15-20 years, Abraham did not know he himself would beget

resilient, and, if kept, advances in strength with the passing of time.

Why did Abraham NOT forget what to name the child, or to circumcise him? The answer ought to be obvious. **Faith does not forget, but holds on to the promises of God.** When men forget what God has promised, and ignore what God has commanded, it is because they have not believed. What faith remembers, unbelief forgets – and that is without exception.

SARAH MADE TO LAUGH

“⁶And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. ⁷And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.”

GOD HATH MADE ME TO LAUGH

“And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me . . .” Other versions read, *“God has made laughter for me,”* ^{NASB} *“brought me laughter,”* ^{NIV} *“given me cause for laughing,”* ^{BBE} *“made me to rejoice,”* ^{GENEVA} *“has made me happy,”* ^{ERV} *“brought me joy and laughter,”* ^{GNB} *“blessed me with laughter.”* ^{MESSAGE}

It is obvious that this is insightful

laughter, or joy. This is not the kind of laughing she did within herself in Mamre, when the angels visited Abraham. **This happiness was given when she associated the birth of Isaac with the promise of God.**

Notice how Sarah traced things back to God. When she was barren she said, *“the Lord hath restrained me from bearing”* (Gen 16:2). Now that Isaac is born, she says that God has made her to laugh. **It is a mark of faith that is traced experience back to God.** Job did so in his sorrow: *“the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD”* (Job 1:21). Abraham did so when accounting for his wandering: *“God caused me to wander from my father’s house”* (Gen

20:13). Joseph did so when accounting his adversity: *“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”* (Gen 50:20).

God says of Himself, *“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand”* (Deut 32:39). The prophets traced all things back to God. *“That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things”* (Isa 45:6-7). And

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

again, "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up" (Hosea 6:1).

There simply is too much said about this for men to remain ignorant of the facts.

These days we often hear Christian leaders say, "Good things

sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets" (2 Kgs 24:2).

➔ **A destroying angel.** "And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy

have given children suck?" Other versions read, "that Sarah would nurse children," ^{NKJV} "suckle children," ^{RSV} "predicted to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children," ^{GWN} "who would have dreamed that I would ever have a baby?," ^{LIVING} "Who would have dared to tell Abraham that someday I would have a child?" ^{CEV} and "Who would believe that Abraham should hear that Sara gave suck to a son." ^{DARBY}

Sarah knows that Abraham was told she would have a son. However, her comment has to do with human perception, not Divine revelation. In other words, **there was nothing observable to men that would have led them to the conclusion that Sarah would some day have and nurse a child.** It simply was impossible to account for the birth of Isaac through some natural process. God had done the impossible, and Sarah knew it.

The purpose of God is the whole reason for salvation and everything associated with it. It is wholly reliant upon His power. Human wisdom and strategies have no place in the execution of Divine purpose.

come from God, and bad things come from the devil." This is a foolish saying, and unworthy of being embraced. Often the Scriptures make a point of God sending "bad" things, or things that in no way can be considered blessings. Ponder the things God is affirmed to have sent.

➔ **Thunder and hail.** "The Lord send thunder and hail" (Ex 9:23).

➔ **Fiery serpents.** "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people" (Num 21:6).

➔ **Thunder and rain.** "The Lord sent thunder and rain" (1 Sam 12:18).

➔ **Pestilence.** "The Lord sent a pestilence" (2 Sam 24:15; 1 Chron 21:14).

➔ **An evil spirit.** "Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech" (Judg 9:23).

➔ **Lions.** "The Lord sent lions among them" (2 Kgs 17:25).

➔ **Aggressive enemies.** "And the LORD

it . . ." (1 Chron 21:15).

➔ **An angel who eliminated mighty and leading men.** "And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria" (2 Chron 32:21).

➔ **A great wind and a mighty tempest.** "But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." (Jonah 1:4).

➔ **Strong delusion.** "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess 2:12).

It is the peculiar prerogative of faith to reckon on these realities. It knows of no circumstance that is devoid of Divine influence. When men are taught that God sends only good, they have simply been taught wrong.

WHO WOULD HAVE SAID?

"And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should

The Miraculous element

The begetting of Isaac involved three distinct miracles. First, the conception of Isaac through Abraham. Second, the birth of Isaac through Sarah. Third, the nursing of Isaac by a woman ninety years of age, who generated milk through Divine strength.

A Confirmation

We have in this instance a confirmation of a word given to those who are in Christ Jesus. "Now unto Him **that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us**" (Eph 3:20).

When it comes to the work of the Lord, and man's participation in it, we are to reckon on the ability of God, not our own. The purpose of God is the whole reason for salvation and everything associated with it. It is wholly reliant upon His power. **Human wisdom and strategies have no place in the execution of Divine purpose.** They had no place in the birth of Isaac, or in any other facet of that grand and extensive "eternal purpose."

I HAVE BORN HIM A SON

" . . . for I have born him a son in

his old age.”

Abraham beget the son, and Sarah gave birth to him. **Both were strengthened by God, for nature had no resources for either of them.** It was impossible for Abraham to beget a child, and it was equally impossible for Sarah to give birth to one. That is how the circumstance stood according to nature.

However, God is transcendent to nature, which is part of His own creation. However, even though the nature testifies to *“His eternal power and Godhead”* (Rom 1:20), **nature itself does not possess such power.** This is why it is so wrong to attribute Divine attributes to nature, as though had power in itself. It is also out of order to treat human reasoning that way.

Many ancient cultures worshiped nature, which itself a creation. **What is**

created is not Deity, nor does it possess Divine qualities. Even Abraham and Sarah knew this, prior to Scripture and the revelation of God’s eternal purpose. There was no way they could attribute the birth of Isaac to natural ability.

There simply is no excuse for men to be ignorant of this fact in this day of the open heavens, when God has made known what was kept secret since before the earth was created.

A FEAST AND A REVELATION

“⁸ And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰ Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. ¹¹ And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son.”

THE CHILD GREW AND WAS WEANED

And the child grew, and was weaned . . .” Other versions read, *“old enough to be taken from the breast,”* ^{BBE} *“Sarah no longer had to nurse Isaac,”* ^{CEV} *“was old enough to begin eating solid food.”* ^{ERV}

According to academic definitions of Bible words, weaning took place at three years of age (SEE BOX TITLED “DEFINITIONS OF ‘WEAN’”).

This means that we know absolutely nothing about Isaac’s life during his first three years. We then have the recording of the event in our text. The next information we are given concerning Isaac is found in the twenty-second chapter, where God commands Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to Him (Gen 22:2). At that time, Isaac was obviously a rational young man, able to carry wood (Gen 22:6), and inquire about the sacrifice Abraham was to offer (Gen 22:7). We can only conjecture the approximate

age of Isaac at that time (Genesis 22).

David Miller, or Apologetics Press, makes the following observations. “SEVERAL COMMENTATORS HAVE WEIGHED IN ON THIS QUESTION. LEUPOLD WROTE: “HE MAY BY THIS TIME HAVE ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF SOME EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY YEARS” (1942, 1:625). JOSEPHUS STATED: “NOW ISAAC WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD” (1.13.2). ADAM CLARKE SAID: “IT IS MORE PROBABLE THAT HE WAS NOW ABOUT THIRTY-THREE” (1:140, EMP. IN ORIG.). JAMIESON, FAUSSET, AND BROWN ASSERTED THAT ISAAC WAS “THEN UPWARDS OF TWENTY YEARS OF AGE” (N.D., P. 29). J. CURTIS MANOR DESCRIBED HIM AS “A YOUTH OF SUFFICIENT STRENGTH AND AGILITY TO CARRY A LOAD OF FIREWOOD UP A MOUNTAINSIDE” (1994, P. 103). KEIL AND DELITZSCH AFFIRMED THAT “THIS SON HAD GROWN INTO A YOUNG MAN” (1976, 1:248). MORRIS ADDED: “THE MEANING IN ISAAC’S CASE SHOULD ALSO BE ‘YOUNG MAN’ ” (1976, P. 373).

WE CONCLUDE THAT AS THE SEVERAL LINES OF EVIDENCE CONVERGE, THEY POINT TO ISAAC BEING A YOUNG MAN—NOT A YOUNG BOY.”

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&article=1272>

This would suggest a period of 18-33 of which we also know nothing at all about Isaac. The same approach is very obvious in the history of Moses, and the life of Jesus. In the case of Moses, from three months to forty years old is a period about which we know nothing. With Jesus, from two years old to twelve is a period concerning which no revelation is given, as well as from twelve to thirty.

The point must be seen that God, in providing a history of a person or

people, provides only information that relates to what He is doing. He never burdens the minds of His people with meaningless data, or matters that, when considered, bring no lasting benefit. To my knowledge, no worldly biographer covers the life of a person, whether that of himself or some other man, following this kind of thinking.

DEFINITION OF “WEAN”

נָמַל FROM THE COMPLETION OF THE INFANT AT THAT TIME) MOST ORIENTAL MOTHERS SUCKLE THEIR CHILDREN MUCH LONGER THAN IS USUAL IN EUROPE, AND THE SAME CUSTOM SEEMS TO HAVE PREVAILED AMONG THE ANCIENT HEBREWS. WHEN SAMUEL WAS WEANED, HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO BE LEFT WITH ELI FOR THE SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE (1 SAMUEL 1:24). AS NO PUBLIC PROVISION WAS MADE FOR THE CHILDREN OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES UNTIL THEY WERE THREE YEARS OF AGE, IT IS PROBABLE THAT THEY WERE NOT WEANED SOONER (2 CHRONICLES 31:16).
MCCLINTOK & STRONG’S

“TO ‘WEAN’ IN ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE IS ALWAYS THE TRANSLATION OF (נָמַל [GAMAL]), BUT [GAMAL] HAS A MUCH WIDER FORCE THAN MERELY “TO WEAN,” SIGNIFYING “TO DEAL FULLY WITH,” AS IN PSALM 13:6, ETC. HENCE, AS APPLIED TO A CHILD, [GAMAL] COVERS THE WHOLE PERIOD OF NURSING AND CARE UNTIL THE WEANING IS COMPLETE (1 KINGS 11:20). THIS PERIOD IN ANCIENT ISRAEL EXTENDED TO ABOUT 3 YEARS, AND WHEN IT WAS FINISHED THE CHILD WAS MATURE ENOUGH TO BE ENTRUSTED TO STRANGERS (1 SAMUEL 1:24). AND, AS THE COMPLETION OF THE PERIOD MARKED THE END OF THE MOST CRITICAL STAGE OF THE CHILD’S LIFE, IT WAS CELEBRATED WITH A FEAST (GENESIS 21:8), A CUSTOM STILL OBSERVED IN THE ORIENT. THE WEANED CHILD, NO LONGER FRETTER FOR THE BREAST AND SATISFIED WITH ITS MOTHER’S AFFECTION, IS USED IN PSALM 131:2 AS A FIGURE FOR ISRAEL’S CONTENTMENT WITH GOD’S CARE, DESPITE THE SMALLNESS OF EARTHLY POSSESSIONS. IN ISAIAH 28:9 THERE IS AN IRONICAL QUESTION, “IS GOD TO TEACH YOU KNOWLEDGE AS IF YOU WERE CHILDREN? YOU SHOULD HAVE LEARNED HIS WILL LONG AGO!”” ^{ISBE}

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

This being one of the unique properties of revelation from God, men should learn, living unto God, to cease from pursuing lines of thinking that have a dead-end, or do not relate to the purpose of God. Those who walk by faith will find that, in the field of religion, conjecture and hypothesizing never increase faith and hope. Notwithstanding that observation, there

That would make Ishmael sixteen years old at the time of this event.

As used here, the word “mocking” means, “1) TO LAUGH, MOCK, PLAY 1A) TO LAUGH TO JEST 1B) TO SPORT, PLAY, MAKE SPORT, TOY WITH, MAKE A TOY OF.”^{STRONG’S} If Ishmael was laughing, it was in derision. If he was playing with Isaac, it was in a disrespectful manner. If he was “toying with” him, it was in a provoking and agitating manner. **They**

IT WAS GRIEVOUS IN ABRAHAM’S SIGHT

“ . . . And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son.” Other versions read, “very displeasing,”^{NKJV} “distressed Abraham greatly,”^{NASB} “was a great grief,”^{BBE} “was a very difficult thing,”^{CSB} “was upset,”^{GWN} “appeared very hard,”^{SEPTUAGINT} “is very wrong in the eyes of Abraham,”^{MESSAGE} “worried about Ishmael,”^{CEV} “troubled Abraham very much,”^{GNB} “very evil,”^{LITV} “gave great pain,”^{MESSAGE} and “very grievous (serious, evil).”^{AMPLIFIED}

Those who walk by faith will find that, in the field of religion, conjecture and hypothesizing never increase faith and hope.

The fact that Abraham loved Ishmael is evident in the way he besought the Lord in his behalf: “O that Ishmael might live before thee” (Gen 17:18). Further, God had assured Abraham with these words: “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation” (Gen 17:20). However, He solemnly added, “**But my covenant will I establish with Isaac**” (Gen 17:21).

are few areas of thought in which conjecturing and hypothesizing are so dominant as in that of religion. Plain Bible reading should lead men to refrain from such activities.

ABRAHAM MADE A GREAT FEAST

“ . . . and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned . . .” Other versions read, “a great banquet,”^{CJB} “gave a party,”^{LIVING} “a big feast,”^{CEV} “a big party,”^{ERV} and “a tremendous banquet.”^{ISV}

The word “great” means “large in magnitude and extent.”^{STRONG’S} That means there was a great variety of food, and an abundance of it.

SARAH SAW

“ . . . And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. . .” Other versions read “scoffing,”^{NKJV} “playing with”^{NRSV} “making fun of,”^{CJB} “laughing,”^{ESV} “laughing at Isaac,”^{GWN} “making sport,”^{JPS} “teasing.”^{LIVING}

When Ishmael was circumcised, he was thirteen years old (Gen 17:25) – and that was about the time Abraham was visited by the three heavenly messengers. We estimate that Isaac was about three years old at this time.

were not simply playing together as some versions suggest.^{NRSV/RSV/BBE/NJB/TNK/ABP/CEV/DARBY/ERV/GNB}

It does not seem to me that the Holy Spirit would address this situation as one in which two children were playing together.

CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON

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

Sarah was not tolerant of the situation at all. She knew the true identity of both children, as well as the promise of the Lord concerning Isaac. For her, the conduct of Ishmael fit well into the fact that he was **not** the heir.

She insists that Abraham throw both Hagar and her son out of the house. They should not live there any longer. Ishmael was not going to share the inheritance with Isaac, who was Abraham’s sole direct heir, and that by revelation.

It is true that to the flesh, this seemed like a heartless thing to do. However, the Spirit will bring a lot of clarity to the whole matter.

Now, he must make a decision that will be difficult for him. He must choose between his will and the will of God. It was this kind of decision to which Jesus referred when He said, “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and **children**, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). God will confirm what must be done.

AN ORDAINED TYPE

More than forty-two generations later, Paul will cite this very occasion as a type of the New and Old Covenants. As well, it will provide an example of the conflict between those who are of the flesh, and those who are born of the Spirit.

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, 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

bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." (Gal 4:28-31).

This text confirms that Ishmael was not merely playing with Isaac. He was persecuting him, even though Isaac had just been weaned.

Paul states that this conflict arises from the fact that some people are born

of God, and some are not. Whether or not they belong to the same earthly family, **their natures are different.** This is so much the case that Jesus warned, *"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."* (Matt 10:36). It all started with Ishmael and Isaac, but it is written, *"even so it is now."* This is a circumstance that is to be duly noted by the saints of God!

The Answer to the Dilemma

Paul cites this very incident as proof of what needs to be done. **He**

does not refer to what happened, but to what the Scripture says. *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*

Paul's conclusion is glorious: *"So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."* **It is not possible for this parallel to be contradicted.** It stands for all time. God orchestrated history in strict accord with His eternal purpose, working all things so as to reflect His purpose.

ABRAHAM COMMANDED TO DO WHAT SARAH SAID

"¹² 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. ¹³ And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed."

Abraham will now be commanded to do something that can only be understood within the context of faith. **Ordinarily**, Sarah referred to Abraham as her *"lord"* (1 Pet 3:6). **Ordinarily**, the wife is to obey the husband (1 Pet 3:1), and *"submit"* to him (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18). However, there are exceptions to those inspired rules.

When it comes to matters pertaining to the Lord, husbandral authority does not apply, for there is no *"male"* or *"female"* in Christ. This by no means provides for rebellion in the home, nor does it justify a dominating wife. **However, when the ways of the Lord have been made known, no domestic arrangement is to be exalted and preferred.** It is true that person has to work this out, and do it humbly and without selfishness or malice. But it must be done.

HEARKEN UNTO HER VOICE!

"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 . . ."

God has no sympathy for the flesh. As loving and compassionate as He is, He will not allow the flesh to successfully assert itself. Thus He commands Abraham, *"Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman."* It is as though He said, *"Do not allow this to be painful in a distracting sort of way. I will use this circumstance to teach My people what happens when they are aligned with Me."*

Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men" (Ezek 24:17). That is a statement of the real God! Men should make it their aim to obtain some understanding of such sayings.

IN ISAAC SHALL THY SEED BE CALLED

*" . . . 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."***

You cannot account for the preference of Isaac over Ishmael apart from the choice of God Himself. It had nothing to do with the character or works of either of the offspring.

The incident bears some similarity to the time when God took Ezekiel's wife from him. He was a young man, and the times were difficult. Yet, he refused to allow Ezekiel to cry about the sensitive situation. *"Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.*

God did not forget Ishmael, but he could not participate in the inheritance. However, God had established the proper lineage that would lead to the Savior, and there was no place for Ishmael in that lineage. Concerning the choices of God it is written, *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:13).

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

You cannot account for the preference of Isaac over Ishmael apart from the choice of God Himself. It had nothing to do with the character or works of either of the offspring. Ishmael was but excluded from heirship because he had mocked Isaac. He was excluded the moment he was born by Divine determination. The choice was made before the birth of either of them. Isaac was a child of promise – i.e. he was born because his birth was promised. In fact, Isaac could not possibly have been born of Sarah if God had not promised it.

Apostolic Doctrine

While it may not be fashionable to reason in this manner, apostolic doctrine pounds this point home with unusual force.

This doctrine is developed in an epistle to a church that had removed from the Living God, who had called them into the grace of Christ. They did this in order that they might embrace *“another gospel.”* Paul is not ambiguous about the charge. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ”* (Gal 1:6-7). **The Gospel has to do with the experience of salvation as well as the announcement of it.** Thus it is written, *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”* (Eph 1:13).

Now, there is a particular perspective that is developed in that statement. First, it is looking backward, accounting for the present position of the saints. When they first heard the Gospel, they concluded that the Divine provision was for them, and thus they believed and obeyed that Gospel. Secondly, after they had been put into Christ, they again heard the Gospel, and it was an explanation of what they had experienced. **When the Gospel is not regularly declared to the church, there is a tendency to begin to account for salvation in ways that are neither true nor profitable.** Soon, it is not traced

back to God at all, but is strictly associated with human response.

Paul is re-establishing the role of God in salvation to the churches of Galatia. He accounts for their salvation by comparing them to Isaac. Here is his reasoning. ***“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, 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 bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”*** (Gal 4:28-31).

“The children of promise” accounts for our salvation by drawing attention to Divine determination – for the promise is something conceived, announced, and carried out by God Himself. Isaac simply would not have been born if God had not determined that he be born. He determined who his father would be, and who his mother would be. To ensure there would be no doubt about it, Abraham and Sarah did not give birth to Isaac when they were young, or during the commencement of their marriage. That would have made a lot of sense to the flesh, but it would not have glorified God. Therefore, God *“Restrained”* Sarah from bearing children when the biological possibility was there – and Sarah knew this was the case (Gen 16:2). **Abraham was not impotent when he received the promise of an heir, as is apparent in his begetting of Ishmael.** But in the interim, between the birth of Ishmael and the final announcement of the promised birth of Isaac, Abraham had lost the capability of begetting children. It is therefore said of him, *“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb”* (Rom 4:19). And again, *“Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable”*(Heb 11:12)

All of this was done in order to confirm that the promise of God accounted for the birth of Isaac.

The same was true of Jacob, Isaac’s son, and also heir of the promise. Prior to his conception, his mother was also barren (Gen 25:21). Therefore, we read of *“the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”* (Ex 3:6,15,16; 4:5; Matt 22:32; ; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37; Acts 3:13; 7:32). This designation is not because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob chose God as their God – although they did. **He is peculiarly their God because of Divine choice.** Abraham was chosen from the three sons of Terah. Isaac and Jacob were conceived and birthed because they had been chosen.

ISAAC	THE PROCESS	IN CHRIST
IN ISAAC SHALL THE SEED BE CALLED	DIVINE DETERMINATION	CHOSEN UNTO SALVATION
ABRAHAM CALLED TO LEAVE WHERE HE WAS	MEANS BY WHICH CARRIED OUT	SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT
FATHER OF MANY NATIONS, MOTHER OF NATIONS	CALLING THOSE INVOLVED INTO ACTIVITY	CALLED THROUGH THE GOSPEL
ABOUT THIS TIME NEXT YEAR	THE DETERMINATION ANNOUNCED	TO THE OBTAINING OF THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
ISAAC IS BORN	THE OUTWORKING OF WHAT WAS DETERMINED	BORN AGAIN, PUT INTO CHRIST, A NEW CREATION

Now, and on even a higher level, those in Christ Jesus are likewise *“children of promise.”* **It is the activity of God that is at the root, or causal level, of their salvation.** He is the One who drew them to Christ (John 6:44,65). He is the one who gave them to Christ (Heb 2:13). He is the One who put them into Christ (1 Cor 1:30). It is no wonder that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: *“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification*

of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 2:13-14).

We must not allow the marvel of this statement to escape us. It accounts for our salvation as well as that of the Thessalonians.

- ➔ The *"beginning"* is traced back to God, who made a choice.
- ➔ The means of carrying out His choice involved the sanctification, or setting apart, by the Holy Spirit. It was He whose influence was *"unto*

obedience" (1 Pet 1:2).

- ➔ The call was facilitated through the proclamation of the Gospel.
- ➔ The determined outcome was made by God Himself: *"to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
- ➔ Born again, God puts us in Christ (1 Cor 1:30), and we become a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).

This perfectly parallels the birth of Isaac. And, that is why those in Christ are called *"children of promise."*

Even when God works all things together for the good of people, the realization of that benefit is limited to *"to them that love God, to them who are **the** called according to His purpose"* (Rom 8:28). So far as the obtaining of the promise is concerning, *"the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded"* (Rom 11:7). This is why the saved are called *"the elect"* (Mk 13:22; Col 3:12), and *"chosen"* (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 2:9). I realize this is difficult for the flesh to receive. However, the Lord has not only spoken on this matter, but has shaped history around it. Through Paul, He has even drawn our attention to it.

ABRAHAM SENDS HAGAR AWAY

"¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs."

Once again, we will see that Abraham immediately responds to the

years old when he departed out of Haran" (Gen 12:4).

- ➔ When God first promised him the land of Canaan. *"And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and **there** builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him"* (Gen 12:7).

all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin" (Gen 17:23-24).

- ➔ God's comment about Abraham. *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"* (Gen 18:19).

Once again, we will see that Abraham immediately responds to the Lord. The history of his responses is plain.

Lord. The history of his responses is plain.

- ➔ When he was initially called. *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went"* (Heb 11:8).
- ➔ When he left Haran. *"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five*

- ➔ When God told him of the staggering number of seed that would come from him. *"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And **he believed in the LORD**; and he counted it to him for righteousness."* (Gen 15:5-6).
- ➔ When God made the covenant of circumcision with him. *"And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and*

- ➔ Abraham's immediate obedience and holy intention that followed God's command to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. *"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him."* (Gen 22:3).
- ➔ Stephen's reference to Abraham. *"And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory*

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. **Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell**" (Acts 7:2-4).

➔ **Paul's comment on Abraham.** "For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**" (Rom 4:3). "Who **against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness**" (Rom 4:18-22)

➔ The reference to Abraham in Hebrews hall of faith: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.**" (Heb 11:8). "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, **offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure**" (Heb 11:17-19).

Allow me to again recount the revealed observations that have been made concerning Abraham.

➔ When he was called, he obeyed.

➔ When God made a promise, Abraham built an altar.

➔ When God told him his seed would multitudinous, he believed in the Lord.

➔ When God gave him the covenant of circumcision, he carried it out immediately.

➔ God said he would faithfully command his children.

➔ When God commanded him to offer Isaac, he set out to do it immediately.

➔ When God told him to do what Sarah had said concerning Hagar and Ishmael, he did so immediately.

➔ Stephen said that when God called him out of Ur, he left that area, and later removed from Haran.

➔ Paul said:

- ◆ He believed God
- ◆ Hoped when it was not reasonable to hope.
- ◆ Was not weak in faith, did not consider his own body.
- ◆ Did not consider the deadness of Sarah's womb.
- ◆ Did not stagger at the promise of God.
- ◆ Was strong in faith, gave glory to God.
- ◆ Was fully persuaded that God could do what He had promised.

➔ When he was called, obeyed, and went out, not knowing where he was going.

➔ Offered up Isaac.

➔ Accounted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead.

God Is Shaping Our Thoughts

In these statements concerning Abraham, God is shaping our minds concerning him. His purpose is not to give a biography of Abraham, but to show in him both the nature and effectiveness of faith. It is serious

beyond measure to represent Abraham as one who had all of the faults of professing Christians of our day. After all of the reasoning has been presented, justifying such an assessment of Abraham, we are confined to the conclusion that this is not how the Lord spoken of him, nor did He move men to make such an assessment. Those who do such things have, in fact, interfered with sound thinking.

ABRAHAM SENT THEM AWAY

'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 . . .'



Again , as is consistently characteristic of Abraham, he does what the Lord commanded him: "*in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice.*"

Out of godly consideration, he gave Hagar some bread (food), and a bottle of water. Some have suggested Abraham should have given more to Hagar and her son. This, however, is not how we should view this account. **There is a reason for the harshness with which it appears Hagar was treated.** It is found in God's development of a type of living under a system of Law, and living in faith and hope of the fulfillment of the promise of God. This type is mentioned in Galatians 4:29-31. In the purpose of God, what He is doing is vastly superior to what man is doing. Therefore, the decisions of men in such matters are incidental, and are to be so considered.

SHE DEPARTED AND WANDERED

“ . . . and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. . . ”

The word “wandered” does not suggest aimless drifting. It rather means to move about without a fixed course, and in this case, without a sure destination. It is difficult for those in the Western world to ponder wandering. With frequent road markers, maps, etc., there is a way to get to a destination, or to readily survey possible destinations. But imagine going to Saint Louis from Joplin without an established road, without a map, and not even sure of the direction one needed to go. That is the idea of wandering.

THE WATER WAS SPENT

“ . . . And the water was spent in

the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.” Other versions read, “placed the boy,”^{NKJV} “left the boy,”^{NASB} “put the boy,”^{NIV} “shoved the child,”^{NET} “abandoned the child,”^{NJB} “placeth the lad,”^{YLT} and “caused the youth to lie down.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The words “cast,” “abandoned,” and “shoved” could leave the wrong impression, as though this was a heartless and inconsiderate act. But that is not the case at all. **Hagar saw that all of their resources were expended, and there apparently was no hope of getting any more.** Thus she placed the boy under the shade of a wilderness shrub, hoping to make the boy as comfortable as possible. Then she separated herself



from him, for the thought of seeing him die was too difficult for her. It appears from the text, that Ishmael had probably lost consciousness, so she had to labor the harder to place the boy out of the heat of the day. It was difficult for her to act rationally – but she did.

HAGAR PREPARES FOR THE DEATH OF ISHMAEL

“¹⁶ And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: 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.”

We will learn from his account that man cannot sustain himself, even though it sometimes takes circumstances similar to this one to confirm that this is the case. **There are situations where human creativity and genius simply will not work.** For those in Christ, it is best to learn to insightfully pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt 6:11). There is an old fable that speaks of a fisherman sitting down to eat some fish and bread. Before he ate, he prayed, thanking the Lord and saying, “Lord I thank Thee for ransacking land and sea to bring this food to me.” If a person can see it, there is a lot of sound perspective in that saying.

At any rate, Hagar learned that there is such a thing as circumstance from which people cannot extricate themselves, no matter how much wisdom they imagine themselves to

have.

A Lesson to Be Learned By Us All

Actually, that is a lesson every follower of Jesus must learn: without Him, we “can do nothing” (John 15:5). This can be learned extensively through personal experience – and it often is. Paul wrote of his experience in this area – **things about which he himself could do nothing.** “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Cor 11:24-27).

Paul did seek to address these circumstances in wisdom, praying, appealing to Caesar, presenting a defense before religious and political

authorities, etc. **However, many of these experiences simply could not be avoided as he lived by faith and walked in the Spirit.** It was His faith and access to God that enabled him to pass safely through these experiences.

SHE SAT DOWN OVER AGAINST HIM

“And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot . . .” Other versions read, “across from him,”^{NKJV} “opposite him,”^{NASB} “nearby,”^{NIV} and “some distance away.”^{BBE}

A “bowshot” is generally considered to be about half-a-mile.^{JOHN GILL} Hagar had apparently done all she could, and was now helpless.

LET ME NOT SEE THE DEATH OF THE CHILD

“ . . . for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him . . . ”

It is a tender scene, as a mother beholds her child’s life ebbing away, and is helpless to do anything about it. Perhaps there have been times when

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time Hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

you were in this position. I have been. There is a special sense of one's weakness that comes upon you during such times.

She speaks in her distress: *"Do not let me see the boy die!"*^{NASB} Oh, the plaintiveness of the cry! It is the call of a helpless soul. She has resigned herself to the fact that Ishmael will die, but asks that she not be permitted to see his agony in doing so. One thing that is noteworthy here. **Hagar, while she may very well have been aware of God, did not have the faith of Abraham.**

SHE LIFT UP HER VOICE AND WEPT
". . . and lift up her voice, and wept." Other versions read, "she began

However, I do not believe this is a proper view. Hagar is the petitioner of this verse, and when an answer is given, it is given to Hagar. I also gather that this was a cry to God, probably as she recalled the first crisis she faced when she fled from the house, and the angel of the Lord found her (Gen 16:7).

Hagar's Did Not Have the Faith of Abraham

One thing that is noteworthy here. **Hagar, while she may very well have been aware of God, did not have the faith of Abraham.** When Abraham was faced with having to take the life of his own son, he reasoned that God had revealed a future for Isaac, and therefore would raise him from the dead

presence of all his brethren" (Gen 16:12). It is also possible that Abraham related to her what the Lord had told him about Ishmael: *"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation"* (Gen 17:20).

But now, Hagar remembers none of these words. She is crushed by her trial, and does not recall the promise made to her, or the one made to Abraham.

Elsewhere, we are told that Hagar is a type of the Law: *"Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children"* (Gal 4:24-25). It is still true that those who choose to live by the principle of Law, instead of by faith. Easily forget the promises of God, and despair more quickly. **By comparison, those who live by faith find hope surfacing in the time of trial.**

In my own judgment, it is good for believers to periodically assess how they respond to tests and trials – periods of great difficulty. Much can be learned about our progress in the faith.

One thing that is noteworthy here. Hagar, while she may very well have been aware of God, did not have the faith of Abraham.

to sob,"^{NIV} "she gave way to bitter weeping,"^{BBE} "crying out and weeping,"^{CJB} "sobbed loudly,"^{GWN} "he began to cry."^{NAB} You will note that the NAB (New America Bible) represents Ishmael as the one lifting up his voice and crying. I suppose this view is based upon the statement of the next verse.

(Heb 11:19). Now, Hagar had been told that Ishmael would mature and dwell in the midst of his brethren (the other descendants of Abraham) *"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*

GOD HEARS THE VOICE OF THE LAD

"¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation."

Here is another case of Divine intervention – the Lord, compelled by His own nature, coming into a human

situation. It is as though He waits until all the hope dries up. This is what happened when Abraham was promised a Son. All human means had vanished.

Many of the miracles of Jesus were wrought in a similar manner: healing the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lunatic, lepers, the impotent, the demon possessed, and raising the dead. In all of those works, it was abundantly evident that no human ingenuity or

resource could have accomplished what Jesus did.

GOD HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LAD
"And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven . . ."

I gather that *"the voice of the lad"* was not a prayer, but some form of crying, agony, or pleas for help. **The great God of heaven is not impervious**

to the helpless cries of people – even when their knowledge is deficient. As James well said, *“the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy”* (James 5:11). He also heard the cries of some individuals in Macedonia: i.e.–*“Come over and help us”* (Acts 16:9). Here, we are exposed to the Divine nature.

However, God does not answer *“the lad.”* Instead, He sends an angel who speaks to Hagar.

What Aileth Thee, Hagar?

“. . . and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar?” Other versions read, *“What is the matter with you?”* ^{NASB} *“What troubles you?”* ^{NIV} *“What’s wrong?”* ^{CSB} *“What art thou doing,”* ^{DOUAY} *“What is it?”* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“Why are you weeping?”* ^{BBE} *“why are you worried?”* ^{CEV}

How different heaven’s view is to that of earth! The angel aware of the promise of God, and thus speaks as though the activity of Hagar is a kind of wonder. Why is she weeping? What is wrong with her? What is troubling her? What is she doing? Why is she worried?

The incident reminds me of the words of our Lord as He approached the

home of Jairus after his young daughter had died. *“And when He was come in, he saith unto them, **Why make ye this ado** [commotion ^{NKJV}], **and weep?** the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth”* (Mark 5:39).

It is true that the view of faith will dissipate much sorrow and grief, and decidedly reduce the level of great grief that would otherwise induct a state where there would be *“no hope”* (1 Thess 4:13).

Fear Not!

“. . .fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is . . . ”

“Fear not” is often the introduction to as Divine explanation. These words are found sixty-three times in Scripture. Their very existence confirms that the Lord is in control of all circumstance.

Hagar was a bowshot away from Ishmael – about half-a-mile. It is doubtful that she could actually hear the cries of Ishmael – which is why she moved a distance away. She did not want to hear his cries – cries that were the throes of death, as she saw things. But God heard them – where the lad

was – **after** she had given up.

LIFT UP THE LAD

“Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.” Other versions read, *“hold him by the hand,”* ^{NASB} *“take him by the hand,”* ^{NIV} *“hold him fast with your hand,”* ^{NRSV} *“take the child in your arms,”* ^{BBE} *“get him and comfort him,”* ^{LIVING} *“Hold his hand and lead him,”* ^{ERV} *“pick him up, and comfort him,”* ^{GNB} *and “support him with your hand.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Ishmael was neither an infant, nor a mere child. He was at least sixteen, being thirteen when he was circumcised three years earlier. It is not likely, therefore that Hagar was told to pick him up and carry him.

Taking him by the hand and supporting and guiding him suggests that he was strengthened by the Lord so that he could walk – even though he had been on the verge of death.

God still enables people who have lost all strength to regain it. Jesus demonstrated this in His miracles. God also often says, *“Be strong!”*

GOD OPENS HAGAR’S EYES

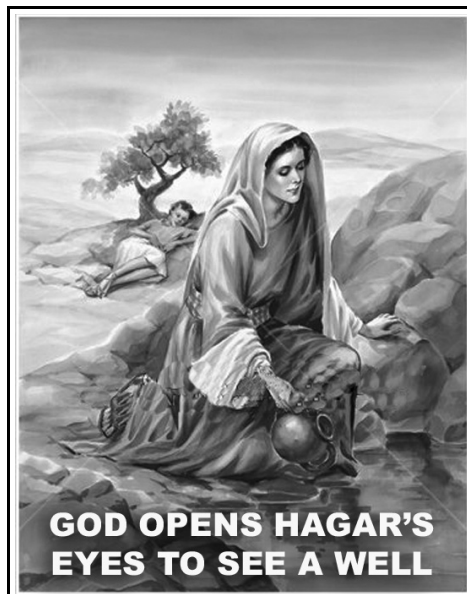
“¹⁹ And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.”

God did not create a well, but opened Hagar’s eyes to behold an existing one. **It apparently was not in a hidden place, for she perceived it in her grief.** However, God intervened and caused her to see what was there all along. In some sense, countless believers had this experience.

GOD OPENED HER EYES

“And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water . . . ” Other versions read, *“made her eyes open,”* ^{BBE} *“enabled Hagar to see,”* ^{NET} *“let her see,”* ^{CEV} *“allowed Hagar to see.”* ^{ERV}

Was Hagar merely distracted, and



GOD OPENS HAGAR’S EYES TO SEE A WELL

therefore incapable of looking for a well because she assumed there was none? Was it the grief of anticipating Ishmael’s death that caused her to be unable to see? These appear to me to be very shallow views of the text. There was some sense in which Hagar was blinded – not to all things, but to the needed thing. **It was a condition that only God could alter.**

The Wonderful Parallel

It should not take a lot of forethought to see the obvious parallel. There are things of God that are not readily seen by even godly people. The Psalmist prayed, *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law”* (Psa 119:18). He sensed more was in God’s Law than he could

After a testing wait of twenty-five years, Isaac is born, and in due time hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the house – Given O. Blakely

discern, and thus asked for his eyes to be opened to them – that they might become apparent to him.

Of old, God closed the eyes of Israel, so they could not behold the wonderful things of God: *“For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes:*

In speaking to the church in Laodicea, a body of people who had become spiritually obtuse, Jesus said, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou

➔ She was moved to keep her container, even though she probably thought she would never use again.

A Similar Circumstance

I do not doubt that a lot of similar things take place when men’s spiritual eyes are opened. A lot goes on behind the scenes, undetected by human eyes.

- ➔ Satan is rebuked.
- ➔ There comes dominating interest in the things of God.
- ➔ A servant of God is sent to announce glad tidings.
- ➔ Other things lose their priority.

It is written, *“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD”* (Prov 16:1). This aspect of God’s working is good and profitable to consider.

SHE GAVE THE LAD DRINK

“ . . . and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.”

“The bottle” was the one Abraham had placed upon her shoulder (Gen 21:15). When the water in that bottle was *“used up”* (Gen 21:15), Hagar did not throw it away – even though there was no humanly logical reason to keep it. It was God that governed this circumstance.

An Obvious Parallel

So men, when passing through grievous circumstances, must not throw all of their spiritual containers overboard. This is another way of saying they should not cast away their confidence (Heb 10:35). Hope must be held *“firm unto the end”* (Heb 3:6).

There is a spiritual state in which the things of God cannot be seen. Those in such a state are near the truth, but cannot see it – just like Hagar was near a well, but could not see it.

the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered” (Isa 29:10). Isaiah also prophesied of the day of salvation, writing, *“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened”* (Isa 35:5). Jesus told Paul that he would be an instrument in His hand in this opening: *“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee . . . To open their eyes . . .”* (Acts 26:18). Later, Paul alluded to this as a veil being lifted from the eyes of the people (2 Cor 3:13).

Paul prayed for the saints: *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power”* (Eph 1:18-19).

mayest see” (Rev 3:18).

There is a spiritual state in which the things of God cannot be seen. Those in such a state are near the truth, but cannot see it – just like Hagar was near a well, but could not see it.

How Were Her Eyes Opened?

We are not apprised of everything that was involved in the opening of Hagar’s eyes.

- ➔ Knowing that one of Satan’s strategies is to blind the mind (2 Cor 4:4), Satan was probably rebuked, as he was when Joshua the high priest stood before the Lord (Zech 3:2).
- ➔ Despair was probably displaced by a flicker of hope.
- ➔ Now she probably scanned the area, whereas before she was bowed down with grief.

GOD WAS WITH ISHMAEL

“²⁰ And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.”²¹

And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.”

GOD WAS WITH THE LAD
“And God was with the lad and he grew . . .” Other versions read, *“God*

was with the boy as he grew up,"^{NIV} "God was with the boy, and he became tall and strong,"^{BBE} "And God blessed the boy and he grew up,"^{LIVING} "God blessed Ishmael, and as the boy grew older,"^{CEV} and "God was with the youth, and he developed."^{AMPLIFIED}

AND DWELT IN THE WILDERNESS

"...and dwelt in the wilderness..."

A "wilderness," as used here, is a wide, open, and uninhabited area; STRONG'S "DENOTING NOT A BARREN DESERT BUT A DISTRICT OR REGION SUITABLE FOR PASTURING SHEEP AND CATTLE." EASTON

There are some revealed facts that clarify this statement about Ishmael. They account for his safety and success in a wilderness area.

➔ When Hagar was first informed by an angel of the birth of Ishmael she was told: "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" (Gen 16:11-12).

➔ After receiving the promise that Isaac, not Ishmael, would be his heir, God said to Abraham: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen 17:20).

➔ God promised Abraham He would make a nation of Ishmael because he was Abraham's seed. "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." (Gen 21:13).

➔ During the episode just mentioned, an angel had told Hagar: "Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation" (Gen 21:18).

Therefore, like a nomadic man with no certain dwelling place, Ishmael grew up in the wilderness. **He survived the experience because God blessed him as He said He would.**

God Is In All of Life

All life and well-being can be traced back to God. As it is written, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). However, there was more to Ishmael's experience than the norm. God had declared of him, "I have blessed him" (Gen 17:20). He did all of this **because** he was begotten by Abraham.



AND BECAME AN ARCHER

"... and became an archer. . ."

Other versions read, "became an expert with the bow,"^{NRSV} "a Bowman,"^{BBE} "expert Bowman,"^{NAB} "an expert with his bow and arrows,"^{CEV} and "became a hunter,"^{ERV} "skillful hunter."^{GNB}

Apparently Ishmael passed this skill along to some of his progeny. Isaiah says of some of his offspring, "And the residue of **the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it**" (Isa 21:17). **Kedar was one of Ishmael's sons:** "And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and

Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam" (Gen 25:13).

HE DWELT IN THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN

This was the wilderness in which Israel was encamped when they first sent out spies into Canaan – ten of which convinced the whole of the people that they could not take the land as they were commanded to do (Num 13:3,26).

This was also the wilderness in which they were consigned to wander for forty years, until all the unbelieving generation died. This is evident from the words of judgment delivered at that time: "Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in **this wilderness**; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Num 14:30).

Thus were the rejected Israelites consigned to wander in the very same wilderness that another rejected one occupied – Ishmael. It seems to me to be a fitting conclusion for those who refused to believe.

HIS MOTHER TOOK HIM A WIFE

"... and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

Hagar was an Egyptian (Gen 16:1). Even though she had spent some years in the household of Abraham and Sarah (more than thirteen years), **she apparently did not lose her preference for Egypt.** Admittedly, there were not a lot of Abraham's relatives available – but there were some. Lot's daughters were two. There were also offspring born to Abraham's brother, Nahor, from whom Isaac would later obtain a wife (Gen 22:20-24).

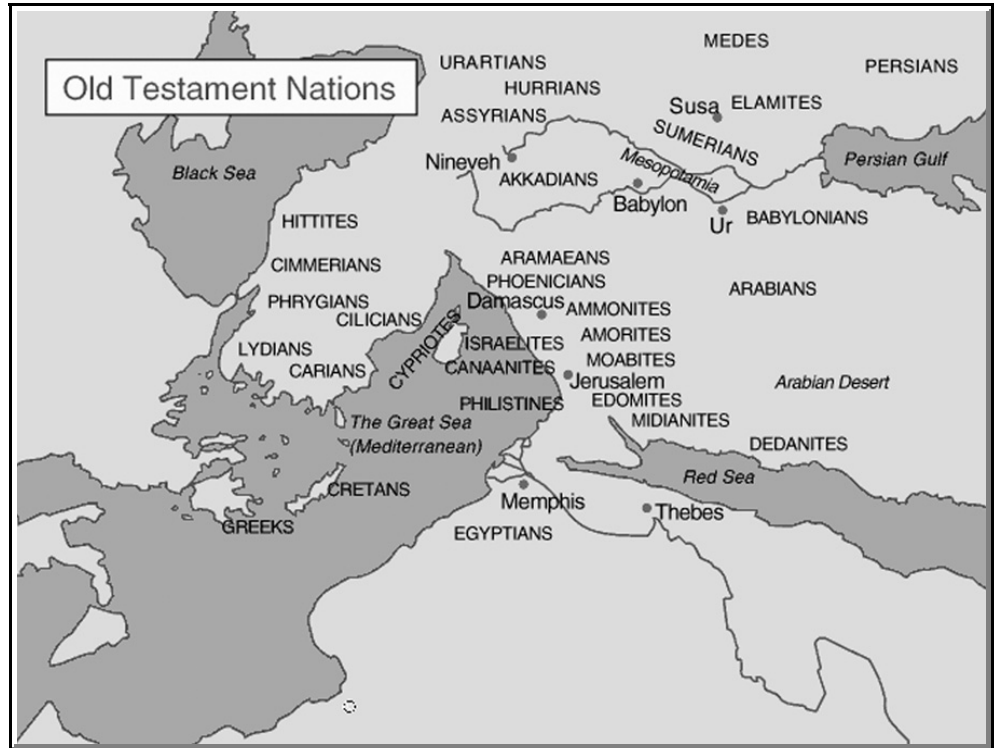
Of course, for Ishmael to have a wife from Abraham's relatives would

have violated the type that was being Divinely developed in Hagar and Ishmael. Therefore, it seems to me that the hand of God was in this whole matter. **He was working out His purpose in such a way as would be perfectly consistent with both His character and His promises.**

An Observation

Slowly but surely, our attention is being drawn to the area in which the promised land existed. Moses wrote of this focus: *"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."* (Deut 32:7-9).

Now Ishmael; is depicted as dwelling in the "Wilderness of Paran," which was close to the Sinaitic peninsula and Mount Sinai itself. **The nations with which Israel will deal are in that area of the world:** Philistines, Midianites, Ammonites, Ammorites, Syrians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Moabites, Egyptians, Babylon, Medes, Persians, Canaanites, etc.



The stage is being set for the rest of the revelation, which will reach its apex when the Word is made flesh and dwells among men – the promised Seed of the woman, and of Abraham. Everything foundationally pertinent to that appearance, and to the working of salvation in the earth, will be wrought in that part of the world. Such things

will not be wrought in Greece, Italy, China, India, Europe, Russia, or Asia.

Instead, God prepared a special part of the world in which Moses and the Prophets would minister, preparing the way for the ministry of John the harbinger, the entrance of His Son into the world, and provision for redemption.

CONCLUSION

An effective salvation requires several things that can only be accomplished by the Architect of that salvation.

- ➔ A salvation must be developed that allows God to fulfill it in a righteous manner, without any compromise of His character.
- ➔ God must make Himself known in such a way as to confirm His absolute intolerance of sin.
- ➔ A means must be developed to introduce a Man into the world who is more precisely in the image of

God than Adam, and possesses greater power and authority than Adam did in his beginning.

➔ The required Man cannot be

ultimately traced back to Adam. He must be born of woman, but not begotten by man.

➔ Special generations must be

An effective salvation requires several things that can only be accomplished by the Architect of that salvation.

developed through whom God can work, and which will lead to the birth of Christ.

- ➔ A spiritual culture must be developed into which the Messiah can be born, then growing in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man.
- ➔ An existing land must be occupied by a chosen people, in which the knowledge of God can be cultured.
- ➔ The nature and potency of faith must be revealed in a manner that will bring glory to God, and salvation to men.
- ➔ Satan must be finally and completely overcome by a man. The defeat must not allow for Satan's recovery.
- ➔ A righteous Law must be established that defines sin, and holds men to its standard. This must be done in such a way as to work condemnation without nullifying the grace of God.
- ➔ Man must be enabled to ultimately have eternal life without any vestige of sin or the sinful nature remaining.
- ➔ Because of the defiling effects of sin, provision must be made for a new heavens and a new earth.

- ➔ The power of God must be sufficiently demonstrated so that men can learn to fear Him.
- ➔ The fact that humanity cannot change its own nature must be clearly shown and confirmed.
- ➔ The fact that God can work outside of the confinement of nature must be verified.
- ➔ Because God works all things after the counsel of His own will, the entirety of salvation must be driven by an *"eternal purpose."*
- ➔ The right and reality of Divine choice must be demonstrated, for salvation would be wrought by a "chosen" Man.
- ➔ A righteous means must be implemented through which the guilt of sin could be removed.
- ➔ A righteous means must be employed through which men are really *"made righteous."*
- ➔ The faithfulness of God to His promises must be firmly established.
- ➔ It must be established that whatever God requires of men necessitates His influence to accomplish, for

salvation will be wholly *"of the Lord."*

- ➔ It must be made clear that no one has a right to eternal life who remains under the domination of sin.
- ➔ It must be confirmed that man, left to himself, degenerates spiritually.
- ➔ It must be confirmed that there are dilemmas from which men cannot extricate themselves.
- ➔ A means must be found for men to communicate with God without being destroyed by His magnificent glory.
- ➔ The nature of hope must be revealed.
- ➔ The fact that *"God is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"* must be confirmed in human experience.
- ➔ There must be examples that clearly show the fact of Divine deliverance from impossible circumstances.

For those with eyes to see, many of these requirements are being fulfilled in the historical examples that have been reported to this point. These examples have been tailored by God and selected for revelation.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/20/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The thirty-second lesson will cover verses 22 through 34 of chapter twenty-one: "ABRAHAM AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BEERSHEBA." Abimelech approaches Abraham, asking that he be kind toward him during his stay in that area. After reproving Abimelech because his servants had taken a well of the area, Abraham strikes a covenant with him to do him good as long as he is in the land. After re-digging the well, Abraham named it Beersheba. He then planted a grove there, called upon the name of the Lord, and remained in the Philistine's land for many days. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

“Openings and Introductions” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; “Lead Singing” – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; “Calling” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; “Sermon” = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; “Exhortation” = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; “Table Meditation” = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ’s role in salvation; “Lead Scripture shower” = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; “Lead prayer session” = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; “Lead Intercessory Prayer” = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; “Closing Scripture/Benediction” – Closing of the AM Gathering

SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO DURING MARCH, 2012

1. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Sermon).
2. *Blakely, Jonathan* (Lead AM Singing, AM Opening Word, PM Sermon).
3. *Blakely, June* (Lead PM Prayer Session, Teach AM Class, Lead PM Singing).
4. *Blakely, Michael* (Teach AM Class, AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation, PM Table Meditation).
5. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano.).
6. *Blakely, Paul* (AM Opening Word, AM Calling, Lead Scripture Shower).
7. *Cobb, Anita* (Lead PM Singing).
8. *Cobb, Matthew* (PM Exhortation, PM Sermon).
9. *Cobb, Nicole* (Lead PM Singing).
10. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Table Meditation, Lead AM Singing, AM Sermon, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
11. *Dill, Sarah* (Read AM Sermon Text)
12. *Hutcherft, Aaron* (AM Table Meditation, AM Calling, AM Opening Word, AM Exhortation, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).
13. *Hutcherft, Barbara* (Lead Scripture Shower, PM Introduction, PM Introduction).
14. *Hutcherft, Debbie* (Lead Scripture Shower, Lead PM Singing).
15. *Hutcherft, Gene* (Lead PM Intercessory Prayer, AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation).
16. *Hutcherft, Judah* (Read AM Sermon Text, PM Piano Solo, Introduction to PM Sermon Text).
17. *Lizeano, Antonio* (Closing Scripture/Benediction).
18. *Parker, Melissa* (AM Calling, AM Opening Word).
19. *Parker, Tony* (AM Sermon, AM Calling, PM Table Meditation).
20. *Sims, Annie* (Introduction to AM Sermon, Lead AM Singing, Read PM Sermon Text).
21. *Sims, Baylie* (Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
22. *Sims, Hannah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction)
23. *Sims, Rachel* (Closing Scripture/Benediction)
24. *Sims, Ricky* (AM Sermon, AM Exhortation, AM Table Meditation, Teach AM Class).
25. *Sims, Tasha* (Lead Scripture Shower, PM Introduction).
26. *Williams, Levi* (Closing Scripture/Benediction).
27. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord’s Table Interlude, Introduction to AM Sermon, Read PM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
28. *Williams, Nichole* (PM Introduction).
29. *Preparing Lord’s Supper* (Various sisters).



Table in the Wilderness

A WEEK-END OR PREACHING
April 20-11, 2012

FRIDAY 7:00 PM

SATURDAY 8:00 AM

LORD’S DAY: 9:00 AM, 6:30 PM

Theme: “THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE”

The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, and Eva

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Adah Hutchcraft (adahhutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@hotmail.com)

THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

COMMENTARY on Philippians: <http://wotruth.com/philippiansdindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>

COMMENTARY on First Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/1sthessindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/2ndthessindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First Peter: <http://wotruth.com/1stpetindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First John: <http://wotruth.com/1stjohnindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Revelation: <http://wotruth.com/revelationindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Mark: <http://wotruth.com/Mark.htm>

COMMENTARY on Titus: <http://wotruth.com/Titus.htm>

COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>

COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>

COMMENTARY on Genesis: <http://wotruth.com/Genesis.htm>

COMMENTARY on Ephesians: <http://wotruth.com/Ephesians.htm>