

God Made Sarah Laugh, So Don't Laugh at Isaac (Genesis 21:1-21)

Grace Chapel September 9, 2009 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

CHRONOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

Genesis 17:17 and 24; Genesis 18:10; Genesis 21:1–2 and 5

Abraham was in Gerar, Hagar went to the wilderness of Beersheba, Ishmael settled in the wilderness of Paran

NEW EXPOSITION

(21:1–2) The Lord fulfilled His promise to Sarah that she would bear a son to Abraham in his old age

(21:3) Abraham called his son Isaac (“He Will Laugh”)

Genesis 17:17

Genesis 18:12–13, 15

Genesis 21:6

(21:4) Abraham circumcised Isaac at eight days according to God's command

Genesis 17:12

(21:5) Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born

(21:6) Sarah proclaimed that God made her laugh and that all who hear would laugh with her

(21:7) Sarah said that no one would have told Abraham that she (at 90) would nurse a child born her [except that it is true that] she bore a son to Abraham (at age 100)

(21:8) Abraham hosted a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned

Information on the age of weaning in ancient Israel suggests that Isaac was 2–3 years old. I offer this as a general suggestion regarding chronology. It is an approximation.

Genesis 16:16 says that Abram was 86, when Ishmael was born.

Genesis 21:5 says that Abraham was 100, when Isaac was born.

Ishmael was 14, when Isaac was born.

Ishmael was ≈16–17, when Isaac was weaned.

(21:9) Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar, mocking Isaac

The word *scoffed* (or *mocked*) is $m^e a \bar{e} q$ (from $\bar{a} a q$, “to laugh”). In other words, it is related to Isaac’s name. Sarah laughed because of her son, but Ishmael made fun of him.

Other uses of the term in Genesis show that it may or may not have a sinister side.

Genesis 26:8

Genesis 39:14 and 17

What was Ishmael doing?

(21:10) Sarah told Abraham to cast out the bondwoman and her son, because Ishmael will not share in Isaac's inheritance

(21:11) Abraham disagreed with Sarah, because of [love for] his son [Ishmael]

(21:12–13) God told Abraham that Sarah is right on this issue, because his seed will be called through Isaac, but [is wrong on another]: God will make a nation of Ishmael, because he is also Abraham's seed

(21:14) Early in the morning Abraham gave provisions to Hagar and Ishmael, sent them away, and they wandered

(21:15–16) They ran out of water; Hagar had Ishmael remain in the shade of a bush; she went a short distance away so she would not see him die; she cried out

(21:17) The Angel of the LORD answered Hagar and said that He heard the voice of Ishmael where he is

Compare Genesis 16:7, 9, 10, and 11 with Genesis 16:13. The Angel of the LORD is the LORD Himself, Jesus Christ

Note the meaning of Ishmael's name ("God Hears") in regard to what God says

(21: 18) The LORD told Hagar to arise, [to rejoin Ishmael], & to hold him, because He would make him into a great nation

(21:19) God allowed her to see that they were right next to a great well, so she filled the skin with water and gave Ishmael a drink

The meaning of Beersheba

Beer =

Sheba =

(21:20–21) God was with Ishmael who matured and dwelt as a hunter in the wilderness of Paran; Hagar found him an Egyptian wife

CONCLUSION