

GENESIS 21

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

Genesis 21:1–34

Birth of Isaac; Ishmael Cast out; Abimelech and Abraham

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God." (John 3:16–18). "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!" (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse studies](#) of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Genesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

Preface: Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah. Hagar and Ishmael are sent packing. Abraham interacts with Abimelech and Phicol (Abimelech's military leader).

Quotations:

J. Vernon McGee: *[The themes of Genesis 21 are] [t]he birth of Isaac; Hagar and Ishmael [are] cast out; [and] Abraham and Abimelech [make a treaty] at Beer-sheba.*¹

Steven J. Cole: *Sometimes when you read the Bible, you get the feeling that God majors in the spectacular. He spoke and the universe was created. He rained down fire and brimstone to destroy wicked Sodom. He sent the plagues on Egypt and parted the Red Sea. He provided manna in the wilderness and brought water from a rock. We could go on and on recounting the mighty deeds that God has done. All these things are true and wonderful. But the problem is, most of us don't live in the realm of the spectacular. We live with the daily, ordinary routines that characterize the greater part of our lives: getting ready for the day, rushing off to work, getting the kids off to school, shopping for groceries, paying bills, mowing lawns, and maintaining the household. Sometimes we may wonder, "How does God fit in with the ordinary?" As you think about Abraham's life, you realize that he was a fairly ordinary man, except that he was a man of extraordinary faith and obedience to God. His life wasn't made up of one spectacular event after another. Most days, he got up, made sure his animals were being cared for, dealt with problems like sick or straying animals, servants who had squabbles, and finding enough water and food for his flocks and family. The one great miracle in his life was the birth of Isaac in his old age. But other than that, Abraham's life was fairly routine.*²

Arthur Pink: *The birth of Isaac marked a pivotal point in the outworking of God's eternal purpose. The coming of this son to Abraham and Sarah was the second great step toward the fulfillment of Jehovah's plan. This purpose and plan was to have a people of His own, separate from the surrounding nations; a people to whom should be entrusted the Holy Oracles, a people of whom as concerning the flesh the Savior was to be born; a people who should ultimately become the medium of blessing to all the earth. In the realization of this plan and purpose the*

¹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014.

² From <http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/111096M.pdf> accessed September 9, 2014.

*first great step was the selection of Abram to be the father of the chosen nation, the call which separated him from the idolatrous people among whom he lived, and the migration unto the land which Jehovah promised to give him.*³

*Pink: We see...that God is in no hurry in the working out of His plans. Man may fret and fume, hurry and bustle, but Jehovah has all eternity at His disposal and works leisurely and with deliberation.*⁴

Gary Kukis: One of the amazing things is how carefully the Bible fits together as a puzzle. This portion of the book of Genesis...fits as a carefully-designed counterpart to first chapter of Matthew and Luke.

Kukis: This is often the favorite verse for women named Sarah, who often shorten it to, *And God said, "Listen to Sarah and do all that she tells you to do."*

Kukis: *Y^ehowah* is both God's covenantal and personal name with Israel. So, when Elohim speaks to Hagar and to Ishmael and when the Angel of Elohim provides for Hagar and Ishmael, this does not mean that they lack a relationship with Him. This does not mean that they are not good enough to be a part of the covenant. This simply means that they are not a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, which covenant all believing Jews in the era of Israel are a part of.

Rom 9:6–8 *But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.* (ESV)

Kukis: What takes place in [the latter] half of the chapter sets up a pattern. The Jews become priests for the world; and Israel will become a priest nation to the world. Abimelech, by establishing a relationship with Abraham, a priest to the Most High God, Abimelech has representation before God; and consideration from God. A priest represents man to God; a prophet represents God to man. So, by his relationship with Abraham, Abimelech has representation before the God of the Universe. For the next 2000 years, Israel will become the way that individuals establish a relationship with God by going through either individuals or through the nation Israel. There will be many times when individuals from Israel will go out and evangelize on behalf of their God as well.

Introductory Remarks: At the end of **Genesis 20** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), we spent a great deal of time summarizing what we have been studying, and taking an overall perspective of what we have been studying. With this lesson, we will return to a verse-by-verse analysis of each chapter of Genesis.

At this point, we begin Genesis 21, which is about the birth of Isaac. Now, recall, the immediate promise of the birth of Isaac occurred way back in Genesis 18:10a (ESV) *The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."* Then God warned Abraham about what He was about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. Then we had a chapter on Sodom and Gomorrah. Then we had this odd chapter of Abraham and Sarah moving to Gerar and Abraham lying about his wife. So, it seems like, between an imminent promise and the actual birth of Isaac, a lot of time has passed, even though only one year has passed. There was actually a purpose in all of that, which we will study.

Chapter 21 covers 3 incidents: (1) the birth of Isaac, (2) the dismissal of Hagar from Abraham's compound, and (3) a covenant established between Abraham and Abimelech.

This should be the most extensive examination of Genesis 21 available, where you will be able to see every word of the original text.

³ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

⁴ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

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Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			
Angel of Jehovah			
Basic Mechanics of the Christian Life	Blessing by Association	A Brief History of Israel	Circumcision
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Additional doctrines and links are found in Definition of Terms below.			

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			
Genesis 16	Genesis 20		

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms	
Angel of Jehovah	The Angel of the Lord is one of the preincarnate forms of Jesus Christ. The Angel of Jehovah is identified as Jehovah. Gen. 16:7-13 21:17-18 22:11-18 31:11-13 48:15,16 Exodus 3:2 cf. Acts 7:30-35 Ex. 13:21 14:19 Judg.2:1-4 5:23 6:11-23 13:3-22 2Sam. 24:16 Zechariah 1:12-13. The Angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah. Gen. 24:7 40 Ex. 23:20 32:34 Num. 20:16 1Chronicles 21:15-18 Isa. 63:9 Zech. 1:12-13. See the Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Chiasmus	A chiasmus (also spelled chiasmus) is the way that some portions of the Bible are organized. It takes its name from the Greek letter chi (χ). The first section matches with the last, the second with the second-to-the-last, etc. It is called a chiasmus, because the inverted parallelism looks like a chi (actually, half a chi) when one looks at it from its organizational standpoint.
Client nation	The client nation is a nation where there are a lot of believers and a lot of mature and growing believers. This nation is known for its evangelization, for its Bible teaching, its Bible scholarship, and missionary activity. The government and leaders may or may not be supportive of such activity. However, generally speaking, such activity is allowed within the national entity. It is this activity which preserves such a national entity. Doctrine of the Client Nation (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
5th Stage of National Discipline	This is the stage of discipline God brings upon Israel when the people are removed from their own land and taken into slavery by some foreign power. Thieme called this the 5 th Cycle of Discipline.
Gloss	A gloss is simply taking the name of a place in one era and identifying it with the same place under a new name in a later era, so that the reader knows where the area is.
Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the Doctrine of Rebound (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Definition of Terms	
The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)	<p>We do not look within ourselves or do we build up some concept of God based upon our own experiences, but we first understand God as He has revealed Himself. Throughout the lives of the saints who have gone before us, God revealed Himself through the written Word and sometimes through direct contact. Once a foundation is laid, then we can see how God is understood through various experiences in our lives.</p> <p>We do not look within to find God and we do not go out and search for God. He will reveal Himself to us. Those who look to other gods are simply worshiping that which others have defined as <i>God</i>; or, in many cases, they incorporate their own norms and standards into their belief of the God they choose to believe in. Essentially, such a person is making God in his own image.</p>
Type, Antitype, Typical	<p><i>A type is a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons, events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught His redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come, not the image of those things (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1).⁵ See the Doctrine of Typology (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</i></p>
<p>Some of these definitions are taken from http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm http://www.realttime.net/~wdoud/topics.html http://www.theopedia.com/</p>	

An Introduction to Genesis 21

Introduction: I should admit that, when first reading Genesis 20 and 21, they seemed to be very odd chapters. Why is much of this material here? Obviously, we would hear about the birth of Isaac; but the other stuff (Abimelech coming to make a treaty with Abraham) seemed quite odd in the second half of Genesis 21.

Genesis 21 ties together and helps to explain the reason for Genesis 20. Abraham will spend much of his later life in the land of the Philistines, proclaiming the Word of God. Genesis 20–21 chapters help to explain how he ends up there.

A lot of the book of Genesis gives us a contrast between the line of Jesus Christ (the line of promise) and alternate genealogies. We see why God chose one line, but not another. We have seen Lot and his life among the Sodomites and the negligible impact that he had on that society, even though he did believe in Jehovah Elohim. Contrast this with Abraham's impact on the Philistines during this era (which Philistines may not be at all related to the Philistines later found in the Bible).

There was more to Abraham's impact than living a perfect life. In Genesis 20, we find out that Abraham made some major errors living with the Philistines. We also saw Lot, whose relationship with Y^ehowah seemed to have little or no impact upon those around him. That is the contrast. Even the men who were to marry his daughters were unbelievers. So, his impact for the Lord was zero. Abraham's impact on the world around him was astonishing.

⁵ From <http://www.dake.com/dake/types.html> accessed July 30, 2013.

When God chooses to have an impact on the world, there is little that we can do about it. While we are in the midst of history, we know many of the secular leaders, e.g. FDR, Hitler, Churchill, Henry Ford, the Wright Brothers; but the men who had the most impact on society may or may not be known. Billy Graham is well-known, and we see how God has given him the ear of many presidents. R. B. Thieme, Jr. is far less known, but has had a much different impact upon the United States. From God's view, the men who fearlessly proclaim the Word of God are the men who had a real impact upon the United States; whereas the famous politicians did very little apart from helping to infest our government with corruption, fraud, waste and abuse.

With Abraham, we get some true perspective. In the latter half of this chapter, we will see two men interacting, Abraham and Abimelech, leader of the Philistines. 4000 years later, who remembers who? Billions of people know Abraham; and only a small percentage of them know much about Abimelech. And this is not to say that Abimelech was a bad leader—quite the contrary, Abimelech seems to be an honest and fair man, someone who gave Abraham a fair shake. In fact, Abimelech gave Abraham a good establishment environment in which he could thrive. Abimelech provided law and order; Abimelech provided justice and a fair court system. These things are very important, and often help with the teaching of the Word of God; but it is Abraham who provided the true spiritual impact, which impact is still with us today.

We know about Abimelech because his name (actually title) is preserved in the Word of God. But there were far greater kings in that era (by human standards). However, we would be hard-pressed to name any of them (well, **most Americans seem to have a difficult time naming the vice president**).

From the New American Bible: [21:1-21] The long-awaited birth of Isaac parallels the birth of Ishmael in chap. 16, precipitating a rivalry and expulsion as in that chapter. Though this chapter is unified, the focus of vv. 1-7 is exclusively on Sarah and Isaac, and the focus of vv. 8-21 is exclusively on Hagar and Ishmael. The promise of a son to the barren Sarah and elderly Abraham has been central to the previous chapters and now that promise comes true with the birth of Isaac. The other great promise, that of land, will be resolved, at least in an anticipatory way, in Abraham's purchase of the cave at Machpelah in chap. 23. The parallel births of the two boys has influenced the Lucan birth narratives of John the Baptist and Jesus (Lk 1-2).⁶

There are two related items in this chapter, and I don't know how significant they are. Hagar and Ishmael will have to leave Abraham's compound and will live out in the desert. Hagar and Ishmael will be saved by a well, which God points out to her. At the end of this chapter, Abimelech, king of Gerar, will recognize the importance of his bond with Abraham, and he will go to Abraham to reestablish that bond. One of the important items of contention (which Abimelech was unaware of) are the wells that Abraham had dug, but Abimelech's men had been giving Abraham grief over. This problem will be cleared up by Abimelech. I don't know if there is a deeper relationship between these two things in this chapter.

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Genesis 21

Back in Genesis 12:2, God promised Abraham that He would make a great nation of him, which requires him to have a son. In nearly every promise made by God to Abraham, it was implied that he would have a son (or many sons)—Genesis 17:1–6. Twice, God returned to Abraham, a year previous, and promised that Sarah would bear him a son (Genesis 17:15–17 18:10–14). In this chapter, the son of promise, Isaac, will be born.

Because Abraham had been promised a son and because Sarah had not conceived, she came up with the idea for Abraham to impregnate her personal slave, Hagar. This was not an unusual thing to do, but Abraham fathering a son by Hagar caused all sorts of personal problems in this family, as we would expect. Things got so bad that Sarah put so much pressure on Hagar and Hagar ran away. God spoke to her and caused her to return to Abraham's household. **Genesis 16** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

⁶ From <http://www.usccb.org/bible/Genesis/21> accessed April 10, 2012.

The Prequel of Genesis 21

In the previous chapter, Abraham and Sarah moved to Gerar. Abraham lied about Sarah, claiming that she is only his sister, and Abimelech took her as his wife. However, before he could consummate the marriage, God came to Abimelech in a dream, and told him to return Sarah to Abraham, on threat of death. In this chapter, Abraham and Sarah are still living close enough to Abimelech to being under his control.

Genesis 21 will begin with the birth of Isaac.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 21

Characters	Commentary
Abraham	Abraham is the father of the Jews. He will father Isaac, in this chapter, and Isaac will continue the line of promise. He is the father of Ishmael in this chapter, by Hagar, Sarah's maid. Abraham is 100 years old in this chapter.
Sarah	Sarah is Abraham's wife and she will bear Isaac, Abraham's son, in this chapter, at age 90.
Isaac	Isaac is the son of promise in this chapter, who will continue the line of promise (all of God's promises of Abraham will be fulfilled through the genealogical line that runs through Abraham and Isaac).
Hagar	Hagar is Sarah's Egyptian maid. Sarah convinced Abraham to have a child by her, which child is...
Ishmael	When (Abram) Abraham was 86, Sarai (Sarah) convinced him to have a child by Sarah's maid Hagar.
The Angel of Y ^e howah	Sarah will demand that Hagar and Ishmael be thrown out of the compound. Although this is difficult for Abraham to do, God tells him to do it. When Hagar and Ishmael are not too far into the desert, they run out of water. The Angel of Jehovah (the preincarnate Christ) opened Hagar's eyes to the well which was not far from her.
Abimelech	Before Isaac was conceived, Abraham and Sarah had gone to Gerar and, because of a lie told by Abraham, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, took Sarah to become his wife. God came to Abimelech and warned him that he would die unless he returned Sarah to Abraham. In this chapter, Abimelech will come to Abraham and establish a treaty with him (which appears to be, in part, a lease contract).
Phicol	Phicol is the head of Abimelech's army; and he accompanies Abimelech.

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The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 21

Legend	
Birth or death	God speaks with Abraham

Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)
<p>Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.</p>
<p>The entire Abrahamic Timeline (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p> <p>The entire Patriarchal Timeline (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
2164 B.C.	0	1967 B.C.	Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
		1957 B.C.		Birth of Sarai
		1927 B.C.	Genesis 11:29–30	Marriage of Abram to Sarai
		1907 B.C. 1927 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 11:28, 21	Abram's family travel from Ur to Haran, although their original intention had been to go to the land of Canaan. Gen 11:28, 21 Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.
Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's.				
2089 B.C.	75	1892 B.C.	Genesis 12:1–4	Abraham leaves for Promised Land from Haran , after being so instructed by God. Gen 12:4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.
		1891 B.C. 1892 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 12:10–20	Abraham & Sarah in Egypt (Goshen, Memphis), return to the Land of Promise (Genesis 12:10-21:1)
			Genesis 13:14–17	God renews His covenant with Abram.
		1882 B.C.	Genesis 15:1–21	God's covenant with Abram is given in greater detail.

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
	85	1882 B.C. 1881 B.C. (Klassen)	Genesis 16:1–14	Sarah gives Hagar, her Egyptian slave girl, to Abram in order to sire a son. Gen 16:3 So Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan 10 years.
2078 B.C.	86	1881 B.C.	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
(2065 B.C.)	99	1868 B.C.	Genesis 17:1–8	God renews His covenant with Abram and renames him Abraham. Gen 17:1 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in My presence and be devout.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:9–14	Circumcision is given as a sign of the covenant and of Abraham's faith in his covenant with God. Circumcision represents regeneration (the new birth).
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:15–19	Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and Isaac, a future son, is promised the Abraham and Sarah. Gen 17:17 Abraham fell to the ground, laughed, and thought in his heart, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?"
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:20	Ishmael's destiny is foretold.
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:21–22	The time that Sarah would give birth is revealed; at a set time in the next year. Gen 17:21 But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at a set time next year."
(2065 B.C.)	99	(1868 B.C.)	Genesis 17:23–27	Abraham obeys God and circumcises himself and the men with him, responding in faith to God's mandate. Gen 17:24 Abraham was 99 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was 13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised.

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:1–15	Jehovah and two angels come to Abraham and promise that Sarah would have a child in a year's time. Gen 18:10, 14 The LORD said, "I will certainly come back to you in about a year's time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son."
(2065 B.C.)		(1867 B.C.)	Genesis 18:16–33	The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is promised and Abraham intercedes on behalf of Sodom.
			Genesis 20:1–18	Abraham lies again about his wife to King Abimelech in Gerar , in southern Judah. Although some believe that this chapter is placed here in Genesis due to thematic elements rather than because it belongs here chronologically, we find Abraham in Gerar in the next chapter, which suggests that this chapter is correctly placed.
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge puts this at 1897 B.C. ⁷ If this chapter is in Chronological order, then MacDonald would have this date as 2065–2064 B.C. and Reese would have it at 1867–1866 B.C.				
Coffman writes: <i>...this chapter is exactly where it belongs in the first book of Moses, and is not displaced chronologically. Efforts to move it around in the Book of Genesis do not derive from any solid evidence, but from the intention of trying to make it some kind of variant. "We see no reason for insisting that Genesis is not in its proper chronological position."</i> ⁸				
2064 B.C.	100		Genesis 21:1–7 1Chronicles 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 th generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
		1864 B.C.	Genesis 21:8–13	Conflicts arise between Isaac and Ishmael, Abram's two sons.
			Genesis 21:14–21	Hagar and Ishmael are both cast out, and they wander the desert of Beer-sheba (which is at the edge of southern Judah). Later, they move to the desert of Paran .

⁷ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 20:1.

⁸ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=20> accessed August 26, 2014. Coffman is quoting from G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis Vol. II* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 27.

Brent MacDonald	Age of Abraham	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
		1864–1834 B.C.	Genesis 21:22–34	Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech, which suggests that Abraham is still in or near Gerar . They will make a covenant in Beer-sheba . We are told that Abraham remains in the land of the Philistines for many days.
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge puts this date at 1886 B.C. ⁹				
		1841–1816 B.C.	Genesis 25:12–16 1Chronicles 1:29–21	Ishmael's children.

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

From: http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf (Christian shepherd)

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Here is what to expect from Genesis 21:

A Synopsis of Genesis 21 by Matthew Poole

God visits Sarah; she conceives and bears a son (Genesis 21:1–2). He is named Isaac (Genesis 21:3) and is circumcised the eighth day (Genesis 21:4). Sarah's joy and thanks (Genesis 21:6–7).

Abraham makes a feast at the weaning of Isaac (Genesis 21:8). However, Ishmael mocks Isaac; and Sarah sees it (Genesis 21:9). She complains to Abraham, and desires to have him cast out (Genesis 21:10). Abraham is grieved (Genesis 21:11). Yet, God commands it; gives the reason (Genesis 21:12); and promises a blessing to Ishmael for his sake (Genesis 21:13).

Abraham sends Hagar and her son away; they wander in the wilderness, and are like to perish for want of water (Genesis 21:14–16). God calls to Hagar (Genesis 21:17); repeats His promise to Ishmael (Genesis 21:18); opens her eyes; and she sees a well (Genesis 21:19). They dwell there, and Ishmael is an archer (Genesis 21:20); and he marries an Egyptian (Genesis 21:21).

Abimelech convinced that God was with Abraham, desires a covenant with him (Genesis 21:22–23). Abraham consents (Genesis 21:24). Because Abimelech's servants having taken a well from him, Abraham reproves Abimelech for it (Genesis 21:25). Abimelech pleads ignorance (Genesis 21:26). Both of them make a covenant (Genesis 21:27–32).

Abraham plants a grove, and calls upon the Lord the everlasting God (Genesis 21:33–34).

⁹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 21:22.

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 21 chapter comments (edited).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Thomas Coke's abbreviated description: *Isaac is born, is circumcised and weaned. At Sarah's request Hagar is driven out; to whom, wandering in the wilderness, an angel promises that Ishmael shall be the father of a numerous posterity. Abraham and Abimelech make a covenant.*¹⁰

This is not too different from mine.

Matthew Henry's Alternate Outline

In this chapter we have,

- I. Isaac, the child of promise born into Abraham's family (Genesis 21:1–8).
- II. Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, cast out of it (Genesis 21:9–21).
- III. Abraham's league with his neighbour Abimelech (Genesis 21:22–32).
- IV. His devotion to his God (Genesis 21:33).

Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21 chapter comments.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

David Hocking has certain got his own style when it comes to organizing a chapter. However, sometimes an alliterative approach like this can help fix the events of a chapter in your mind.

David Hocking's Alliterative Outline of Genesis 21

- 1A. The **power** of god was displayed in the birth of Isaac - 1-7
 - 2A. The **problem** with Isaac and ishmael developed at a feast for Isaac - 8-14
 - 3A. The **promise** of god was declared again to Hagar - 15-21
-
- 1A. THE POWER OF GOD WAS DISPLAYED IN THE BIRTH OF ISAAC - 1-7
 - 1B. The CAUSE behind this miracle - 1 "the Lord visited Sarah as He had said" God's in no hurry to work out His plan "visited" - used in two ways:
 1. To judge - Exodus 20:5; 34:7
 2. To bless - Gen. 50:24; Exodus 4:31; Ruth 1:6. cf. Luke 1:34, 37
 - 2B. The CONCEPTION - 2 "at the set time of which God had spoken to him" Cf. 17:21; 18:10, 14 - cf. Gal. 4:4
 - 3B. The CALLING of his name - 3 "Isaac" - means "laughter" - cf. Gen. 17:17, 19, 21; 18:12-15
 - 4B. The CIRCUMCISION of the boy - 4 "as God had commanded him" - cf. 17:9-12
 - 5B. The COMMENTS of Sarah - 6-7 cf. Isaiah 54:1, 5-8
 - 2A. THE PROBLEM BETWEEN ISAAC AND ISHMAEL WAS DEVELOPED AT A FEAST FOR ISAAC - 8-14
 - 1B. The immediate REASON - 9 "mocking" - same root as the name "Isaac" (laugh) an intensive form of participle - "to ridicule"
 - 2B. The REQUEST of Sarah - 10 quoted in Galatians 4:30
 - 3B. The REACTION of Abraham - 11 "very grievous" - Hebrew word, ra'a', means "to spoil by breaking in pieces" or "to afflict; displease; do harm or hurt" etc. - used 93 times. Translated "hurt" in Gen. 31:7 and "displeased" in Gen. 38:10 and "dealt ill" in Gen. 43:6 and "done evil" in Gen. 44:5
 - 4B. The RESPONSE of God - 12-13
 - 1C. Concerning ISAAC "for in Isaac shall thy seed be called"

¹⁰ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

David Hocking's Alliterative Outline of Genesis 21

- 2C. Concerning ISHMAEL "will I make a nation, because he is thy seed"
- 5B. The N.T. REVELATION - Galatians 4:21-31
- 3A. THE PROMISE OF GOD WAS DECLARED AGAIN TO HAGAR - 15-21
 - 1B. God RESPONDED to Hagar's need - 15-17
 - 1C. He heard the boy's CRY - 17a
 - 2C. He showed His CONCERN for Hagar - 17b "What aileth thee, Hagar?"
 - 3C. He spoke words of COMFORT to her - 17c "Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is" "ISHMAEL" - "God shall hear"
 - 2B. God REPEATED His previous promise to Hagar - 18 Cf. 16:10; 17:20
 - 3B. God REVEALED that He will bring it to pass - 19-21 "God opened her eyes" "God was with the lad"

CONCLUSION:

- (1) GOD'S POWER - He can do anything! (21:1-7)
- (2) GOD'S PLAN - He does what is right and good! (21:8-14)
- (3) GOD'S PROVISION - He will take care of you! (21:15-21)

From <http://www.davidcox.com.mx/library/H/Hocking,%20David%20-%20Genesis.pdf> accessed September 7, 2014.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The first half of this chapter explains the separation of the Ishmaelites from the Israelites, and suggests why there might be some resultant animosity between these peoples, despite the fact that they have come ultimately from two half-brothers.

The second half of this chapter informs us that, even though there is a distinct separation between Abraham and the line of promise from other peoples, that is not an uncrossable barrier to the gentiles outside of Abraham's line. All it takes is positive volition toward the Revealed God, which is what Abimelech and Phicol both have.

Steven J. Cole: When you come to a passage like this in the Bible, the question is, Why did God include this in sacred Scripture? It seems to me that the answer is, It shows the faithfulness of God in the ordinary. It shows how God faithfully provided all that Abraham needed apart from Abraham's schemes. Throughout Abraham's story run two great promises which God made to Abraham: a son, through whom Abraham would become a great nation, and through whose descendants all the nations would be blessed; and, the land of Canaan, where his descendants would live. In seeking to bring about both of these promises, Abraham resorted to human schemes to help God out: with the son, he went in to Hagar and produced Ishmael; with regard to the land, his fears of being wiped out by the inhabitants of the land prompted him to lie about Sarah being his sister, not his wife.¹¹

Chapter Updates:

I will use this space to indicate any format changes.

Every verse will be hyperlinked from the first page, so that you can easily go to a specific verse in this chapter.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

¹¹ From <http://www.fcsonline.org/content/1/sermons/111096M.pdf> accessed September 9, 2014.

In the future, I would really like to add a few translations, fill in the translation of this chapter (at the end of this document); and provide additional sources at the end of this document.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The Birth of Isaac, the Promised Son

I have made a few changes on Murai's excellent work. This is known as a **chiasm**. ESV is used below.

Hajime Murai Organizes Genesis 21:1–8

Structure	ESV Text
A Sarah bears a child for Abraham in his old age (vv. 1–2)	The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him.
B Abraham names Isaac (21:3)	Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.
C Isaac's circumcision (21:4)	And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.
B' Sarah explains Isaac's name (21:5-6)	Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me."
A' Sarah weans Isaac, having borne a child for Abraham in his old age (21:7-8)	And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

From http://www.valdes.titech.ac.jp/~h_murai/bible/01_Genesis_pericope_e.html accessed September 8, 2014 and edited.

I believe that one of the reasons for a chiasmic structure is to make memorization of the passage much easier.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Slavishly literal:

And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, as which He had said, and so makes Y^ehowah to Sarah as which He had spoken.

Genesis
21:1

Moderately literal:

And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, just as He had said [He would]; consequently, Y^ehowah did for Sarah just as He had promised [her].

Kukis not-so-literal paraphrase:

And Jehovah visited Sarah, just as He said He would. Consequently, Jehovah made it possible for Sarah to become pregnant, as He had promised her.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation¹²; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. Taken from <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/> and first published in 1862.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, as which He had said, and so makes Y^ehowah to Sarah as which He had spoken.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Unfortunately, what was recovered the Dead Sea Scrolls of Genesis, with very little of the second third of the book being preserved. Nothing of Genesis 21 survives.

Targum of Onkelos

And the Lord remembered Sarah according to that which He had said to her; and the Lord wrought a miracle for Sarah like to that for which Abraham had spoken in

¹² I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

	prayer for Abimelek. [JERUSALEM. And the Lord wrought <u>miracles</u> for Sarah, as He had spoken.]
Latin Vulgate Peshitta (Syriac)	And the Lord visited Sara, as he had promised: and fulfilled what he had spoken. AND the LORD remembered Sarah, as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had spoken.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord visited Sarah, as He said, and the Lord did to Sarah, as He spoke.
Significant differences:	The targums add the word <i>miracle(s)</i> .

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Isaac's birth The LORD was attentive to Sarah just as he had said, and the LORD carried out just what he had promised her.
Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	The LORD was good to Sarah and kept his promise. The Lord kept the promise he had made to Sarah. The Lord did for Sarah what he had promised.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	The LORD blessed Sarah, as he had promised,... GOD visited Sarah exactly as he said he would; GOD did to Sarah what he promised:...
New Berkeley Version	The LORD came to Sarah as He had said; He dealt with her as He had promised [Enabling her to be a mother.].

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Jehovah visited SarAh and did as [He had promised] her.
Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh counted happiness to Sarah as he said when Yahweh did to Sarah as he spoke.
Christian Community Bible International Standard V	Yahweh was kind to Sarah as he had said, and fulfilled his promise to her. <i>Isaac is Born</i> The LORD came to Sarah, just as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	The LORD came to help Sarah and did for her what he had promised.
New Jerusalem Bible	Yahweh treated Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her.
New Simplified Bible	Jehovah was gracious to Sarah, as he had said. Jehovah did for Sarah what he had promised.
Revised English Bible	The LORD showed favour to Sarah as he had promised, and made good what he had said about her.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English Conservapedia	And the Lord came to Sarah as he had said and did to her as he had undertaken. And the LORD visited Sarah as He said He would, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.
The Expanded Bible	A Baby for Sarah The Lord cared for [visited] Sarah as he had said and did for her what he had promised.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	The Ever-living afterwards effect with Sarah what He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah that which He had said;...
New Advent Bible NET Bible®	And the Lord visited Sara, as he had promised: and fulfilled what he had spoken. The Birth of Isaac The LORD visited [The Hebrew verb translated "visit" (pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced <i>paw-KAHD</i>]) often describes divine intervention for blessing or cursing; it indicates God's special attention to an individual or a matter, always with respect to his

people's destiny. He may visit (that is, destroy) the Amalekites; he may visit (that is, deliver) his people in Egypt. Here he visits Sarah, to allow her to have the promised child. One's destiny is changed when the Lord "visits." For a more detailed study of the term, see G. André, Determining the Destiny (ConBOT).] **Sarah just as he had said he would and did** [Heb "and the Lord did." The divine name has not been repeated here in the translation for stylistic reasons.] **for Sarah what he had promised** [Heb "spoken."]. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.

NIV – UK

The Birth of Isaac

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeser companion Bible	<u>SARAH BIRTHS YISCHAQ</u> And Yah Veh visits Sarah as he said and Yah Veh works to Sarah as he worded:...
JPS (Tanakh—1917)	And the LORD remembered Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.
Kaplan Translation	<i>Isaac and Ishmael</i> God granted special providence [Pakad in Hebrew (see Hirsch). Usually translated as 'remembered' or 'visited.']] to Sarah as He said He would, and God did what He promised for Sarah.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Context Group Version	And YHWH visited Sarah as he had said, and YHWH did to Sarah as he had spoken.
English Standard Version	The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised.
Green's Literal Translation	And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said. And the Lord did to Sarah as He had spoken.
Kretzmann's Commentary	Isaac Born, Circumcised, and Weaned And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. The Lord visited Sarah by doing to her as He had promised, by granting her what she had desired for so many years, a child of her own. Children are a gift of the goodness of God.
Syndein/Thieme	And Jehovah/God visited Sarah as He had said, and Jehovah/God kept on doing {'asah} unto Sarah as He had intensively decreed/'communicated categorically' {'dabar}.
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah has looked after Sarah as He has said, and Jehovah does to Sarah as He has spoken.

The gist of this verse: God fulfills His promises to Sarah.

Genesis 21:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וָ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced <i>paw-KAHD</i>]	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6485 BDB #823
This is a very common and notable verb found throughout the Old Testament; and here for the first time.			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
kaph or k ^e (כּ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'âsher (כַּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i>] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Translation: And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, just as He had said [He would];...

Several chapters ago, God promised Abraham and Sarah (who was listening from the flap of the tent) that she would become pregnant by Abraham, when he is about 100 years old and she is about 90 years old.

In between this chapter and those promises (Genesis 17:16, 19 18:10), much has happened. After promising Abraham again that he would sire a child by Sarah, God speaks to Abraham about the destruction of Sodom. Abraham intercedes for Sodom, because Lot lives there and gets God to agree that, if there are only 10 righteous men in Sodom, then God would not destroy it. In Genesis 19, the angels of Y^ehowah go to Sodom to destroy it and 4 other cities. However, they first rescue Lot and his family. Abraham sees the destruction of Sodom from where he lives, and moves from the place southward, so that he passes by the destroyed cities moving toward the Negev. Then, in Genesis 20, Abraham turns about, going northwest, and stays in Gerar, which is a Philistine controlled city. He lies to Abimelech, the king there, about Sarah, and so Abimelech takes Sarah to be his wife. God comes to Abimelech in a dream and warns him that, unless Sarah is returned to her husband, everyone in Abimelech's family would die. Abimelech and his cabinet are in a panic, and Sarah is quickly restored to Abraham, although Abimelech does reprove Abraham for his lying. Abimelech gives Abraham many presents, as well as

an invite to stay anywhere in the land of Gerar (Abimelech apparently controlled a significant portion of the land beyond his city).

Barnes, who usually provides excellent commentary, suggests¹³ that Isaac may have been born prior to Abraham and Sarah moving to Gerar. Barnes is wrong, because the real threat of Genesis 20 is Sarah being taken into a harem at the time that she is to conceive the child of promise.

You will note here that, not only is the child that Sarah bears uniquely—born, but this involves a visit from Jehovah Elohim. *To visit* here is the very common Hebrew verb *pâqad* (פָּקַד) [pronounced *paw-KAHD*], which means, *to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census*. If you are familiar with the British expression, *to sort [something] out*; where someone needs to deal with a situation or solve a problem by acting directly or becoming personally involved, that is what this word means. Strong's #6485 BDB #823. This word can be used for the threat of evil (Exodus 20:5 Psalm 59:5) or for the promise of good (Genesis 50:24 Exodus 4:31 Ruth 1:6).¹⁴

*The NET Bible: The Hebrew verb translated "visit" (פָּקַד, paqad) often describes divine intervention for blessing or cursing; it indicates God's special attention to an individual or a matter, always with respect to his people's destiny. He may visit (that is, destroy) the Amalekites; he may visit (that is, deliver) his people in Egypt. Here he visits Sarah, to allow her to have the promised child. One's destiny is changed when the LORD "visits."*¹⁵

*Thomas Constable: God "visited" Sarah (Genesis 21:1, NIV), a common metaphor that describes God's intervention in nature and human affairs. The Hebrew word translated "visited" (paqad) also appears when God intervened to save the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Genesis 50:24-25; Exodus 4:31) and when He ended a famine (Ruth 1:6). It also occurs when He made Hannah conceive (1 Samuel 2:21) and when He brought the Jewish exiles home from Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 29:10). Thus its presence here highlights the major significance of Isaac's birth.*¹⁶

In previous chapters, God came to Abraham in person (which seems to be the case, most of the time). However, here, He appears to work behind the scenes. God is clearly here, at work, directly with Abraham and Sarah, because of the use of the verb *pâqad* (which is in the Qal, and not the Hiphil¹⁷).

We are not given any details here as to what the nature of this visit is, but Sarah's reproductive system, which appeared to have problems from the beginning (Genesis 11:29–30—although the problem could have been partially with Abraham) and was certainly out of order due to her old age (Genesis 18:11), was regenerated by this visit. Similarly, Abraham, who was sexually dead (Genesis 18:12), was now no longer sexually dead. You will recall that **circumcision** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) was the sign of regeneration—new life was given to his sexually dead phallus. Furthermore, this effect on Abraham will continue for another 40 or so years. He will be sexual active and potent for some time now. After Sarah passes, Abraham will take another wife and have several sons by her.

Given that Sarah was thought to be beautiful even in the previous chapter, her not having a child was probably not due to a lack of trying—which fact is backed up by her associating sex and conception with pleasure in Genesis 18:12. It is reasonable to suppose that she and Abraham both continued having sex up until the time of Abraham's age-induced impotence. And this was all overridden by God, as per this verse, where God [visits Sarah as He had promised](#).

¹³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:1–8.

¹⁴ Scripture from Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:2.

¹⁵ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Genesis 21:1.

¹⁶ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

¹⁷ The Hiphil can indicate that God oversees something that goes on, but the Qal suggests that He is directly involved.

Genesis 21:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'âsher (כַּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180

The Piel stem is intensive, making dâbar is stronger. It can carry with it the idea of providing guidance and direction, if not a set of mandates (and this would be determined by context). The kind of intensification is determined by context. The Piel may call for *talk, backed with action; give your opinion; expound; make a formal speech; speak out; talk it around, to give a somber and tragic report*.

Translation: ...consequently, Y^ehowah did for Sarah just as He had promised [her].

What God has promised Sarah is, He would make it possible for her and Abraham to become parents. Her womb would become functioning again, as would Abraham's phallus, and they would have a child together, just as God had promised. So, this is about 3 months after the end of Genesis 17.

Clarke: *That is, God fulfilled his promise to Sarah by giving her, at the advanced age of ninety, power to conceive and bring forth a son.*¹⁸

¹⁸ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:1.

This passage can certainly be misunderstood. However, I usually try to see these passages in different ways, and even this possibility did not come to me.

The Bible Query on, *Did God Impregnate Sarah?*

Q: In Gen 18:10,14 and Gen 21:1,2, does this teach that God impregnated Sarah, as Born Again Skeptic's p.217 claims?

A: No. The atheist missed the point that God was not returning to impregnate Sarah, but God returned after the son was born. God only said three things about Sarah's son.

1. God would visit them again next year as Genesis 18:10,14 says
2. God would fulfill his promise of Sarah having a Son as Genesis 21:1 says.
3. Most importantly, the son will be from Abraham (Genesis 17:15,17). To be precise, the son was from Abraham's own body as Genesis 15:4 says.

From Bible Query; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006. Genesis 21:1.

What this does do is set up a parallel situation to the virgin birth, which we will study. Quite obviously, I just took this simply in the way proposed by Clarke in the quote above.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

God has already promised in Genesis 17:15–16 *And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."* (ESV) Clearly, this is a son of Abraham and Sarah. God confirms this in Gen 18:10a *The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son."* (ESV) Sarah is being emphasized in all of this because Isaac being born to her is a picture of Jesus being born to virgin Mary. The emphasis is upon the line of promise as coming from the *seed of the woman* (Genesis 3:15).

Prior to this point in the narrative, we know that Abraham was sexually dead; and that Sarah was long past the age of giving birth. Therefore, God has to make a change in both Abraham and Sarah in order for her to become pregnant. However, the Bible focuses only upon the woman. The Bible does not tell us that Jehovah visits Sarah on one day and Abraham the next. The Bible narrative only focuses upon Sarah. Why? This is because the unique birth of their son is a type of Christ, Who is also uniquely-born. Although God spoke to Joseph about Mary's pregnancy, God affected no change in Joseph (see Matthew 1:18 Luke 1:27–38). This is because Jesus was virgin-born, so there was no contribution from Joseph (she became pregnant before they married; and there was no out-of-wedlock sex between them—Matthew 1:21–25). Therefore, the narrative here in Genesis says nothing about God visiting Abraham and causing a physical change in him (although, logically, that had to have happened¹⁹). The idea is to parallel the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ (even though these history of these events were all *recorded* about two millennia before Christ). Since Joseph had nothing to do with the birth of our Lord, nothing is said about God visiting Abraham and restoring his potency to him. *After the fact*, an angel visited with Joseph and explained to him what had happened, so that he did not privately divorce Mary (Matthew 1:18–20). So, even though Abraham is a willing and necessary participant in the conception of Isaac, his contribution is not spoken of, only Sarah's is. That is because Isaac's birth is a picture of our Lord's birth.

One of the amazing things is how carefully the Bible fits together as a puzzle. This portion of the book of Genesis, which I believe to have been written²⁰ 4000 years ago, fits as a carefully-designed counterpart to first chapter of Matthew and Luke. That is, the birth of Isaac is very much a foretelling of the birth of Jesus—actually, to be precise, the birth of Isaac is the **type** and the birth of Jesus is the **antitype**.

¹⁹ And Genesis 25:1–4 confirms to us that this was essentially a permanent state of potency for Abraham for many decades to come.

²⁰ Actually, passed down verbally until Moses.

Now, let's just assume that Matthew and Luke, just wrote about the birth of Jesus with this in mind—to be a parallel to this chapter of Genesis—then why don't they allude to it? Why doesn't one of them say, "And the birth of Jesus fulfills the type established by Isaac"? Or words to that effect? If I was in their shoes and trying to make up stuff about Jesus, but so that it matched up with the birth of Isaac, would I not allude to some of the parallels once or twice? Insofar as I know, most of the parallels drawn between these two births has been done over the past 100 years. Some parallels were drawn before, but this particular subject was most completely fleshed out only recently (relative to the history of Christian thought). So either this is a spectacular hoax, where one author, 4000 years ago writes about the birth of Isaac, including quite a number of details, which two other authors, 2000 years later notice and weave into the birth account of Jesus (but without making mention of it) so that a few writers and exegetes 2000 years after them might catch all of these parallel details and write about them; or this is the Word of God and the plan of God. It is much easier to believe the latter than it is to believe the former. When you see all of the **parallels** between Isaac's birth and our Lord's, you will be quite amazed.

Genesis 21:1 And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, just as He had said [He would]; consequently, Y^ehowah did for Sarah just as He had promised [her]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:1 And Jehovah visited Sarah, just as He said He would. Consequently, Jehovah made it possible for Sarah to become pregnant, as He had promised her. (Kukis paraphrase)

One of the reasons for studying the Word of God and learning what is in the Bible is to build your faith upon substance. Like anything else, these are just words, but we know approximately when these words are written, and we know that there was a clear time period between the Old and New Testaments. Also, these different testaments were preserved by different entities (Jews and Christians) who did not always see eye-to-eye. However, the more I have studied the Bible, the more everything fits together; the more it all makes sense. And there is little reason to think it is this gigantic hoax or some incredible coincidence. This is only one example of type and antitype out of many. It takes a much greater faith to believe that this is a hoax or a coincidence rather than believing this is the Word of God.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of pāqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced *paw-kad'*] and it means *to attend to* or *to visit*. The context determines whether this is with friendly or hostile intent. There is a parallelism here:

Yahweh visited Sarah
as He had said
and Yahweh did to Sarah
as He had promised

The last word is the Piel perfect of dābar (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAHR*] and in the Qal it means simply *to speak*, however this is the intensive stem and *to promise* is a reasonable rendition. What was done is God had to make Sarah fertile again; He had to make her womb operational. The results were immediate.

Calvin: The language of the historian seems designedly chosen to magnify the power of God as well as His faithfulness to His promise. It was God's grace that brought about that event, as well as the raising of spiritual children to Abraham, of which the birth of this son was typical.²¹

God, for 25 years, has promised Abraham and Sarah a son. This would be the son, through whom all God's promises would be fulfilled.

Modernizing a quote from John Trapp: God repays not His people with words only, as Barack Obama did his people, nor does God fool them with great and wonderful promises, as candidate Obama did his various constituencies; but God's promises are real, resulting in the performance of His Word. Of the many promises of the man Obama, it may be said, that he has been as the peacock, all in its

²¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 21:1. I did not see this in Calvin's Commentary, however.

glorious and changeable colors; which lovely colors changed by the light as he moved.²² Trapp continues: *Great men's words, said one, are like dead men's shoes: he may go barefoot that waits for them. Not so good men; they will stand to their oath, though it tend to their loss. [Psalms 15:4] They are children that will not lie. [Isaiah 63:8] Their Father is a God that cannot lie. [Titus 1:2] He is the God of Amen, as Isaiah called him; [Isaiah 65:16] and "all his promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus," [2Corinthians 1:20] "the faithful and true witness". [Revelation 3:14] Judah would not break promise with the harlot, lest he should be shamed. [Genesis 38:23].²³*

Arthur Pink: *Isaac was the child of promise. The Lord took great interest in the birth of this boy. More was said about him before his birth than about any other, excepting only Abraham's greater Son.*²⁴

And so conceives and so gives birth Sarah to Abraham a son in his many years to a set time which promised him, Elohim.

Genesis
21:2

Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age by a set time which Elohim had promised him.

Sarah conceived and then gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the time which God had foreordained.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so conceives and so gives birth Sarah to Abraham a son in his many years to a set time which promised him, Elohim.
Targum of Onkelos	And she conceived, and Sarah bare to Abraham a son, who was like to himself in his age, at the time of which the <u>Lord</u> had spoken to him.
Latin Vulgate	And she conceived and bore a son in her old age, at the time that God had foretold her.
Peshitta (Syriac)	For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she conceived and bore to Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time according as the Lord spoke to him.

Significant differences: No real differences except *Lord* in the targum instead of *God (Elohim)*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Easy English	Although Abraham was very old, Sarah had a son exactly at the time God had said. So Sarah became *pregnant. And she had a baby son for Abraham. This son was born at the exact time that God had promised such a long time before.
Easy-to-Read Version	Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. All these things happened exactly like God promised.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...and she became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham when he was old. The boy was born at the time God had said he would be born.
<i>The Message</i>	Sarah became pregnant and gave Abraham a son in his old age, and at the very time God had set.

²² From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jtc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21>; accessed September 7, 2014, and heavily edited.

²³ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jtc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21>; accessed September 7, 2014, slightly edited.

²⁴ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

New Berkeley Version	Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the season which God had mentioned to him.
New Life Bible	Sarah was able to have a child and she gave birth to a son when Abraham was very old. He was born at the time the Lord said it would happen.
New Living Translation	She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Sarah conceived and begat to Abraham a son in his old-age, as God spoke to him at that meeting.
Beck's American Translation	Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son when he was old, at the time God mentioned.
International Standard V	Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the very time that God had told him.
NIRV	Sarah became pregnant. She had a son by Abraham when he was old. He was born at the exact time God had promised him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Sarah became with child, and gave Abraham a son when he was old, at the time named by God.
Bullinger Bible	For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the <i>exact time</i> of which – God [<i>the Creator</i>] had spoken to him.
Conservapedia	For Sarah fell pregnant, and bore to Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him.
The Expanded Bible	Sarah became pregnant [conceived] and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. Everything happened at the time God had said it would.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and Sarah conceiving, gave birth to a son to Abraham in his old age, a way that GOD had promised him.
New Advent Bible	And she conceived and bore a son in her old age, at the time that God had foretold her.
NET Bible®	So Sarah became pregnant [Or "she conceived."] and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the appointed time that God had told him.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	...and Sarah conceives and births Abraham a son in his old age at the season Elohim worded to him:...
Kaplan Translation	Sarah became pregnant, and she gave birth to Abraham's son in his old age. It was at the exact time that God had promised it to him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And pregnant is Sarah and is bearing for Abraham a son for his old age, at the appointed time of which the Elohim had spoken to him.
Kretzmann's Commentary	For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him. God's promise was literally fulfilled, for at just the time that He had named at His last visit the son of promise was born, a stranger in truth, for Abraham was still sojourning in the land of the Philistines. The birth of Isaac was an act of faith on the part of Sarah, who with all her human infirmities was a true child of the Lord, Hebrews 11:11.

Syndein	For Sarah kept on being pregnant, and kept on bearing Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which 'Elohim/Godhead had decreed/'communicated categorically' {dabar}.
World English Bible	Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.
Young's Updated LT	And Sarah conceives, and bears a son to Abraham, to his old age, at the appointed time that God has spoken of with him.

The gist of this verse: Sarah conceived and then bore a son to Abraham, at the time that God had promised them.

Genesis 21:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
Owen lacks the conjunction here in the Hebrew, but has it in the English. However, the Hebrew Old Testament here has the wâw consecutive. The same is true of the Hebrew Bible in sword.			
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247

Translation: Sarah conceived...

The proper name *Sarah* actually occurs below in the Hebrew. However, it makes better sense in the English to put it up front.

The conception was helped along by God, in ways we do not understand. Both Sarah and Abraham's reproductive organs were revitalized, as God had direct contact and sorted everything out. This made it possible for Sarah to conceive.

A set of wâw consecutive followed by imperfect verbs indicates the order in which these things take place. Quite obviously, Sarah conceived first and then she gives birth after.

Genesis 21:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 21:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾAb̄erâhâm (אֲבִרָאָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
z ^e qûnîym (זָקֵן) [pronounced zeh-koo-NEEM]	old age, extreme old age	masculine plural noun (or adjective); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2208 BDB #279

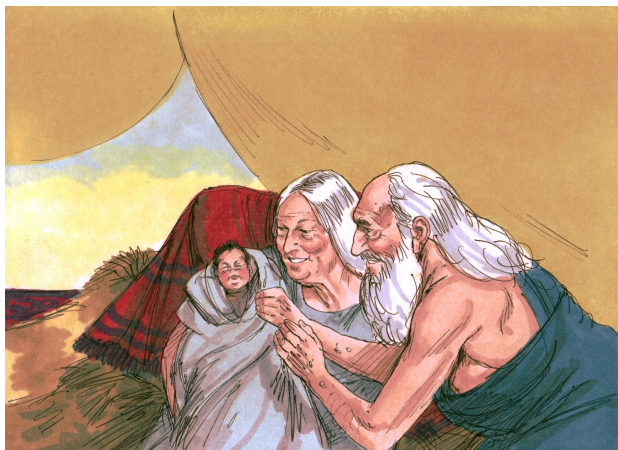
This word does not occur but 4 times in Genesis; and being in the plural interests me. Perhaps the idea is a piling up of many years.

Translation: ...and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age...

So there is no confusion, this is a son born to Abraham and Sarah, despite their advanced age.

Sarah gives birth to Isaac (graphic) from **Bible Lessons for Kids**; accessed September 9, 2014.

One aspect of the Old Testament which I find fascinating is there is no miracle or confusion about the birth of a child; a



child is first conceived and then it is born.

There is a two-step process recognized by the writers of Scripture from the beginning. This goes all the way back to Genesis 4:1–2. This verse indicates that this birth is the one that God had promised. Abraham has already sired one child, whom God has rejected as heir of Abraham and the promises He made to Abraham, and Abraham will have other children also. However, this is **the** child, the line of Jesus Christ, the line of the Jewish race.

Pink: *We see...that God is in no hurry in the working out of His plans. Man may fret and fume, hurry and bustle, but Jehovah has all eternity at His disposal and works leisurely and with deliberation.*

There is a history here which Arthur Pink aptly recalls: *Some twenty-five years had now passed since Abram had left Ur of the Chaldees, and during these years he had received promise from the Lord that He would make of him a great nation (Gen. 12:2) and that He would make his seed as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16). But years went by and Abram remained childless: the promised seed had not been given and Abram was exercised and perplexed. "And Abram said, Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezar of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me You have given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir" (Gen. 15:2, 3). To these questions the Lord returned answer, "This will not be your heir; but he that will come forth*

out of your own bowels will be your heir" (Gen. 15:4). Another interval passed and yet no child appeared, and "Sarai said unto Abram, Behold, now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing: I pray you, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai, and he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived" (Gen. 16:2, 4). A further thirteen years dragged their weary course and "God said unto Abraham, as for Sarai your wife, you will not call her name Sarai, but Sarah will her name be. And I will bless her, and give you a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations: Kings of people will be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Will a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? And will Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before You! And God said, Sarah your wife will bear you a son indeed; and you will call his name Isaac" (Gen. 17:15-19). Shortly after this the Lord, accompanied by two angels, appeared unto His servant in the plains of Mamre and, "they said unto him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And He said, I will certainly return unto you according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah your wife will have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old will I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Will I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto you, according to the time of life, and Sarah will have a son" (Gen. 18:9-14).²⁵

Pink continues: *Many are the important truths illustrated in the above Scriptures, and many are the profitable lessons to be learned therefrom. We name a few of them without attempting to enlarge. We see from the above that God is in no hurry in the working out of His plans. Man may fret and fume, hurry and bustle, but Jehovah has all eternity at His disposal and works leisurely and with deliberation. Well for us to mark this attentively- "he that believes will not make haste" (Isa. 28:16). Again, we note here God's Almightyness. Nothing can hinder or thwart the outworking of His purpose. Abraham may be old, Sarah may be barren, but such trifles present no difficulty to Him who is infinite in power. Abraham may seek to obtain an heir through Hagar, but Jehovah's plan cannot be foiled: Sarah's son will be his heir, not Ishmael. Behold, too, the faithfulness of God. The Lord had said Sarah will have a son, and what He promised He performed. His promise may seem unreasonable and impossible to the carnal mind, but His word is sure. Learn, also, how faith is tried and tested. This is in order to display its genuineness. A faith that is incapable of enduring trial is no faith at all. A hard thing was promised to Abraham but, "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" (Rom. 4:19, 20). Finally, note that God has a set time for the accomplishing of His will and the fulfilling of His word. Nothing is left to chance. Nothing is contingent on the creature. Everything is definitely fixed beforehand by God. "For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him" (Gen. 21:2). Mark how this is emphasized by repetition- "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah will bear unto you at this set time in the next year" (Gen. 17:21); "At the time appointed I will return unto you, according to the time of life, and Sarah will have a son" (Gen. 18:14). So also we read in another connection, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak" (Habak. 2:3). Compare Galatians 4:4.²⁶*

Genesis 21:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

²⁵ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014 (updated).

²⁶ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014 (updated).

Genesis 21:2c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
môw'êd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced moh- GADE]	<i>a specific (set, pre-determined, appointed) time; a point in time; a sacred season, a set feast; an appointed meeting; an appointed place [where people meet; of an assembly]; a specific sign or signal; an assembly</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4150 BDB #417
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...by a set time which Elohim had promised him.

Back in Genesis 18, God got very specific with Abraham and told him exactly when a child would be born to him. It would be about a year later. We had the individual Member of the Trinity in v. 1; and here, God is seen as the Trinity. Jesus Christ, the revealed member of the Trinity was involved in the process of making it possible for Sarah and Abraham to have a child. However, the promise had come, essentially from the entire Trinity (as God the Father would have planned this in eternity past).

At the time that God made His final promise to Abraham and Sarah, Sarah is 89 years old, and she will give birth at age 90. This occurs here at God's set time. God has perfect timing which, to us who are impatient, often seems to be too far off in the future. For 25 years, God has been speaking to Abraham and making a series of promises to him, but this appears to be the first promise upon which God actually acted. The birth of Isaac is the basis for every other promise that God makes to Abraham. For perhaps 30 years, God has been making promises to Abraham, but none of these promises can come to pass without Isaac being born. Everything else depends upon His birth. And yet, all of this time, Abraham was strong in faith. **And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; he did not hesitate at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised He is also able to perform (Romans 4:19–21; VW).** My point is, Abraham did not see this promise fulfilled for 25 years, and then the most fundamental of all the promises is fulfilled. He did not see any of these promises begin to be fulfilled until he was 100 years old, about 25 years after he first stepped out in faith (comparing Genesis 12:4 with Genesis 21:5). Or, see the **Abrahamic Timeline (HTML) (PDF)**. Yet Abraham remained strong in faith all of this time (he certainly slipped up a few time; Genesis 20 is an examples).

God has kept Abraham and his wife alive during some incredible historical events, but that simply kept them alive long enough to have the most fundamental promise of God fulfilled. All of the promises of inheritance in the world would have meant little to a childless Abraham and Sarah. In fact, all of God's promises to Abraham would have meant nothing at all, apart from the birth of Isaac.

Is there any chance you see the parallel to the birth of Jesus at this point? All of God's promises to us mean absolutely nothing apart from the birth of Jesus Christ. We have no inheritance unless Jesus has come to this earth. What's more is, none of these promises made by God to us has any foundation unless Jesus dies for our sins. Therefore, almost immediately after Isaac's birth—that is, in terms of this recorded narrative—God will ask Abraham to offer up his own son as a sacrifice.

Genesis 21:2 Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age by a set time which Elohim had promised him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:2 Sarah conceived and then gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the time which God had foreordained. (Kukis paraphrase)

You will note that the Preincarnate Form of our Lord does not seem to appear to Abraham or to Sarah. Our first two verses read: *And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, just as He had said [He would]; consequently, Y^ehowah did for Sarah just as He had promised [her]. Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age by a set time which Elohim had promised him.* If there is a face to face meeting, nothing is said about that. I don't believe that God did appear to Abraham, and there is a reason for this. Isaac is representative of the Christ child; therefore, it would confuse the issue for the 2nd Person of the Trinity to be there, physically manifested, at the birth of Isaac, who represents our Lord's birth into this world. God simply keeps the birth of Isaac as a real event, but one which represents the birth of our Lord.

It is also worth noting that the writer of this passage refers to the Word of God 3 times in the first two verses:

Genesis 21:1–2 Y^ehowah visited Sarah **as He had promised**. And Y^ehowah did to Sarah **as He had spoken**. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, **at the set time of which God had spoken to him**.

What God speaks and what God promises is His Word. Even before there was a Bible, there was the concept of God speaking to man, and conveying very specific thoughts. For 25 years, God has been making promises to Abraham; and now, the first of these promises is being brought to pass. The most fundamental promise of all, of those made to Abraham, is being brought to pass. Therefore, Genesis 21:1–2 emphasizes that these are the *words of God and God fulfills His Word*.

Now go back and re-read those two verses and notice that Sarah is named 3x; Abraham is only named once. Against, the emphasis is upon the woman, the seed of the woman; that is key to the virgin birth of our Lord. This birth is more important than any other, because Isaac's birth will symbolize our Lord's birth in so many ways.

We see a similar emphasis in Heb 11:11–12 *By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful Who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.* (ESV, capitalized) Do you see how the birth and conception is closely associated with Sarah, but the fulfillment of the promises are associated with Abraham?

Pink: It has been noticed by others that in Abraham we have a striking illustration of election, while in Isaac we get, typically, the precious truth of sonship. Abraham was the one chosen and called by God; Isaac was the one promised and born of God's power. The historical order of Genesis is thus the doctrinal order of the New Testament. Thus we read in Ephesians 1:4, 5, "According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before

Him: in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Isaac brings before us in type regeneration.²⁷

V. 2 reads: Sarah conceived and then gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the time which God had foreordained. This birth is a miracle. In order for Abraham to father the child and for Sarah's body to be able to receive his seed and produce a child, God had to work miracles in both of them. God had to make them both alive again. Abraham's body was dead sexually; Sarah's body was dead reproductively. They were at a point in life when, restoration to a former state would be impossible. This is a consistent theme throughout Scripture, that we are dead, and that God must give us life. We are dead, and there is no human solution. Jesus Christ is our only solution.

Pink: As it was with Isaac so it is with every Christian. Before any of us could be born again God had to work a miracle. Make no mistake on this point; regeneration is the direct result of the supernatural operation of God. This needs to be stressed today, for regeneration has been so misrepresented by modern evangelists that to the popular mind the "new birth" signifies nothing more than a process of reformation. But the new birth is no mere turning over of a new leaf and the endeavor to live a better life. The new birth is very much more than going forward in a religious meeting and taking the preacher's hand; very much more than signing a card and "joining the church." The new birth is an act of God's creative power, the impartation of spiritual life, the communication to us of the Divine nature itself. Arthur Pink continues: Abraham and his wife- each of them nearly a hundred years old- desiring a son- what could they do? Nothing! absolutely nothing. God had to come in and work a miracle. And thus nature had nothing to glory in. So it is with us. The natural man is not only a sinner, a lost sinner, but he is a helpless sinner impotent, unable to do anything of himself. If help comes it must come from outside of himself. He is, like Abraham and Sarah, shut up to God.²⁸

These grand themes of Scripture—written over a period of 2 millennia—occur and reoccur throughout. Man is dead; man is in a hopeless state. And yet, God is able to bring life out of death; God is able to take that which is dead, and He makes it alive. But there is more to this than simply a superiority over nature; God redeems us, as well as makes us alive. God forgives us *when* He regenerates us. God does not simply give us new life, but He restores us to Himself, as His children, as His prodigal sons.

Genesis 21:1–2 And Jehovah visited Sarah, just as He said He would. Consequently, Jehovah made it possible for Sarah to become pregnant, as He had promised her. Sarah conceived and then gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the time which God had foreordained.

J. Vernon McGee: There are some very remarkable truths here that we need to lay hold of. First of all, the birth of Isaac was a miraculous birth. It was contrary to nature. In the fourth chapter of Romans, Paul writes that Abraham "... considered not his own body now dead . . . neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4:19) . Out of death God brings forth life: this is a miraculous birth. We need to call attention to the fact that God did not flash the supernatural birth of Christ on the world as being something new. He began to prepare men for it, and therefore way back here at the birth of Isaac we have a miraculous birth. McGee continues: We also find here that God had to deal with both Sarah and Abraham. They had to recognize that they could do nothing, that it would be impossible for them to have a child. Abraham is 100 years old; Sarah is 90 years old. In other words, the birth of Isaac must be a birth that they really have nothing to do with.²⁹

²⁷ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014 (updated).

²⁸ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

²⁹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014.

And so calls Abraham a name of his son, the one being born to him, who has born to him, Sarah, Isaac.

Genesis
21:3

Abraham called the name of his son, the one being born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.

Abraham called the name of his son, Isaac (the boy whom Sarah bore to him).

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so calls Abraham a name of his son, the one being born to him, who has born to him, Sarah, Isaac.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham called the name of his son whom Sarah had borne him Izhak.
Latin Vulgate	And Abraham called the name of his son, whom Sara bore him, Isaac.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him — whom Sarah bore to him — Isaac.
Significant differences:	None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abraham named his son Isaac,...
Easy English	Abraham called his new son Isaac. Isaac had been born to Sarah for Abraham.
Easy-to-Read Version	Sarah gave birth to a son, and Abraham named him Isaac [Isaac This name means "he laughs" or "he is happy."].
New Living Translation	And Abraham named their son Isaac.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And AbraHam named the son that was born to him through SarAh, IsaAc (Laughter).
Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham called the name of his son begotten to him, that Sarah begot to him, Isaac (laughed).
International Standard V	Abraham named his son who was born to him Isaac-the very one whom Sarah bore for him!
God's Word™	Abraham named his newborn son Isaac.
New American Bible	Abraham gave the name Isaac to this son of his whom Sarah bore him. Mt 1:2; Lk 3:34.
New Simplified Bible	Abraham gave the name Isaac (he laughs) to the son Sarah bore him.
Revised English Bible	The son whom Sarah bore to him Abraham named Isaac,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham gave to his son, to whom Sarah had given birth, the name Isaac.
Conservapedia	Abraham named his son that was born to him from Sarah, Isaac [Or literally, "He shall laugh."].
The Expanded Bible	Abraham named his son Isaac, the son Sarah gave birth to.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Abraham accordingly gave the son born to him, by Sarah, the name of Isaac;...
HCSB	Abraham named his son who was born to him--the one Sarah bore to him--Isaac.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Abraham gavehis newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac.
NET Bible®	Abraham named his son — whom Sarah bore to him — Isaac [Heb "the one born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac." The two modifying clauses, the first

introduced with an article and the second with the relative pronoun, are placed in the middle of the sentence, before the name Isaac is stated. They are meant to underscore that this was indeed an actual birth to Abraham and Sarah in fulfillment of the promise.].

NIV – UK

Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible
Kaplan Translation

Avraham called his son, born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Yitz'chak. Abraham gave the name Isaac [Yitzchak in Hebrew. See Genesis 17:19.] to the son he had, to whom Sarah had just given birth.

exeGeses companion Bible

...and Abraham calls the name of the son he births, whom Sarah births to him, Yischaq:...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible
Concordant Literal Version

Abraham named his son whom Sarah bore to him Isaac [laughter]. And Abraham is calling the name of his son who is born to him, whom Sarah bears for him, Isaac.

English Standard Version

Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. The emphasis is again upon the fact that this was the son of promise, that he was the son of Abraham, not by a servant, but by Sarah, his wife. He complied with God's command in giving his son the name Isaac (he that laughs), Genesis 17:19. As the joyous laughter of Abraham had been caused by the great contrast between the idea and the reality, so the birth was a miracle of God's mercy, whence the son should always be an object of joyful and grateful contemplation.

Modern KJV

And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him (whom Sarah bore to him) Isaac.

Syndein

And Abraham kept on calling the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac {Yitschaq - name means 'laughter'}.

Young's Updated LT

And Abraham calls the name of his son who is born to him, whom Sarah has born to him—Isaac.

The gist of this verse:

Abraham named his newly-born son Isaac.

Genesis 21:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Genesis 21:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Abraham called the name of his son,...

You will recall that God already told Abraham what to name his son. This sentence has an unusual construction, so that what Abraham names his son is found at the end of this sentence, after twice it is said to be born to Abraham.

Genesis 21:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to be born; in the participle, being born, receiving birth</i>	Niphal participle with the definite article	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i>]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: ...the one being born to him, whom Sarah bore to him,...

These are parenthetical phrases, which emphasize and reemphasize the real birth of a son to Abraham and Sarah. We would have expected, given what has come before, for phrasing like this to be left out. The whole idea is, you should not be able to come away from this chapter and think anything other than, Abraham impregnated Sarah, and this is the child she bore.

Genesis 21:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Yis ^e châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yihse</i> - KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing;</i> transliterated <i>Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

This is also spelled Yits^echâq (יִצְחַק) [pronounced *yihyse*-KHAWK]. When you hear about manuscript discrepancies in the Old Testament, many of them simply involve alternate spellings.

Translation: ...Isaac.

Although this is not a wildly composed sentence, it is unusual, particularly with all of the repetition. What is found in the subordinate clause is already covered in v. 2. The writer is apparently making a big deal of this.

Isaac would continue the line of Abraham down through Jacob and then to Moses and Joshua³⁰, through David, and eventually to our Lord's humanity.

Genesis 21:3 **Abraham called the name of his son, the one being born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:3 **Abraham called the name of his son, Isaac (the boy whom Sarah bore to him).** (Kukis paraphrase)

God had told Abraham to name his son Isaac (Genesis 17:19). He was given this name for two reasons. When God told Abraham that he would soon have a son, he fell on his face and *laughed*. The word *laughed* is tsâchaq (צַחַק) [pronounced *tsaw-KHAHKH*], which means *to laugh; to mock; to play*. Strong's #6711 BDB #850. God, knowing all things at once, knew that Sarah would also laugh at the prospect of having a child (Genesis 18:9–12). Isaac's name is derived from this verb *to laugh*.

Gill: *[Abraham] remembers the order [to name his son Isaac], and is obedient to it; the reason of which name, which signifies laughter, was on account of his laughing for joy at the promise made him, as well as there might be afterwards a further reason for it, from Sarah's laughing through distrust; and it might presignify the joy and laughter that would be expressed by others at his birth.*³¹

Barnes: *This is no longer the laugh of delight mingled with doubt, but that of wonder and joy at the power of the Lord overcoming the impotence of the aged mother.*³²

Thomas Constable: *Isaac's name ("laughter") was appropriate for two reasons. 1. Isaac would be a source of joy to his parents as the fulfillment of God's promised seed. 2. Both Abraham and Sarah had laughed in amazement and unbelief respectively when told that God had chosen to bless them by giving them a son so late in life (Genesis 17:17; Genesis 18:12).*³³

B. H. Carroll: *[A]ccording to Paul, Isaac comes into the world the child of promise, and by a miraculous birth. In this respect he is the type of all Christians who are regenerated, born of supernatural power.*³⁴

³⁰ Interestingly enough, neither Moses nor Joshua are in the line of Christ. Moses and Aaron are Levites (Exodus 2:1–2, 10–11). Joshua was in the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8, 16). The line of Christ apparently goes through Rahab the prostitute and her husband, Salmon (Joshua 6:17, 23 Matthew 1:5)

³¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:3.

³² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:3.

³³ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

³⁴ *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 25:19–28:9

And so circumcises Abraham Isaac, his son—a son of eight days—as which had commanded him Elohim.

Genesis
21:4

And Abraham circumcised Isaac, [his] son, [at] eight days, just as Elohim had commanded him.

And Abraham circumcised Isaac, his son, when he was 8 days old, just as God had commanded him to do.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so circumcises Abraham Isaac, his son—a son of eight days—as which had commanded him Elohim.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham circumcised Izhak his son, when the son of eight days, as the Lord had commanded him.
Latin Vulgate	And he circumcised him the eighth day, as God had commanded him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day, as God commanded him.
Significant differences:	The Greek and Syriac leave out the word <i>son</i> (found twice in the Hebrew). The Syriac only has this word once (which is a legitimate way to translate it).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	...and when the boy was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, just as the LORD had commanded.
Easy English	When Isaac was 8 days old, Abraham *circumcised him. It was what God had ordered Abraham to do.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham circumcised [circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.] Isaac when Isaac was eight days old like God had commanded.
New Berkeley Version	...and, in agreement with Gods command, Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was 8 days old,...
New Life Bible	Then Abraham did the religious act of the Jews on Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had told him to do.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then on the eighth day, AbraHam circumcised IsaAc, just as God had instructed him.
International Standard V	On the eighth day after his son Isaac had been born [Lit. Isaac was a son of eight days when], Abraham circumcised him, just as God had commanded him.
New American Bible	When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded. Gn 17:10-14; Acts 7:8.
Revised English Bible	...and when Isaac was eight days old Abraham circumcised him, as decreed by God.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham made him undergo circumcision, as God had said to him.
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Conservapedia Abraham had Isaac circumcised when he was eight days old, as God had instructed him to do.

The Expanded Bible He circumcised [17:10] Isaac when he was eight days old as God had commanded. NET Bible® When his son Isaac was eight days old [Heb "Isaac his son, the son of eight days." The name "Isaac" is repeated in the translation for clarity.], Abraham circumcised him just as God had commanded him to do [Just as God had commanded him to do. With the birth of the promised child, Abraham obeyed the Lord by both naming (Gen 17:19) and circumcising Isaac (17:12).].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible ...and Abraham circumcises his son Yischaq
- a son of eight days,
as Elohim misvahed him:...

Kaplan Translation When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version And circumcising is Abraham Isaac, his son, at eight days of age as the Elohim had instructed him.

Syndein And Abraham kept on circumcising his son - Isaac being eight days old - as 'Elohiym/Godhead intensively commanded {tsavah}.

Young's Updated LT And Abraham circumcises Isaac his son, being a son of eight days, as God has commanded him.

The gist of this verse: Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was 8 days old.

Genesis 21:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwl (לומ) [pronounced mool]	<i>to circumcise; to cut off</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4135 BDB #557
'Ab'râhâm (אברהם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yis'châq (ישׂחק) [pronounced yih ^s -KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *And Abraham circumcised Isaac,...*

It's interesting that the vocabulary seems simpler, so far in this chapter, and more repetitive than I have seen before.

As a quick lesson in Hebrew, the reason that we know Abraham is circumcising Isaac is, before the proper noun Isaac, there is the untranslated sign of the direct object.

Circumcision was to be the sign between God and His people. Circumcision set them apart from the rest of the human race. Every circumcised Jew should look and see that this is a sign that God had promised Abraham that at 100 he would sire a son who would be the line of the Messiah and through this son, Abraham would be the father of the Jewish race.

Genesis 21:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
sh ^e mônâh (שִׁמּוֹנָה) [pronounced <i>sh^emoh-NAW</i>]	<i>eight</i>	feminine singular numeral	Strong's #8083 BDB #1032
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced <i>yaw-MEEM</i>]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: *...[his] son, [at] eight days,...*

This is exactly what God had commanded; all males were to be circumcised. You will recall that, in a previous chapter, God spoke of Abraham obeying Him and of fulfilling the righteousness required of him. This is simply his obedience to God's Word.

The spiritual significance of 8 days is, God restored the earth in 6 days and rested on the 7th, because everything had been provided for Adam. However, Adam sinned, and this began a whole new series of actions by God in order to bring righteousness back to this earth. This is represented by the 8th day and the circumcision of Isaac, which is a reference to spiritual rebirth.

Genesis 21:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, just as; according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
The kaph preposition can be used of time, and translated <i>about, at, as, when, at the time of</i> . ³⁵			
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

³⁵ As per *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 454.

Genesis 21:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Together, ka'ăsher (כַּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i>] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this for example.			
tsâvâh (צָוָה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-VAW</i>]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...just as Elohim had commanded him.

This final phrase makes it clear that Abraham is obeying what God told him to do.

We also have the word combination kaph 'ăsher for the third time. This signifies a couple of things: a limited vocabulary, perhaps, on the side of the human author; but it also signifies that this is a part of God's plan from the divine side. Together, these words mean *just as*; and we are looking at what has occurred, *just as God had promised* and Abraham doing *just as God had commanded*.

Genesis 21:4 **And Abraham circumcised Isaac, [his] son, [at] eight days, just as Elohim had commanded him.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:4 **And Abraham circumcised Isaac, his son, when he was 8 days old, just as God had commanded him to do.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Circumcision was a sign between God and Jewish believers, as was discussed earlier. It was an external sign of an internal change in a person (exercising faith in the Revealed Member of the Trinity resulting in the rebirth). Furthermore, this external change was not generally observed by others. When you meet some male, you do not know whether or not he is circumcised just as, when you meet any person, you do not know whether or not they have believed in Jesus Christ. However, this was a sign of an acknowledgment of a fulfilled promise (fulfilled in this chapter), the first of many promises which God would fulfill to Abraham.

We have already studied the **Doctrine of Circumcision** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). More importantly, there is the relationship between **Circumcision and Regeneration** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Circumcision takes that which is dead and gives it new life—that is the reason for circumcision in the first place. Man is born dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1 Colossians 2:13), but God gives him new life (John 3:1–12 Colossians 2:13–14), as circumcision represents (Deut. 30:6 Ezekiel 11:19–20 Romans 2:28–29a).

The Jews were thereafter associated with circumcision—not because circumcision was necessary in order for a Jew to be saved—but because circumcision is representative of the second birth or being born again, something which Jesus kept repeating to Nicodemus in John 3. **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that outwardly in flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart** (Romans 2:28-29a). Several times in the Old Testament, God speaks of the circumcision of the heart. This is because the key to the relationship of the Jew to God was not this external sign of circumcision, but the internal sign of the circumcision of the heart. Or, to put it in another way, **Abraham believed Y^ehowah and this was credited to him as**

righteousness (Genesis 15:6). Righteousness is achieved through faith in Y^ehowah, the Revealed Lord; not through circumcision. **Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous--even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith** (Romans 4:11; NLT).

And Abraham a son of a hundred of a year in a being born to him Isaac, his son. Genesis 21:5 **Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.**

Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And Abraham a son of a hundred of a year in a being born to him Isaac, his son.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham was the son of an hundred years when Izhak his son was born to him.
Latin Vulgate	When he was a hundred years old: for at this age of his father, was Isaac born.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him.
Significant differences:	The Latin leaves out the two references to <i>son</i> in the Hebrew. The Syriac and Greek leave out the first reference (which is legitimate).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born,...
Easy English	Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born for him.
New Berkeley Version	...Abraham himself being 100 at his son Isaac's birth.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham, a son of a hundred years, begot his son Isaac.
Beck's American Translation	Abraham was 100 when his son Isaac was born.
International Standard V	Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
God's Word™	Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Now Abraham was a hundred years old when the birth of Isaac took place.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And Abraham was then one hundred years old when Isaac was born to him.
NET Bible®	(Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.) The parenthetical disjunctive clause underscores how miraculous this birth was. Abraham was 100 years old. The fact that the genealogies give the ages of the fathers when their first son is born shows that this was considered a major milestone in one's life (G. J. Wenham, Genesis [WBC], 2:80).

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Avraham was one hundred years old when his son Yitz'chak [laughter] was born to him.
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exeGesés companion Bible ...and Abraham is a son of a hundred years
when he births his son Yischaq.
Kaplan Translation Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated *Emphasized Bible* Now Abraham was a hundred years old, when Isaac his son was born to him.
Green's Literal Translation And Abraham was a son of a hundred years when his son Isaac was born to him.
World English Bible Abraham was one hundred years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.
Young's Updated LT And Abraham is a son of a hundred years in Isaac his son being born to him.

The gist of this verse: Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

Genesis 21:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
mê'âh (מֵאָה) [pronounced <i>may-AW</i>]	<i>one hundred, a hundred, hundred</i>	feminine singular numeral construct	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-NAW</i>]	<i>year</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040

Translation: Abraham was 100 years old...

This chapter is quite emphatic; the writer is making it clear that Abraham is very old at this time (he will live to be 175 years old); but there is no way to misunderstand that Abraham is far past the age when he is normally able to sire a child.

We find this commemorated in Rom. 4:19 He [Abraham] did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. (ESV) *Dead* here refers to being sexually dead. Abraham knew that he was sexually dead when he sired a son by means of Sarah. This is in an homage to Abraham's faith. Rom. 4:16–17 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his [Abraham's] offspring--not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"--in the presence of the God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. (ESV, capitalized)

Genesis 21:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
When verbs in the infinitive construct are preceded by the bêyth preposition, b ^e acts as a temporal conjunction; that is, <i>in their being created</i> = <i>when they were created</i> (Genesis 2:4); <i>in their being in the field</i> = <i>when they were in the field</i> (Genesis 4:8). ³⁶			
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to be born; in the participle, being born, receiving birth</i>	Niphal infinitive construct	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yis ^e châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced yihs ^e -KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...when his son, Isaac, was born to him.

We have the word *to be born* again for about the 4th time, along with the phrase *Isaac, his son*, just in case we did not know who this Isaac fellow was.

Genesis 21:5 [Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:5 [Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.](#) (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham and his wife were well past the age of having sex; and yet, God made it possible, after Abraham was circumcised, for him to be capable of having sex and for his wife to be capable of conceiving a child. Where there had been death, God made life. God took that which was dead and regenerated it; He gave it life. Circumcision represented the removal of the old, dead skin and a regeneration of the phallus, representing a regeneration of the life. The idea is to represent the regeneration of the soul which occurs when one believes in the Revealed God (Jesus Christ).

Sarah had been unable to conceive for all of her marriage to Abraham (Genesis 11:30), except at this time. This made the birth of Isaac unique. There will not be another birth like his throughout all of Scripture.

The time frame given here is in accordance with all that is in the historical record.

³⁶ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

And so says Sarah, “Laughter makes to me Elohim, any of the one hearing will laugh to me.”

Genesis
21:6

And Sarah said, “Elohim made laughter to me; everyone hearing [this] will laugh with me.”

And Sarah said, “God has made this laughter with regards to me; everyone who hears this will laugh with me.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Sarah, “Laughter makes to me Elohim, any of the one hearing will laugh to me.”
Targum of Onkelos	And Sarah said, The Lord hath done <u>wondrously</u> for me; all who hear will <u>wonder</u> at me.
Latin Vulgate	And Sara said: God hath made a laughter for me: whosoever shall hear of it will laugh with me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Sarah said, God has made me to rejoice today exceedingly; everyone that hears the news will rejoice with me.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Sarah said, The Lord has made laughter for me, for whoever shall hear shall rejoice with me.

Significant differences: The targum has *wondrously* rather than *laughter*. *Rejoice* (Syriac, Greek) might be a reasonable substitute for *laughter*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	...and Sarah said, "God has made me laugh. Now everyone will laugh with me. And Sarah said, "God has made me happy. Every person who hears about this will be happy with me.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Sarah said, "God has brought me joy and laughter. Everyone who hears about it will laugh with me."
<i>The Message</i>	Sarah said, God has blessed me with laughter and all who get the news will laugh with me!
New Living Translation	And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me." The name Isaac means "he laughs."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And SarAh said, 'Jehovah has created laughter for me, because, everyone who hears [about this] will rejoice with me.'
Beck's American Translation	"God has made me laugh," Sarah said. "And everybody who hears about this will laugh about me.
International Standard V	Now Sarah had said, "God has caused me to laugh [The Heb. name Isaac means <i>laughter</i>], and all who hear about it [The Heb. lacks <i>about it</i>] will laugh with me."
New American Bible	Sarah then said, "God has given me cause to laugh,* and all who hear of it will laugh with me. Gn 17:17.
New Jerusalem Bible	Sarah said: God has given me cause to laugh! All who hear about this will laugh with me!
New Simplified Bible	Sarah said: »God brought me laughter. Everyone who hears about this will laugh on account of me.«
Revised English Bible	Sarah said, 'God has given me good reason to laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Sarah said, God has given me cause for laughing, and everyone who has news of it will be laughing with me.
Conservapedia	Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me, and everyone who hears about this will laugh along with me." The Hebrew word for "laugh" and "laughter" recalls exactly the name of Isaac.
The Expanded Bible	And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh [^c the name Isaac is related to a Hebrew word meaning "laugh"]. Everyone who hears about this will laugh ·with [or at] me.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Sarah then said, "God has made a delight for me; For He has heard my laugh to Him, All who hear will laugh with me;"...
NET Bible®	Sarah said, "God has made me laugh [Heb "Laughter God has made for me."]. Everyone who hears about this [The words "about this" are supplied in the translation for clarification.] will laugh [Sarah's words play on the name "Isaac" in a final triumphant manner. God prepared "laughter" (ts ^e chôq (צחק) [pronounced <i>tsekhk-OAK</i>]) for her, and everyone who hears about this "will laugh" (tsâchaq (צחק) [pronounced <i>tsaw-KHAHKH</i>]) with her. The laughter now signals great joy and fulfillment, not unbelief (cf. Gen 18:12-15).] with me."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Sarah said, "God has given me good reason to laugh; now everyone who hears about it will laugh with me."
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with [for] me."
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	And Sarah said, "God has made joy for me; whoever hears will rejoice over me." Sarah said, 'God has given me laughter. All who hear about it will laugh [<i>Yitzchak</i> in Hebrew, a play on Yitzchak. It means 'to be happy for me' (Rashi).] for me.'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Sarah, "Laughter the Elohim makes for me. Everyone hearing is laughing for me.
English Standard Version	And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me."
Heritage Bible	And Sarah said, God has made me laugh so that all who hear attentively will laugh with me.
Syndein	And Sarah kept on saying, 'Elohiym/Godhead has manufactured {'asah} laughter {in me}, so that all who hear will 'Isaac'/laugh {tsachaq}.
World English Bible	Sarah said, "God has made me laugh. Everyone who hears will laugh with me."
Young's Updated LT	And Sarah says, "God has made laughter for me; every one who is hearing laughs for me."

The gist of this verse: Sarah gives her approval to the name of Isaac, which means *laughter*. God made Sarah *laugh* (Isaac), and all who hear about this will laugh with her.

Genesis 21:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Sârâh (שרה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
ts ^e chôq (צחק) [pronounced tsehk-OAK]	<i>laughter, sport, laughingstock</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6712 BDB #850
'âsâh (עשה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: And Sarah said, “Elohim made laughter to me;...

Sarah now was laughing out of joy; before it was out of skepticism and disbelief. But growing inside of her was the baby Isaac (*Isaac* means *laughter*); so now she is repeating the play on words that is in the name of her son (the name that God gave him).

God chose the name, but she is warming up to it.

Genesis 21:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>the hearer, the listener; the one being attentive to; to one taking cognizance of; hearing, listening; being attentive</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
tsâchaq (צחק) [pronounced tsaw-KHAKH]	<i>to laugh; to mock; to play</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6711 BDB #850

Genesis 21:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
When followed by the lâmed preposition, this means <i>with [someone]</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto*; it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to*; in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition *eis* (εἰς), meaning *into*, as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Genesis 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Genesis 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by*, which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition *eis* (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter*, used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because*; Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about*, used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of anyone, for anyone*. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

Translation: ...everyone hearing [this] will laugh with me.”

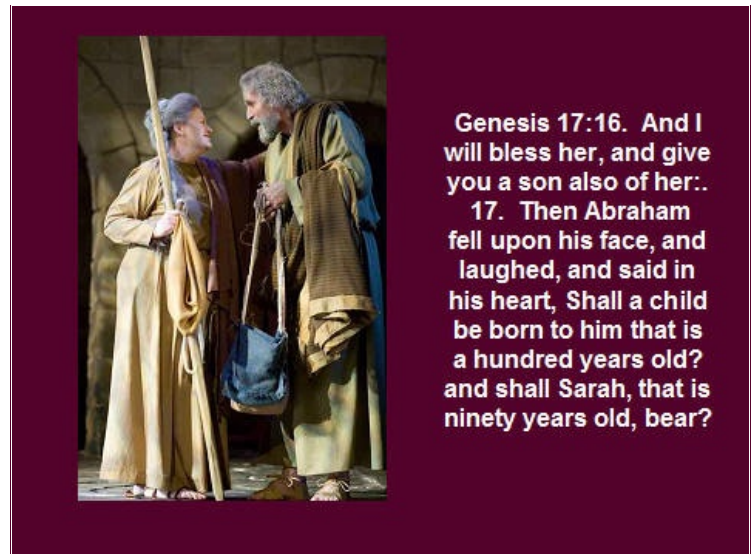
When people hear of her bearing a son, they will laugh with Sarah. When she gives them his name, they will laugh with her. When she tells them all that happened, they will laugh with her.

The lâmed preposition could mean *at, over, or concerning*, but *with* is probably closer to the correct meaning as we understand it. This would not be a laughing of derision but a laughing of shared humor and joy.

Sarah would, along with Abraham, tell about Jesus Christ their Savior (they knew Him as Y^ehowah Elohim); and they had this child which Sarah bore after 9 months of pregnancy; and this pregnancy was testimony to God's power and faithfulness. Surely, they knew people in that day and age; and some of them knew about Abraham's meetings with God and God's promises to him; and they were skeptical. And then they heard about Isaac; or they saw Sarah, age 90, pregnant. No doubt, some of them believed as well.

Genesis 17:16–17 (a graphic)

Genesis 21:6 And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me.”



From HiddenMeanings.com accessed March 25, 2013. Using an image from a website does not indicate any sort of endorsement for that website.

No doubt, some of them believed as well.

Genesis 21:6 **And Sarah said, “Elohim made laughter to me; everyone hearing [this] will laugh with me.”** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:6 **And Sarah said, “God has made this laughter with regards to me; everyone who hears this will laugh with me.”** (Kukis paraphrase)

There is a masculine noun and a verb found here, both related to *laugh*; and which are the basis for the name of Isaac. Sarah has quite a relaxed attitude about all of this. The entire situation made her laugh; it made her husband laugh; and so they named their child *laughter*. Furthermore, this suggests that this is a blessed occasion, as it were. A very happy occasion.

Recall that Abraham and Sarah had quite a large family business. Abraham was able to call up 318 men to go to war back in Genesis 14, so, even though this narrative focuses upon Abraham and Sarah, bear in mind that they had quite a large entourage with them who saw to their livestock business. Therefore, there were many people who celebrated this birth with them all.

Abraham also seemed to have a fairly good relationship with those around him; so there was likely some celebration which occurred with neighboring groups of people as well.

And so she says, “Who speaks to Abraham, suckles children Sarah; for I have borne a son to his old age.”

Genesis
21:7

Then she said, “Whoever spoke to Abraham, ‘Sarah will nurse a child’? And yet [lit., *when, for*] I have born a son [to him] regardless of [lit., *regarding*] his old age.”

Then she said, “Whoever said to Abraham, ‘Sarah will nurse a child?’ Yet I have given birth to his son despite his old age.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she says, “Who speaks to Abraham, suckles children Sarah; for I have borne a son to his old age.”
Targum of Onkelos	And she said, How faithful was the messenger who announced to Abraham, and said, Sarah will nurse children, for she shall bring forth a son in her old age!
Jerusalem targum	And she said, What was the announcement which announced to my lord Abraham at the beginning, and said, It will be that she will give suck, because she shall bring forth a son in her old age?
Latin Vulgate	And again she said: Who would believe that Abraham should hear that Sara gave suck to a son, whom she bore to him in his old age?
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would give suck to children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she said, Who shall say to Abraham that Sarah suckles a child? For I have born a child in my old age.

Significant differences: Although the Hebrew is not a difficult vocabulary; this verse is difficult to understand exactly as written. So what we have here are several translators trying to makes sense of this verse.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Who would have dared to tell Abraham that someday I would have a child? But in his old age, I have given him a son."
Easy English	She also said, 'Nobody could have told Abraham that Sarah would feed sons from her breast. But although Abraham is old, I have had his baby son.'
Easy-to-Read Version	No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham's child. But I have given Abraham a son even though he is old."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."
<i>The Message</i>	She also said, Whoever would have suggested to Abraham that Sarah would one day nurse a baby! Yet here I am! I've given the old man a son!
New Berkeley Version	Then she added, "Who would have told Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse children'? For I have borne him a son in his old age."
New Living Translation	Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then she added: 'Who could tell Abraham that I'm nursing a child, because I've given birth in my old age?'
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Who would have predicted to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet, I have given him a son in his old age."
International Standard V	She also said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse sons? Yet I have given birth to a son in my husband's [Lit. <i>in his</i>] old age!"
New American Bible	Who would ever have told Abraham," she added, "that Sarah would nurse children! Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."
NIRV	She continued, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? But I've had a son by him when he is old."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	She said, "Who talks of Abraham? Sarah nurses sons! For I begot him a son in his old-age!"
Bible in Basic English	And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would have a child at her breast? for see, I have given him a son now when he is old.
Conservapedia	And she said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would ever nurse a son? I have born him a son in his old age."
The Expanded Bible	No one thought that I would be able to have Abraham's child [-suckle/nurse children], but even though Abraham is old I have given him a son."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and she continued, "For Abraham I am a flowing brook, He has made me suckle children, For I have borne a son to his age."
New Advent Bible	She went on to say [Heb "said."], "Who would [The perfect form of the verb is used here to describe a hypothetical situation.] have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have given birth to a son for him in his old age!"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And she says, Who utters to Abraham, that Sarah ever suckle sons - to birth him a son for his old age?
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And she added, Who would have said to Abraham That Sarah would suckle children!

Yet I have borne a son in his old age.”
 Kaplan Translation She said, 'Who would have even suggested to Abraham that Sarah would be nursing children? But here I have given birth to a son in his old age!'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children at the breast? For I have borne him a son in his old age!
English Standard Version	And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And 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. It was an occasion of great rejoicing; for Sarah, with reference to the name which the Lord had selected for the child, cried out: "Laughter God has prepared for me; all that hear it will rejoice with me," full of astonishment at the miraculously given child. Who would ever have thought or dared to express the idea that she should yet have a child of her own to cuddle and to nurse?
Syndein	And she kept on saying, "Who would have intensely uttered {malal} unto Abraham, that Sarah should have caused to give children to suck? For I have born him a son in his old age."
World English Bible	She said, "Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."
Young's Updated LT	She says also, "Who has said to Abraham, Sarah has suckled sons, that I have born a son for his old age?"

The gist of this verse: Almost speaking poetically, Sarah remarks that who would have told Abraham that she would nurse a son, a son she has given birth to in Abraham's old age.

Genesis 21:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mîy (מי) [pronounced <i>mee</i>]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
mâlal (מלל) [pronounced <i>maw-LAHL</i>]	<i>to utter, to speak, to express</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #4448 BDB #576
Mâlal has two, and possibly three, very different meanings; it means <i>to utter, to speak</i> (Genesis 21:7 Job 8:2 33:3 Psalm 106:2 Proverbs 6:13); <i>to scrape, to rub</i> (as per BDB in Proverbs 6:13); a third meaning seems to be <i>to languish, to wither, to fade</i> (as per BDB), but I believe that <i>to cut off, to cut back</i> seem to be better renderings (see Genesis 17:11 Job 14:2 18:16 24:24 Proverbs 37:2). Although BDB lists these as the same word, Strong and the New Englishman's concordance spell the latter word nâmal and its Strong's number is #5243.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 21:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾAb̄erâhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw- HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
yânaq (יָנַק) [pronounced yaw-NAHK]	<i>to cause one to nurse [suck], to nurse; to give suck to</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3243 BDB #413
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw- NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Sârâh (סָרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: Then she said, "Whoever spoke to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child'?"

Or less precisely, Then she said, "Whoever said to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child?'" Who could have predicted such a thing? Who would ever look at Abraham and Sarah and suggest, "I believe they are thinking about having children." Such a thought would never occur to a normal person, given that Abraham is 100 and Sarah is 90.

John Calvin gives this the same interpretation: *such a thing would never have entered into the mind of any one. Therefore, she concludes, that God alone was the Author of it.*³⁷ Gill similarly writes: *No one a year ago could ever have thought of such a thing, much less have come and told Abraham that he should have a child or children by Sarah; the thing was incredible, and next to impossible; none but God himself...could have declared this, as none but he could bring it about, the thing is so marvellous and astonishing.*³⁸

The bulk of these past few chapters have been straightforward narrative not requiring a great deal of exegesis to understand. Having waited many decades (we do not know how long Abraham and Sarah had been married), Sarah is bubbling over with enthusiasm about the birth of her son. She is finally understanding and believing in God with a greater strength of faith.

Of her laughter, Ellicott writes: *God has made me to laugh.-Sarah's laugh was one of mingled emotions. Joy was uppermost in her mind, but women do not laugh for joy at the birth of a child. Doubtless she called to mind the feelings with which she listened to the announcement of her bearing a son, made by those whom she then regarded as mere passing wayfarers (Genesis 18:12), but whom she had now long known to be the messengers of God. And still the event seemed to her marvellous and astonishing, so that "all that hear," she said, "will laugh with me"-Heb., for me, or over me-not "will ridicule me," but will be merry at the thought of an old woman of ninety having a son.*³⁹

³⁷ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Genesis 21:7 (slightly edited).

³⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:7.

³⁹ From <http://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

Genesis 21:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
BDB gives this list of definitions: 1) <i>that, for, because, when, as though, as, because that, but, then, certainly, except, surely, since</i> ; 1a) <i>that</i> ; 1a1) <i>yea, indeed</i> ; 1b) <i>when (of time)</i> ; 1b1) <i>when, if, though (with a concessive force)</i> ; 1c) <i>because, since (causal connection)</i> ; 1d) <i>but (after negative)</i> ; 1e) <i>that if, for if, indeed if, for though, but if</i> ; 1f) <i>but rather, but</i> ; 1g) <i>except that</i> ; 1h) <i>only, nevertheless</i> ; 1i) <i>surely</i> ; 1j) <i>that is</i> ; 1k) <i>but if</i> ; 1l) <i>for though</i> ; 1m) <i>forasmuch as, for therefore</i> .			
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
zêqûnîym (זֶקֶן) [pronounced zeh-koo-NEEM]	<i>old age, extreme old age</i>	masculine plural noun (or adjective); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2208 BDB #279

Translation: And yet [lit., *when, for*] I have born a son [to him] regardless of [lit., *regarding*] his old age."

Less precisely: Then she said, "Whoever said to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child?' Yet I have given birth to his son despite his old age." Yet, even though no one would ever suggest that such a thing could occur, Sarah has still given birth to his son.

As an aside, note that Sarah speaks of Abraham's old age and not her own.

A few translations present Sarah's words as poetry:

Then she said,

"Whoever spoke to Abraham,

'Sarah will nurse a child'?

Except I have born a son [to him] regardless of [lit., *regarding*] his old age."

This and the previous verse are very poetic in nature.

Genesis 21:7 Then she said, "Whoever spoke to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child'? And yet [lit., *when, for*] I have born a son [to him] regardless of [lit., *regarding*] his old age." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:7 Then she said, "Whoever said to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child?' Yet I have given birth to his son despite his old age." (Kukis paraphrase)

Sarah has given birth and she still cannot imagine that this happened. Sarah is testifying to the fulfillment of the promises which God made to Abraham and to her. This all came about as a fulfillment of the promises of God. And, for 25 years, God has been making these promises. No one other than God could have seen this coming.

So far, we have studied the first 7 verses:

Genesis 21:1–5 The Lord kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what He had promised. She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. And Abraham named their son Isaac. Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. (NLT pronouns referring to God have been capitalized)

God had a specific time frame, and Isaac was born according to God's timing and God's plan.

Genesis 21:6–7 And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!" (NLT)

Even though Abraham and Sarah would live longer than we do today (to ages 175 and 137, respectively), age 100 for a father was too old and age 90 for a mother was too old. This was outside of the realm of possibility. However, **with God, all things are possible** (Mark 10:27b). This does not mean that you or I will grow to 175 and have children at age 100—all of that took place for a reason. Isaac's birth was not simply another person born in the line of Christ; Isaac's birth was to foreshadow the birth of Jesus.

Like many actual historical events of the Old Testament, the birth of Isaac foreshadows the birth of our Lord. This is a topic that we have covered before, and it has been posted online as well ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The Parallels Between the Birth of Isaac and the Birth of Jesus

Birth of Isaac

Birth of Jesus

His birth was impossible. Abraham and Sarah were long past the age of being able to have children. Genesis 17:17 18:10–14 21:7 Romans 4:19

His birth was impossible. He was born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:22–23 Luke 1:26–31

Isaac's birth was unique. No one in the Bible was born the same way as Isaac. Genesis 21:1–2

Our Lord's birth was unique. No one was ever born as He was. Luke 1:36–37 John 3:16 (*only-begotten = uniquely born*).

His birth was foretold. God, on many occasions, spoke to Abraham, telling him that Isaac would be born to him. McGee: *When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees twenty-five years earlier, God had said to him, "I am going to give a son to you and Sarah." Now twenty-five years have gone by, and God has made good His promise.*⁴⁰ See Genesis 12:7 13:15–16 15:1–5 17:1–7, 16 18:10

McGee: *God also said to the nation Israel, "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son." When the day came that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was a fulfillment of prophecy. Both births had been promised.*⁴¹ His birth was foretold on many occasions in the past. God spoke of the Seed of the woman and His words are recorded in Genesis 3:15 Isaiah 7:14 9:6–7 Luke 1:26–31, 35 (as well as elsewhere).

Arthur Pink points out: *Isaac was the child of promise. The Lord took great interest in the birth of this boy. More was said about him before his birth than about any other, excepting only Abraham's greater Son.*⁴²

⁴⁰ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014.

⁴¹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014.

⁴² From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

The Parallels Between the Birth of Isaac and the Birth of Jesus

Birth of Isaac	Birth of Jesus
There was a long interval between the prophecy of birth and Isaac's actual birth. From the first time that Abraham heard about his offspring, it was 25 years before this was brought to pass. Compare Genesis 12:7 with Genesis 21:1-3.	There was a long interval between the prophecy of birth and our Lord's birth. Isaiah's prophecies are the best known, and he wrote and spoke about 700 years before the birth of our Lord. God spoke of the Seed of the woman thousands of years before our Lord's birth. Genesis 3:15 Isaiah 7:14 9:6-7
All of the various promises that God made to Abraham are dependent upon the birth of Isaac. If Isaac is not born, then all of these other promises are meaningless. Abraham cannot be the father of a special people to God unless he had that first son.	All of God's promises to Israel mean nothing apart from the birth of Jesus Christ. There must be a Savior, or everything that God promised to Israel is meaningless. Similarly, all of the promises which God has made to us are meaningless without the birth of Jesus Christ.
When the announcement of the imminent birth was made, Sarah was incredulous, and thought that such a thing was impossible. Genesis 18:9-12	When the announcement of the imminent birth was made, Mary was incredulous, and thought that giving birth to a son as a virgin was impossible. Luke 1:34
Sarah was assured by God that He is able to do what He has promised. Genesis 18:13-14	Mary is assured by God that He is able to do that which He has promised. Luke 1:34, 37
Isaac was named before his birth. Genesis 17:19 21:3	Jesus was named before His birth. Matthew 1:21
The name <i>Isaac</i> was rich with meaning and related directly to Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 17:17 18:12-15	The name <i>Jesus</i> was rich with meaning and directly related to the people He would save. Matthew 1:21 Luke 1:31-33
His birth was a result of a visit from God. Genesis 21:1-2	His birth was a result of a visit from God. Matthew 1:18 Luke 1:35
The change required for Isaac to be born was brought on by a visit of Y ^e howah to Sarah. Although a change had to be wrought in Abraham as well, that is never discussed. The focus has to be upon the woman in order to set up the parallel situation. ⁴³ Genesis 21:1	This is to parallel the virgin birth of Jesus, where Jesus is born only of the woman without any contribution from Joseph. The reason for this is, the sin nature is passed down through the father, so the father has to be eliminated from the birth equation. Isaiah 7:14
The emphasis upon Sarah: Genesis 21:1-2 focuses upon Sarah and God interacting with Sarah. Abraham is named in v. 2, but not as having anything to do with the birth of Isaac. So Sarah miraculously has her reproductive processes activated.	The emphasis upon Mary: Jesus is virgin-born, so there is no contribution of any sort by Joseph, our Lord's legal father. So Mary is miraculously impregnated apart from Joseph.
As far back as Genesis 3:15, the focus has been upon the Seed of the woman; this is simply continued through Sarah.	
The birth of Isaac occurred at God's appointed time. Genesis 21:2	The birth of Jesus occurred at God's appointed time. Galatians 4:4

⁴³ Or, *parable*, if you will; the Bible is big on *parables* going way back. Parables are not something which Jesus invented at His incarnation. Parables, in many ways, are the foundation of Scripture. We often call them *shadow images*, but they are the same thing.

The Parallels Between the Birth of Isaac and the Birth of Jesus

Birth of Isaac

Birth of Jesus

The birth of Isaac was miraculous. God had to override the limitations of nature. Abraham was no longer able to father children and Sarah's reproductive organs had shut down. Genesis 18:11–13 Romans 4:18–21

The birth of Jesus Christ was miraculous; God had to override the limitations of nature. Mary was a virgin, and it is physically impossible for a woman to give birth apart from a man. Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:23 Luke 1:34

Where there had been death (Abraham was no longer potent and Sarah could not conceive), God brought life. This is the meaning of circumcision; that which is dead, God brought to life.

Where we are born dead in our trespasses and sins, God regenerates us (makes us alive to Him). Out of death, God brings life. Ephesians 2:1

The birth of Isaac brought great happiness to the household of Abraham. Genesis 21:6

The birth of Jesus is also a cause for great celebration and happiness. Luke 1:14, 58

There was great joy when Isaac was born. Genesis 21:6

There was great joy when Jesus was born. Luke 1:46–47 2:10–11

The birth of Isaac did not just cause joy but conflict. However, we are not to overly concerned about the conflict in this world. Genesis 21:9–12

The birth of Jesus did not just cause joy but conflict. However, we are not to be overly concerned about the conflict in this world. John 16:33 **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** (NIV) See also Matthew 10:37 Galatians 5:17

All of the promises of God to Abraham are based upon the birth of Isaac. If Isaac is not born, then none of the promises that God made to Abraham can come to pass. This is the most fundamental event upon which every other promise is based.

All of God's promises to us are based upon the birth and then death of our Lord. If Jesus is not born, then none of God's promises can come to pass. That Jesus died for us sins is the fundamental event upon which all other promises are based.

Another way of putting this is, Isaac was the down payment of the many promises which God has made to Abraham. God cannot make Abraham's descendants like the sand of the sea without there being Isaac first.

Jesus Christ is the down payment of the many promises God has made to Israel over the years. There is no millennial kingdom apart from the King.

Isaac represents the line of promise; and Ishmael is cast out of Abraham's household. Genesis 21:3, 10, 12, 14 Romans 9:7 Hebrews 11:18

Jesus represents the line of promise, the firstborn of many brothers. Romans 8:29

Our relationship to Jesus Christ is likened to the Jews relationship to Isaac. Gal. 4:28 **Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.**

Isaac, the son of Abraham, will be obedient to his father unto death. Genesis 22:1–10

Jesus, the Son of God, will be obedient to His Father unto death. Philip. 2:5–8

The greatest parallel of all comes in the next chapter (Genesis 22), where God asks Abraham to sacrifice his uniquely-born son.

Some of these examples came from <http://www.ovrInd.com/Teaching/Typology.html> accessed February 26, 2013. 3 or 4 examples came from *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 21:2–7. 2 examples are from C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:3.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

When faced with the information found in the Bible, we have logical choices. Regarding these many parallels (and those between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus is just one set of such parallels), there are 3 logical explanations: (1) this was all a great hoax perpetrated by the early Christian writers, who after perpetrating said hoax, forgot to tell anyone that is what they were doing. Paul never, in any of his epistles, talks about this. Luke, nowhere in his gospels, speaks about type and antitype and refers back to the birth of Isaac. (2) This was all a giant coincidence. There are a lot of parallels, but they just happened. No one planned for them; they just are. After all, there are coincidences in life. (3) This is the Word of God and these words are really recorded by God the Holy Spirit in order to set up a set of parallels 2000 years later.

When dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ, we also have a limited number of possibilities: (1) He was the greatest liar of all time, fooling millions of people into thinking that He was the Messiah when He really was not. (2) Jesus was completely delusional. He was like some nutball you take out of a sanitarium, that you take off his meds. Or, (3) Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God as He claims. There is no 4th option. You cannot say that He was a great teacher, because He made claims about Himself that were either true or false. If these claims were all false, then He was a liar. If He believed these claims and these claims were false, then He was a nutcase.⁴⁴

When you begin to logically explore these options, and then throw in things like the science of the Bible and the fulfilled prophecy of the Bible, then it is hard to see the Bible as anything other than the Word of God.

Then there are all of these little things. In the past year or so, I have begun to include quotations on various topics related to the subject at hand or to the particular chapter of the Bible that I am writing about. Having the internet, I have access to the thoughts of millions of men over a period of thousands of years. And, surprisingly enough, the quotations which are most on point and are most accurate generally come out of the Bible. So, on the one hand, I have the Bible as a source written by about 40 different men over a period of 2000 or so years; and then I have all of the writings of the entire world of all mankind and man's collective wisdom—and there tends to be greater wisdom that comes out of the Bible.

Sometimes, so many parallels become overwhelming. So let's simplify this.

T. H. Leale Sums up the Parallels of the Births of Isaac and Jesus

1. Both births were announced long before.
2. Both occur at the time fixed by God.
3. Both persons were named before their birth.
4. Both births were supernatural.
5. Both births were the occasion of great joy.
6. Both births are associated with the life beyond.

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tbi/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014. Many commentators did this.

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So far, we have studied the first 7 verses of Genesis 21, which are all about the birth of Isaac:

Gen 21:1–7 And הויה [= Y^ehowah] visited Sarah as He had said, and הויה did for Sarah as He had spoken. So Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which Elohim had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Yitshaq [= Isaac].

⁴⁴ Josh McDowell gives this argument in Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 107–112.

And Abraham circumcised his son Yitshaq when he was eight days old, as Elohim had commanded him. And Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Yitshaq was born to him. And Sarah said, "Elohim has made me laugh, and everyone who hears of it laughs with me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age." (The Scriptures 1998+)

These points are fairly basic, but reasonably important:

Ray Pritchard on, What Abraham learned from the birth of Isaac

- A. Abraham learned that God keeps His Word.
The most important verse in the whole chapter is verse 1. Here is what it says in the Living Bible: "Then God did as he had promised, and Sarah became pregnant and Abraham a baby son in his old age, at the time God had said." Did you notice where God is in that verse? He's at the beginning at he's at the end: "Then God did as he had promised;" "at the time God had said." That's why Sarah got pregnant and why Abraham is now changing diapers at the age of 100.
All the God promises Abraham was predicated on Abraham fathering a son. God allowed Abraham to wait for a great deal of time before beginning at that point.
- B. Abraham learned that God's timing is always perfect.
Approximately 25 years have passed since God first spoke to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees. During that time Abraham had many adventures and many spiritual ups and downs. Sometimes he fervently believed God, but often he doubted. Time and again God appeared to him to remind him of his promise. I'm sure he often wondered why God was taking so long to keep his Word.
Let the story of Isaac's birth remind you of this truth: God is never early and he is never late. He's also not in a hurry and he doesn't work according to our timetable. How often do we fret and fuss and fume when God delays his answers to our prayers. How much better to say, "Lord, let your will be done in your own time in your own way."
God has a perfect timetable. We may not understand it all of the time; but the more doctrine that you know, the more likely you are to understand what is going on in your life.
- C. Abraham learned that God's power is unlimited.
This is Paul's point in Romans 4:21, where he says that Abraham believed God's promise because he was "fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." To use Paul's terms he wanted both Abraham and Sarah to be "as good as dead" physically so that when the child was born, only God could get the credit. No one could say to Abraham at the age of 100, "Oh, you rascal!" because Abraham did nothing but believe what God had said. When Abraham held little Isaac in his arms, he knew that nothing was too hard for the Lord.
This does not mean that you look for a miracle in each and every circumstance. Given the period of time over which the Bible was written, there are actually very few miracles over human history. Furthermore, most of those miracles were done for a specific reason. When Jesus began His public ministry, these miracle were His credit card; they showed that He was the Messiah. In the Church Age, God's power is primarily in His Word. It is more normal for a believer to go through his entire life and never see a miracle than it is for us to witness unqualified miracles.
- D. He learned that God can turn sorrow into joy.
In Genesis 17 & 18 we are told that both Abraham and Sarah laughed in unbelief when God promised that within a year Sarah would give birth to child. But when the year had passed, Isaac was born. His name means "laughter." It was both a statement of total joy and a reminder that God's promises are no laughing matter.
Has God made a promise to you? If so, you may be sure that he will keep it. You may waver, but he will not waver. You may doubt but that will not stop God. This morning your eyes may fill with tears, but remember the word of the Lord: "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy" (Psalm 126:5).

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Finally, Isaac was born. God had made many promises to Abraham, in Person, and these promises essentially were based upon Abraham having a son of his own loins. Only on one recorded occasion did Abraham finally say, "Listen, God, I need to have a son and I don't have a son. Your promises are only fulfilled to me if I have a son. How can I be assured that I will really have a son?" Which concern God answered with a covenant (that is, God drew up a contract between Himself and Abraham—Genesis 15).

But finally, at age 100, Isaac is born to Abraham; and Isaac is the down payment of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. This birth essentially gets the ball rolling. None of God's promises to Abraham make any sense apart from Isaac being born (as we discussed in the previous chapter, this is analogous to Jesus Christ being born (and dying for our sins). Nothing in the Bible makes sense apart from that fundamental truth. Without Jesus, God's other promises to us are meaningless.

Isaac's Birth in the New Testament:

Isaac's birth is spoken of in two New Testament passages. As usual, enough of the surrounding text will be incorporated, so that the full meaning might be understood. We begin in v. 13 of Romans 4, although there is nothing about the birth of Abraham's son until v. 17. However, we need to get the context for what is being said.

Romans 4 is all about justification by faith versus justification by works.

Rom 4:13 **For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he [Abraham] would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.**

The Jews are the racial offspring of Abraham. However, Paul would shake this notion up somewhat in Romans 4. What Paul will eventually speak of is the heirs of Abraham by *faith*.

Paul gets a lot of mileage from using Abraham as an illustration. All Jews recognize Abraham as their father, but there was no Mosaic Law in the time of Abraham. Therefore, Paul can point to things which are true about Abraham, and say, "And because you are Jews, these things are also true about you." Most importantly is, Abraham was not justified by the Law because there was no Mosaic Law during his time. Therefore, Abraham cannot be justified by any part of the Law.

It should be worth noting that this letter to the Romans is going to a church which is mostly gentiles, although there is a substantial Jewish population. Furthermore, there is always the challenge of legalism for any church, with or without the challenge of Judaism. Therefore, to understand all of this, we need to look at the **Doctrine of Legalism**. Because few Christians understand the life into which they have been born, because a lack of the knowledge of the Word of God, they do not understand what legalism is, and how pernicious it is.

This comes from the **Doctrine of Legalism** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). However, originally, that material comes primarily from the sources listed below.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Legalism

1. Fundamental to understanding legalism, is to understand the concept of *grace*. Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind because of the work that has been done on our behalf by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Grace means that man has received from God that which he has not earned or deserved. Nothing that we are, and nothing that we can do, is enough to qualify us for anything that the Lord has to give us. In fact, our human works are a matter of arrogance, which God will not tolerate. Isa. 64:6 describes how God views our works: **All our righteousnesses are as filthy [lit., *menstruous*] rags in His**

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sight.

2. The concept of legalism:
 - 1) Legalism is the belief that you can do something meritorious and thereby be rewarded in some way by God for doing good works or following some religious system of customs, laws and/or rituals.
 - 2) *Legalism* connotes any system of merit, by which a person tries to please God, or to assist God, or to glorify God by means of his own human power.
 - 3) Religious legalism promotes a system of works as man's approach to God. Religious legalism is whatever system that teaches that a person can do something to earn or merit salvation or blessing from God.
 - 4) Religious legalism also refers to any system of religious bondage imposed on someone by another individual, or by an organization, that attempts to make that person a practitioner of legalism. Often, bullying tactics or ostracism are used to keep people in line.
 - 5) Legalism includes the concept that God will bless, help, and prosper the one living according to whatever legalistic standards have been established. These standards may be the application of the norms and standards of society, some subgroup of society (a particular church or denomination), or from a misinterpretation of the Bible (e.g., Sabbath-keeping in the Church Age).
 - 6) Therefore, legalism is the belief in and the practice of human religious regulations and taboos because one believes *that* is the way to please God, to become spiritual, and to live the Christian life. Legalistic people, because they work for God's blessing, often confuse cause and result, and thereby misunderstand grace.
3. There are four principal spiritual transactions in which human works are not acceptable to God: salvation, spirituality, spiritual growth (resulting in spiritual maturity), and eternal rewards. Very briefly, legalism is against salvation by grace (Galatians 1:6–9 2:16), spirituality by grace (Galatians 3:2–5 5:5), and the freedom to live the Christian way of life by grace—which is the freedom to live apart from pressure imposed by a religious community or a taboo list (Galatians 4:8–11 5:1–5).
4. As an aside, Satan has two overall strategies with regards to people on this earth: (1) to keep them from the gospel; and (2) for those who have believed in Jesus Christ, to neutralize their spiritual lives. Huge numbers of believers have had their spiritual lives neutralized by legalism (which means, nearly nothing of what they do on this earth has any eternal consequence). Legalism is used by Satan to accomplish both of these objectives.
5. Legalism and salvation:
 - 1) Legalism in salvation is the concept that you must do something more than have faith in Christ in order to gain God's approval (or you must do something other than or in addition to exercising faith in Christ). That is, even in some legalistic Christian faiths, there is the belief that there is a set of additional works that must be done or that there is some often poorly-defined set of minimal standards which must be adhered to in one's life. If you do not meet those standards, then you did not really believe in the first place; or you had a head belief, but not a heart belief. Let me emphasize that this is a false view of salvation.
 - 2) There are many religious systems which teach salvation by works, or which try to mix works with faith, such as:
 - (1) Believe + keep the Law of Moses.
 - (2) Believe + be circumcised.
 - (3) Believe + water baptism.
 - (4) Believe + confess your sins.
 - (5) Believe + give up your bad habits and fully surrender; make Jesus Lord of all.
 - (6) Believe + make a public display or some sort (come forward or raise your hand); or have great sorrow or a show of tears.
 - (7) Believe + join a church.
 - (8) Believe + live some minimal sort of Christian life. This is what is found most often in today's Christianity. Those who promote this sort of legalism will never state it is in this way, but they will carefully explain, "If you still do thus-and-so, maybe you did not really believe in Jesus in the first place." Or, "Maybe you have a head belief but not a heart belief." If there is no

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evidence of salvation, then, perhaps you were never really saved. “After all,” they will tell you, “**If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature;**” (not understanding what they have just said). This is the most insidious attack upon salvation. The believer who is under attack for not acting like a Christian then has two ways to go: he can abandon his faith altogether because he did not have enough faith or he can enter into a life of legalism, adhering to whatever set of standards that quasi-Christian group has established.

- (9) What is added to faith is just a matter of the time and place; Christian converts in Paul’s day were told they needed to believe and be circumcised; it is unlikely that any significant group of legalists today adds circumcision to faith in Christ.
 - (10) However, the gospel of Jesus Christ is to have faith alone in Christ alone; it is believe + nothing. Placing your faith in Jesus Christ is a non-meritorious choice; and that is our only means to connect with God. We have no other means by which we can initially establish a relationship with God. Jesus said to Thomas, “**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me.**” (John 14:6). **God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It’s not the result of anything you’ve done, so no one can brag about it** (Ephesians 2:8–9; God’s Word™).
- 3) Legalism is diametrically opposed to salvation by grace. Gal. 1:6-9 **I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him Who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to the one we [originally] proclaimed to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is proclaiming to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.** (WEB, slightly modified). Galatians 2:16 **Still we know that a person is not justified [i.e., made right with God] by [perfect obedience to] the law of Moses, but rather through faith in [the person and work of] Christ. [Knowing this] we have trusted in Christ Jesus [to save us], so that we might be made right with God by trusting in Him and not by [our compliance with] the requirements of the law of Moses. Because by such law-compliance no one can be made right with God.** (AUV–NT)
 - 4) Romans 4:4–5 **Now wages are not considered a gift if the person has to work for them, but [rather] an obligation [of his employer]. But to the person who believes in God, who makes ungodly people right with Himself apart from doing good deeds, that person’s faith is considered by God [as the basis] for being righteous.** (AUV–NT) Or, to state this in a different way, how can salvation be the *gift of God* if you have to work for it?
 - 5) Legalism becomes a heavy yoke or load to live under. No man has the ability to impress, bribe, coerce, or trick God into giving him salvation. The attempt to work for your salvation is taking on an impossible burden. In Matthew 11:28–30, [Jesus said], “**Come to Me, all of you who are overworked and overburdened and I will give you rest [i.e., spiritual refreshment]. Accept My reins [on your life], and learn about Me, because I am gentle and humble, and [in My service] you will experience rest in your spirits. For My reins [on your life] are easy [to respond to] and the burden I place [on you] is light.**” (AUV–NT; pronouns referring to Jesus are capitalized)
6. Legalism and fellowship with God:
 - 1) Grace is the means by which our fellowship with God is restored. We name our sins to God and God forgives us these sins. 1Corinthians 11:31 1John 1:9
 - 2) We are forgiven, not because we feel badly, we do penance, we promise never to commit that sin again; we are forgiven because Jesus Christ died for that sin on the cross. The means by which our fellowship is restored is based upon grace, and not upon legalism. Again, all we do is admit our sins.
 - 3) This naming of our sins both restores our fellowship with God and resumes the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Being led by the Spirit is not a 50-50 proposition; we are either led by the Spirit or we are not. 1John 3
 - 4) Legalism in the Christian life is using some meritorious system in order to get back into fellowship (into God’s good graces, so to speak). This could include penance, begging for forgiveness,

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promising never to commit a particular sin again, promising God an overall improvement in your life, working up a deep sorrow over your sins, confessing your sins to a priest, doing penance, etc.

- 5) Some adherence to certain norms and standards are not wrong—such as functioning under the laws of divine establishment, which is a divine code designed for all people in all nations. Adhering to the laws of divine establishment make you a better person socially, and this adherence makes for a better nation, but it does not make you spiritual. You can be a good person in society, and yet not filled with the Holy Spirit.
7. Legalism and the Christian life:
- 1) After salvation, legalism is abandoning grace as the basis of our spiritual lives.
 - 2) If we are saved by grace, then it is logical that spirituality and spiritual growth are also by grace. Gal. 3.2–5 *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? (ESV, mostly) Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (ESV)*
 - 3) As believers in Jesus Christ, we have the freedom to live the Christian way of life by grace—which includes the freedom to live apart from pressure imposed by a religious community or a list of taboos. Galatians 4.8–11 *Previously, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and empty elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once again? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. See also Galatians 5.1–6.*
 - 4) Some forms of legalism are easy to define; e.g, Legalism is the belief in and the practice of human religious regulations and taboos because one believes that is the way to please God, become spiritual, and live the Christian life. This could include tithing, going to church, and not doing the things which some sub-group of Christians tell you not to do (don't misunderstand this to mean that the Christian can do anything).
 - 5) Legalism is a set of do's or don't's, adherence to which mean that a person is spiritual or a good Christian. Here is the problem: with a list of do's and don't's, quite obviously, Charley might be better than Lucy who might be better than Linus when it comes to adherence to this list. However, in the Christian life, there is no such thing as a 50 percenter. You are saved or you are not; you are spiritual or you are not. Now, there are different stages of growth, but this is completely different from imperfectly following a list of do's and don't's.
8. Legalism versus grace apparatus for perception:
- 1) Grace apparatus for perception is terminology developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr., which means that all believers have the same ability to grow through knowledge of Bible doctrine and the same ability to be productive in the plan of God, no matter what their mental or physical deficiencies. If a person is able to understand the gospel and to believe in Jesus Christ, then he is able to execute the Christian way of life as a mature believer. We all reach spiritual maturity in the same way: God's grace system, which is the ability to understand with all the saints what the will of God is. Ephesians 3:18–19
 - 2) Every believer has the same crack at the Christian way of life—including Christian maturity—whether they have an IQ of 70 or of 130.
 - 3) The full doctrine of the grace apparatus for perception is found [here](#) and [here](#).
 - 4) Examples of legalism in the Christian Life, which are also examples of pseudo-spirituality and the pseudo Christian life. These are things that Christian churches, groups and believers do, instead of actually growing in grace and the knowledge of God's Word.
 - (1) Taboos: thinking one is spiritual because he doesn't do certain things or follows a certain do's and don't's. I don't know that this is really much of a part of mainstream Christianity as it used to be.
 - (2) Imitating Personalities: the idea that living the Christian life is conformity in dress,

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- mannerisms, speech, etc. I have observed this, and it is quite entertaining, but unrelated to the spiritual life. This can occur in all kinds of churches. How many Sunday School teachers at Berachah Church attempted to imitate Bob's personality when teaching young children?
- (3) Relative Righteousness: "your sins are worse than mine, therefore I am more spiritual" or "I am spiritual and you are carnal." Spirituality is an absolute state—you are or you are not.
 - (4) Ecstasies: spirituality by speaking in tongues, groaning, getting in a trance, fainting. This is a very big deal today (primarily the speaking in tongues and the trance-like states) and has been a corruption of the Christian life for over a century now.
 - (5) Asceticism: spirituality by self-sacrifice or extreme self-denial; giving up normal activities or even necessities in the mistaken notion that God is impressed. This is not generally found in the U.S. anymore, where we tend to be very self-indulgent; but is more common outside of the U.S. This is a very big deal in monasteries.
 - (6) Ritualism: This is the idea that one is spiritual or growing because he goes through various forms of ceremony or ritual. Spiritual maturity is ascribed to those who do this and look really holy while doing it. In the Apostle's day, the Jews promoted circumcision as necessary to the Christian walk. These days, any sort of ritual may be used, including singing (I am not saying that singing is wrong, but it is mostly unrelated to spiritual growth, unless one concentrates on the words and the words are Biblically accurate).
 - (7) These examples often take the place of spiritual growth. That is, instead of being filled with the Spirit and learning Bible doctrine and growing, one or more of these other things are offered up instead.
 - (8) This describes most churches today. They practice various forms of legalism, rather than the filling of the Holy Spirit (by naming one's sins to God—1John 1:9) and **growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ** (2Peter 3:18).
9. Legalism and false systems of production:
- 1) One of the biggest problems of legalism is, confusing means with results. Legalism posits the idea that you are spiritual if you are faithful in praying, giving, witnessing, attending church, and so forth. But these legitimate activities are a result of Christian growth and the filling of the Holy Spirit. When the emphasis is placed upon doing these things, that is putting the cart before the horse. These things are not the means for spirituality or growth in Christ.
 - 2) The grace principle is this: when you are in fellowship, occupied with Christ, and controlled by the Holy Spirit, all of your activities bring eternal reward (gold, silver, precious stones—1Corinthians 3:10–14). You are producing divine good, and the spiritual power for your efforts comes from God as a grace provision. The amount that you produce is, of course, limited or enhanced by your spiritual growth.
 - 3) When you are out of fellowship (with unconfessed sin), you are occupied with yourself, you control yourself, everything is chaos. You therefore produce human good (wood, hay, and stubble—1Corinthians 3:10–14). There is no spiritual power supporting your efforts, and there is no reward for them in heaven. This describes most believers today. Most believers today spend a majority of their time out of fellowship, and they only get back into fellowship by accident (they shock themselves so much with a series of sins, that they acknowledge these sins, and are restored to fellowship).
 - 4) Obedience to God's Word is not legalism. Remember the definition. Everything you do has the potential for reward in heaven, under the right circumstances. The key is being in fellowship, and growing by grace and the Word of God.
 - 5) The legalist thinks that the good works he does for God will not only keep him in fellowship and walking with the Lord but will also make him more spiritual and a great Christian. This is confusing means and results.

Much of this was originally taken from the following websites:

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/legalism.html>

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=260

<http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/study/Bible%20Doctrines/dictionary-bible-doctrine.htm>

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Isaac's birth in the New Testament continued:

So far, we studied one verse in the New Testament (which passage will reference Isaac's birth) and the doctrine of legalism:

Rom 4:13 **For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he [Abraham] would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.**

God made promises to Abraham, and God did not do this because Abraham followed the law, but because Abraham exercised faith in the Revealed God.

In the apostle Paul's time, There were those trying to place believers under the Mosaic Law, and Paul told them to go back and examine Abraham, who received promises not based on the Law, as there was no Mosaic Law during the time of Abraham. The promises that God made to Abraham were based upon the **righteousness of faith**.

Throughout most of the letter to the Romans, Paul makes use of the Old Testament. In fact, in the book of Romans alone, Paul quotes nearly 100 separate **Old Testament verses**. The books of the Old Testament are his Scriptures, and he uses them as authoritative, even though he is speaking mostly to non-Jews. Paul is writing in the pre-canon period of the New Testament era, so he is in the Church Age. Yet he makes his theological points quoting the Old Testament.

The Church Age is neatly divided into two time periods—there is the early church, at which time the apostles had authority over more than one church, there were sign gifts which gave God's authority to the apostles, and during which time they wrote the New Testament, which are the authoritative words of the apostles. Then there is the post-canon period, which began between A.D. 70–100, at which time, it is the apostles' writings which become authoritative, and at which time, all the apostles are martyred (save John). So we no longer have apostles traveling about from church to church, or to missionary fields, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and teaching Bible doctrine. All that remains are their writings. Therefore, their writings are taken as authoritative and their writings take the place of the apostles. Their writings become the New Testament, the sum of which become the canon of the New Testament.

By the time of the canon of Scripture came about, the apostles have been recognized as being from God, as carrying the words of truth, and what they left behind were the authoritative Word of God, which we call the New Testament. Like the Old Testament, these words came from a variety of authors (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude and possibly a 9th author of Hebrews); but, unlike the Old Testament, these writings were written and recognized as being authoritative over a relatively short period of time (less than 70 years).

Paul lived in the pre-canon period of the Church Age, where his teaching and writings were beginning to be understood as authoritative. Before his authority was fully recognized, Paul (and the other apostles) had sign gifts, which meant he could do healings, miracles, and speak in languages which he did not know (Acts 28:8–9 Romans 15:19 1Corinthians 14:18 2Corinthians 12:12). However, these sign gifts necessarily faded as Paul's authority (and the authority of the other apostles) became established (Romans 1:1 1Corinthians 9:1–3 13:8–10 2Corinthians 11:5 Philip. 2:26–27 2Timothy 4:20). If you look up these passages, they may seem to be a random collection of unrelated things, but Paul on many occasions has to establish his authority as an apostle, which is

a man who can speak authoritatively on all matters of Bible doctrine. He had sign gifts which established his authority as an apostle (Acts 19:11–12 1Corinthians 14:18). However, as time went on, his authority became established among the people of God, and therefore, Paul no longer needed to perform miracles to prove that his teaching was from God. As a result, he was unable to heal the sick after a time (Philip. 2:26–27 1Timothy 5:23 2Timothy 4:20). This was no longer necessary; his authority as an apostle was clearly established.

Paul could always refer to the Old Testament Scriptures as authoritative, as they were accepted as the Word of God by believers all over. However, Paul also taught doctrines which were outside of the realm of the Old Testament, and these are the doctrines of the Church Age—the mystery doctrines—doctrines which are only known to those within a certain fraternity (by application, these doctrines were not known in the Old Testament, but were known only to believers in the Church Age—Romans 11:25 1Corinthians 2:7 Ephesians 1:7–10).

Much of the point that is being made here, Paul sums up in Ephesians 3:1–7 **This is the reason that I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, [pray for you. See 3:14-19]. [Note: Paul here digresses from his prayer, begun in 1:15-16, to explain the circumstances of his being a prisoner on behalf of these Gentiles]. [I assume] you have heard about my commission [to minister] to you, which was given to me by God's unearned favor [= grace of God]. [It is] that God's secret plan [= the mystery doctrine of the Church Age] [i.e., revealed in the Gospel preached to Gentiles. See verse 6] was made known to me by way of a revelation. [See Acts 9:15; 22:21]. I have already written to you [about this] briefly [i.e., probably a reference to 1:9ff]. So, when you read this you will be able to understand my insight into the secret plan of Christ, which was not told to people of previous generations as it has now been revealed to His [i.e., Christ's] holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. This secret plan is that the Gentiles [now] share in the inheritance along with us [Jews], and are fellow-members of the body [i.e., the church], and that they share, along with us [Jews], in the promise of the Gospel, in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus. I was made a minister [of the Gospel] according to the gift of God's unearned favor, which was given to me according to the working of His power. (AUV–NT with two additional notes by me).**

This mystery doctrine is Church Age doctrine; or doctrine which is peculiar to the Church Age; doctrine which is not taught in the Old Testament. This means that Paul will teach doctrines which are, from time to time, outside of the Age of Israel (such as, the gentiles would share in the inheritance of God).

However, there are principles which are true in all dispensations. Many of these principles Paul is able to glean from the Old Testament. Logically, Paul will show that God has a gracious relationship to all believers; and not a relationship based upon legalism (again, **legalism** is the system by which we do something in order to be saved, blessed or rewarded by God).

Paul uses Abraham as an illustration because nearly all Jews acknowledge Abraham as their father, and Jesus is the true heir of Abraham. Also, the gentile believers in Rome would have known about Abraham and that he is considered to be the father of the Jewish race. However, Abraham lived 500 years prior to the Law, so one cannot say that Abraham was blessed because he followed the Law. Therefore, when God promised blessing to Abraham and his offspring, this was based upon Abraham's righteousness of faith and not due to his adherence to the Mosaic Law. There was no Mosaic Law when these promises were given to Abraham. Therefore, Abraham was not blessed because he kept the Law.

Back to our passage in Romans:

Rom 4:14 **For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs [to the promises of God], faith is null and the promise is void.**

There is a clear contrast. If the promises of God are those who adhere to the Mosaic Law—and the true heirs of Abraham adhere to the Mosaic Law—then the faith of Abraham is meaningless and the promises that God made to Abraham, based upon faith, are void.

The first verb is kenoō (κενῶ) [pronounced *keh-n-OH-oh*], which means, 1) *to empty, make empty*; 1a) *of Christ, He laid aside equality with or the form of God*; 2) *to make void*; 2a) *deprive of force, render vain, useless, of no effect*; 3) *to make void*; 3b) *cause a thing to be seen to be empty, hollow, false*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2758. Paul writes here that, if the inheritance promised by God comes through adherence to the law, then faith is *deprived of its force*; faith is *rendered vain, useless and of no effect*; faith is *empty, hollow, and false*. This is because the approach to God is either through the Law or through faith; if we approach God through the Law, then faith is made empty, hollow and false.

The second verb is katargēō (καταργέω) [pronounced *kaht-ahr-GEH-oh*], which means *to be idle, to render inactive, to be useless, ineffective*. Strong's #2673. God made promises to Abraham—that has been much of the focus of our study of Abraham in Genesis—but if our heirship of God's blessings is based upon the Mosaic Law, then the promise of God is useless and ineffective.

Rom 4:14 **For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null** [or, *empty, void, deprived of power, vain, useless, of no effect, empty, hollow, false*] **and the promise is void** [or, *ineffective, useless, idle*].

So, this indicates that there is no middle ground; there is no halfway point where people who have faith and adhere to the Law are also heirs to the promises of God. If Law is the basis of blessing, then their faith is vain, useless, empty and false; in fact, the promise which God made is void, ineffective and useless—if that promise is predicated upon keeping the Law. However, there was no Mosaic Law for Abraham to follow, so what meaning do God's promises to Abraham have, if one must adhere to the Mosaic Law in order to be heir to them? This makes no sense to require believers in the Church Age to adhere to the Mosaic Law in order to be considered true believers, when Abraham himself did not follow the Mosaic Law.

Abraham had to accept God's promises on the basis of faith because there was no Mosaic Law. And if he is an heir by faith, then the Jews are heirs by faith as well. If Abraham is the father of the Jews, then he sets the example—his life sets the pattern. Furthermore, if Abraham is our father by faith, then he sets the example for us—believers in the Church Age—as well.

Similarly, there is no mixture of works and faith, either for salvation or for spirituality.

Rom 4:15 **For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.**

All people transgress the Mosaic Law. Therefore, from a righteous God, we can expect nothing from Him but wrath. That is, *if our relationship to God defined by the Mosaic Law*. The Law defines sin in many areas, and since all men sin, the best the Law can do is pronounce us sinners. If we are sinners, then we have no relationship with God. We can only be judged by God. The Ten Commandments themselves condemn all mankind. It is no good if you follow commandments 1–9 but not 10 (or whatever). That makes you a sinner. Unless we keep the Law perfectly, in all respects, we cannot depend upon the Law for our righteousness. Since no one keeps the Law perfectly, no one can depend upon the Law for righteousness.

Paul adds **...but where there is no law, there is no transgression**. Is Paul saying that a person has a better chance of a relationship to God if he lives in Timbuktu or in outer Mongolia, where there is no Law of Moses being taught? Of course not! We are speaking of two different systems which are fundamental to our relationship to God: Law versus faith. So, we are speaking of two realms here, one of law and one of faith; in the realm of law, we are transgressors; in the realm of faith—**where there is no law—there is no transgression**. We have to be in one sphere or the other, in our relationship to God. Because we cannot keep the Law fully, the Law brings God's wrath upon us. Therefore, if we are in the realm of the law, then we have transgressed against God, and God can give us nothing but wrath. However, if we are in the realm of faith, **where there is no law, then there is no transgression**. In the realm of faith, we are outside of the Law, and therefore, not subject to the condemnation of the Law. Furthermore, if we are in the realm of faith, then we are modeling Abraham, who is our mutual father (the father of Jews and gentiles alike who have exercised faith in Jesus Christ).

There is no overlap between those who stand upon faith and those who stand upon the Law. These are two separate and distinct realms.

Rom 4:14–15 **For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null [or, empty, void, deprived of power, vain, useless, of no effect, empty, hollow, false] and the promise is void [or, ineffective, useless, idle]. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law [which is in the realm of faith] there is no transgression.**

There are two realms: the realm of faith and the realm of Law. When one adheres to (holds to) the Law, then their faith is empty, vain and of no effect. Furthermore, the promise of God is void and useless. This is because the Law brings forth wrath. God looks at us, measures us against His perfect standards, and then condemns us, as a matter of law. He cannot do anything else if only the Law of God is applied. **But where there is no Law** [that is, being in the realm of faith], **there is no transgression.** Faith has to be properly directed toward Jesus Christ; and then, after salvation, toward what is taught in the Bible. And in that realm of faith, there is no transgression.

Remember when Genesis 15:6 **said, And Abraham believed in Jehovah, and He counted it unto him for righteousness?** Transgressions were not a part of this equation. Here, Abraham is in the sphere of faith and all of the merit lies in the object of his faith. Therefore, **there is no transgression.**

Rom 4:16 **That is why it [the promise] depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring--not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,** (ESV, which is used mostly in this lesson)

This verse can be a bit confusing, because it appears that Paul is saying it is okay for two types of people to receive salvation: those who adhere to the law and those of faith. When Paul speaks of those who are *adherents of the law*, he is referring to Jews who were under the Law of Moses and aware of God's Law. However, their relationship to God has to be based upon faith in Christ (in the Old Testament, faith in the Revealed God); not upon their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law.

Sharing the faith of Abraham means, Abraham believed in the Revealed Lord and this was credited to him as righteousness. Those who share this faith are those who also believe in the Revealed Lord, Who is Jesus Christ (Who is God revealed to us—John 14:8–12); and God has also credited them with righteousness.

Then Paul writes something which might have startled most of the Jews in Rome and some of the Romans: he writes that Abraham is **the father of us all.** Paul is not writing to an all Jewish church. We have no idea how many of those at the Roman church are Jews, but certainly just a percentage of them—say 10%. Jews have, at many times in history, seen their father Abraham as being a defining factor in their lives; a separating factor from all that is impure. And yet, Paul is writing to a mostly gentile church calling Abraham **the father of us all.**

The key is *sharing the faith of Abraham.* When Paul writes this letter, Abraham has been dead for 2000 years. So, what does this mean?

Let's get a more accurate translation:

Rom 4:16 **For this reason [it is] of faith, that [it should be] according to grace, for the promise to be secure to all the seed [fig., descendants], not to the [one] of the Law only, _but_ also to the [one] of [the] faith of Abraham, who is father of all of us... (ALT)**

Romans 4:16 **For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in God], according to His unearned favor, so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The**

promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by **faith**, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],... (AUV–NT)

So, what is the promise of Abraham? *The promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world* (from v. 13). This promise, which comes through faith according to grace, is given to all of Abraham's descendants. These promises made to Abraham are not just for those subject to the Law of Moses (that is, the Jews) but to anyone who lives by faith, which, incidentally, includes Abraham (many times, Paul will make this point in his letter to the Romans, as well as elsewhere).

Isaac's birth in the New Testament continued:

We are in the early portion of Genesis 21, where we are studying the birth of Isaac. This birth is alluded to on several occasions in the New Testament, which includes the passage of Romans which is now before us (Romans 4:13–24).

Gen 21:1–7 And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said, and Jehovah did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, God has made laughter for me, and all who hear will laugh with me. She also said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle a son? For I have borne him a son in his old age. (Voice in the Wilderness).

Like many narratives of the Old Testament, at first glance, there does not appear to be much to talk about. But there is.

This is what we have studied so far (in the AUN–NT version, with an additional note or two from me thrown in)

Rom 4:13–16 For it was not through [obedience to] law [See 3:31] that the promise to Abraham or his descendants of inheriting [the best of] the world [was made], but through their being considered righteous because of [their] faith [in God]. For if [only] those who are obedient to the law **deserve** an inheritance, [then their] faith [in God] is for nothing, and God's promise is nullified. For the law brings [God's] wrath [i.e., because of man's failure to obey it perfectly], but where there is no law [which is being in the sphere of faith instead], there is no [responsibility for] sin. For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in God], according to His unearned favor [= grace], so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by faith, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],...

Abraham does not inherit the promises made to him by God through his obedience to the Law, because the law only brings God's wrath. The promise is based upon God's grace—His unmerited favor, which we attain by faith, a non-meritorious system of perception (everyone has faith; so it is the object of our faith which has all of the merit). These promises are for all of Abraham's descendants, which includes us who are Abraham's progeny through faith—we who have believed in the same Revealed Lord.

If we live by faith, Abraham is our father. Now, this is not some nebulous faith in something other than ourselves—faith in itself is not meritorious—but the object of faith has all of the merit (or lack of same). So, if you believe that Harry Potter is real, and you have great faith in that, you are not in the faith of Abraham.

That was a goofy example; so let's take a real example. One thing which has become the object of faith for many today is *science*; I have known many people who talk about how they have great faith in science. One person told

me that she only believes in peer-reviewed studies (which was a very foolish for an educated woman to say, because she believed in lots of things that had not been scrutinized by scientists). Science is sometimes good and accurate; and science is sometimes quite foolish in its attempts to prove that everything in this world just came about apart from God. But there is no real merit in science; science cannot fix our sin nature; and, at best, science can modify our actions or provide useful technologies for us. But there is no spiritual merit in science and people who place their faith in science are lost (except as recognizing the science is a helpful tool in this life). There is no ultimate redemption to be had by having faith in science.

Furthermore, scientists and those who claim to be scientists have sin natures, and therefore, they have agendas which are related to their beliefs, which beliefs are established apart from scientific research and which beliefs interfere with their science. So there are many so-called scientists with agendas: the global warming crowd, the evolution crowd, the God-does-not-exist crowd. These scientists will not discover or theorize anything which goes against that which they fundamentally believe, and will interpret their data in accordance with what it is that they believe. So many “scientists” begin with a philosophical point of view based upon faith, and they do not allow the science that they espouse to run counter to that faith.

As has been observed, **science has become highly politicized** in the past few decades (I write this in 2013)—at least in some areas. Therefore, every powerful hurricane or every harsh winter or any record temperature here or there becomes additional **evidence** of climate change, in the eyes of some scientists and by many of **those** who have placed their faith in science (which is **not the view** of all scientists). Furthermore, now it appears that news outlets like to exaggerate the claims of **global warming and hurricanes** (for instance), and act as if, for instance, the hurricane Sandy is **unique** in its size, path and destructiveness, when **it is not**.

The way that these things get twisted is amazing. One article explains how climate change is making hurricanes **more destructive**. The simple reason for increased destruction caused by hurricanes is, there are more people and property in more places than there were before. 50 years ago, a hurricane may follow a particular path and miss any populated areas. Today, that same hurricane can strike the same area with the same force, but it is much more destructive because now there are people and structures in that same path.

Let me be more specific about this particular faith—it is a faith often that mankind is at least partially to blame, and that by changing our light bulbs, or driving different cars, or by reducing our consumption of energy, that climate change will be averted or put off. In most cases, those who have faith in climate change believe that huge sums of money funneled to the government (or to climate change groups) for the purpose of changing climate change will ultimately have an ameliorative affect on the climate. Millions of people believe this, because *we all have faith* and we all believe in things. So Paul’s sphere of faith includes the object of Jesus Christ when it comes to salvation and the Word of God when it comes to our life as Christians. Again, it is the object which is key, not the faith itself.

As an aside, how does the Christian view science? Like everything in this life, science can become **corrupted**. Science is no more pure than anything else in life. Science is a tool and has provided wonderful things for us in terms of conveniences, energy and medical care; but that does not mean that science is above corruption and **dogma**. Scientists have sin natures, and their nature not only affects their own personal lives, but it also affects their work. Therefore, it should not be a shock to anyone that science can be corrupted just like anything else.

Let’s look at that final verse again:

Romans 4:16 **For this reason, the promise** [i.e., of being made right with God] **comes through faith** [in God], **according to His unearned favor** [= grace], **so that it may be** [given] **with certainty to all of Abraham’s descendants.** **The promise is given not only to those** [who live] **under the law** [i.e., the Jews], **but also to** [all] **those** [who live] **by faith**, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers],... (AUV–NT with one insertion)

Faith is the Greek word *pistis* (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*], which means, 1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it; 1a) relating to God; 1a1) the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ; 1b) relating to Christ; 1b1) a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God; 1c) the religious beliefs of Christians; 1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same; 2) fidelity, faithfulness; 2a) the character of one who can be relied on. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #4102. So faith is used not just as a system of perception, but *what* is believed is incorporated by this word. We use this word in the same way. When we speak of the *Christian faith*, we are not just referring to the non-meritorious act of believing, but primarily to the Christian doctrines which we believe in.

So, faith both incorporates our trust, conviction and belief along with what is the object of our faith, which are the promises of God (and, more widely, Bible doctrine).

Rom 4:17 as it stands written, "I have made you the father of many nations" —in the presence of the God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

On the one hand, this particular reference in Genesis 17:5 means that Abraham would be the father of many Jewish and gentile nations. However, Paul puts a bit of a spin on this, stating that **Abraham is the father of us all** (referring to believers), suggesting perhaps that there would be many nations who are made up of predominantly believers. Abraham, in the realm of faith, is the father of these nations as well.

So Paul takes a promise which, in the context of Genesis 17, refers to both Jewish and Arabic nations (which Abraham is the father of), but then Paul applies this passage to Jewish and gentile nations which are predominantly made up of believers. This is fascinating, because Christianity was not a thriving all-encompassing faith adhered to by most of the world—not when Paul wrote. Tradition has it that all of the Apostles save John would be martyred for their faith. So Paul was looking out into the future, at a time when the faith of Abraham would define the population of even gentile nations. This is because **God gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist**. This nations of Christians do not even exist, yet God will call things that do not exist into existence. Abraham is the father of such nations as are defined by the faith of most of the population in Jesus Christ (at one time, near the era of Paul, this was the Roman empire, and, as of late, this was Great Britain of a century ago; and today it is the United States and South Korea).

The statement that Paul is making here is quite amazing. At one time, just Israel, and then later Israel and Judah, were **client nations** to God, made up of mostly believers. However, here Paul looks down the corridors of time, and he sees a widespread faith in Jesus Christ as occurring in some gentile nations, which makes Abraham the father of those nations as well.

Paul's taking an Old Testament passage and putting a different spin on its interpretation is quite weird for some believers. Some believers expect that when a passage of the Old Testament is quoted in the New, that Paul is going to explain to us exactly what this passage means; or that Paul is going to show how this passage is fulfilled during his era. But Paul does not do that. Paul takes this Old Testament passage, which nearly everyone who reads it ought to understand that it refers to Jewish and Arabic nations, where Abraham is the genetic progenitor of such nations; and Paul gives this a completely new meaning, where Abraham will be the father of a number of nations which are based upon the fundamental faith in Jesus Christ. And this is based up Abraham being *our* father because of his faith in the Revealed Lord.

You see, I am not Jewish, and, chances are, most of you reading this are not Jewish. But Abraham is my father, because he exercised faith in the Revealed Lord; and you and I have similarly exercised faith in Jesus Christ, the Revealed Lord. He set the pattern for us, and we have followed his pattern of faith, making him our father.

Romans 4:16–17 **Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the Law [that is, the Jews], but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham [anyone who believes in the Revealed Lord], who is the father of us all (as it stands written, I have made you a father of many nations) in the presence of Him whom he believed; God, who makes the dead alive and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Mostly the VW)**

We are dead in trespasses and sins, and God makes the dead alive; and then God calls those things which do not exist—gentile nations who have faith in Him—into existence.

Rom 4:18 **In hope he [Abraham] believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."**

Abraham's faith was remarkable, because he did not have a lot of reason to believe God. For 25 years, God had been making promises to Abraham, all of which hinged upon the birth of his son Isaac, and Abraham exercised faith in God's promises. Again, that is the key to this chapter, the theme, if you will: faith versus adherence to the Law of Moses.

The word translated *hope* here is *elpis* (ἐλπίς) [pronounced *el-PIS*], which means, *hope, desire of some good with expectation of obtaining it*; that latter phrase means *confidence*. When the Bible speaks of the *hope of the resurrection* or *our hope of salvation*; the word is obviously *confidence, expectation*. It only means *hope* in the sense of being the opposite of the Gentiles *who have no hope* or *who are hopeless*. Zodhiates. Strong's #1680.

So, even though Abraham had no reason to have confidence in God and in the birth of Isaac, he was, nevertheless, strong in faith, and he trusted in God for the birth of his son through Sarah. Yet, Abraham had few reasons to have such a great trust.

Rom 4:19 **He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.**

God told Abraham that he would father a child by Sarah, and that this would occur after their reproductive equipment quit. Abraham's faith continued. Remember when he was circumcised. I can guarantee you, as a male, whether you are sexually dead or not, the idea that you, as an adult, ought to be circumcised to indicate that you have faith in God's promises, is uniquely abhorrent if you lack that faith. When God said to Abraham, "You need to cut off a portion of the skin around your sexually dead phallus" Abraham responded with faith, not with, "Are you bleeping kidding me?" I can assure you that any male who allows any sharp object anywhere near that area has to be operating on a great deal of faith. **Abraham was not weak in faith when he evaluated his own sexual impotence, as he was 100 years old; nor was he weak in faith when taking into consideration the fact that Sarah had been barren** for all of her life (Abraham has probably known Sarah from age zero on up).

A normal male, a male who lacked faith in the promises of God, would have said, "Look, I am too old to be potent and Sarah has always been barren; so let's skip this whole circumcision thing. You want me to offer up a lamb on the altar? No problem. But if You want me to cut away the skin around my phallus, I'll pass on that one." Yet Abraham, who was not weak in faith, was circumcised, along with the other males of his compound (indicating that they too had great faith in the God of Abraham).

Now, Abraham was very successful and very rich; but not a single promise that God made to him had come to pass; and most of God's promises were such that Abraham would never see them come to pass—yet Abraham continued with great faith in the Revealed God.

Rom 4:20–21 **No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.**

The faith that Abraham had in God, at this point in his life, is quite astounding. Abraham was fully convinced that God would do exactly as He had promised him.

It is this great faith that *gives glory to God*. That phrase may cause some people problems. What is the deal? Is God this grand Egotist Who needs people to say, over and over again, "You are great, God; I really mean that"? That is not how it is. Glorification of God is a matter of focus, and God wants us to focus upon Him, because it is in Him that we have our salvation. Don't look to Abraham, don't look to Sarah, and for goodness sakes, don't look to me. Abraham's faith in God glorifies God; it shifts the focus of man and angels toward God. It forces us to examine God's grace, God's veracity, God's promises, and God's character. Can God be trusted? When God promises us something, can we depend upon Him to stand by His promises? When we read over and over again, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved;**" do we respond with skepticism or are we able to allow our focus and our faith to be on Him? When we near death—and we will all come near to death and experience it—to whom do you look for your life in eternity? Do you look toward your own self and your own puny works—many of which often were working in cross-purposes with God's plan? Do you look toward your sons or your daughters or to your spouse? Or do you look to God? Abraham's faith gives glory to God; Abraham's faith tells us where it is appropriate to adjust our focus and then to place our faith. Giving glory to God tells us where we should direct our own focus. It is in the Revealed God—in Jesus Christ—where we have our salvation.

And, so that there is no misunderstanding, this is not developing a set of holy sayings that irritate the people around you ("Give glory to God, brother"). It is a matter of soul-focus.

So there is no misunderstanding, we all have faith and we all choose where to place our faith. I recall talking to one very cute liberal and she told me she only placed her faith in peer-reviewed, scientific studies. Well, there are no peer reviewed studies on eternity; there are no peer-reviewed studies on death—other than the fact that it is inevitable. And if you are placing your faith in some man, or some man's opinion, then you had better be willing to take the responsibility for pointing your faith in that direction—because it is not your faith but the object of your faith which has the merit, or lack of same.

In the plan of God, the Bible is unequivocal: your eternal relationship with God is 100% dependent upon the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It depends not even 1% on what you have done or achieved.

So when you see the phrase, where this or that gives glory to God—that is because God is our proper focus—and Jesus Christ, His Son, is the only Way, the only Truth and the only Life—**no man comes to the Father but through Him** (John 14:6). "**For it is by Him that we have life and we move and exist; so also some of the wise men among you have said: 'Our lineage is from Him.'**" (Acts 17:28). God can be trusted; God's Word can be trusted.

This is what we have studied in Romans so far:

Rom 4:13–19 **For it was not through [obedience to] law [See 3:31] that the promise to Abraham or his descendants of inheriting the [new] world [kingdom] [was made], but through their being considered righteous because of faith [in the Revealed God]. For if those who are obedient to the law deserve an inheritance, [then their] faith [in the Revealed God] is for nothing, and God's promise is nullified. For the law brings [God's] wrath [i.e., because of man's failure to obey it perfectly], but where there is no law [which is being in the sphere of faith], there is no [liability for] sin. For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in the Revealed God], according to His unearned favor, so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by faith, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers], as it stands written, "I have made you the father of many nations" —in the presence of the God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he [Abraham] believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.**

There are two spheres: one of faith and one of law. In the sphere of law, we stand condemned; in the sphere of faith we are made righteous (our faith must be directed toward the Revealed God, Jesus Christ). Abraham, who exercised faith in the Revealed God and His promises, is our father, we who are of the faith. So Abraham is not just the father of the Jewish race, he is the father of all believers.

Furthermore, he had confidence in God when God promised him that he would be made the father of many nations, because God can call into existence that which does not exist. And Abraham had this confidence despite his own age, his sexual death, and the barrenness of his wife's womb.

Rom 4:20–21 **No distrust made him [Abraham] waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised.**

Abraham, despite having nothing but promises before him—no actual fulfillment for over 25 years—was strong in faith to God, and this faith gives glory to God, as Abraham was fully persuaded that God could and would do all that He promised.

Rom 4:22 **That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."**

One of the most quoted Old Testament passages in the New Testament is Genesis 15:6 (along with Psalm 110:1). Abraham's faith is his righteousness; because it is not the faith itself, which is a choice, but the object of the faith wherein is all the merit. The object of Abraham's faith is God, often known to him as the Angel of the Lord.

Here, Paul is not speaking of Abraham's faith giving him salvation righteousness; this is an experiential righteousness based upon his faith, which faith **gives glory to God** because Abraham **was fully convinced that God could do that which He promised**. This is faith built upon faith; this is faith in the experiential life of the believer.

Therefore, there is a salvation faith which Abraham exercised in the past, but his faith in God and in God's promises are another kind of faith, a faith which glorifies God. We know this as experiential righteousness or experiential sanctification.

Rom 4:23–24 **But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in Him Who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord.**

That faith is important is well-known to those in the Old Testament so that Paul can teach it in the New. Changing dispensations does not mean that everything is turned upside down; there are some changes in the way that God administers His household on earth. However, faith is always presented as superior to works, throughout all dispensations. And the object of faith is the key. Old Testament Jews were *not* saved by keeping the Law; they were saved by exercising faith in the Revealed Lord, which is exactly the same way that we are saved (if Jews were saved by keeping the Law, then what about Abraham, who did not have the Mosaic Law?). We believe in the Revealed Lord (Jesus Christ), just as Abraham did, and we are saved forever.

There is also a faith, exercised by the mature or maturing believer, toward Bible doctrine, which is an experiential faith, which glorifies God.

So, just in case you blinked and missed it, Paul is teaching the primacy of faith and the importance of the object of faith; Abraham believed God when it came to having a son, and God brought that to pass. His faith was vindicated; and the importance of his faith stands even to this day. Because Abraham believed and this was counted to him as righteousness, Paul is able to take this passage to use it today, to teach the same thing to us in the Church Age.

Now let's take a look at Hebrews 11, which is the *faith* chapter

Heb 11:11 **By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful Who had promised.**

Sarah had never conceived in 88 years. Sarah had been barren her entire life. And now, not only did she continue to be barren, but she was also barren simply due to her age. But Sarah had faith herself—something which is not really spoken of in the Old Testament. But the writer of Hebrews, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, knows that she also had faith in what God had promised. Her trust was in the God Who has promised her a son.

The verb translated *considered* here is *hêgeomai* (ἡγέομαι) [pronounced *hayg-EH-ohm-ah-ee*], which means 1) *to lead; 1a) to go before; 1b) to be a leader; 1b1) to rule, command; 1b2) to have authority over; 1b3) a prince, of regal power, governor, viceroy, chief, leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel, overseers or leaders of the churches; 1b4) used of any kind of leader, chief, commander; 1b5) the leader in speech, chief, spokesman; 2) to consider, deem, account, think*. Thayer Definitions only. Strong's #2233. It is the latter group of meanings which are pertinent. Whom does she **consider** faithful and trustworthy? The Revealed God. Towards Whom is her faith directed? Toward the Revealed Lord. She may have laughed when she first heard that she was going to become pregnant, but she did believe at some point after that.

How did Sarah view God? She saw Him as *pistos* (πιστός) [pronounced *pis-TOSS*], which means *faithful, trustworthy, dependable, worthy of trust; exhibiting fidelity; believing, confiding, trusting; credible*. Thayer Definitions: 1) *trusty, faithful; 1a) of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties; 1b) one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust; 1c) that can be relied on; 2) easily persuaded; 2a) believing, confiding, trusting; 2b) in the NT one who trusts in God's promises; 2b1) one who is convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead; 2b2) one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and author of salvation*. Strong's #4103. You will note the similarities to the Greek word *pistis* (previously studied).

Both Sarah and Abraham were both made fully aware when they would have a child and who the participants would be (themselves, as opposed to a surrogate like Hagar). Both Sarah and Abraham had faith in God and in what He had promised to do. The emphasis in the Old Testament, prior to conception, was on Sarah, because the emphasis on the birth of our Lord is the virgin birth. Therefore, throughout the Old Testament, the emphasis was on the Seed of the Woman (with Eve) and upon Sarah and God visiting her (you will recall that the text only spoke of God *visiting* Sarah before the birth of her son).

There is also a great power here, which Paul in Romans and the writer of Hebrews do not go into: Abraham and Sarah, a married couple, exercised faith in the same direction, toward the same things—toward the Revealed Lord and His promises. This is a great corporate witness, and is one of the great strengths of a good marriage. Recall when Jesus said, **“When 2 or 3 are gathered in My name, then there I am in the midst of them.”** This can be exploited (in a good way) by a married couple every time that they pray together or exercise their spiritual gifts together. A married couple going in the same direction, both maturing and exercising faith toward Bible doctrine, form a very powerful witness for God, and their shared prayers are powerful and effective.

Heb 11:12 **Therefore from one man [Abraham], and him as good as [sexually] dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.**

Here we have one of the fundamental themes of Scripture—out of death, God brings life. Abraham was sexually dead, but from him, there were descendants born, as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the grains of sand by the seashore (these are **hyperbole**, by the way).

From the death of Jesus Christ—His dying for our sins—God brings life to all men who believe in Him. From our spiritual death (we are all born spiritually dead), God brings life; we are born again. What this new life entails is the regeneration of our human spirit, so that we are able to take in correct information about God and store it (just as our souls take in information about the world around us, and we process and store that information as well). **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; former things passed away** [e.g., the control of the sin nature], **then suddenly new things** [the human spirit; the divine operating assets] **came into existence** (2Cor. 5:17; Brodie).

Heb 11:12 **Therefore from one man [Abraham], and him as good as [sexually] dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.**

That one man in v. 12 is Abraham; and Abraham is without a child by Sarah and he is too old to father a child by Sarah—he is as good as dead—and to him would be born descendants, as many as the stars of heaven and as many is the grains of sand at the seashore. The writer of Hebrews is not saying that Abraham is near to dying, he is saying that Abraham is sexually dead.

In order for this verse to be true, that first son had to be born to Abraham, and that was Isaac. Nothing that God promises Abraham can come to pass if there is no uniquely-born son.

There is something else which must be said at this juncture: when there is a New Testament passage which quotes or refers to an Old Testament, that is not all that can be said about that event in the Old Testament; nor is that the only way to understand or interpret that Old Testament event. We have already studied how the birth of Isaac parallels the birth of our Lord. This is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament. Paul does not spend a chapter explaining how the birth of Isaac foreshadows the birth of our Lord. God knows that believers long after the fact would be able to understand and explain such things. Furthermore, most of the work on that particular topic is quite recent. However, it is just as valid as Paul's teaching on the Old Testament (apart from the fact that, every word that Paul wrote was inspired by God the Holy Spirit).

Here is why Paul used the Old Testament as he did: there were not many who questioned the authority of the Old Testament in the time of Jesus. The pharisees and scribes tried on many occasions to distort the Old Testament teachings, but they recognized that the Old Testament was accurate and authoritative.

Today, this is no longer the case. Smarty-pants intellectuals have done everything in their power to lessen the authority and power of the Old Testament, including attacking the authorship of the Old Testament, and they have come up with the weirdest, most bizarre system to explain the various authors (the **JEPD** theories, which has been previously discussed). However, no matter how far out they go on these theological theories, which lead nowhere except away from the truth, they are stuck with the **parallels** between the **birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord**; the **parallels** between of offering of Isaac and the crucifixion of our Lord (that will be found in a future lesson). This kind of information, insofar as I know, has been developed fairly recently, and is quite detailed and persuasive. And no amount of weird theories about Old Testament authorship can explain away these parallels. The same thing is true of the many times we find **Jesus in the book of Genesis**, and the same thing is true when we examine the **remarkable things** in the book of Genesis. The end result for the believer today is, we have confidence that the Bible is not some random book; nor it is some really smart book—it is the Word of God. The things which are contained simply in the book of Genesis cannot be explained in any other way. So, just at the very time that mankind needs a few good reasons to have faith in the Bible as the Word of God, these reasons are provided by God (through His servants).

Most of these things have already been covered in one form or another in previous studies, but it is a good time to summarize them:

Reasons Why We Can Believe the Bible is the Word of God

1. The scientific evidence:
 - 1) The Big Bang theory is actually presented in the first sentence of the first chapter of Genesis.
 - 2) Man is made out of the chemicals of the ground—how did the author of Genesis know this?
 - 3) The Bible teaches that man can be cloned and this cloning can be modified.
2. The genetic evidence:
 - 1) There are a half-dozen linear genealogies found in the Bible that lead us directly from Adam to Jesus. These are the only linear genealogies found in the Bible and there are about a half-dozen different authors involved. How did they know? Most of them (with the exceptions of Matthew and Luke) recorded these genealogies long before the birth of Jesus. How did they know which lines to follow? And so there is no mistaking this, it is not just the important people of the Bible who are in this line. Moses is not in the line of Christ (but Joshua is).
 - 2) The **first linear genealogy** in the Bible contains the gospel message.
 - 3) Whether the Bible speaks of Eve through whom will come the Seed of the Woman or speaks of Sarah, and how God visits Sarah prior to the birth of Isaac, the emphasis is *always* upon the woman. Jesus is born of a virgin because, in this way, the sin nature is not passed down to Him (the sin nature is passed down through the man because Adam sinned knowingly; he was not deceived). How is it possible to have this aspect of Christian theology taught throughout the Bible when most Christians today do not even understand it?
3. The evidence of foreshadowing:
 - 1) Not only is the birth of Isaac one of the most important incidents of the book of Genesis, but all of the promises of God are based upon this birth. So it is with the birth and death on the cross of our Lord.
 - 2) There are **multiple parallels** between the **births of Isaac and Jesus**.
 - 3) There are multiple parallels between **the offering of Isaac and the offering of our Lord** on the cross for our sins. This will be covered when we get to Genesis 22.
 - 4) These are not the only instances of foreshadowing. I have never sat down to count them, but there must be at least **100 instances** where Jesus Christ is foreshadowed in the Old Testament. How does that happen in some ancient, random book?
4. The evidence of the consistency of Genesis with the thrust of the rest of the Word of God:
 - 1) When God credits Abraham with righteousness, this is based upon faith. This is fundamental to orthodox Christianity, and is not found in religion. In all religions, there is a quid pro quo. If you want to get into heaven, you had better do more than just believe in the doctrines of your faith.
 - 2) People argue about theology all the time. Even so-called Christian cults question the Trinity; and all cults require a mixture of faith and works for a person to stand justified before God. Yet, somehow, the authors of Genesis write that which is completely consistent with orthodox Christian theology.
 - 3) The idea that an innocent creature is killed to atone for sin is found in the 3rd and 4th chapters of Genesis.
 - 4) The concept of the Seed of the Woman is found in the 3rd chapter of Genesis.
 - 5) The Persons of Godhead and the essence of God—Genesis is consistent with everything found in the New Testament epistles.

This is merely a smattering of evidence. There are hundreds—and perhaps **thousands**—of books written on apologetics (reasoned arguments or writings in justification of the truth of the Bible or of the reality of Jesus Christ). The things listed above are simply a few things which we have already studied.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Because we will spend a great deal of time in the New Testament in this section, and that all of this fits together under the heading of, *The Son of the Slave-woman Persecutes the Son of the Free-woman*, we will keep this entire lesson together. These individual lessons tend to be 4 or 5 pages in length; and this lesson is about 9–10 pages—therefore, this counts as two lessons.

So far we have covered the first 7 verses of Genesis 21:

Gen 21:1–7 The LORD came to Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. Abraham named his son who was born to him--the one Sarah bore to him--Isaac. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me." She also said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." (HCSB)

When God told Abraham that he would have a son, Isaac was born. All of this was joyous to Sarah—it made her laugh—and all those who knew them laughed as well. This son was named Isaac, because that means laughter and that is the name God had designated for him. And Sarah kept telling everyone who would listen to her, “Who would have told Abraham that his wife would nurse a child [at her age]? [Who told them? God told them]. Therefore, I have given birth to Abraham’s son in his advanced age.”

However, there were two people who were not laughing with Sarah.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Hagar and Ishmael are Cast out of the Abrahamic Compound

I have made a few changes on Murai’s excellent work. ESV is used below.

Hajime Murai Organizes Genesis 21:8–21

Structure		ESV Text
A(21:8–11)	Abraham grieves at losing his child	And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son.
B(21:12–13)	The promises of God	But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."
C(21:14)	Abraham sends Hagar into the wilderness with bread and water	So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.
A'(21:15–16)	Hagar grieves, fearing that her child will die	When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.

Hajime Murai Organizes Genesis 21:8–21

Structure		ESV Text
B'(21:17–18)	The promises of God	And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation."
C'(21:19–21)	Hagar lives in the wilderness, the LORD gives water	Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

From http://www.valdes.titech.ac.jp/~h_murai/bible/01_Genesis_pericope_e.html accessed September 8, 2014.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so grows the child and so he is weaned and so makes Abraham a feast great in a day of a weaning of Isaac.

Genesis
21:8

So the child grew and was weaned. Therefore, Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

So the child grew and was weaned. On that day, Abraham prepared a great feast for Isaac.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so grows the child and so he is weaned and so makes Abraham a feast great in a day of a weaning of Isaac.
Targum of Onkelos	And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day when Izhak was weaned.
Latin Vulgate	And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast on the day of his weaning.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that his son Isaac was weaned.

Significant differences: The Latin leaves out Isaac's name.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	The boy grew and stopped nursing. On the day he stopped nursing, Abraham prepared a huge banquet.
Contemporary English V.	The time came when Sarah no longer had to nurse Isaac, and on that day Abraham gave a big feast.
Easy English	The baby grew and Sarah began to give solid food to him. So Abraham organised a big *feast on the day when Isaac stopped drinking milk from his mother.
Easy-to-Read Version	Isaac continued to grow. Soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party.
New Berkeley Version	The child grew big enough to be weaned [Usually on the fifth birthday.] and on Isaac's weaning day Abraham prepared a great feast.

New Life Bible	When the child grew old enough to stop nursing, Abraham made a special supper on that day.
New Living Translation	When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

International Standard V	<i>Hagar and Ishmael Leave</i> The child grew and eventually was weaned, so Abraham threw a tremendous banquet on the very day Isaac was weaned.
NIRV	Isaac grew. The time came for his mother to stop nursing him. On that day Abraham had a big dinner prepared.
Revised English Bible	The boy grew and was weaned, and on the day of his weaning, Abraham gave a great feast.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And when the child was old enough to be taken from the breast, Abraham made a great feast.
Conservapedia	The child grew up, and was weaned. Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.
The Expanded Bible	Hagar and Ishmael Leave Isaac grew, and when he became old enough to eat food [was weaned], Abraham gave a great feast [on the day of his weaning].
NET Bible®	The child grew and was weaned. Abraham prepared [Heb "made."] a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And the child grows and weans: and Abraham works a great banquet
Kaplan Translation	The child grew and was weaned. Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. This was probably when the child was about three years of age. Samuel served in the sanctuary from the time that he was weaned (1Sam. 1:22-28). A Hebrew mother is quoted in 2Maccabees 7:27 as saying to her son that she gave him "suck three years."
Concordant Literal Version	And growing up is the boy and being weaned. And making is Abraham a great feast on the day of the weaning of Isaac, his son. the day they wean Yischaq.
Fred Miller's Revised KJV	And the child grew and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the <i>same</i> day that Isaac was weaned.
Heritage Bible	And the child became large, and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day Isaac was weaned.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. So Abraham shared the grateful joy of his wife, making the occasion of his son's weaning a great festival, with the customary feast. This happened when Isaac was about three years old. This story reminds us of the greater miracle of the birth of Jesus, who also, but in a far more wonderful manner, was born contrary to the course of nature. Isaac, too, is a type of the believers of

all time. For just as he was born by virtue of the divine promise, so we are spiritual children of the promise, Romans 9:8; Galatians 4:28; 1Peter 1:23.

Syndein

And the child kept on growing, and was caused to be weaned. And Abraham manufactured {‘asah} a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Young’s Updated LT

And the lad grows [up] and is weaned, and Abraham makes a great banquet in the day of Isaac’s being weaned.

The gist of this verse: Abraham holds a big feast on the day that Isaac is weaned.

Genesis 21:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
gâdal (גָּדַל) [pronounced gaw-DAHL]	to be [become] great; to grow; to be greatly valued [celebrated, praised]; to twist together, to bind together	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #1431 BDB #152
yeled (יָלֵד) [pronounced YEH-led]	child, one born; son, boy, youth	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong’s #3206 BDB #409

Translation: So the child grew...

Isaac appears to be healthy, from the text, and he grows older (he is still a child).

Abraham is even more indulgent with this child than he was with Ishmael. He has attempted to intercede and have Ishmael to be the child of promise, but to no avail. It was not in God's plan for that to happen. God’s plan has to take into consideration the thoughts and acts of all those in the line of Abraham and Isaac.

And the child grew and was weaned (a graphic). Taken from [The Last Days Calender](#), accessed September 10, 2014. This was one of the few pieces of art that could be called *sweet*. Many portrayals of Sarah regarding the birth and young age of Isaac have her looking pretty long in the tooth. Abraham was concerned that she might be taken from him when they were in Gerar (and she was), which suggests that she was still reasonably attractive at her age (this was not simply a perception thing on Abraham’s side).



Genesis 21:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
gâmal (גמל) [pronounced gaw-MAHL]	<i>to be weaned; to receive [a reward, a blessing]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #1580 BDB #168

Translation: ...and was weaned.

The series of wâw consecutive followed by imperfect verbs indicates a series of chronological actions,⁴⁵ some of which may indicate continuous action, some of which may not. There will be a final day that Isaac nurses on breast milk, and that is the day spoken of here.

J. Vernon McGee speaks to this weaning: *This little fellow first lived by feeding on his mother's milk, but there came a day when he had to be weaned. Even this has a lesson for us. When mamma is getting the bottle ready for the little baby in the crib, everything in his entire body is working. He's got his feet up in the air, he's got his hands up in the air, and he's yelling at the top of his voice - he wants his bottle! "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1Peter 2:2). It is wonderful to be a new Christian with an appetite like that for the milk of the Word. But the day comes when you are ready to start growing up as a believer. Instead of just reading Psalm 23 and John 14 - wonderful as they are - try reading through the entire Bible. Grow up. Don't be a babe all of the time. Notice God's admonishment in Hebrews 5:13-14. "For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to those who are of full age ..." Grow up, my friend.*⁴⁶

Genesis 21:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâsâh (עשה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ʾAb ^e râhâm (אברהם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
mishteh (משׂתה) [pronounced mish ^e -TEH]	<i>a feast, a drink, a drinking bout, a party, a banquet</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4960 BDB #1059

⁴⁵ I should call this the Kukis rule of wâw consecutives with imperfect verbs.

⁴⁶ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014 and slightly edited to modernize the text.

Genesis 21:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
Together, these are literally translated <i>in the day</i> ; however, we may understand it to mean <i>in that day; in this very day; at once, presently; lately; by day; in the daytime; throughout the day; in this day, at this [that] time; now; before that</i> . These interpretations often depend upon <i>when</i> the action of the verb takes place.			
When followed by an infinitive, this can be rendered <i>in the day in which, in the day when, in the day that; when</i> .			
gâmal (גָּמַל) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHL</i>]	<i>to be weaned; to receive [a reward, a blessing]</i>	Niphal infinitive construct	Strong's #1580 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yis ^e châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yih^s-KHAWK</i>]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

Translation: Therefore, Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

The parents decided that there would be a day that Isaac no longer nurses, and on the day, Abraham prepares a great feast to celebrate this.

The NET Bible notes: *Children were weaned closer to the age of two or three in the ancient world, because infant mortality was high. If an infant grew to this stage, it was fairly certain he or she would live. Such an event called for a celebration, especially for parents who had waited so long for a child.*⁴⁷

Therefore, the celebration is, the child is old enough where Abraham and Sarah believe that he will live to be an adult. This is some discussion of the age that he is weaned by Clarke, suggesting⁴⁸ 3 years, 5 years and even 12 years. However, I think we can reasonably stay with age 2 or 3.⁴⁹

Genesis 21:8 So the child grew and was weaned. Therefore, Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

⁴⁷ From <http://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?Gen02.htm> Genesis 21:9 footnote. Accessed April 12, 2012.

⁴⁸ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:8.

⁴⁹ Gill discusses this and offers some evidence. But, I don't find it to be very important. Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:8.

Genesis 21:8 **So the child grew and was weaned. On that day, Abraham prepared a great feast for Isaac.** (Kukis paraphrase)

We go through various stages of growth in our lives, and one of those is the time that we stop taking mother's milk. Abraham celebrates this with a feast. One of the things which I have noticed, at least in the young life of those in the Jewish faith is, they mark off various stages of youth, one of them being the time in which a child is weaned. Today, Jewish tradition celebrates the circumcision and then the bar mitzvah (or bat mitzvah, for girls), which symbolizes a stage of young adulthood.

There is also the concept of the arc of a man's life, and there are events which are universal, or very nearly universal, in the life of every man (and woman). We all go through this stage as a child, completely dependent upon our parents—a dependence which continues for quite a long time. Isaac reaches that first stage, the first stage of a move from complete dependence to some independence from his mother, the day he is weaned.

And so sees Sarah son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, jesting [with Isaac, the son of hers].

Genesis
21:9

But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (the Egyptian [woman]), whom she had given birth to for Abraham, making sport with her son Isaac.

But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (this is the Egyptian woman whom had given birth to him for Abraham); and he was making fun of her son Isaac.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sees Sarah son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, jesting [with Isaac, the son of hers]. The text in brackets is found in the Greek but not in the Hebrew.
Targum of Onkelos	And Sarah observed the son of Hagar the Mizreitha, whom she bare to Abraham, mocking <u>with a strange worship, and bowing to the Lord.</u>
Jerusalem targum	And Sarah observed the son of Hagar the Mizreitha, whom she bare to Abraham, <u>doing evil works which are not fitting to be done, mocking in a strange worship.</u>
Latin Vulgate	And when Sara had seen the son of Agar, the Egyptian, playing with Isaac, her son, <u>she said to Abraham.</u>
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Sarah, having seen the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who was born to Abraham, sporting with Isaac her son,...

Significant differences: Both targums have a second half that is much different than the Hebrew.

The Syriac actually matches the Hebrew exactly. The Latin and Greek add some additional text; and there is even more text in the Latin, which simply belongs with the next verse. The additional text appears to be warranted.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	One day, Sarah noticed Hagar's son Ishmael playing, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that Egyptian slave woman and her son! I don't want him to inherit anything. It should all go to my son."
Easy English	Sarah saw Abraham's other son. Hagar the *Egyptian had given birth to that son for Abraham. That other son was laughing at Isaac.

Easy-to-Read Version	Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who had had Abraham's first son. Sarah saw Hagar's son playing. {Sarah became upset.}
Good News Bible (TEV)	One day Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, was playing with Sarah's son Isaac.
<i>The Message</i>	One day Sarah saw the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, poking fun at her son Isaac.
New Berkeley Version	But Sarah noticed the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had borne Abraham, teasing [The Septuagint has, "laughing at her son Isaac."].
New Century Version	But Sarah saw Ishmael making fun of Isaac. (Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave.)
New Life Bible	Hagar And Ishmael Are Sent Away But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian make fun of Isaac. Abraham was the father of Hagar's son.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	However, Sarah noticed Hagar's son (the one who was born to Abraham through the Egyptian [woman]) playfully making fun of their son Isaac.
Ancient Roots Translinear <i>God's Word™</i>	Sarah saw the son Hagar the Egyptian begot for Abraham laughing. Sarah saw that Abraham's son by Hagar the Egyptian was laughing at Isaac.
International Standard V	Nevertheless, when Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian-whom Hagar had borne to Abraham-making fun of Isaac [The Heb. lacks <i>of Isaac</i>], she told Abraham, "Throw out this slave girl, along with her son, because this slave's son will never be a co-heir with my son Isaac!" V. 10 is included for context.
New American Bible	Sarah noticed the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing with her son Isaac;...
NIRV	But Sarah saw Ishmael making fun of Isaac. Ishmael was the son Hagar had by Abraham. Hagar was Sarah's servant from Egypt.
New Jerusalem Bible	Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac.
New Simplified Bible	Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was laughing in mockery.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian playing with Isaac.
Bullinger Bible	And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, <i>laughing and mocking again</i> .
Conservapedia	And Sarah watched as the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, making fun.
The Expanded Bible	But Sarah saw ·Ishmael [the son of Hagar the Egyptian] ·making fun of Isaac [laughing; or playing].
NET Bible®	But Sarah noticed [Heb "saw."] the son of Hagar the Egyptian — the son whom Hagar had borne to Abraham — <i>mocking</i> [The Piel participle used here is from the same root as the name "Isaac." In the Piel stem the verb means "to jest; to make sport of; to play with," not simply "to laugh," which is the meaning of the verb in the Qal stem. What exactly Ishmael was doing is not clear. Interpreters have generally concluded that the boy was either (1) mocking Isaac (cf. NASB, NIV, NLT) or (2) merely playing with Isaac as if on equal footing (cf. NAB, NRSV). In either case Sarah saw it as a threat. The same participial form was used in Gen 19:14 to describe how some in Lot's family viewed his attempt to warn them of impending doom. It also appears later in Gen 39:14, 17, where Potiphar accuses Joseph of mocking them.] [Mocking. Here Sarah interprets Ishmael's actions as being sinister. Ishmael probably did not take the younger child seriously and Sarah saw this as a

threat to Isaac. Paul in Gal 4:29 says that Ishmael persecuted Isaac. He uses a Greek word that can mean "to put to flight; to chase away; to pursue" and may be drawing on a rabbinic interpretation of the passage. In Paul's analogical application of the passage, he points out that once the promised child Isaac (symbolizing Christ as the fulfillment of God's promise) has come, there is no room left for the slave woman and her son (who symbolize the Mosaic law).].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom Hagar had borne to Avraham, making fun of Yitz'chak;...
exeGesés companion Bible	And Sarah sees the son of Hagar the Misrayim, whom she birthed to Abraham, ridiculing:...
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, making merry.
Kaplan Translation	But Sarah saw the son that Hagar had born to Abraham playing [(Ibn Ezra; Yov'loth 17:4). Others have 'scoffing' or 'sporting' (Sforno; Rashi). The verse may also be read, 'Sarah saw that the son....was a scoffer' (Hirsch).].
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Sarah saw the son of Haġar the Mitsrite, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking [Isaac].
Concordant Literal Version	And seeing is Sarah the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she bore for Abraham, making fun of Isaac her son.
English Standard V. – UK	But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing [Possibly laughing in mockery].
Heritage Bible	And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, whom she had born to Abraham, laughing <i>at Isaac</i> .
Kretzmann's Commentary	Hagar and Ishmael Cast Forth And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. It was a jeering laughter, a sneer, which Ishmael affected, perhaps as early as the festival of weaning. Unbelief, jealousy, and pride were aroused in Ishmael by the fact that Isaac was plainly the heir of the household. The mimicking, mocking, ridiculing on the part of Ishmael against Isaac could not long remain hidden from Sarah.
New King James Version	And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.
Syndein	{Verses 9-13: Ishmael's Laughter} And Sarah kept on perceiving {ra'ah} the son of Hagar the Egyptian {Ishmael}, which she had born unto Abraham, intensively laughing/'Isaac'ing {tsachaq}.
Young's Updated LT	And Sarah sees the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she has borne to Abraham, mocking.

The gist of this verse: Sarah observes Ishmael, the son of Hagar, mocking her son.

Genesis 21:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Hâgâr (חַגָּר) [pronounced haw-GAWR]	<i>flight, fugitive; transliterated Hagar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1904 BDB #212
Mits ^e rîy (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits ^e -REE]	<i>Egyptian, of Egypt; a Mitsrite, or inhabitant of Mitsrajim</i>	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #4713 BDB #596

Translation: But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (the Egyptian [woman]),...

Sarah is keeping her eyes open during this celebratory occasion, and she notices the son of Hagar, Ishmael. Abraham first tried to fulfill the covenant from God through him.

The story of Abraham and Hagar is found in **Genesis 16** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In fact, if you will recall, this was originally Sarah's idea, but which fell flat with God. Even when God was assuring Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah, he called to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You." But God looks on the inside of a man, and there was not enough inside Ishmael to perpetuate the Jewish race, who would be God's people. Furthermore, God had intended that Sarah to be the mother of the Jewish family.

Genesis 21:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 21:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾAb̄erâhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
tsâchaq (צַחַק) [pronounced <i>tsaw-KHAHKH</i>]	<i>to jest; to make sport of; to toy with; to make a toy of; to play</i>	Piel participle	Strong's #6711 BDB #850

Translation: ...whom she had given birth to for Abraham, making sport...

Ishmael would be about 16 or 17 at this time (Ishmael was 14 when Isaac was born), and he was Abraham's son all of this time. It is obvious that Abraham had doted on him and spent a great deal of time with him. So, this new son was emotionally a problem for Ishmael. Whereas, he should have responded as an adult (he was a young adult at this time), he did not—he responded like a spoiled child. Although there are several meanings for the verb above, it seems to be clear that he was treating Isaac derisively. He was not a protective big brother; he was an antagonized older brother, jealous of the attention that he had lost.

Interestingly enough, the verb above, *to make sport, to jest, to toy with*; is very similar to Isaac's name in the Hebrew. What this could suggest is, Ishmael was making fun of Isaac's name. Now, this is somewhat daft for a young adult to be making fun of a 3 year old child. Paul refers to Ishmael's laughter as *persecution* in Galatians 4:29 (which will be **studied in great detail** in this chapter).

Some commentators⁵⁰ state that this is the beginning of the Egyptian persecution of Israel, but I just don't buy into that at all.

*Barnes: His laugh was therefore the laugh of derision. Rightly was the child of promise named Isaac, the one at whom all laugh with various feelings of incredulity, wonder, gladness, and scorn.*⁵¹

*John Calvin: [Ishmael's laughter] was not a childish and innoxious laughter, appears from the indignation of Sarah. It was, therefore a malignant expression of scorn, by which the forward youth manifested his contempt for his infant brother.*⁵²

*Poole: And this carriage proceeding from a most envious and malicious disposition, and being a sufficient indication of further mischief intended to him, if ever he should have opportunity, it is no wonder it is called persecution (Galatians 4:29).*⁵³

Pink: [I]t was the birth of Isaac which revealed the true character of Ishmael. We know practically nothing of Ishmael's life before the birth of Isaac, but as soon as this child of promise made his appearance the real nature of Hagar's son was made manifest. He may have been very quiet and orderly before, but as soon as the child of God's quickening-power came on the scene, Ishmael showed what he was by persecuting and mocking him. Here again the type holds good. It is not until the believer receives the new nature that he discovers the real character of the old. It is not until we are born again we learn what a horrible and vile thing the flesh is. And the discovery is a painful one: to many it is quite unsettling. To those who have supposed that regeneration is an improving of the

⁵⁰ See *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 21:9.

⁵¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:9–21.

⁵² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Genesis 21:9.

⁵³ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:9.

*old nature, the recognition of the awful depravity of the flesh comes as a shock and often destroys all peace of soul, for the young convert quickly concludes that, after all, he has not been born again. The truth is that the recognition of the true character of the flesh and a corresponding abhorrence of it, is one of the plainest evidences of our regeneration, for the unregenerate man is blind to the vileness of the flesh. The fact that I have within me a conflict between the natural and the spiritual is the proof there are two natures present, and that I find the Ishmael-nature "persecuting" the Isaac-nature is only to be expected. That the Ishmael-nature appears to me to be growing worse only goes to prove that I now have capacity to see its real character, just as the real character of Ishmael was not revealed until Isaac was born.*⁵⁴

Bear in mind that Ishmael could have understood that he was out and Isaac was in; and that Isaac would inherit the lion's share of Abraham's estate; however, he should have also understood that this is God's will.

The Greek adds the text below, which I believe was lost from the original Hebrew.

Genesis 21:9c Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
meta (μετά) [pronounced meht-AH]	<i>with, among, in the company of, in the midst of</i>	preposition with the genitive	Strong's #3326
Isaak (Ἰσαάκ) [pronounced ee-sah-AHK]	<i>to laugh; laughter; transliterated Isaac</i>	proper singular noun	Strong's #2464
tou (τοῦ) [pronounced tu]	<i>of the; from the, [away, out] from the; from the source of; by the; than the</i>	masculine singular definite article, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #3588
huios (υἱός, οὔ, ό) [pronounced hwee-OSS]	<i>son, child, descendant; pupil; follower</i>	masculine singular noun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #5207
autês (αὐτῆς) [pronounced ow-TAYC]	her, hers; of her; from her	3 rd person feminine singular; ablative/genitive case	Strong's #846

Translation: ...with her son Isaac.

The Greek adds that this antagonism was directed toward little Isaac. Now, if Ishmael is antagonistic toward Isaac at 3 years old, imagine how bad this could get in the next 5 or 10 years. Sarah observed his behavior and was concerned for Isaac's safety.

Genesis 21:9 But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (the Egyptian [woman]), whom she had given birth to for Abraham, making sport with her son Isaac. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:9 But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (this is the Egyptian woman whom had given birth to him for Abraham); and he was making fun of her son Isaac. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian (whom she had borne to Abraham) mocking her son Isaac.

⁵⁴ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

The last few words of this verse are not found in the Hebrew; they are, however, found in the Greek text, and appropriately added (there are several instances of phrases and even entire sentences which have been dropped out of the preserved Hebrew text which were preserved in the Greek text).⁵⁵

Recall that Abraham, at the insistence of Sarah, had relations with her slave woman, Hagar, and Hagar bore Abraham a son, Ishmael (Genesis 16). This son would have been about 16 or 17 by this time—a particularly obnoxious time in any person's life—and he was being quite obnoxious here, mocking his recently weaned half-brother. The idea is, there was no familial love exhibited; Hagar and Ishmael did not share in this celebration; Ishmael mocked the recently-weaned son. Hagar, through her son, would have been the heir to all that was Abraham's, and Abraham was a very rich man (Genesis 13:2). She had, in her own mind, material stability with her son as the only heir of Abraham. However, this son Isaac changed everything. Hagar's 401k accounts were suddenly worthless. Her stock portfolio had crashed. Hagar went from having a rather comfortable retirement to having nothing. There is no doubt that her attitude toward Isaac overflowed to her son and impacted him.

Despite all of the promises that God made to Abraham, it is likely that Hagar and Ishmael doubted them; and Ishmael would have been Abraham's natural heir (and Abraham had a grand fortune). Although we read about Hagar and Ishmael in the New Testament, at no time do we hear about their great faith in God's promises to Abraham. Therefore, a son by Abraham's wife was not a welcome sight to Hagar or to Ishmael. This birth was no blessed event to them; this celebration of his being weaned did not give them any happiness. Consequently, in their own minds, they had nothing about which to celebrate. This ended their financial security. It was as if they had gone to their well of savings, and found out that every company in which they had invested went broke, and all they had were baskets-full of worthless stock certificates.

For 13 years after Ishmael had been born, as Abraham and Sarah got older and older, Hagar saw her position as heir through Ishmael grow more and more secure. And she would have been heir to great wealth. And then Isaac is born, and this meant that she would have been left with a comparative pittance; therefore, her attitude toward Isaac was not one of shared happiness. No doubt that Ishmael, even as a young teen, heard about her true feelings about Isaac, which were anything but warm and joyous. So, like many teens, the opinion of his mother became his opinion.

We do not know what words were spoken. Perhaps Hagar said, "If not for this little boy, you, Ishmael, would be heir to all that is Abraham's." Whatever was said, Hagar's dislike of this new son became Ishmael's dislike as well. The birth of Isaac changed everything for them.

V. 9 reads: [But Sarah saw the son of Hagar \(this is the Egyptian woman whom had given birth to him for Abraham\); and he was making fun of her son Isaac.](#) Just as there is a natural conflict between the two sons of Abraham, so there is the natural conflict between our two natures.

J. Vernon McGee: The coming of this little boy Isaac into the home sure did produce a great deal of difficulty. We find that the boy who was the son of Hagar, Ishmael, was mocking. We begin now to see the nature and the character of Ishmael. Up to this point, he seems to be a pretty nice boy, but now, with the appearance of this other son in the family, Ishmael really shows his true colors. This is an illustration, by the way, of the fact that a believer has two natures. Until you are converted, you have an old nature, and that old nature controls you. You do what you want to do. As the old secular song put it, you are "doing what comes naturally." What you do that comes naturally is not always the nicest sort of thing. But when you are born again, you receive a new nature. And when you receive a new nature, that is where the trouble always begins. Paul writes in the seventh chapter of Romans of the battle going on between the old nature and the new nature: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil; which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:19). That is, the new nature doesn't want to, but the old nature wants to do it, and the old nature is in control. The time comes when you have to make a decision as to which nature you are going to live by. You must make a determination in this matter of yielding to the Lord. You either have to permit the Holy Spirit to move in your life, or else you have to go through life controlled by the flesh. There is no third alternative for the child of God. The son of the

⁵⁵ The science of making such a determination is known as textual criticism.

bondwoman must be put out. That is exactly what we have here in Genesis: the son of the bondwoman Hagar had to be put out.⁵⁶

Arthur Pink explains this in his own vocabulary: *[T]he coming of Isaac into Abraham's household aroused opposition and produced a conflict. "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking" (Gen. 21:9). In the epistle to the Galatians we are shown the dispensational meaning and application of this, and there we read, "But as then he that was born after the flesh (Ishmael) persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. 4:29); but it is with the individual application of this type that we are now concerned. Ishmael exemplifies the one born after the flesh: Isaac the one born after the Spirit. When Isaac was born the true character of Ishmael was manifested; and so when we are born again and receive the new nature, the old nature, the flesh, then comes out in its true colors. Just as there were two sons in Abraham's household, the one the product of nature, the other the gift of God and the outworking of Divine power, each standing for a totally different principle, so in the believer there are two natures which are distinct and diverse. And just as there was a conflict between Ishmael and Isaac, so the flesh in us lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh (Galatians 5:17).*⁵⁷

To match the type, Ishmael does not become a better man when Isaac is born. He does not look at Abraham, Sarah and Isaac and think, "Okay, no problem. This is God's plan; I will just go with it." Ishmael became antagonistic toward Isaac. It is unlikely that all of this came from Ishmael by himself; it is likely that Hagar helped him develop some of his anger (which can certainly be done with a young person). But, seeing this from what it all represents, Ishmael plays his role as we would expect—he becomes antagonistic toward Isaac, even though Isaac is, for all intents and purposes, an innocent child.

Isaac's name is built upon the word for *laughter*.

Laughing with Isaac

1. Isaac's name is closely associated with the verb *to laugh*.
2. When Abraham is about 100 years old, and his wife is 90, God tells Abraham that he will father a son by her. Abraham thought that this was quite funny and laughed. Genesis 17:17
3. Because Abraham laughs, God said, "You will name your child *he laughs*." Genesis 17:18
4. Later, Sarah overhears the Revealed God telling Abraham that he would father a child by Sarah, and that this would happen quite soon, and she laughed within herself at such a thing. No doubt, there was some skepticism in this laugh. God called her on this. Genesis 18:12–15
5. After Isaac was born, Sarah spoke of all those who hear of this birth as sharing with her the laughter of such an amazing occurrence, both of the parents being so old. Genesis 21:6
6. In this final connection, where Ishmael is said to *mock, laugh out, deride* Isaac; the verb is a cognate of Isaac's name; however, it is in the Piel stem, which is the intensive stem. The implication is, Ishmael is not laughing and having fun with baby Isaac, but he apparently has ill motives toward the boy, who would take away his inheritance.
7. Ishmael did not *yitz'chaq-liy (laugh with her)*; he *m'tzachëq Yitz'chäq (he mocked Isaac)*.¹
8. When Sarah observes this, she tells Abraham to cast Hagar and Ishmael out of their compound. Isaac's rightful inheritance is a key issue, and what Sarah observes makes her worried for him. Genesis 21:9–10

There are a variety of emotions which can be expressed by laughter—delight, derision, joy, skepticism, and the simple response to something which sounds quite funny. All of these emotions are associated with the birth of Isaac. One might reasonably say that these are the varied human responses to the birth of Jesus as well.

¹ Taken, in part, from Leupold, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxiii_1.html accessed September 8, 2014.

⁵⁶ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014.

⁵⁷ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014 (slightly edited).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

What Sarah does next may seem harsh, but, like any mother, she was going to protect her son.

And so she says to Abraham, “Cast out the maid the this, and [cast out] her son; for will not possess a son of the maid the this with my son, with Isaac.”

Genesis
21:10

Consequently, she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave-woman and her son, for the son of this slave-woman will not inherit with my son Isaac.”

Consequently, she said to Abraham, “Throw this slave-woman out along with her son. No son of a slave-woman will inherit along side my son, Isaac.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she says to Abraham, “Cast out the maid the this, and [cast out] her son; for will not possess a son of the maid the this with my son, with Isaac.”
Targum of Onkelos	And she said to Abraham, Cast out this handmaid and her son: for it is not possible for the son of this handmaid to inherit with my son; and he <u>to make war with</u> Izhak.
Latin Vulgate	Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Therefore she said to Abraham, Expel this maidservant and her son; for the son of this maidservant shall not be heir with my son Isaac.
Septuagint (Greek)	...that she said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not inherit with my son Isaac.
Significant differences:	The targum has <i>to make war with</i> ; which is not in the Hebrew text. The verb I translate <i>to possess</i> can also mean <i>to inherit</i> .

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Easy English	So Sarah said to Abraham, ‘Send away this woman that is a slave. And send away her son too. That son of a female slave shall not *inherit with my son, Isaac.’
Easy-to-Read Version	Sarah said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. Send them away! When we die, our son Isaac will get everything we have. I don’t want that slave woman’s son sharing those things with my son Isaac!”
Good News Bible (TEV)	Sarah saw them and said to Abraham, “Send this slave and her son away. The son of this woman must not get any part of your wealth, which my son Isaac should inherit.”
<i>The Message</i>	She told Abraham, “Get rid of this slave woman and her son. No child of this slave is going to share inheritance with my son Isaac!”
New Century Version	So Sarah said to Abraham, “Throw out this slave woman and her son. Her son should not inherit anything; my son Isaac should receive it all.”
New Life Bible	So Sarah said to Abraham, “Put this woman servant and her son out of your home. The son of this woman servant will never get any of the riches of the family as will my son Isaac.”
New Living Translation	So she turned to Abraham and demanded, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won’t have it!”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So she told AbraHam: 'Throw this slave woman and her son out, because I won't have the son of this slave receive an inheritance with my son, IsaAc.'
Ancient Roots Translinear	She said to Abraham, "Expel this maidservant and her son: For the son of this maidservant is not heir with my son, Isaac!"
God's Word™	She said to Abraham, "Get rid of this slave and her son, because this slave's son must never share the inheritance with my son Isaac."
International Standard V	...she told Abraham, "Throw out this slave girl, along with her son, because this slave's son will never be a co-heir with my son Isaac!"
New American Bible	...so she demanded of Abraham: "Drive out that slave and her son! No son of that slave is going to share the inheritance with my son Isaac!" Jgs 11:2; Gal 4:30.
NIRV	Sarah said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman. Get rid of her son. The slave woman's son will never have a share of the family's property with my son Isaac."
New Jerusalem Bible	'Drive away that slave-girl and her son,' she said to Abraham, 'this slave-girl's son is not to share the inheritance with my son Isaac.'
New Simplified Bible	She said to Abraham: »Get rid of that slave woman and her son.«

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	So she said to Abraham, Send away that woman and her son: for the son of that woman is not to have a part in the heritage with my son Isaac.
Conservapedia	So she told Abraham, "Drive this slave woman and her son away from here! The son of this slave will not share the estate with my son! Not with Isaac!"
The Expanded Bible	So Sarah said to Abraham, ".Throw [Drive] out this slave woman and her son. Her son should not inherit anything; my son Isaac should receive it all [Gal. 4:21-5:1]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and said to Abraham, "Drive out my maid and her son, for the son of this slave shall not be an inheritor with my son Isaac."
HCSB	So she said to Abraham, "Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a co-heir with my son Isaac!"
NET Bible®	So she said to Abraham, "Banish [Heb "drive out." The language may seem severe, but Sarah's maternal instincts sensed a real danger in that Ishmael was not treating Isaac with the proper respect.] that slave woman and her son, for the son of that slave woman will not be an heir along with my son Isaac!"
NIV, ©2011	...and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	...and she says to Abraham, Expel this maid and her son: for the son of this maid supersedes not my son - with Yischaq.
Kaplan Translation	She said to Abraham, 'Drive away this slave together with her son. The son of this slave will not share the inheritance with my son Isaac!'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is she to Abraham, "Drive out this maidservant an her son, for not shall he enjoy the tenancy--the son of this maidservant--with my son, with Isaac!"
English Standard Version	So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac."
Green's Literal Translation	And she said to Abraham, Drive away this slave-girl and her son, for the son of this slave-girl shall not inherit with my son, with Isaac.
Heritage Bible	And she said to Abraham, Drive out this maidservant, and her son, because the son of this maidservant shall not hold possession with my son, with Isaac.

King James 2000 Version	Therefore 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.
Kretzmann's Commentary	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. This was not a matter of petty jealousy, but was spoken in agreement with the promise of the Lord. Till now Hagar had been suffered in the house of Abraham, but Sarah's demand was that the slave be driven forth, that Abraham renounce all connection with her and her son.
Syndein	Therefore she kept on saying to Abraham, " 'Drive away/'Cast out' this bondwoman and her son. For the son of this bondwoman shall not keep on being heir with my son, even with Isaac."
Updated Bible Version 2.11	Therefore she said to Abraham, Cast out this slave and her son. For the son of this slave will not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.
World English Bible	Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this handmaid and her son! For the son of this handmaid will not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."
Young's Updated LT	And she says to Abraham, "Cast out this handmaid and her son; for the son of this handmaid has no possession with my son—with Isaac."

The gist of this verse: Sarah demands that her slave girl and her son be sent away.

Genesis 21:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Abêrâhâm (אָבְרָהָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
gârash (גָּרַשׁ) [pronounced gaw-RASH]	<i>to expel, to cast out, to throw out, to drive out [away]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #1644 BDB #176
'âmâh (אָמָה) [pronounced aw-MAW]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #519 BDB #51
zô'th (זֹאת) [pronounced zoth]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb; with the definite article	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 21:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Consequently, she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave-woman and her son,..."

Sarah tells her husband to send Hagar and Ishmael packing. There are some things to notice here: Sarah is ordering Abraham to do something, and not even to polite preposition is used (*unto Abraham*). So, this suggests that Sarah is falling prey to the weakness of her old sin nature, which is ordering Abraham around.

There is a great deal of emotion involved. You will note the sign of the direct object with *son* but not with *this slave-woman*. Properly, the direct object would placed in front of each of them. Just in front of *her son* suggests that, she added those few words after a pause, and threw in the untranslated sign of the direct object so that Abraham knew that this applied to Ishmael as well; or it just indicates that Sarah is emotionally flustered, operating on her emotions, and puts together a slightly sloppy sentence.

Hagar and Ishmael Banished by Abraham Verhaghen (1728-1811) (graphic). From [Turning the Tide](#), accessed September 9, 2014. Ishmael is supposed to be 16 or 17 years of age; and he should be bigger and taller than his mother Hagar. However, I have not found a single painting or picture which depicts that. At the same time, Isaac should be around three years of age.



Several commentators discuss how this verb *cast out* can also refer to a divorce, and that this was a sort of divorce. The problem with that approach is, two passages where this word means *divorced* (Leviticus 21:7, 14), the verb is in the Qal passive participle. This is a Piel imperative. The different stem can change the meaning of a verb considerably. The Piel is the intensive stem. So, *to cast out*, *to throw out* are more legitimate understandings of this verb than *to divorce*.

Two things will happen as a result of the use of this verb: (1) Hagar will have her freedom from Abraham (which may not be something that she wants); and (2) Hagar will not inherit, through her son, the riches of Abraham. Furthermore, these may not be things which Abraham wants.

Genesis 21:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Genesis 21:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lô' (לו' or לא') [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yârash (רָשָׁה) [pronounced yaw-RASH]	<i>to possess, to take possession of, to occupy a geographical area [by driving out the previous occupants], to take possession of anyone [or their goods]; to inherit, to possess; to expel, to drive out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3423 BDB #439
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'âmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced aw-MAW]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #519 BDB #51
zô'th (זֹה) [pronounced zoth]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb; with the definite article	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
'îm (עִם) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'îm (עִם) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Yis ^e châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced yih ^s -KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

Translation: ...for the son of this slave-woman will not inherit with my son Isaac.”

Sarah has observed Hagar, Ishmael and their response to Isaac being born. It is hard to tell if Sarah, after long consideration, just allowed this to build up, and she suddenly blows a gasket here; or if she was looking for a reason to throw them out, and found it.

Genesis 21:10 [Consequently, she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave-woman and her son, for the son of this slave-woman will not inherit with my son Isaac.”](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:10 [Consequently, she said to Abraham, “Throw this slave-woman out along with her son. No son of a slave-woman will inherit along side my son, Isaac.”](#) (Kukis paraphrase)

What is clear is, there has been antagonism between Sarah and Hagar. That is to be expected, as Hagar bore a son to Abraham. It does not matter that it was Sarah's idea—as has been discussed before—it was a bad idea. And this is one of the times that Abraham should have said, “Honey, I am not going to do this.”

Matthew Henry: *Note, By abusing our privileges we forfeit them. Those that know not when they are well off, in such a desirable place as Abraham's family, deserve to be cashiered, and to be made to know the worth of mercies by the want of them.*⁵⁸

It is quite clear that Abraham is very attached to his son, as, when God was making promises to Abraham, Abraham proposed, “Oh that Ishmael might walk before You!” Ishmael is also Abraham’s firstborn, even though he is not Sarah’s son. This would make inheritance difficult to determine, as the lion’s share usually falls upon the firstborn son.

In many circumstances, a personal maid becomes a part of the family. Although she obviously does not hold the place of a wife, she could be nearly as important and nearly as authoritative. However, that has never occurred here. There was friction between Sarah and Hagar since the conception of Ishmael, and that wound never healed.

Sarah had never overcome her feelings about Hagar and about Ishmael. Those were 16 or so long years where Hagar, an inferior slave, bore to Abraham a son, which Sarah had not been able to do. This combined with her jealousy over Abraham having slept with Hagar (even though it was Sarah's idea) made it impossible for Sarah to live under the same roof with Hagar.

Surprisingly few commentators⁵⁹ recognize that inheritance is a key issue in this narrative, despite the fact that it is clearly stated here by Sarah. For the past 16 or 17 years, Hagar and Ishmael believed that they would inherit the fortune of Abraham. Ishmael is, after all, Abraham’s only son—until Isaac, of course. So, no doubt they made plans (well, Hagar made plans; Ishmael was too young to really understand the situation fully). Hagar and Ishmael put all of the 401k plan into the inheritance from Abraham; because as Abraham got older and older, along with his wife, then it should be clear that Abraham is not going to father any children.

Sarah, with her natural child Isaac, is not going to see her husband’s inheritance given to some slave-woman and her son.

However, once Isaac came along, then things changed rapidly. Once Isaac was born, Ishmael knew that Isaac was the son of promise and that he was just the son of a slave. He realizes that he will never be anything more than he is right now.⁶⁰ Ishmael has gone from heir to the richest man in Palestine to the son of a slave woman. Although it happened almost overnight, Ishmael has had time to think about this for 3 years (and his mother, Hagar, is no doubt, venting some of her own displeasure in his ear).

While Ishmael was young, and separation from the Abraham compound would be too difficult for Hagar and Ishmael, God required Abraham to keep them there.

At this time, even though Sarah demanded this separation possibly due to mental attitude sins, God required the separation anyway. Ishmael was a gentile and Isaac was a Jew. Abraham will have but one Jewish son, Isaac. His son Ishmael and his other sons and all of their descendants will all be Gentiles.

Now, even though Sarah is operating from emotion, that does not mean that such a separation is inevitable. Ishmael is a young adult now, so this is quite different now than it was when Hagar was just pregnant with Ishmael.

Application: There is a right time and a wrong time for a thing to happen. You may have an opportunity to leave your job for a better job, and you reject this notion for a number of different reasons. However, this exact same offer could emerge 10 years later, and it is the right time to take the offer. As believers in this world, we do not live in a stagnant pond. There is a time for us to remain the same and there is a time for us to change; there is

⁵⁸ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:14–21.

⁵⁹ There are notable exceptions, like Thomas Constable, writing: *Ishmael was a potential rival to Isaac's inheritance.* <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014. The importance is spoken of clearly in the [Sermon Notebook](#), accessed September 9, 2014.

⁶⁰ Two of these statements came from the [Sermon Notebook](#), accessed September 9, 2014.

a time to stay and a time to go. Before, it was the wrong time for Hagar to go; now it is the right time. What has changed? Ishmael is now old enough to look out for them. He will not appear to be mature enough at first, but he will grow up in a hurry.

Application: Note that this separation, a long time coming and inevitable, takes place, despite Sarah being controlled by her emotions and ordering Abraham about. My point being, Abraham needs to consider the rightness or the wrongness of Sarah's demand, apart from her own emotional state. When you hear something from someone else, you do not dismiss it immediately because they are in an emotional state or they are a bleeding heart liberal, or they are a Christian who has been out of fellowship for the past 20 years. You listen to the content and make a judgment based upon the content.

Paul makes an unusual application of this verse: **But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave-woman and her son; for in no way shall the son of the slave-woman inherit with the son of the free woman."** (Galatians 4:30). Paul is teaching by analogy. Hagar is like the Mosaic Law, which condemns us. When we have seen the grace of God, we put aside the Law and live by grace, just as the true inheritance of Abraham will go through Isaac. Isaac represents grace; Hagar represents the Law. After tasting the grace of God in salvation, we do not return to the Law in order to be perfect or mature. We cast out the Law as a means of spiritual growth.

Here is Paul's entire argument: Gal 4:21–31 (ESV) **Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband." Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.** Isaiah 54:1 and Genesis 21:10 are paraphrased by Paul.

The Jews were enslaved to the Law and the Law could do nothing but condemn man (now, the Mosaic Law is very useful for learning and understanding the laws of divine establishment, but that is not the topic that Paul is on). In the present-day Jerusalem (present-day for Paul), Rome was in charge. The Jews were under the Romans. However, this is not true of the eternal Jerusalem, where Jesus Christ, the Son of David, will reign. Just as the Jews should hope for being ruled over by David's Greater Son, so should believers in the Church Age desire to understand and execute the spiritual life for them.

First of all, the Mosaic Law will be the Law that God dictates to Moses on Mount Sinai, after Moses leads 2 million Jews out of slavery. These Jews will all go to Mount Sinai and Moses will go and commune with God near the top of that mountain, and he will return to the Jews with the Law of God (often call the Mosaic Law) for Israel.

The Mosaic Law had many purposes. It organized Israel into a national entity, and gave it laws and regulations which would preserve and prosper nation Israel. For us in the Church Age, this is a wonderful basis for the laws of a client nation. The more in step that we are with the Ten Commandments, for instance, the greater our nation will be.

Application: Two areas where are nation is weak is, the concept of adultery and the concept of covetousness. There are men in our society who would not think twice about committing adultery, if the woman was extremely attractive to them. Secondly, the concept of covetousness, where so many people in our society believe that, somehow, the top 1% or top 10% of our society has taken all of the stuff that we ought to have; and we therefore should desire their stuff and, when possible, take it from them.

Application: Another area where our nation is weak is *murder*. We kill millions of unborn children. I do realize that there is a theological argument to be made that a fetus is not yet human. However, when it comes to the law, we generally do not get to make theological arguments. Scientifically, that which is in the womb is as human as the baby which emerges from the womb. The only difference is, the child outside of the womb is breathing oxygen. The child in the womb lives by means of oxygen, but it is taken in a different way. Biologically, the child in the womb and outside of the womb is the same; so we cannot differentiate between them and allow one to be destroyed and protect the other by law.

The Mosaic Law also teaches us that we have all sinned before God. Even though the pharisees had distorted the Mosaic Law into a means of salvation as well as a form of spirituality, that was never its intended use. It was given to the nation Israel to guide and preserve it, and to the people of Israel to preserve them as a national entity; but the Mosaic Law did not define spirituality before God.

There were certainly spiritual aspects to the Law of Moses. All of the animal sacrifices and meal offerings are found in the Mosaic Law. Those things pointed toward the Lord Jesus Christ; and those things were necessary as a ceremonial way of dealing with the sins of individuals. However, now that Christ had come, we do not return even to those ceremonies (Hebrews 8–9).

Sarah is beside herself, and she calls for Hagar and her son to be cast out of their home. Sarah had been jealous of Hagar having a son by Abraham, which she could not (for over a period of 25 years or more). She was no doubt jealous of the relationship that Abraham and Ishmael (and Hagar) had. It does not matter one whit that Sarah talked Abraham into impregnating her handmaid—after all, this is a woman that we are talking about here. At the very least, Abraham should have said *no* to her idea of Abraham having a child by Hagar in the first place.

However, Sarah's demand that Hagar and Ishmael be cast out is now based upon something else: she is concerned for her son's welfare. She can see real jealousy and real animosity in Ishmael, and he has become a real potential threat to Isaac. She can sense in Ishmael's voice as he made fun of Isaac animosity and jealousy, and she cannot have this attitude in a rival heir so close to them. So Ishmael and Hagar must go.

So, Sarah's concern might be based upon the safety of her child and what she has observed; and it may be based upon some jealousy and mental attitude sins which have festered on and off for the past 16 years. Whatever the reason, she wants Hagar and Ishmael gone.

Some commentators were quite harsh with Sarah. The Expositor's Bible Commentary reads: *It is one of those painful cases in which one poor creature clothed with a little brief authority stretches it to the utmost in vindictive maltreatment of another. Sarah happened to be mistress, and, instead of using her position to make those under her happy, she used it for her own convenience, for the gratification of her own spite, and to make those beneath her conscious of her power by their suffering. She happened to be a mother, and instead of bringing her into sympathy with all women and their children, this concentrated her affection with a fierce jealousy on her own child.*⁶¹ I believe this to be far too strong.

So you understand what is happening here, Sarah originally suggested that Abraham have sex with her Egyptian maid, Hagar, and have a child by means of her. This was not uncommon in the ancient world, and we will see it occur with Jacob and his two wives (Jacob is Abraham's grandson). However, it is clear by what takes place in this chapter that Sarah does not raise this child as her own, but Hagar does. Furthermore, Abraham raises the child as his own.

Is Sarah being too harsh with Hagar and Ishmael?

1. It is clear that Sarah has been overly harsh with Hagar. You will recall that she drove her away while pregnant, which would have likely resulted with Hagar dying in the desert (had not God intervened). That is *very* harsh.

⁶¹ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/teb/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

Is Sarah being too harsh with Hagar and Ishmael?

2. However, about 17 years have passed since then, and Hagar is still living at Abraham's compound. So, even though Abraham was not as forceful back then as he should have been, he did exert enough influence to get Sarah to back off.
3. Furthermore, Abraham was able to raise Ishmael in what is clearly a very close relationship.
4. So, no matter what Sarah thinks of the whole situation, she has backed off enough, so that Hagar has remained at the compound and Abraham has raised his young son Ishmael.
5. It is clear that Abraham is quite close to Ishmael, and, even when God spoke to Abraham about having another son, he said, "O that Ishmael might stand before You!"
6. Given that Abraham said that, is sad about Ishmael leaving, but that Hagar and Ishmael leave together, clearly suggests that Sarah had little or nothing to do with the raising of Ishmael. He was apparently raised by Hagar and by Abraham, his natural parents.
7. When Ishmael, who is literally a young man, plays with little Isaac, it is clearly too rough.
8. What is on the line is the fortune of Abraham, which is considerable. At one time, this would have gone to Ishmael. Now, it is clear that it will not.
9. We have assumed that Hagar was unhappy about this (she would have been set for life, if Ishmael inherited his father's riches) and she no doubt spoke to the young Ishmael about it.
10. Although Sarah said that all those who heard about her giving birth would share in her laughter, it is likely that Hagar, her own personal maid, did not share in this laughter. This is not stated, but it is a logical deduction.
11. Also, operating from logical reasoning, it appears that the way that Ishmael was playing with Isaac was too rough and endangered the child.
12. It ought to be clear that, it is nearly impossible to have two women under the same roof as wives. That is simply not going to work out. Where there is a clear, delineated authority, as with a personal slave girl, this works. But, when that slave-girl (now a woman) has borne a child for the master of the compound, that changes everything.
13. Points #9–11 are reasonable assumptions, and they would explain why Sarah became so upset as to say, "They have to go immediately." If her little boy's life was threatened—and I believe that is how she saw it—then like any other mother, she is going to get rid of the threat.
14. Was Isaac in danger? I believe that he was. People do a lot of evil things for wealth; wealth destroys some families—even reasonably close-knit families. The characters here are anything but close-knit.
15. So, unlike the Expositor's Bible Commentary, I see this as Sarah as being protective of her baby son, who has just been weaned (making him about 3 years old). I do not believe that she is overreacting here; but that certainly could be debated. There is not enough information to clearly determine that.
16. Sarah looking out for the welfare of her own son is simply what a mother does. And, in any case, this was God's plan for their family, anyway.
17. One cannot underplay the importance of the inheritance. Sarah is Abraham's wife; Hagar is not. Sarah expects for her son to receive the riches of her husband; so does not expect those riches to go to the son of some slave-woman, even though her son was fathered by Abraham.

In closing, Sarah may have been overreacting (I don't believe that to be the case); but even if that is what she is doing, she is simply looking to protect her son.

You may not like personally that Sarah expects for Abraham's wealth to be inherited by Isaac and not by Ishmael, but that is the natural inclination. The son of the wife of Abraham should be the one to inherit. The son of the slave-woman should not be the one to inherit. This might be easier to understand if, for instance, you have built up some wealth, and you do not like the idea that the government wants to pocket half of your wealth when you die. If that bothers you, then you have at least an inkling of Sarah's point of view here.

I believe that Ellicott has a better grasp of the situation than the ECB; he writes: *[W]e may feel sure that Sarah was not without good reason for her conduct; for St. Paul bears witness that Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Galatians 4:29). The LXX. and Vulg. translate playing, sporting, and Gesenius thinks that he was "dancing gracefully; "but if this were all, Sarah's jealousy would have been most unjust. When, however, we consider that Ishmael had been for fourteen years the heir, and that he now fell back into an inferior position, we cannot be surprised if at this banquet in his rival's honour he gave way to spiteful feelings, and by word and gesture derided and ridiculed him. Hagar too had probably never regarded Sarah with much affection since her forced return, and now that her son was disinherited, her bitterness would grow more intense. These jealousies are the inevitable results of polygamy; and wherever it exists, the father's life is made wretched by the intrigues of the women for their children.*⁶²

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 21:8–10 And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing (at her son Isaac). So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac."

What the key here is: Hagar and her son would have inherited Abraham's wealth, or the greater part of it—before Isaac came along. Now they would inherit very little or nothing. This is, in great part, the source of their animus toward Isaac.

Sarah, on the other hand, would share none of Abraham's wealth with Hagar and her son. So she called for Abraham to cast Ishmael out. Furthermore, she was concerned for the safety of her young boy.

Interlude: the Son of the Free Woman versus the Son of the Slave Woman

Before we move forward in this narrative, we need to take a look at the illustration which Paul makes of this in Galatians 4:21–31. We have briefly examined this passage, but we need to look at it in more depth. This is an excellent passage to study, because too often, people believe that, this or that quotation from the Old Testament in the New gives the proper interpretation of the OT passage. However, that is not always the case. We saw that recently when God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, which nations would be Jewish and Arabic nations (that is the proper interpretation of that Old Testament passage). However, Paul takes that fatherhood and applies it to Abraham as the father of nations of those who believe in Jesus Christ (that is, a substantial percentage believe in Jesus Christ). Because Abraham believed and righteousness was credited to him, he becomes the father of all those with faith in Jesus. That was *not* what God promised Abraham; however, Paul used God's promise and made a different application of it. And Paul made this application while filled with the Spirit and writing Scripture.

Therefore, when a passage is quoted from the Old Testament, that does not mean that the passage is being fulfilled in the New Testament. It does not even mean that the passage from the Old Testament is being properly interpreted in its context. The Apostles used the Old Testament Scripture in a number of different ways. Many times, an incident in the Old Testament provided an application or a parallel situation of an important doctrine, even though that was not the intent of the original Old Testament passage.

The book of Galatians is all about a church where they have heard the gospel and they believed in Jesus Christ, and they have been saved. However, these Galatians have been bewitched by another gospel, a gospel of legalism and Jewish works (Galatians 1:6–9). Paul is going to use this narrative, of Isaac being born and of Sarah's demand that her handmaid and her son be banished, *to illustrate* grace versus legalism.

So there is no misunderstanding—what Paul teaches in Galatians is *not* the meaning that anyone had taken from this passage in Genesis before. At best, a few commentators may have understood *why* Sarah demanded that

⁶² From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

Ishmael and Hagar be banished from Abraham's compound. Most do not even understand that basic notion. But Paul is the first person to take this passage and use it to illustrate grace versus legalism. That was *not* the original intent of Genesis 21:10.

Gal 4:21 **Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, don't you listen to the law?** Most, but not all of these readings, come from the WEB Bible. Paul here is speaking to the Galatians, asking them a question.

Paul had gone to Galatia, had proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and many people had believed. However, there was a problem there: Paul wrote to them: **I marvel that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel; but there isn't another gospel. Only there are some who trouble you, and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should proclaim to you any gospel other than that which we proclaimed to you, let him be cursed** (Galatians 1:6–8; modified WEB). Those in Galatia originally responded to the gospel [= good news] of Jesus Christ⁶³ and they believed in Him. However, they were beginning to desert this gospel and hold to the teachings of the Judaizers, who were teaching a **religion of merit**—recall our recent study of **legalism** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). They were teaching believers that they needed to place themselves under the Law of Moses. Paul is asking them, *You want to be subject to the Law; do you even hear what the Law actually says?* Essentially, Paul is asking them, *Do you have any idea as to what it means to place yourselves under the Law of Moses?*

Then Paul launches into an illustration, in which he appropriates from the passage that we are studying in Genesis:

Gal 4:22 **For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the free woman.**

Hagar was a slave woman—the handmaid; she was Sarah's personal servant. Hagar bore Abraham a son; and Sarah bore Abraham a son. Hagar's son therefore represents being born into slavery and Sarah's son illustrates being born into freedom. Children born to slave women automatically became the property of the family who own the slave woman; children born to a free woman are born free.

Gal 4:23 **However, the son by the handmaid was born according to the flesh, but the son by the free woman was born through promise.**

The son of Hagar came about by natural events (= according to the flesh). Abraham and Hagar had sex, and this resulted in a son—Ishmael—being born. However, the son of *promise* is Isaac, who is born to Sarah and Abraham. This is the son whom God had promised Abraham—Ishmael was not the son that God promised Abraham. Therefore, it was through Isaac that God's promises to Abraham would be fulfilled. Isaac is the son who should not have been born; as neither Abraham nor Sarah should have been capable of producing a child the a few years previous. They were too old and their equipment was no longer working—but God promised them and God regenerated their reproductive organs. God brought life out of death.

Gal 4:24 **These things contain an *allegory*, for these are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage, which is Hagar.**

When Paul writes *these things*, he is referring back to the births of Isaac and Ishmael.

Although the word *allegory* above appears to be a noun, it is actually the verb *allêgoreo* (ἀλληγορέω) [pronounced *al-lay-gohr-EH-oh*], which means, *to speak allegorically or in a figure, where the thing spoken of is an emblem or representative of something else; to speak differently from what thinks or actually means*. Thayer and Zodhiates definitions. Strong's #238. The ACV renders this *Which things are allegorized,...* The ALT translates this: *...which [things] speak allegorically*.

You have noticed that, from time to time, I take an historical incident and give it a spiritual interpretation. These historical incidents in the Bible are all real, but they are often recorded in order to teach certain spiritual truths.

⁶³ The gospel message is, *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved*.

Apparently the Apostle Paul noticed that I was doing that, thought it was a good idea, and so he does the exact same thing here. Paul is going to use this real-life incident in order to teach grace (which is freedom) versus works (which is bondage). Hagar is a slave-woman, so children born to her are children of bondage. A slave woman bears slave children. Her children are not born free. They are subject to the same master who rules over her. This has been historically the way that children of slaves have been considered, for thousands of years, in many different cultures.

As an aside, this is key in understanding our 14th amendment, passed in 1868. Because sons of slaves were considered to be slaves, the **14th amendment** stated that, if a person was born in the United States, they were a citizen of the United States. This was so that no slaveholder could make a claim on owning a child of a slave. This amendment was not written to make citizens of **anchor babies**. That application took the words but not the intent of the 14th amendment to justify such an approach. The amendment intended to make all slave children free, U.S. citizens.

Back to our passage: Paul also mentions Mount Sinai, which is where God gave the Law of God to Moses.

Gal 4:25 **For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she corresponds to the Jerusalem that exists now, for she is in bondage with her children.**

Here is the parallel: Hagar represents Mount Sinai, from whence the Law of God was given; she is in bondage to that law, as are her children. This is the current Jerusalem (the Jerusalem of Paul's day), from whence come these Judiazers who are teaching that keeping the law of Moses is the proper spiritual life for believers in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, these things are all related: Hagar, the slave woman; Ishmael, the son born to the slave-woman (who is born into slavery); Mount Sinai, where the Law was given to Moses (which Law we cannot fully obey); and the Jerusalem of Paul's day, which was filled with legalism. All of these things represent some kind of bondage; none of these things give freedom.

Gal 4:26 **But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

However, the Jerusalem *from above* represents grace and freedom, and *that* Jerusalem is the mother of all believers, Jews and gentiles. There will be a new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2 (ESV)—**And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**) to replace the Jerusalem of Paul's day, which was still subject to Judaism, and that Jerusalem of the earth was in legalistic reversionism. That Jerusalem, from above, represents our freedom. Because that which comes from above, is from God; and that which is earthly represents our slavery to sin. **[Jesus] said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."** (John 8:23; ESV). Therefore, we should **set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth** (Colossians 1:2).

Prior to this, Paul has not spoken of a Jerusalem from above; nor do we have any other authors of Scripture speaking of a Jerusalem from above. However, much of what we see around us is a copy or an illustration of God's design. The writer of Hebrews explains the priesthood in that way: **Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. **They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.** For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, **"See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."** But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.** (Hebrews 8:1–6; Exodus 25:40; ESV). Therefore, one of the things which was taught to the nascent church is typology; how the things of this world—particularly those things which God required—are illustrations of that which is true and real. Using the illustration in Hebrews, we do not put our hope

and faith in the Aaronic priesthood but in the true High Priest, Who is both represented and illustrated by the high priests of the Aaronic priesthood who offer up gifts and sacrifices.

So, these things are closely aligned: Hagar, the slave woman, who has given birth to a child of slavery; Mount Sinai, from whence the law of God came; and the city of Jerusalem in Paul's time, which was filled with legalism and the religion of merit. All of these things represent slavery to something. Hagar is Sarah's personal servant; Hagar's son was both the son and slave of Abraham; and Mount Sinai represents the Law of God, which places man under a bondage from which he cannot free himself. The Mosaic Law does not lead to ultimate freedom. The Jerusalem of Paul's day represented an attempt by the Judaizers to place Christians under the Mosaic Law.

In opposition to these, there is freedom: the son of the free woman and the Jerusalem from above. In fact, Paul will bring these things to a conclusion, when he writes, **Stand fast in the freedom in which Christ has made you free** (Galatians 5:1). And as Jesus said, **"So if the Son sets you free, you will be indeed free."** (John 8:36).

Paul continues his thought:

Gal 4:27 **For it stands written, "Rejoice, you barren who don't bear. Break forth and shout, you that don't travail. For more are the children of the desolate than of her who has a husband."**

You may read this and both wonder, "What the heck does that mean?" and "How does this relate to the context?"

Paul is quoting Isaiah 54:1 **"Sing out, barren woman who have never borne children; break out a song and shout, you who have never experienced going into labor. For the sons of the desolate one are more than the sons of the married woman," says Jehovah.** This goes back to God warning Israel (specifically, Judah, the southern kingdom), through Isaiah of the coming **5th stage of national discipline** (in Isaiah's day, Judah, the southern kingdom, could have been conquered and taken away into captivity). The sons of the desolate woman refer to the children of Judah; and the sons of the married woman refer to Assyria, which had administered the 5th stage of national discipline to the northern kingdom and was about to do the same to the southern kingdom (Judah). See **A Brief History of Israel** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) for the outline of Israel's history.

The end result of this was, Assyria was destroyed and removed from history by God and by the Babylonians. Their children cannot be found. You do not know any Assyrians, although this was one of the greatest kingdoms in ancient history. Do you know any Jews, who are sons of the desolate one? Of course you do. That is because **the sons of the desolate one [= Judah] are more than the sons of the married woman [= Assyria].**

God made promises to Israel; God made no such promises to Assyria. Therefore, the nation which seemed desolate and about ready to fall into ruin—Judah (southern Israel)—would have a lasting line of sons, and Assyria would not. That is because the children of Judah are the children of promise.

Gal 4:28 **Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are children of promise.**

Isaac was born as a result of the promise of God. Sarah was desolate; she had no children, and, at age 90, had no prospect of having children. Before there was the Law of Moses, there was Abraham and God gave him many promises. At no time did God say, "You must do this, or I will not fulfill these promises to you." God gave Abraham a promise, and fundamental to that promise was Isaac, the son of Abraham. Paul is explaining here that, we, like Isaac, are children of promise. Isaac would inherit the riches of Abraham and be heir to the promises of God (Genesis 17:7–9 25:5 Galatians 4:28). This was all based upon faith, because Abraham had faith in God and in His promises. There were no works involved in order to attain God's promises. Even Abraham's righteousness was based upon faith in the Revealed Lord (Genesis 15:6).

We, as believers in Jesus Christ, have also been promised great riches. Furthermore, these riches do not depend upon anything that is meritorious. Every person who believes in Jesus Christ will receive riches, even if his spiritual life is an absolute train wreck.

Gal 4:29 **But as then, he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.**

The child of the slave-woman persecutes the child born according to the Spirit, refers to Ishmael who made fun of his new half-sibling Isaac (Genesis 21:9). Although Paul does not discuss this, Isaac was in actual danger from Ishmael, which is why Sarah wanted Ishmael gone. Hagar had filled Ishmael's soul with anger, and that can have dire consequences in the soul of a teenaged boy. The child of the slave woman persecutes the child of the free woman. So it is in Paul's day. The sons of bondage, the Judaizers, were persecuting the sons of freedom, those whom Christ made free indeed—in the context of Paul's letter, these are those in Galatia who have been made free by their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul is encouraging them to remain in freedom and not to place themselves in bondage after being made free. The Judaizers were looking to take away the freedom of those who believed in Jesus Christ. In this way, they were persecuting those reborn according to the Spirit.

We see this played out to this very day. We have Muslims from many countries **teaching their children**, from the **youngest ages** (start at ages 3 and 4), about how terrible the Jews are, and how **they are descended from pigs and apes**; and how they ought to be **slaughtered** like animals (these videos on Youtube are often deleted, so they may not still be there). Their children are born into slavery, their children are taught to hate, and they persecute the Jews. Although this is not a perfect analogy, this illustrates how even today, the son of the bond woman persecutes the son of the free woman.

Paul is now going to justify his dissertation on slavery versus freedom, using an illustration from the Old Testament.

Gal 4:30 **However what does the Scripture say? "Throw out the handmaid and her son, for the son of the handmaid will not inherit with the son of the free woman."**

Now Paul quotes the passage which we have been studying. The child of the slave woman (which represents adherence to a religion of merit) must be thrown out. The child of the slave woman cannot coexist with the child of promise. There is no compromise which can be made between a religion of slavery and a relationship of grace. These are, by their very nature, completely separate; just as the son of the slave woman cannot inherit what is promised to the son of the free woman.

Now, is Sarah thinking about law and grace? Has it entered into her thinking to make sure that we forever more will see a distinction of being born free or being born a slave? Not at all. She is looking to preserve her recently-weaned son. She senses animosity from Hagar and Ishmael, understands why Hagar has this animus, and she knows how this endangers Isaac. So, in Sarah's opinion, Hagar and Ishmael must go. However, none of this enters into Paul's application of this passage. Paul uses this passage to illustrate something entirely different; he uses this real historical incident and makes it an allegory of grace versus legalism, even though that was *not* the original intent of the passage.

Gal 4:31 **So then, brothers, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the free woman.**

Paul's first conclusion is, we, as believers in Jesus Christ (contextually, this refers to Paul and the Galatian believers), are not children of the slave woman; we are the children of freedom. And then he writes, **So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law** (Galatians 5:1; NLT).

So, we are born-again like Isaac was born. We are born into freedom. Therefore, it makes little sense for us to put ourselves under slavery. Now, Paul's specific application is to the Galatians and the Mosaic Law. They were not to place themselves under the law; they were not to seek circumcision; they were not to pursue any system of merit-based religion, because they are born free, just as Isaac was born free. Believers in Jesus Christ are born free; what sense does it make for that free-born believer to search out a slave-master to whom he can subjugate himself?

We can take this concept, which is taught by analogy, and expand it to include any sort of works-based religion (which is *all* religion). We may be saved by faith in Christ, and He has made us free—and yet, we can, out of our own lack of doctrine, attempt to place ourselves under a works-based religion rather than under a grace-based relationship. We recently studied **legalism** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))—a legalistic Christian way of life was therein described—and that is what many Christians do, after being saved by grace. They might become involved in political activism (I recall a church that I used to be a janitor for, and their foyer was filled with misguided political literature, none of which would have advanced the spiritual lives of anyone in that congregation⁶⁴). A few today make the Mosaic Law their spiritual life (some even *keep the Sabbath*). Some fall into Christian cults of ritual or emotionalism, where they are guided in their lives based upon how they feel. Such churches can appear to be on opposite sides of the spectrum—one dependent upon quiet adherence to a set of ritual actions while another seems to be a series of emotional explosions going off in all parts of the church—but they are very similar inasmuch as, how the participants *feel* is what is of utmost importance. They are enslaved to their feelings, something which Paul warns against in Romans 16:17–18.

What is most common today are churches that simply do not correctly teach the spiritual life after salvation. They do not teach about the restoration of fellowship through the naming of one's sins to God; they do not teach about growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. They may actually teach the gospel correctly (except for the misapplication of Revelation 3:20)—but then they do absolutely nothing from that point forward to advance the plan of God. They might inspire and motivate, but without teaching the mechanics of the spiritual life. Without the mechanics of the spiritual life, no believer advances in the plan of God, and no believer advances the plan of God.

At best, such a church teaches believers how to be patriots and good citizens. At worst, believers are taught political activism which is contrary to their own country; and it engages them in the plan of Satan for believers. However, even in the best of these churches, rarely is the spiritual life taught; rarely are accurate mechanics taught.

Just in case you have forgotten, we covered the **mechanics of the spiritual life** in the first few lessons of the **introduction** to these lessons on Genesis.

This has been formalized in several studies:

The **Spiritual Life in the Church Age** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The **Basic Mechanics of the Christian Life** (aka, **The Christian Life for Dummies**) ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Along these same lines, may I suggest **The Christian Basics**, **The Fundamental Themes of Scripture**, **Dispensations**, and **Rebound**, the links to which can be found [here](#).

⁶⁴ In fact, the material in their foyer was anti-establishment as well—so it was not even good information for unbelievers or for believers who wanted to be good citizens of the United States.

This is the passage that we have been studying: Galatians 4:21–31 Tell me then, you are so eager to be subject to the Law, have you listened to what the Law says? Scripture says that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave girl and one by the freewoman. The son of the slave girl came to be born in the way of human nature; but the son of the freewoman came to be born through a promise. There is an **allegory**⁶⁵ here: these women stand for the two covenants. The one given on Mount Sinai -- that is Hagar, whose children are born into slavery; now Sinai is a mountain in Arabia and represents Jerusalem in its present state, for she is in slavery together with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and that is the one that is our mother; as scripture says: Shout for joy, you barren woman who has borne no children! Break into shouts of joy, you who were never in labour. For the sons of the forsaken one are more in number than the sons of the wedded wife. Now you, brothers, are like Isaac, children of the promise; just as at that time, the child born in the way of human nature persecuted the child born through the Spirit, so now. But what is it that scripture says? Drive away that slave girl and her son; the slave girl's son is not to share the inheritance with the son of the freewoman. So, brothers, we are the children not of the slave girl but of the freewoman. (NJB)

A Summary of Galatians 4:21–31

Slavery	Freedom
Ishmael, the son of the slave woman.	Isaac, the son of the free woman.
The children of slavery; or those who want to put themselves into slavery.	We, like Isaac, are children of promise.
Mount Sinai, in Arabia, where the Mosaic Law was given.	The Jerusalem from above.
The Law of Moses puts us into bondage.	The spiritual life gives us freedom.
Judaism (actually, a mixture of Judaism and Christianity).	The Christian life.
The Jerusalem of Paul's day, from whence the teachers of Judaism came.	The Jerusalem from above, from whence comes all the blessings from God.
A religion of merit; we are taken in by God because we are so good.	A relationship of grace; God takes us because we have believed in Jesus Christ.
Spirituality by merit: in the book of Galatians, this is following the tenets of Judaism, which was a mixture of grace and legalism (which makes it all legalism). Today, this is any Christian life apart from the design of God.	Spiritually by grace. Since Jesus Christ has died for our sins, we are restored to fellowship by naming our sins to God (those sins that we commit as believers). Then we grow spiritually based upon the grace system provided for us by Jesus Christ (which grace system He test drove).
As an application of this, we have spiritual growth by means of merit. This may involve emotionalism, church attendance, doing things around the church, becoming involved in some spiritual function, etc.	Spiritual growth by means of grace. This means we learn the Word of God under God's grace system, and works are a natural outgrowth of spiritual maturity.
Paul takes a real historical incident and uses it to illustrate to the Galatians the constant struggle between legalism and grace.	

⁶⁵ That is, Paul uses this historical incident to illustrate a spiritual truth.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary also sums this up: *But the chief use Paul makes of this entire episode in the history is to see in it an allegory. a kind of picture made up of real persons and events, representing the impossibility of law and gospel living harmoniously together, the incompatibility of a spirit of service with a spirit of sonship. Hagar, he says, is in this picture the likeness of the law given from Sinai, which gendereth to bondage. Hagar and her son, that is to say, stand for the law and the kind of righteousness produced by the law, -not superficially a bad kind; on the contrary, a righteousness with much dash and brilliance and strong manly force about it. but at the root defective, faulty in its origin, springing from the slavish spirit. And first Paul bids us notice how the free-born is persecuted and mocked by the slave-born, that is, how the children of God who are trying to live by love and faith in Christ are put to shame and made uneasy by the law...For Paul would have each of us apply, allegorically, the words, Cast out the bondwoman and her son, that is, cast out the legal mode of earning a standing in God's house, and with this legal mode cast out all the self-seeking, the servile fear of God, the self-righteousness, and the hardheartedness it engenders. Cast out wholly from yourself the spirit of the slave, and cherish the spirit-of the son and heir. The slave-born may seem for a while to have a firm footing in the father's house, but it cannot last.*⁶⁶

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This concludes our foray into the New Testament, and we will return to the verse-by-verse exegesis of Genesis 21.

We have spent a great deal of time in the New Testament; now let's go back to our passage:

A brief review of Genesis 21:1–10:

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 21:1–4 **And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said. And Jehovah did to Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him (whom Sarah bore to him) Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. (MKJV)**

The circumcision represents the new birth (which is regeneration). From this point on, it will represent the identification of the Jews with God—they are so identified because they are reborn. This rebirth is by principle, but it is not always true in reality; that is, not all Jews believe in their God, the Revealed Lord, Y^ehowah. Some believe in a merit-based religion and they offer their works to God, just as Cain offered the best of his produce to God. God had no interest in the works of Cain's hand; nor did he have any interest in a racial Jew who offers Him human works.

You may have dedicated your life to some cult, and they had you doing stuff every day. That will not get you saved; that will not get God's attention. You can dedicate your life to doing your part to slow down global warming, but that will not get you saved; that will not get God's attention. You can spend the final years of your life volunteering to do good things; but that will not get you saved; that will not get God's attention.

Abel had the respect of God; Abel offered God a animal whose throat had been cut. Abraham had the respect of God; he exercised faith in Y^ehowah. God the Holy Spirit regenerates such a person, and that is represented by circumcision. Circumcision is not the new birth; circumcision represents the new birth.

Gen 21:5–7 **And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac [= laughter] was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me. And she said, "Who could have said to Abraham, will Sarah suckle children? For I have borne a son to him in his old age." (MKJV mostly)**

⁶⁶ From <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/teb/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

It was amazing that Isaac was born—his birth is unique in the Old Testament. It was a real historic birth—Isaac was a real historical person who was born in the manner previously described, but his birth also pointed ahead to Jesus Christ. As we have studied, his birth foreshadows the birth of Jesus Christ.

Gen 21:8–10 *And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian (whom she had borne to Abraham) mocking [her son]. And she said to Abraham, Cast out this slave woman and her son. “For the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac.”* (MKJV mostly)

Hagar had poisoned the thinking of her own son against Isaac because the birth of Isaac suddenly meant that neither her nor her son had a guaranteed inheritance (poisoning the thinking of youth is something which is done often today in Islamic nations and in communist countries). Abraham was quite wealthy, and Ishmael was his only natural son at this time. Therefore, he would have inherited all of Abraham’s wealth (this was Hagar’s retirement plan). There was a great deal of anger revealed in Ishmael’s treatment of Isaac, which animus he had no doubt gotten from his mother (who would have been in on this inheritance). The viciousness of Ishmael’s behavior caused Sarah to demand that Hagar and Ishmael be given the boot. She wanted to protect her son and his inheritance.

And so is evil the word in [two] eyes of Abraham upon causes of his son. Genesis 21:11 **But this thing is very displeasing in the eyes of Abraham on account of his son [Ishmael].**

This was all wrong, in Abraham’s opinion, on account of his son Ishmael.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so is evil the word in [two] eyes of Abraham upon causes of his son.
Targum of Onkelos	And the thing was very evil in Abraham's eyes, on account of <u>Ishmael</u> his son, <u>who would practice a strange worship</u> .
Latin Vulgate	Abraham took this grievously for his son.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.
Septuagint (Greek)	But the word appeared very distressing before Abraham concerning his son.

Significant differences: The first phrase of being *this thing is evil in the eyes of Abraham* appears to be interpreted in the Latin, Syriac and Greek rather than translated (which is fine). The targum adds an extra word and an extra phrase.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	This upset Abraham terribly because the boy was his son.
Contemporary English V.	Abraham was worried about Ishmael.
Easy English	Because of Sarah's words, Abraham was very cross and he was unhappy for his son (Ishmael).
Easy-to-Read Version	This upset Abraham very much. He was worried about his son {Ishmael}.
Good News Bible (TEV)	This troubled Abraham very much, because Ishmael also was his son.
<i>The Message</i>	The matter gave great pain to Abraham--after all, Ishmael was his son.
New Berkeley Version	To Abraham the proposal seemed very wrong on account of his son,...
New Century Version	This troubled Abraham very much because Ishmael was also his son.
New Life Bible	And the thing brought much sorrow to Abraham because of his son.
New Living Translation	This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Those words about his son were very difficult for AbraHam,...
Beck's American Translation	Abraham didn't like this at all because of his son Ishmael.
Christian Community Bible	This matter distressed Abraham because it concerned his son,...
International Standard V	Abraham was very troubled about what was being said about his son, but God told Abraham, "Don't be troubled about the youth and your slave girl. Pay attention to Sarah in everything she tells you, because your offspring are to be named through Isaac. V. 12 is included for context.
God's Word™	Abraham was upset by this because of his son Ishmael.
New American Bible	Abraham was greatly distressed because it concerned a son of his. A son of his: Abraham is the father of both boys, but Sarah is the mother only of Isaac. Abraham is very concerned that Ishmael have a sufficient inheritance.
Revised English Bible	Abraham was very upset at this because of Ishamel,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	The word toward the cause of his son offended Abraham's eyes a hundredfold. And this was a great grief to Abraham because of his son.
Conservapedia	This whole affair was very difficult for Abraham to bear on account of his son.
The Expanded Bible	This troubled [distressed; upset] Abraham very much because Ishmael was also his son.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But in Abraham's view, this speech was very bad, in regard to his son;...
HCSB	Now this was a very difficult thing for Abraham because of his son.
New Advent Bible	Abraham took this grievously for his son.
NET Bible®	Sarah's demand displeased Abraham greatly because Ishmael was his son. Heb "and the word was very wrong in the eyes of Abraham on account of his son." The verb <i>râ'a'</i> (עָרָא) [pronounced <i>raw-GAHG</i>] often refers to what is morally or ethically "evil." Its usage here suggests that Abraham thought Sarah's demand was ethically (and perhaps legally) wrong.
NIV – UK	The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	The matter distressed Abraham greatly, for it concerned a son of his.
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	But the matter greatly displeased Abraham, concerning his son. This troubled Abraham very much because it involved his son.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	Yet evil is this word exceedingly in the eyes of Abraham, on account of his son's case.
English Standard Version	And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son.
Green's Literal Translation	And the thing was very evil in the eyes of Abraham, on account of his son.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. His personal affection for his own flesh and blood, and the fact that God had given him special promises concerning Ishmael, Genesis 17:18-20, caused him to hesitate about taking such a step.
NASB	The matter distressed [Lit was very grievous in Abraham's sight] Abraham greatly because of his son.
Syndein	And this word/matter {dabar} kept on being exceedingly grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.
A Voice in the Wilderness	And the matter caused Abraham's eyes to quiver greatly because of his son.
World English Bible	The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son.

Young's Literal Translation *And the thing is very wrong in the eyes of Abraham, for his son's sake.*

The gist of this verse: Abraham is very troubled at Sarah's demand that Hagar and Ishmael leave, because Ishmael is the son he loves.

Genesis 21:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'a' (עָרָא) [pronounced <i>raw-GAHÇ</i>]	<i>to make a loud noise; to be evil [from the idea of raging or being tumultuous]; to be bad, to displease; possibly to be unpleasant and embittering; to break, to shatter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7489 BDB #949
The previous word is listed by Owen, as well as by one of the KJV's in e-sword. One of the KJV in e-sword and BDB suggest that the verb here is...			
yâra' (עָרָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHÇ</i>]	<i>to grieve, to displease</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3415 BDB #438
Gesenius says that these are the same word. Why is there a mixup like this? The first letter of râ'a' as an imperfect tense is yodh (י), which makes it look like the alternate reading directly above.			
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
m ^o ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced <i>m^e-ODE</i>]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bêyth preposition and the construct 'îynêy (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i>], literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of</i> ; as _____ sees things to be.			
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: *But this thing is very displeasing in the eyes of Abraham...*

Unlike Sarah, Abraham has a deep and abiding affection for his son Ishmael. He has obviously taken the time to raise this boy and he loves him very much. This puts Abraham in a difficult position; he is the man of the house. He can certainly assert his authority at this point, and that seems to be the direction in which he is leaning. Given

their history as husband and wife—what we are allowed to see of it—for Abraham to stand up to his wife at this point and say, *no*, would be quite dramatic.

The verb here is *râ'a'* (עָרָא) [pronounced *raw-ḠAHḠ*], which means, *to be evil; to be bad, to displease; possibly to be unpleasant and embittering; to break, to shatter*. Strong's #7489 BDB #949. More literally, this reads, **And so the word is evil in [two] eyes of Abraham because of his son.**

However, the NET Bible gives a good explanation here: *The verb *râ'a'* (עָרָא) [pronounced *raw-ḠAHḠ*] often refers to what is morally or ethically "evil." Its usage here suggests that Abraham thought Sarah's demand was ethically (and perhaps legally) wrong.*⁶⁷

J. Vernon McGee deals with the personal struggle which is occurring within Abraham's own soul: *After all, as far as the flesh is concerned, Ishmael is Abraham's son just as much as Isaac is. Isaac has just been born, and a little bitty baby doesn't know too much about him yet. But this boy Ishmael has been in the home for a good many years - he's a teenager now, and Abraham is attached to him. The thing is very grievous if Abraham is going to have to send him away. Again, I go back to that which we said before: God did not approve of the thing which Sarah and Abraham did, and God cannot accept Ishmael. This is sin. God just did not approve of it, and He doesn't intend to approve of it at all. It was a heartbreak to Abraham, but in order to relieve the embarrassment, he had to send that boy away. Poor Sarah just couldn't take it with this older boy around mocking her. As a believer you cannot live in harmony with both natures. You are going to have to make a decision. James says, "**A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways**" (James 1:8). This explains the instability and the insecurity among many Christians today. They want to go with the world, and yet they want to go with the Lord. They are spiritual schizophrenics, trying to do both - and you cannot do that. The Greeks had a race in which they put two horses together, and the rider would put one foot on one horse and the other foot on the other horse, and the race would start. Well, it was a great race as long as the horses were together. You and I have two natures - one is a black horse, and the other is a white horse. It would be great if they would go together, but they just will not work together. The white horse goes one way and the black horse another way. When they do this, you and I have to make up our minds which one we are going with - whether we are going to live by the old nature or the new nature. This is why we are told to yield ourselves: "**yield yourselves unto God . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God**" (Rom. 6:13). Paul goes on to say that what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, the Spirit of God can now accomplish (see Rom. 8:3-4). The law tried to control man's old nature and failed. Now the Spirit of God, empowering the new nature, can accomplish what the law could never do. The character of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, begins to be revealed. This is the nature that we find manifested later on in that nation, a nation that is antagonistic and whose hand is against his brother. This has been the picture of him down through the centuries.*⁶⁸

Our natures cannot work together. This is why fellowship with God is on or it is off; this is why the filling of the Holy Spirit is an absolute. In life, we do not improve the function of the sin nature. This is a choice believers must sometimes make 100 times a day; and other believers may have to only make 10 times a day.

Abraham only has one son of promise; there is only one son through whom all of the promises of God come. There must be a separation between the son of the bondwoman and the son of promise.

Application: This does not mean that, if you have two sons, a bad son and a good son, that you send the bad son packing (unless he has reached the age of adulthood, and then sending him away is legitimate). What is happening here is real, but it is also illustrative. Ishmael versus Isaac represents the battle between the sin nature and the control of the Holy Spirit; and it represents the line of promise and the line of rejection of God.

⁶⁷ *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>; Genesis 21:11.

⁶⁸ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt accessed September 7, 2014.

Again, I cannot overemphasize how this is illustrative, as well as real. Ishmael and Hagar both appear to be believers in the Revealed God. We will spend eternity with them. Hagar is not some raving bitch and Ishmael is not the embodiment of evil. It is simply time for them to be separated from Abraham, Isaac and the line of promise. We use this separation in order to illustrate several cogent points about the Christian life and about the line of promise. However, in doing so, we are not denigrating Hagar or Ishmael in any way. God will take care of them; and God will bless Ishmael greatly.

Genesis 21:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ʾôwdôth (אוֹדוֹת) [pronounced <i>oh-DOTH</i>]	<i>cause, reason for; the occasion of; causes, circumstances; properly turnings</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #182 BDB #15
Together, ʿal ʾôwdôth (אוֹדוֹת עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl-oh-DOTH</i>] mean <i>on account of the causes, on account of; because of; concerning; on the occasion of</i> . With the 1 st person singular suffix, <i>for my sake</i> .			
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...on account of his son [Ishmael].

This final phrase simply indicates that this is all based upon Ishmael. That is, Abraham does not have any strong feelings for Hagar; but he does for his son Ishmael. Abraham has not had a son before, and it was a joyous time for him, at age 87 or so, that he was able to father a son by Hagar; and he raised Ishmael as a son. There is no indication that Abraham viewed him any differently than a full-blooded son, even though his mother was Sarah's slave girl and not Sarah.

Genesis 21:11 **But this thing is very displeasing in the eyes of Abraham on account of his son [Ishmael].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:11 **This was all wrong, in Abraham's opinion, on account of his son Ishmael.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham was quite unhappy about Sarah demanding that her slave-woman and her son be cast out, because he loved Ishmael. Obviously, Sarah did not feel the same way about him. She was apparently concerned for the safety of her own child, and this concern appears to be warranted (this danger to Isaac is not stated outright, but it is certainly implied). Furthermore, by this time, both Hagar and Ishmael were capable of taking care of themselves (which was not true when Hagar was pregnant with Ishmael when she left Abraham's compound before and God brought her back).

Calvin comments: Although Abraham had been already assured, by many oracles, that the blessed seed should proceed from Isaac only; yet, under the influence of paternal affection, he could not bear that Ishmael should be cut off, for the purpose of causing the inheritance to remain entire to him, to whom it had been divinely granted; and thus, by mingling two races, he endeavored, as far as he was able, to confound the distinction which God had made.⁶⁹

God is constantly making a clear distinction, between those who are chosen and those who are not; between the elect and those who are not; between the saved and the unsaved; the clean and the unclean. There is a

⁶⁹ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Genesis 21:11.

distinction, and it is black and white. So Isaac is in the line of promise; Ishmael is not in the line of promise. One is in and the other is out. There is that same distinction between believers and unbelievers. The former has made a choice, at some time in their lives, to believe in Jesus Christ. That latter has chosen not to believe in Him throughout every moment of his life. Isaac and Ishmael are illustrative in this way; but both men believe in the Revealed God.

As slaves, their ability to act in their own interest for their own survival will be somewhat limited. Slaves have many of their basic needs taken care of; therefore, they are not used to attending to their basic needs. Abraham provided Ishmael and Hagar food and shelter and clothing. That is what a master does for a slave. These slaves were not used to providing these basic things for themselves. It takes some planning and forethought and even some self-discipline to take care of oneself, and Hagar and Ishmael will have to learn this on their own.

We have several generations of people in the United States who are enslaved to our massive welfare system (which is spread across several different state and federal departments); so that they would have a very difficult time fending for themselves in today's world. Such people are sheltered from the notion of hard work, self-discipline, self-reliance, and the concept of saving for the future (or even thinking about the future). They are being taught that, if you need food, shelter and your electric bill paid, then you go to the government to get it. Some even go to the government in order to get a cellphone. They are slaves to the government just as Hagar and her son are slaves.

And so says Elohim unto Abraham, “[He] Is not displeasing in your [two] eyes upon the boy and upon your female servant. All that says unto you Sarah, listen in her voice, for in Isaac will be named for you a seed.

Genesis
21:12

But Elohim said to Abraham, “[Let this thing] not be displeasing in your sight because of the boy and because of your female servant. All that Sarah says to you, listen [and go along with] what she says [lit., in her voice], for your Seed will be called in Isaac.

But God said to Abraham, “Don’t be upset over this; don’t worry about the lad or about Hagar. Listen to what Sarah is asking you to do, and go ahead and do it, for your Seed will be called in Isaac.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Elohim unto Abraham, “[He] Is not displeasing in your [two] eyes upon the boy and upon your female servant. All that says unto you Sarah, listen in her voice, for in Isaac will be named for you a seed.
Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said to Abraham, Let it not be evil in your eyes on account of the youth <u>who goes forth from your nurturing</u> , and of your handmaid <u>whom you send away</u> . Listen unto all that Sarah says to you, <u>because she is a prophetess</u> ; for in Izhak will sons be called unto you; <u>and this son of the handmaid will not be genealogized after you</u> .
Latin Vulgate	And God said to him: Let it not seem grievous to you for the boy, and for your bondwoman: in all that Sara has said to you, hearken to her voice: for in Isaac will your seed be called.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And God said to Abraham, Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the boy and because of your maidservant; whatever Sarah tells you, hearken to her voice; for your descendants shall come through Isaac.
Septuagint (Greek)	But God said to Abraham, Let it not be distressing before you concerning the child, and concerning the bondwoman; whatever Sarah shall say to you, listen to her voice, for in Isaac shall your seed be called.

Significant differences: The targum is filled with excess text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God said to Abraham, "Don't be upset about the boy and your servant. Do everything Sarah tells you to do because your descendants will be traced through Isaac.
Contemporary English V.	But God said, "Abraham, don't worry about your slave woman and the boy. Just do what Sarah tells you. Isaac will inherit your family name,...
Easy English	But God said to Abraham, "Do not be unhappy about the boy and your female slave. Your *descendants that I choose will come by means of Isaac. So do what Sarah says.
Easy-to-Read Version	But God said to Abraham, "Don't worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do what Sarah wants. Isaac will be your only heir [A person who receives his parents' property when they die.].
Good News Bible (TEV)	But God said to Abraham, "Don't be worried about the boy and your slave Hagar. Do whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that you will have the descendants I have promised.
<i>The Message</i>	But God spoke to Abraham, "Don't feel badly about the boy and your maid. Do whatever Sarah tells you. Your descendants will come through Isaac.
New Berkeley Version	...but God said to Abraham; Do not consider it objectionable because of the lad and because of your maid. Listen to everything Sarah tells you, for your name shall be perpetuated through Isaac;...
New Century Version	But God said to Abraham, "Don't be troubled about the boy and the slave woman. Do whatever Sarah tells you. The descendants I promised you will be from Isaac.
New Life Bible	But God said to Abraham, "Do not be full of sorrow because of the boy and the woman who serves you. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you. For your children and all their children's children after you will be given a name through Isaac.
New Living Translation	But God told Abraham, "Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...but God said to AbraHam, 'Don't allow this thing about your son and the slave woman to become too difficult for you. Listen to whatever SarAh tells you, because IsaAc will be the one who is called your seed.
Beck's American Translation	But God told Abraham, "Don't feel bad about the boy and your slave woman. Do everything Sarah tells you, because Isaac's children will be called your children.
Christian Community Bible	...but God said to him, "Don't be worried about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to Sarah and do whatever she says, because the race, which is called by your name, will spring from Isaac.
<i>God's Word™</i>	But God said to Abraham, "Don't be upset about the boy and your slave. Listen to what Sarah says because through Isaac your descendants will carry on your name.
New American Bible	But God said to Abraham: Do not be distressed about the boy or about your slave woman. Obey Sarah, no matter what she asks of you; for it is through Isaac that descendants will bear your name. Rom 9:7; Heb 11:18.
NIRV	But God said to him, "Do not be so upset about the boy and your servant Hagar. Listen to what Sarah tells you, because your family line will continue through Isaac.
New Jerusalem Bible	This greatly distressed Abraham, because the slave-girl's child too was his son, but God said to him, 'Do not distress yourself on account of the boy and your slave-girl. Do whatever Sarah says, for Isaac is the one through whom your name will be carried on. V. 11 is included for context.

New Simplified Bible	God said to Abraham: »Do not be upset about the boy and your slave. Listen to what Sarah says, because through Isaac your descendants will carry on your name.
Revised English Bible	...but God said to him, 'Do not be upset for the boy and your slave-girl. Do as Sarah says, because it is through Isaac's line that your name will be perpetuated.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	God said to Abraham, "Never offend your eyes toward the lad, and toward your maidservant. In all that Sarah said to you, hear her voice. Call Isaac your see.
Bible in Basic English	But God said, Let it not be a grief to you because of the boy and Hagar his mother; give ear to whatever Sarah says to you, because it is from Isaac that your seed will take its name.
Conservapedia	So God told Abraham, "Don't let this situation with this boy and the slave-woman trouble you. Listen to Sarah's voice in everything she tells you. Your descendants will be reckoned through Isaac."
The Expanded Bible	But God said to Abraham, "Don't be ·troubled [distressed; upset] about the boy and the slave woman. Do ·whatever [all] Sarah tells you. ·The descendants I promised you will be from [-The seed will be named for you through] Isaac
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...but GOD said to Abraham: "Let it not be disheartening in your sight; do all that Sarah has said against the lad, and against his mother. Listen to what she says; for from Isaac I will nominate an Heir to you.
HCSB	But God said to Abraham, "Do not be concerned about the boy and your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac.
NET Bible®	But God said to Abraham, "Do not be upset [Heb "Let it not be evil in your eyes."] about the boy or your slave wife. Do [Heb "listen to her voice." The idiomatic expression means "obey; comply." Here her advice, though harsh, is necessary and conforms to the will of God. Later (see Gen 25), when Abraham has other sons, he sends them all away as well.] all that Sarah is telling [The imperfect verbal form here draws attention to an action that is underway.] you because through Isaac your descendants will be counted [Or perhaps "will be named"; Heb "for in Isaac offspring will be called to you." The exact meaning of the statement is not clear, but it does indicate that God's covenantal promises to Abraham will be realized through Isaac, not Ishmael.].
NIV – UK	But God said to him, Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	...and Elohim says to Abraham, Villify not in your eyes because of the lad and because of your maid: in all that Sarah says to you, hearken to her voice; for your seed is called in Yischaq:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed over the boy or your slave; whatever Sarah tells you, do as she says, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be continued [Lit., <i>called</i>] for you.
Kaplan Translation	But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be troubled because of the boy and your slave. Do everything that Sarah tells you. It is through Isaac that you will gain posterity [Literally, 'you will be said to have offspring,' or, 'offspring will be considered yours.'].'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	God said to Abraham, Do not let it seem grievous and evil to you because of the youth and your bondwoman; in all that Sarah has said to you, do what she asks, for in Isaac shall your posterity be called.
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is the Elohim to Abraham, "Let it not be evil in your eyes on account of the lad, and on account of your maidservant. In all that Sarah is saying to you, hearken to her voice, for in Isaac your seed shall be called.
English Standard Version	But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.
Green's Literal Translation	And God said to Abraham, Let it not be evil in your eyes because of the boy, and on account of your slave-girl. All that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice, for in Isaac your Seed shall be called.
Heritage Bible	And God said to Abraham, Let it not be evil in your eyes because of the youth, and because of your maidservant; in all that Sarah has said to you, hear attentively her voice, because your seed shall be called in Isaac.
Kretzmann's Commentary	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. It was God who decided the matter, and in Sarah's favor. Abraham was to set aside personal feelings and considerations, both as to Ishmael and as to Hagar, and heed the voice of his wife. For Isaac was to be the bearer of the Messianic promise; through his lineage the blessing of the Lord was to come upon the nations, in the person of the Messiah. Cf Romans 9:7-8; Hebrews 11:18. The words of Sarah have a special spiritual meaning, as St. Paul shows, Galatians 4:29 : " As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. " Those that are spiritual-minded, the children of God, are derided and persecuted by the carnal-minded, by the children of the world. The will of the Lord is that His children should separate themselves in all spiritual matters from the children of the world, and avoid all the pitfalls which are placed for the unwary feet of such as seek the friendship of His enemies.
New RSV	But God said to Abraham, `Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you.
Syndein	And 'Elohiym/Godhead said unto Abraham, "Let it not keep on being grievous in your sight because of the lad, and because of your bondwoman. In all that Sarah has kept on saying unto you, listen unto her voice; For in Isaac {Yitschaq} shall your seed/progeny be called.
A Voice in the Wilderness	And God said to Abraham, Do not let your eyes quiver because of the lad or because of your maidservant. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your Seed shall be called.
World English Bible	God said to Abraham, "Don't let it be grievous in your sight because of the boy, and because of your handmaid. In all that Sarah says to you, listen to her voice. For from Isaac will your seed be called.
Young's Updated LT	And God says unto Abraham, "Let it not be wrong in your eyes because of the youth, and because of your handmaid: all that Sarah says unto you—listen to her voice, for in Isaac is a seed called to you.
The gist of this verse:	God tells Abraham to put aside his feelings and to do what Sarah has asked him to do.

Genesis 21:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'el (ל) [pronounced <i>eh</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרָאם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: But Elohim said to Abraham,...

As is often the case, we are not told the circumstances of this communication. Did God speak to Abraham in a dream? Did he come to Abraham face to face? In any case, Abraham is now to listen to and go along with Sarah's demands.

You will notice the slight difference in the prepositions. Sarah spoke *to* Abraham and God speaks *unto* Abraham. Given the similarities of the two prepositions, it does not seem unreasonable that one is actually an abbreviation or a less formal version of the other. God speaks to Abraham with respect. You may wonder why God is speaking to Abraham with respect—Abraham has believed God; Abraham has not only positional righteousness in God, but he has experiential righteousness as well. God has been promising Abraham a son, and Abraham has believed God. Now, you may question this, but recall, Abraham, at an advanced age, allowed himself to be circumcised and the men of his camp were all circumcised. That requires faith.

Abraham's faith reveals both his experiential righteousness and it honors God. When you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, honor God with your faith, this is a great thing. When you claim, for instance, some of God's promises during a difficult situation, this is what God wants to see in our lives. God wants us to know His Word and He wants us to place our faith in His Word.

Genesis 21:12b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'al (אֵל) [pronounced <i>al</i>]	<i>no, not; nothing; none; neither, nor; do not, let not [with a verb]; let there not be [with an understood verb];</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39
yâra ^c (עָרָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHG</i>]	<i>to grieve, to displease</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3415 BDB #438

Genesis 21:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Unlike before, Owen has the following word listed instead of the previous one, even though their spelling is exactly the same here and in v. 11. One of the KJV in e-sword and BDB suggest that the verb here is...			
râ'a' (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-GAHG]	<i>to make a loud noise; to be evil</i> [from the idea of <i>raging</i> or being <i>tumultuous</i>]; <i>to be bad, to displease; possibly to be unpleasant and embittering; to break, to shatter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7489 BDB #949
Gesenius says that these are the same word.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced gay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
This phrase is literally <i>in your eyes</i> , but it can be translated <i>in your opinion, in your estimation, to your way of thinking, as you see [it]</i> . The dual and plural forms of this word appear to be identical. Possibly, this could also mean, <i>as you please, as you want, as you desire, whatever you think is right</i> .			
'al (לְ) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
na'ar (נָעַר) [pronounced NAH-gahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'al (לְ) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
'âmâh (אֲמָה) [pronounced aw-MAW]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #519 BDB #51

Translation: ...“[Let this thing] not be displeasing in your sight because of the boy and because of your female servant.

This sentence seems to be a little clunky, because there are all of these prepositions, and we normally do not have the subject of the verb following a preposition. However, God is picking up on Abraham being displeased with this thing (the word that Sarah spoke), so *the word* is properly incorporated into this phrase. The thing that Sarah said is not to displease Abraham.

Abraham is displeased about losing contact with his son and there appears to be an affection between him and Hagar, despite nothing being said. God speaks of *your maidservant*; Hagar is not even spoken of as being Sarah’s, but in terms of her belonging to Abraham.

Barnes: This separation from the family of Abraham was, no doubt, distressing to the feelings of the parties concerned. But it involved no material hardship to those who departed, and conferred certain real advantages. Hagar obtained her freedom. Ishmael, though called a lad, was at an age when it is not unusual in the East to marry and provide for oneself. And their departure did not imply their exclusion from the privileges of communion with God, as they might still be under the covenant with Abraham, since Ishmael had been circumcised, and, at all events, were under the broader covenant of Noah.⁷⁰

Genesis 21:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl ’ăsher mean <i>all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
’ămar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
’el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced saw-RAW]	<i>princess, noble woman; transliterated Sarah</i>	proper noun; feminine singular	Strong's #8283 BDB #979

Translation: All that Sarah says to you,...

God, this time, is going to tell Abraham to listen to what Sarah says and to obey her. This is an unusual tact and somewhat unexpected. Interestingly enough, God uses the formal preposition rather than the informal one, even though Sarah used the informal preposition.

God is not saying, “This time around, Sarah has got everything right.” God is telling Abraham to simply go along with what she says, as that is in His plan. God needs to separate Ishmael from Isaac.

⁷⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:9–21.

Genesis 21:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw- MAHG]	<i>listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

What is suggested here is, Abraham listen to what Sarah is saying, and to obey her; or, *do as she tells you.*

Translation: ...listen [and go along with] what she says [lit., *in her voice*],...

The word translated *listen* is the Qal imperative of shâma^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG], which means *listen [intently], hear, listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of.* God is not simply telling Abraham to listen to what Sarah has to say, consider it, and make a decision; God is telling Abraham to listen to what Sarah says and then to do that. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033.

God tells Abraham to go along with what Sarah is requesting. Before, Abraham was to assert his own authority; however, at this time, it is right for them to separate. Ishmael, in particular, needs to move along. We have two similar circumstances. Sarah complained about Hagar 17 years ago, and Abraham told her to do whatever she wanted to her slave girl. So Sarah put the screws to Hagar until Hagar just ran off pregnant with Ishmael. God caught up with her and told her to return to Abraham and Sarah. But this time, when Sarah says, "They have got to go," God tells Abraham, "What Sarah is asking you to do, do."

This is often the favorite verse for women named Sarah, who often shorten it to, *And God said, "Listen to Sarah and do all that she tells you to do."*

Abraham got into this trouble because of listening to Sarah in the first place. He should have inquired of God as to the reasonableness of Sarah's plan. There is nothing wrong with listening to the voice of your wife, particularly if your wife is intelligent and spiritually mature. However, Abraham was the head of the household, he made the decisions, and in the case of fornicating with Hagar, this should have been put before Yahweh if he had any confusion concerning this union. Now, although Abraham loves his son Ishmael, his first born, he has to separate Ishmael from his family because Ishmael is not an heir to Abraham.

Genesis 21:12e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Genesis 21:12e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Yis ^e châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced <i>yihse</i> - KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing;</i> transliterated <i>Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to be named; to be called, to be proclaimed; to be called together [assembled, [summoned]; to be read aloud, to be recited</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
zera' (זֶרַע) [pronounced ZEH-rahg']	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #2233 BDB #282

Translation: ...for your Seed will be called in Isaac.

God gives the reason for Ishmael to move on; it is in Isaac that Abraham's seed will be called. There are two interpretations for Abraham's seed: it can refer to Jesus Christ and it can refer to his posterity. Both are in the singular form.

Bullinger Bible: Here ser'a is in the singular sense, because of the word "Isaac", and because of the singular verb "it shall be called." Zer'a is a collective noun (like Eng. "sheep"), but the context must determine whether it is singular, or plural. It is to this verse Gal. 3.16 refers; not to 12.7, where it is indefinite; or 17.7 where the verb and pronouns show it is plural. See note there, and on Gal. 3.16; and cp. Rom. 9.7. Heb. 11.18. "Thy seed" is therefore "Christ". The difference of the 30 years comes in here: 430 to the Exodus (12.40) from Gen. 12.4, when Abraham was 75: 25 thence to Isaac's birth: and now, 5 to his recognition as the seed = 30 years.⁷¹ The information about the seed is interesting; I am not sure about this extra 30 years.

Genesis 21:12 But Elohim said to Abraham, “[Let this thing] not be displeasing in your sight because of the boy and because of your female servant. All that Sarah says to you, listen [and go along with] what she says [lit., in her voice], for your Seed will be called in Isaac. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:12 But God said to Abraham, “Don't be upset over this; don't worry about the lad or about Hagar. Listen to what Sarah is asking you to do, and go ahead and do it, for your Seed will be called in Isaac. (Kukis paraphrase)

There is a natural separation which must take place between the child of the slave woman and the child of the free woman. Therefore, this time, when Sarah puts her foot down and says, “Hagar and Ishmael need to leave;” God tells Abraham to go with it. It will be through Isaac and not through Ishmael that Abraham's Seed (Jesus Christ) will be called.

Furthermore, Ishmael is at an age where he is able to quickly grow up. At first, he will start out as this helpless kid who depends upon his mother; and then he will suddenly take charge of the situation and provide for them.

⁷¹ From <http://www.companionbiblecondensed.com/OT/Genesis...pdf> accessed September 7, 2014.

When we studied this, Paul used this to illustrate the complete separation which must exist between legalism and grace. The believer is either on the grace side of things or the works side of things. The believer either continues in a grace-relationship with God or he returns (reverts) to a works-based religion—a religion based upon merit. As pointed out, that is not the thrust of this narrative in our context; Paul appropriated it for that cause.

Guzik writes: *God's solution was clear - get rid of the son of the flesh. There is to be no reconciliation with the flesh, no peaceful coexistence. The son of the flesh must simply be put away forever.*⁷²

Bear in mind that all of this is illustrative. There is no indication that Ishmael did not believe in the Revealed God, the God of his father. God remained with Hagar and Ishmael when they left, God looked out for them, God preserved them, and God blessed them.

As Paul wrote 2 millennia later: **But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."** This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Rom 9:6–8; ESV)

And also son of the slave woman for a nation I will make him, for your seed [is] he."	Genesis 21:13	Furthermore, I will make the son of [this] slave-woman into [lit., for] a nation, because he [is] your seed."
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Furthermore, I will make this son of a slave-woman into a nation, because you are his father."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And also son of the slave woman for a nation I will make him, for your seed [is] he."
Targum of Onkelos	But the son of the handmaid have I set for a <u>predatory</u> people (le-am lestim), because he is your <u>son</u> .
Latin Vulgate	But I will make the son also of the bondwoman a <u>great</u> nation, because he is thy seed.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And also of the son of the maidservant will I make a <u>great</u> nation because he is your offspring.
Septuagint (Greek)	And moreover, I will make the son of this bondwoman a <u>great</u> nation, because he is your seed.

Significant differences: The targum has a couple of words not found in the Hebrew. The Latin, Syriac and Greek all have qualifiers before the word *nation*; the Hebrew does not.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But I will make of your servant's son a great nation too, because he is also your descendant."
Contemporary English V.	...but the son of the slave woman is also your son, and I will make his descendants into a great nation."
Easy English	However, I will also make the son of your female slave into a nation. I will do that because he is your son too.'
Easy-to-Read Version	But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make a great nation from his family also."

⁷² David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 21:12–14.

Good News Bible (TEV)	I will also give many children to the son of the slave woman, so that they will become a nation. He too is your son."
<i>The Message</i>	Regarding your maid's son, be assured that I'll also develop a great nation from him--he's your son too."
New Century Version	I will also make the descendants of Ishmael into a great nation because he is your son, too."
New Life Bible	But I will also make a nation of the son of the woman who serves you, because he is your son."
New Living Translation	But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar's son because he is your son, too."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	What's more, I will make a great nation of this slave woman's son, because he's also your seed.'
Christian Community Bible	But from the son of your servant I will also form a nation, for he too is your offspring."
<i>God's Word</i> [™]	Besides, I will make the slave's son into a nation also, because he is your child."
International Standard V	Nevertheless, I will make the slave girl's son into a nation, since he, too, is your offspring."
New American Bible	As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also,* since he too is your offspring. I will make a nation of him also: Ishmael's descendants are named in 25:12-18.
NIRV	I will make the son of your servant into a nation also. I will do it because he is your child."
New Jerusalem Bible	But the slave-girl's son I shall also make into a great nation, for he too is your child.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And I will make a nation of the son of your servant-woman, because he is your seed.
Conservapedia	"But I will also make a nation from the slave-girl's son, because he is your descendant."
The Expanded Bible	I will also make the ·descendants of Ishmael [^h the son of your slave woman] into a great nation because he is your ·son [^h seed], too."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And also from the son of your second wife I will found a great nation: —for he is your heir."
HCSB	But I will also make a nation of the slave's son because he is your offspring."
NET Bible®	But I will also make the son of the slave wife into a great nation, for he is your descendant too."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	But I will also make a nation from the son of the slave-girl, since he is descended from you."
exeGesés companion Bible	...and I also set a goyim of the son of the maid because he is your seed.
Kaplan Translation	But still, I will also make the slave's son into a nation, for he is your child.'
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And of the son of the female servant I also make a nation, because he is your seed."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And moreover, the son of this maidservant, a great nation I will constitute him, for your seed is he.
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English Standard Version	And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."
Green's Literal Translation	And also I will make a nation of the son of the slave-girl, for he is your seed.
Heritage Bible	And also, I will put a people of the son of the maidservant, because he is your seed.
King James 2000 Version	And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is your descendant.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation because he is thy seed. For Abraham's sake even the slave's son should receive a large share of this world's blessings.
NASB	And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant [Lit seed]."
New King James Version	Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."
New RSV	As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.'
Syndein	And also of the son of the bondwoman {Ishmael} I will make a nation {gowy - gentile nation}, because he . . . {is} your seed.
World English Bible	Also of the son of the handmaid will I make a nation, because he is your seed."
Young's Updated LT	As to the son of the handmaid also, for a nation I set him, because he is your seed."

The gist of this verse: God promises Abraham that He would make a nation of Ishmael because he is Abraham's son.

Genesis 21:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'âmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced <i>aw-MAW</i>]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #519 BDB #51
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
gôwy (גוֹי) [pronounced <i>GOH-ee</i>]	<i>people, nation</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

Genesis 21:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
sîym (שׂיַם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sūwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced soom]	to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7760 BDB #962

All of the BDB meanings: *to put, set, lay, put or lay upon, lay (violent) hands on; to set, direct, direct toward; to extend (compassion) (figuratively); to set, ordain, establish, found, appoint, constitute, make, determine, fix; to set, station, put, set in place, plant, fix; to make, make for, transform into, constitute, fashion, work, bring to pass, appoint, give.* Gesenius adds: *to direct, to turn [in any direction]; to make, to prepare.*

Translation: Furthermore, I will make the son of [this] slave-woman into [lit., for] a nation,...

I have taken the liberty of translating the lâmed preposition as *into*, because when this preposition follows the verb *to be*, it indicates that something is transformed *into* something else. Therefore, a similar use would be warranted here.

Although a few commentators spoke of Hagar as being a wife to Abraham, and suggest that he, when sending her away, is giving her a bill of divorcement. However, the Bible never speaks of her as being his wife. Here and elsewhere, she is called *maid-servant*.

What may be pertinent is found in Constable's commentary: "*The key to Sarah's demand lies in a clause in the laws of Lipit-Ishtar where it is stipulated that the father may grant freedom to the slave woman and the children she has borne him, in which case they forfeit their share of the paternal property.*" [Note: Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, p. 147.] *The laws of Lipit-Ishtar were laws that governed life in Mesopotamia that antedated the Mosaic Law.*⁷³ So, what Abraham does here is in accordance with the lawful traditions of that day.

Abraham is obviously concerned about his son, Ishmael. Although he is certainly enthralled with this new son by Sarah, he has raised Ishmael and loves him deeply. So, the idea of simply throwing this boy out with his mother is disconcerting to Abraham. Furthermore, he would be doing this at the request of Sarah, and what she has insisted upon in the past has not always been the right thing to do.

Abraham does not have to be concerned that his child will die or that God will discard him. God will make him into a nation.

Genesis 21:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
zera' (זֶרַע) [pronounced ZEH-rahg']	a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282

⁷³ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

Genesis 21:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

This pronoun can be used in the emphatic sense. Sometimes, the verb *to be* is implied when this pronoun is used.

Hûw' is also used as a masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun and is rendered *that; this*.

Translation: ...because he [is] your seed."

What Abraham needs to understand is, God honors him and his faith; so God will even look after this young boy, despite the fact that he is the result of an ill-designed union of Abraham and Hagar, the Egyptian slave-girl.

Abraham is quite disconcerted over all that has happened, and what God is requiring, so God explains to him the following, as Calvin put it: *.first, God recalls to his memory the promise made concerning Isaac; as if he would say, it is enough and more than enough, that Isaac, in whom the spiritual benediction remains entire, is left. He then promises that he will take care of Ishmael, though exiled from his paternal home; and that a posterity shall arise from him which shall constitute a whole nation...And it is certain that, by this method, the other son was cut off from the family of Abraham; so that he should no more have a name among his posterity. For God, having severed Ishmael, shows that the whole progeny of Abraham should flow from one head.*⁷⁴

Genesis 21:13 Furthermore, I will make the son of [this] slave-woman into [lit., for] a nation, because he [is] your seed." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:13 Furthermore, I will make this son of a slave-woman into a nation, because you are his father." (Kukis paraphrase)

It is as simple as this: Abraham and Isaac are Jews; Ishmael is not. The line of promise will go through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It will not go through Ishmael. This is not necessarily a slight against Ishmael; but it is a slight against his descendants.

Or, to turn these two verses into points:

God gives reasons why Abraham should listen to Sarah

1. Abraham clearly loves his son Ishmael, and will have a very difficult time letting him go.
2. There is a line of promise that Abraham is fully aware, and Isaac is this line of promise; Ishmael is not.
3. Furthermore, God is going to greatly bless Ishmael and make a nation out of him. He cannot be made a nation as long as he is under his father.

One could certainly use these two boys to illustrate the Holy Spirit versus the sin nature.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Gill says⁷⁵ that the Ishmaelites, Saracens and the Turks are all descended from Ishmael.

⁷⁴ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Genesis 21:11.

⁷⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:13.

As has been mentioned previously, this is blessing by association. Ishmael will be a wild ass of a man and God will bless him merely because he is Abraham's son.

God promises to Abraham to bless the boy Ishmael, and to make a great nation of him. This is again, **blessing by association** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Ishmael will be blessed because he is related to Abraham. Ishmael will be preserved by God, much as Lot was preserved; and Ishmael will be blessed as well. There is a difference: when Lot *chose* to separate from Abraham, this blessing by association went by the wayside; Ishmael is being required to separate from Abraham. For this reason, the blessing to Ishmael is greater than the blessing to Lot.

How many people are preserved and blessed because of their relationship to a mature or maturing believer? This is a very real thing. Families, friends, loved ones; schools, businesses, military units, corporations; churches and various organizations are all blessed through their association with mature and maturing believers. If you are a mature or maturing believer, everything that you are associated with should receive some measure of blessing. You ought to be able to recognize it. If you are a mature or maturing believer, you ought to be able to look at your family, your business, your various associations (neighborhood, city, state; schools, military unit), etc. and be able to see that these things are being blessed and/or protected by God.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. often gave the example of a business which has had a wonderfully successful year; and they are having an end-of-the-year party, and the CEO and the vice presidents are sipping champagne and toasting each other for their great financial wizardry and business insight; but down in the basement, in his own little office of janitorial supplies, is the janitor, who by himself or with a crew, starts at the bottom floor and works his way up to the top, night after night, sweeping, cleaning and collecting trash. And it is this janitor who has advanced from salvation to becoming a mature believer in Jesus Christ; and God has given great blessing to this huge organization because of this janitor—whose name most of these executives do not even know.⁷⁶

Several times, we are reminded in Genesis, about Abraham's wealth (and later, about Isaac's great wealth); and everyone associated with Abraham was therefore blessed. And when Lot, by mutual agreement, struck out on his own, taking with him approximately one-half of a very successful business, ended up with very nearly nothing, eking out a sad existence in some cave several miles from a destroyed Sodom, still alive and still preserved by God, but with very little else to show for it. Lot became associated with the degeneracy of Sodom rather than with the spiritual maturity of Abraham, and therefore, his personal wealth was a reflection of this change of association. This is what Lot chose for himself. At no time did he say, "I am surrounded by degeneracy and difficulties; I need to go back and work for my Uncle Abraham." His daughters at no time said, "We live in a cave with our father, Lot; and there are no prospects here. We are better off working for Abraham as his slaves than we are in this cave." This would have been true and the daughters, had they come to that conclusion, would have been greatly blessed. However, Lot and his daughters choose continued separation from Abraham.

On the other hand, Ishmael is not moving away from Abraham because this is what he wants to do. This is a separation that must take place; this is a separation which is of God. Therefore, God will remain with Ishmael and Hagar.

Application: There is an application which needs to be made here. There are times when a family must let their son (or daughter) go. Despite the great love which exists, a child will not (and should not) remain under your roof forever. This is a young age for Ishmael, but he will become a man very early on in his life.

⁷⁶ This was not any specific company to which Bob was referring. This is just an illustration.

And so rises early, Abraham, in the morning and so he takes bread and a skin of waters and so he gives unto Hagar, putting upon her shoulder and the youth. And so he sends her away and so she departs and so she wanders in a wilderness of Beersheba.

Genesis
21:14

So Abraham arose early in the morning and he took food [lit., *bread*] and a skin of water and gave [them] unto Hagar, putting [them] upon her shoulders; [and he gave them] to the youth. Then he sent her way and she departed and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba.

So Abraham arose early in the morning and took provisions and a container of water and gave these things to Hagar and the youth, putting them on her shoulders. Then he sent her away, and they departed and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so rises early, Abraham, in the morning and so he takes bread and a skin of waters and so he gives unto Hagar, putting upon her shoulder and the youth. And so he sends her away and so she departs and so she wanders in a wilderness of Beersheba.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham rose up in the morning, and took bread and a cruse of water, and gave to Hagar to bear upon her shoulder, <u>and bound it to her loins, to signify that she was a servant</u> , and the child, and dismissed her <u>with a letter of divorce</u> (be-gitta). And she went, and wandered from the way into the desert which was <u>hard</u> by Beersheba.
Latin Vulgate	So Abraham rose up in the morning, and taking bread and a bottle of water, put it upon her shoulder, and delivered the boy, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Bersabee.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread and a skin <u>containing</u> water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and the boy; and sent her away. And she departed, and lost her way in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham rose up in the morning and took loaves and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar, and he put the <u>child</u> on her shoulder, and sent her away, and she, having departed, wandered in the wilderness near the Well of the Oath.
Significant differences:	There is a lot of extra text in the targum. The Greek has her putting her child on her shoulder; he is too big for that.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham got up early in the morning, took some bread and a flask of water, and gave it to Hagar. He put the boy in her shoulder sling and sent her away.
Contemporary English V.	Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar an animal skin full of water and some bread. Then he put the boy on her shoulder and sent them away. They wandered around in the desert near Beersheba,...
Easy English	So, early in the morning, Abraham gave bread to Hagar. And he gave to her a bottle that someone had made out of skin. The bottle had water in it. He put those onto her shoulder and he sent her off with the child. She left. And she wandered in the desert near Beersheba.
Easy-to-Read Version	Early the next morning, Abraham got some food and some water. Abraham gave these things to Hagar. Hagar carried these things and left with her boy. Hagar left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

Good News Bible (TEV)	Early the next morning Abraham gave Hagar some food and a leather bag full of water. He put the child on her back and sent her away. She left and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham got up early the next morning, got some food together and a canteen of water for Hagar, put them on her back and sent her away with the child. She wandered off into the desert of Beersheba.
New Berkeley Version	Early next morning, Abraham got up, took bread and a skin of water [A goat's complete body-skin, well sewed together so that no leak occurred.], which he gave to Hagar and put on her shoulder, also the lad [Ishmael was around 18; his mother did not carry him, as some would have it.] and dismissed her. She left and roamed in the Beersheba desert...
New Century Version	Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a leather bag full of water. He gave them to Hagar and sent her away. Carrying these things and her son, Hagar went and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.
New Life Bible	So Abraham got up early in the morning. He took bread and a leather bag of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder. He gave her the boy, and sent her away. She left, and went from place to place in a place where no people live in Beersheba.
New Living Translation	So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a container of water, and strapped them on Hagar's shoulders. Then he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So the next morning, AbraHam got up, gave Hagar some loaves [of bread] and a skin of water, put her son on her shoulders, and sent her away. Then she left there and wandered in the desert near the Well of the Oath.
Christian Community Bible	Abraham rose early next morning and gave bread and a skin bag of water to Hagar. He put the child on her back and sent her away. She went off and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. 1Kings 19:3
<i>God's Word™</i>	Early the next morning Abraham took bread and a container of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder. He also gave her the boy and sent her on her way. So she left and wandered around in the desert near Beersheba.
International Standard V	So early the next morning, Abraham got up, took bread and a leather bottle of water, gave them to Hagar, and placed them on her shoulder. He then sent her away, along with the child. She went off and roamed in the Beer-sheba wilderness.
New American Bible	Early the next morning Abraham got some bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. Then, placing the child on her back,* he sent her away. As she roamed aimlessly in the wilderness of Beer-sheba,... Placing the child on her back: a reading based on an emendation of the traditional Hebrew text. In the traditional Hebrew text, Abraham put the bread and the waterskin on Hagar's back, while her son apparently walked beside her. In this way the traditional Hebrew text harmonizes the data of the Priestly source, in which Ishmael would have been at least fourteen years old when Isaac was born; compare 16:16 with 21:5; cf. 17:25. But in the present Elohist (?) story, Ishmael is obviously a little boy, not much older than Isaac; cf. vv. 15, 18.
NIRV	Early the next morning Abraham got some food and a bottle of water. The bottle was made out of animal skin. He gave the food and water to Hagar. He placed them on her shoulders. Then he sent her away with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.
New Jerusalem Bible	Early next morning, Abraham took some bread and a skin of water and, giving them to Hagar, put the child on her shoulder and sent her away. She wandered off into the desert of Beersheba.

Revised English Bible Early next morning Abraham took some food and a full water-skin and gave them to Hagar. He set the child on her shoulder and sent her away, and she wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Abraham arose in the morning, took bread and a wineskin of water, and gave it to Hagar, and set it over her shoulder, and sent her and the boy. She went and strayed in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Bible in Basic English And early in the morning Abraham got up, and gave Hagar some bread and a water-skin, and put the boy on her back, and sent her away: and she went, wandering in the waste land of Beer-sheba.

Conservapedia So Abraham got up early in the morning, and took bread and a flask of water, and gave it to Hagar (setting it on her shoulder) and the child, and sent her away. She left, and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheba [Literally, "house of seven" or "seventh house."].

The Expanded Bible Early the next morning Abraham [^Lgot up and] took some food and a ·leather bag full [skin] of water. He gave them to Hagar and sent her away. Carrying these things and her son [^Lon her shoulder], Hagar went and wandered [^Cthe verb may imply moving aimlessly and without hope] in the ·desert [wilderness] of Beersheba [^Can area in the northern part of the Negev, southern Canaan].

Ferar-Fenton Bible Abraham accordingly rose up at dawn; and taking bread and a skin of water, he placed them on the shoulder of Hagar, and the lad's, and sent her away; and she went and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheba [= *The Well of the Oath*].

HCSB Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, *put them* on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba.

NET Bible® Early in the morning Abraham took [Heb "and Abraham rose up early in the morning and he took."] some food [Heb "bread," although the term can be used for food in general.] and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He put them on her shoulders, gave her the child [Heb "He put upon her shoulder, and the boy [or perhaps, "and with the boy"], and he sent her away." It is unclear how "and the boy" relates syntactically to what precedes. Perhaps the words should be rearranged and the text read, "and he put [them] on her shoulder and he gave to Hagar the boy."], and sent her away. So she went wandering [Heb "she went and wandered."] aimlessly through the wilderness [Or "desert," although for English readers this usually connotes a sandy desert like the Sahara rather than the arid wasteland of this region with its sparse vegetation.] of Beer Sheba.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible And Abraham starts early in the morning and takes bread and a skin of water and gives it to Hagar, putting it and the child on her shoulder and sends her away: and she goes and strays in the wilderness of Beer Sheba:.

Kaplan Translation Abraham got up early in the morning. He took bread and a skin [Or a wooden container (cf. Ibn Ezra).] of water, and gave it to Hagar, placing it on her shoulder. He sent her away with the boy. She left and roamed aimlessly in the Beer-sheba desert. She may have begun heading toward Egypt from Beer-sheba where Abraham lived (see notes on Genesis 20:15, 16:7). This is the first mention of

Beer-sheba in the Torah. It is some 25 miles east of Gerar, connected by a wadi. See Genesis 26:17.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulders, and he sent her and the youth away. And she wandered on [aimlessly] and lost her way in the wilderness of Beersheba. Ishmael was born when Abraham was eighty-six years old (Gen. 16:16), so Ishmael was fourteen when Isaac was born. Isaac was weaned (Gen. 21:8) at least three years later probably (II Chron. 31:16; II Maccabees 7:27).
Concordant Literal Version	And early in the morning Abraham is rising, and taking bread and a flask of water and is giving it to Hagar, and places it on her shoulder, with the boy, and is sending her away. And going is she and straying in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham loaded up early in the dawn, and took food, and a skin-bottle of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the youth, and sent her away; and she walked, and wandered in the desert of Beer Sheba.
Kretzmann's Commentary	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. Abraham, as usual, lost no time in performing his duty, unpleasant as it was. Early the next morning he gave Hagar a supply of bread and a skin filled with water, and thereupon called Ishmael, then a lad of almost seventeen years. When these two had been dismissed, they wandered forth toward the southwest, probably with the intention of reaching the main caravan route toward Egypt. Thus the separation, which had to come sooner or later, had been effected.
Syndein	And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and kept on taking bread, and a bottle of water, and kept on givin it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, with the child, and intensively kept on sending her away. And she kept on moving away, and kept on wandering in the desert of Beersheba.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave [it] to Hagar (putting [it] on her shoulder) and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.
World English Bible	Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and gave her the child, and sent her away. She departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham rises early in the morning, and takes bread, and a bottle of water, and gives unto Hagar (placing it on her shoulder), also the lad, and sends her out; and she goes on, and goes astray in the wilderness of Beer-Sheba.

The gist of this verse: Abraham gets up early the next morning and prepares food and water for Hagar and Ishmael, for them to take. Many of the supplies are put on Hagar's shoulder, and they are sent off. They wander in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba.

Genesis 21:14 is a wonderful starter verse for a person just learning how to translate Hebrew into English. Most of the words are quite common and the grammar is quite easy. First of all, the bulk of this verse is a series of imperfect tenses strung together with wâw consecutives. What this means is, we have actions which are temporally and/or logically consecutive, without any thought given to the duration or to the completion of the actions of the verbs. There are other very simple nuances found in this verse, which will be explained as we come to them.

Genesis 21:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkam (שָׁכַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHM</i>]	<i>to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start; morning (in the Hiphil infinitive absolute)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7925 BDB #1014
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bôqer (בֹּקֵר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133

Translation: So Abraham arose early in the morning...

The first action is, Abraham gets up early in the morning. Sarah has told him to send this slave-girl and her son away and God confirmed that this is the right thing to do; therefore, Abraham determined that this would all occur the next day. Mostly likely, he informed Hagar and her son that he would require them to depart.

We begin this verse with actions that Abraham takes and finished this verse with actions that Hagar takes. Essentially, we have a hand-off in action from Abraham to Hagar, just as he places the provisions on her back.

Genesis 21:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced <i>LEH-khem</i>]	literally means <i>bread</i> ; used more generally for <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chêmeth (חַמַּת) [pronounced <i>KHAY-meth</i>]	<i>waterskin, skin [canteen], container, bottle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2573 BDB #332
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>mah-YIHM</i>]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Translation: ...and he took food [lit., bread] and a skin of water...

Although the word found here is specifically *bread*, it often stands in for foodstuffs. He also gathers up a container of water, the container likely being made of animal skin.

*Kalisch: The monuments of Egypt, the sculptures of Mesopotamia, and the relics of Herculaneum and Pompeii afford ample opportunities to learn the shape and use of every variety of water container, often surprising us both by their elegance and costliness.*⁷⁷

When given supplies like this, they only last for so long. Hagar and Ishmael will have to learn how to gather food on their own, separate from Abraham's compound. They are completely and totally responsible for themselves now, although God will get them started.

Genesis 21:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Hâgâr (חַגָּר) [pronounced <i>haw-GAWR</i>]	<i>flight, fugitive; transliterated Hagar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1904 BDB #212

Translation: ...and gave [them] unto Hagar,...

We have a main verb here (as most of the verbs are), which action will be taken up after a few more words that follow. In the Hebrew, we know what stuff Abraham has gathered up; so there is no need to repeat that these are the things which Abraham gives to Hagar. In fact, we do not even require a masculine plural suffix here. It is assumed, in the Hebrew, that Abraham gives to Hagar the foodstuffs and the container of water.

Genesis 21:14d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
sîym (שִׂיַם) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sûwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>putting, placing, setting; making; appointing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
'al (אֵל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

⁷⁷ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 21:14 (edited; *water container* instead of *bottles*).

Genesis 21:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
sh ^e kem (שֶׁקֶם) [pronounced shek-EHM]	<i>shoulder; upper part of back below neck; back; [elevated] track of land</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7926 BDB #1014
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
yeled (יֶלֶד) [pronounced YEH-led]	<i>child, one born; son, boy, youth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

Translation: ...putting [them] upon her shoulders; [and he gave them] to the youth.

In that day, they had obviously designed some sort of a backpack, and this backpack was put on Hagar's shoulders, and in the backpack would have been the food and water.

Then we have the sign of the direct object. This means, we go back to the main verb, which is *to give*, and these things are given to the youth as well.

Genesis 21:14a-d So Abraham arose early in the morning and he took food [lit., *bread*] and a skin of water and gave [them] unto Hagar, putting [them] upon her shoulders; [and he gave them] to the youth. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Ishmael was a lad of seventeen years, and it is quite customary for Arab chiefs to send out their sons at such an age to do for themselves: often with nothing but a few days' provisions in a bag.*⁷⁸

Several commentators suggest⁷⁹ that perhaps it is by God's orders that Hagar and Ishmael are so poorly equipped to go out into the world. The explanation is, we are not always told what God tells individuals to do. I do not believe that, in this case, God was involved in such minutia. I believe that what Calvin suggests is probably closer to the mark (see below).

John Calvin asks the fascinating question: *He places a flagon of water and bread upon her shoulder. Why does he not, at least, load an ass with a moderate supply of food? Why does he not add one of his servants, of which his house contained plenty, as a companion?* Then he answers this question with: *[perhaps] Abraham limited her provision, in order that she might not go far from his house.*⁸⁰ Even though all of this is speculation, Hagar did not take Ishmael back to Egypt; and Scripture records much of Ishmael's family, indicating that he stayed relatively close to Abraham. The more that they are given, by way of supplies, the further they can travel away from Abraham's compound. This way, they were out of Abraham's compound, but Abraham (or whoever) was able to continue to keep tabs on Ishmael and his descendants (which is testified to in later portions of Scripture).

⁷⁸ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 21:14.

⁷⁹ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:14. Wesley and others as well.

⁸⁰ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Genesis 21:14.

Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86. Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born; and since Isaac has just been weaned, it would be about 3 years later. So, Ishmael is 17, more than old enough to strike out on his own.

You must realize that this is a huge step for Hagar and Ishmael. Hagar has been a slave-girl of Sarah's for at least 15 years, and she probably began as a young woman or teen; and she has been under the care and direction of Abraham for all of these years. The same is true of Ishmael. Up until the day before, there was no talk of them striking out on their own; so there was no reason for them to even consider doing such a thing. In other words, these two people are not used to fending for themselves.

We depend upon technology for a great deal more than we realize; our very subsistence is based upon an incredible level of technology. When it came to simple food and shelter, Hagar and Ishmael were completely dependent upon Abraham and all that he had amassed. So, even with these provisions, it will take a great deal of reorientation for Hagar and Ishmael to fend for themselves.

Genesis 21:14e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

Translation: Then he sent her way...

Here is the handoff; Abraham sends Hagar away. At this point, we will follow Hagar and what happens with her.

The word order can be a tad bit confusing here. The provisions and the child were not put on Hagar's shoulders; the *child* is 16 years old. Ishmael was circumcised at age 13 (Genesis 17:25) and Isaac was born a year later. Then Isaac was weaned. This takes us to around age 16 or 17 for Ishmael.

Along with the child goes with *and sent her away*. Abraham gave them an early start and gave them provisions, and sent them off. For some reason, it does not sound as though he gave them a sheep or any other kind of animal.

The code of Hammurabi had been in effect for some time; it was the law code from Mesopotamia, from whence Abraham had originally come. Abraham's treatment of Hagar is in exact accord with this code. The code itself was fairly complex and its complexity answers critics who do not believe that such a complex code could have been written during the time of Moses. According to Scofield, many of the unusual customs and behaviors that we find in the book of Genesis, stem from the Code of Hammurabi, which was apparently well-known at that time. Recall Romans 2:14–15 **For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things in the law, these, having not the law are a law unto themselves. Who outwardly demonstrate the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and witness and their thoughts between each other accusing or else excusing one another**

People get concerned about a lot of things in the Bible. One of these is the idea that Abraham up and sends Hagar and her son out of his compound.

The Bible Query on, was Abraham right to send Hagar away?

Q: In Gen 21:14, was Abraham right to send Hagar away?

A: Normally, it would be wrong to send Hagar and her teenage boy away alone without protection and with little water, and this is why Sarah's request greatly distressed Abraham in Genesis 21:11. However, in this particular case, God told Abraham to go ahead, and that everything would be all right. God himself gave Hagar and Ishmael water (Genesis 12:17-19), and God was with Ishmael as he grew up (Genesis 21:20). As a side note, Hagar was actually a Semitic name according to The Expositor's Bible Commentary vol.2 footnote 15 p.307. There were many Semites who lived in the northern part of Egypt.

It should also be noted that, in doing this, Abraham is giving Hagar and Ishmael their freedom; and God is looking out for them.

From Bible Query; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006; from E-sword; Genesis 21:14.

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The Bible Illustrator: To be compelled to face life single-handed at the age of sixteen is by no means a fate to be pitied. It was the making Of Ishmael. and is the making of many a lad in every generation. But the two fugitives are soon reminded that, though expelled from Abraham's tents and protection, they are not expelled from his God. Ishmael finds it true that when father and mother forsake him, the Lord takes him up. At the very outset of his desert life he is made conscious that God is still his God, mindful of his wants, responsive to his cry of distress.⁸¹

It is disconcerting, with a superficial reading, to think that Abraham just suddenly throws Hagar and her son out on their own. The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary gives a similar approach to this question.

A Justification of Abraham, by the Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary

The conduct of Abraham, in this instance, seems cruel and unkind. But it must be noted-

1. That he acted according to the Divine command. His duty was clearly announced, but the performance of it was painful to his feelings.
2. Hagar, by this act, obtained her freedom.
3. The mother and son were not hereby excluded from the Covenant. Ishmael had been circumcised, and had the Covenant promises. Nor were they excluded from intercourse with Abraham's house (ch. Gen).
4. In this early age it was not a difficult thing to find a livelihood in the course of such a journey. Food could be obtained without injury to anyone. Accordingly we find that Ishmael chose to dwell in the wilderness, where he became an archer. The subsequent history shows that Hagar was able to provide for herself and her son.
5. Let me add that Ishmael was a young adult at this point in time. God did not order Abraham to send a mother and her dependent child out into the world to fend for themselves. They are both adults and God is going to look out for them.

First 4 points are from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/phc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

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J. O. Dykes, D. D., comments: *So far as Ishmael was concerned, the archer and huntsman whose home was to be the desert, with his bow for his best inheritance, it was well that he should be early trained to the hardships of a nomadic chieftain. For his own comfort, he could not be too soon compelled to forego all idle dreams of one day succeeding to his father's estate. Too soon he could not be withdrawn from the presence of a brother whose priority would only inflame his envy. It was*

⁸¹ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tbi/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=22> accessed December 7, 2014.

the kindest thing for the youth to send him away from his father's tents. Let it be remembered that he was not sent away from his father's God. The mercies of God are not limited to the area of His covenant.⁸²

Genesis 21:14f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: ...and she departed...

Hagar departs from the camp which had provided her such great security over the decade or two. She will have freedom, but what comes with her freedom is a great deal of personal responsibility.

Pink: At last the conflict is over. He who "persecuted" Isaac is now "cast out" (Gal. 4:29). So it will yet be with us. Judicially the life of the flesh is already ended for us, but practically it is still here with us and in us. But blessed be God what is true now judicially shall soon be true experimentally also. When Christ returns for us, the flesh shall be put off for ever, just as Elijah left behind him his earthly mantle. But mark how accurate our type is: not till Isaac "grew" and was "weaned" was the persecuting Ishmael cast out! Let this be our closing thought. Soon our Ishmael shall be east out. Soon shall this vile body of ours be made like unto the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21). Soon shall the Savior return and we shall be "like Him," for we shall see Him as He is (John 3:2). Blessed promise! Glorious prospect! Does not the presence of the vile flesh within us now only serve to intensify the longing for our blessed Lord's return? Then let us continue to cry daily, "Come quickly. Even so, come Lord Jesus."⁸³

Part of what Islam believes is, Ishmael is the firstborn son of Abraham, and he therefore ought to inherit all that belongs to the firstborn; and that Mohammed was descended from Ishmael.

The Bible Query on, *Isn't Ishmael the firstborn son?*

Q: In Gen 21:14 If you read the Old Testament, it is clear that in Genesis the first born son (meaning God's chosen, the inheritor of his father), is Ishmael and the lies interpolated by the Jews into the Old Testament to disinherit him (why? Because they could not accept someone from outside their tribe) clearly becomes visible when they wrote that Ishmael with his mother Hagar were banished away from the tribe of Abraham forever?, but when we read more of Genesis we find that the true story is that "Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren" (family) and further "Isaac died in the presence of all his brethren". These statements from the Bible clearly show up a further Jewish interpolation which is that they had to make up the incident about the permanent banishment of Hagar and Ishmael so that they could replace Ishmael who was the original "only son of Abraham" at the time when Abraham was willing to sacrifice anything for the love of and obedience to God's will, it also shows that the promise of the savior of mankind was made through Ishmael (firstborn son) and not Isaac (second son). (A Muslim asked this)

A: First of all, some Muslims might not be aware that the Qur'an does not specify whether the son that was offered in sacrifice was Ishmael or Isaac.

⁸² From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tbi/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

⁸³ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_25.htm accessed September 7, 2014.

The Bible Query on, *Isn't Ishmael the firstborn son?*

Your assertion that Ishmael died in the presence "of his family" does not mean he was not banished. The only thing the Bible says on that is Genesis 25:17b where it says "He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people." This was a common euphemism for saying he died. This cannot prove he was buried with his ancestors, because Abraham too was "gathered to his people" in Genesis 25:8, and that does not mean he was buried back in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Contrary to your question, it never said, *Abraham was to sacrifice his firstborn son*. Rather, *Abraham was to sacrifice his only son*, because Ishmael had already been sent away and Isaac was the only child of promise. I have a question for you though, could the Qur'an be wrong?

1. Sura 32:23 "We did indeed aforetime give the book to Moses. Be not then in doubt of its reaching (thee): and We made it a guide to the children of Israel." So do you agree that the Torah, as it was originally given, was correct and from the true God?
2. Sura 5:46 "And in their [the prophets'] footsteps we sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: we sent him the gospel; therein was guidance and light. And confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah". So do you agree that the Torah in Jesus' time, as he confirmed it, was the true word of Allah?
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain many copies of Old Testament manuscripts from the time of Christ and before. Three points where you think the Bible of being in error are:
 - 3.1. Isaac was the child of promise, the covenant. Genesis 17:19,21
 - 3.2. Ishmael and Hagar banished in Genesis 21:8-19
 - 3.3. Abraham sacrificing Isaac vs. Ishmael found in Genesis 22:1-18

The Dead Sea scrolls mention that Isaac is the child of promise. Philo was a Jewish scholar who lived in Alexandria Egypt, dying in 50 A.D. He wrote a commentary on Genesis, and his commentary, on Genesis in his time, shows it is the same as we have today.

Clement of Rome was an early Christian bishop, probably the Clement mentioned by Paul, who wrote a letter to the Corinthians in 97/98 A.D. He mentions that the son Abraham offered to sacrifice was the son of his old age. [He does not actually say Isaac though].
4. You cannot blame Christians for judging your accusations against the Gospel of both Jesus' time and Mohammed's because of Sura 5:47. It says, "Let the People of the Gospel Judge by what Allah hath revealed Therein..." ? So do you agree that Christians should judge by the Gospel, of which we have copies long before Mohammed's time? If not, then is the Qur'an wrong?

Sura 5:48 says, "To thee (People of the Book) We sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee...". If you are a Muslim who disagrees with these words, then how does Allah differentiate between His words, which He allows devout worshippers to learn only in corrupted form, and His words that remain uncorrupted?

Most Muslims believe in the hadiths, which are the authoritative collections of the sayings and doings of Mohammed, as the highest authorities after the Qur'an. Of the six major recognized hadith collections, Bukhari is the highest. I thought you would like to read what it says about Hajar [Hagar] and Ishmael. Bukhari vol.4 book 55 ch.9 no.583 p.373 "Abraham brought her [Hagar] and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place at the Ka'ba under a tree on the position of Zam-zam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody at Mecca, nor was there any water. So he made them sit over there and place near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He say, "Yes". ... (p.374 same hadith) "The Prophet said, "This is the source of the tradition of the walking of people between them (i.e. Safa and Marwa). When she reached the Marwa (for the last time), she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. ... She saw an angel at the place of Zam-zam digging the earth

The Bible Query on, *Isn't Ishmael the firstborn son?*

with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place."

The famous Muslim historian al-Tabari (839-923 A.D.), investigated whether it was Ishmael or Isaac that was almost sacrificed, and he said it was Isaac, not Ishmael (al-Tabari vol.2 p.68). He had a ten-page discussion of the Muslim authorities who said it was Isaac and the ones who said it was Ishmael (al-Tabari vol.2 p.82-92), while concluding it was Isaac.

However, I think that this issue, of which of Abraham's sons was which, is a small thing compared to being able to answer the question of Proverbs 30:4f: "[Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!](#)"

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Genesis 21:14g

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tâ'âh (תָּאָה) [pronounced <i>taw-GAWH</i>]	<i>to err; to go astray [by sin], to [physically, mentally] wander [about]; to stagger [from intoxication]; to perish</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8582 BDB #1073
Tâ'âh refers to wandering without a guide, to sheep going astray without a shepherd, to a person acting without a moral compass.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mid ^e bâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced <i>mid^e-BAWR</i>]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness; mouth</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
B ^e êr Shâba' (בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>b^eayr SHAW^e-vahg</i>]	<i>well of the oath [seven] and is transliterated Beersheba, Beer-sheba</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #884 BDB #92

Translation: ...and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba.

At this point, she and Ishmael are directionless; they are out in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba, but at this point, they do not seem to know what to do, except to wander.

Genesis 21:14 So Abraham arose early in the morning and he took food [lit., *bread*] and a skin of water and gave [them] unto Hagar, putting [them] upon her shoulders; [and he gave them] to the youth. Then he sent her way and she departed and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:14 So Abraham arose early in the morning and took provisions and a container of water and gave these things to Hagar and the youth, putting them on her shoulders. Then he sent her away, and they departed and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba. (Kukis paraphrase)

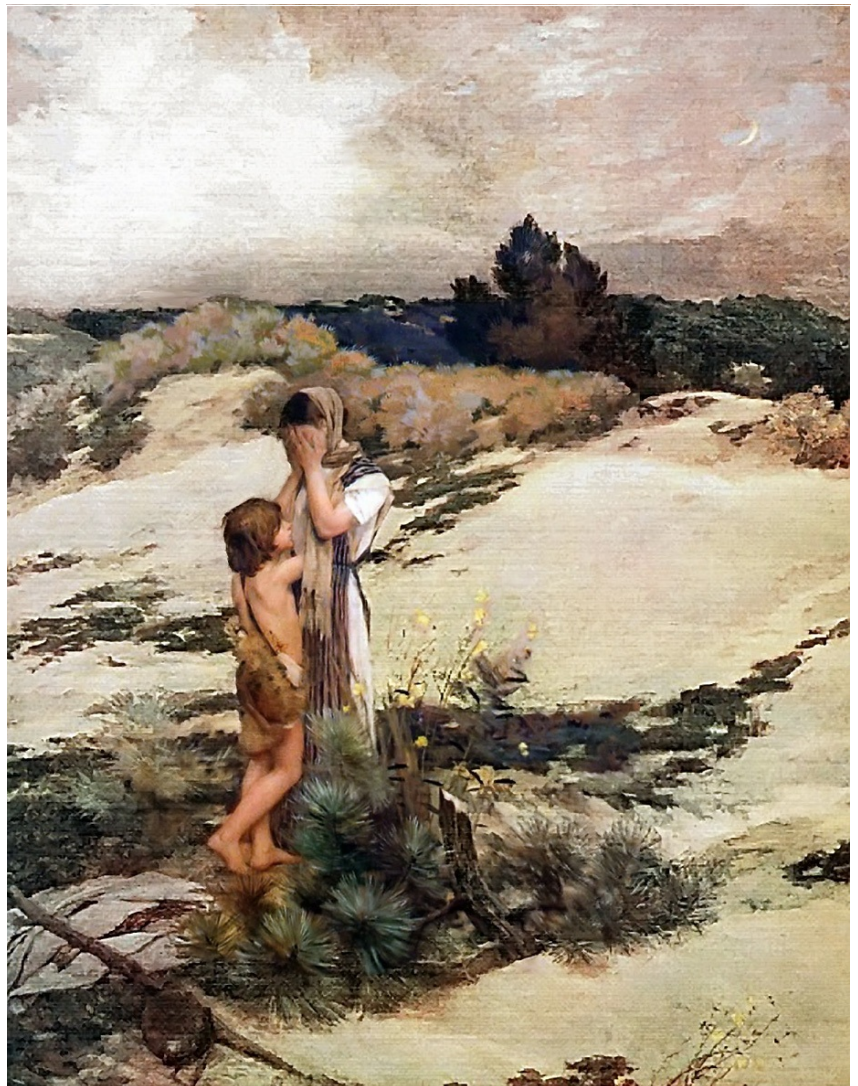
Hagar and Ishmael in the Desert by Jean-Charles Cazin (1840–1901) (graphic), from [Fine Art America](#); accessed September 9, 2014. There are many stunning paintings and pictures commemorating this even; and in every one of them, Ishmael looks to be somewhere between 4 and 10 (rather than 16 or 17).

In the next verse, the water will be spent, and Ishmael will be near death from thirst. I admit this bothered me, to some degree. Why didn't Abraham give them enough supplies? However, their nearly dying of thirst in the next verse is not necessarily because Abraham was skimping on their supplies. This is because of the verb used here, which is *tâ'âh* (תַּאֲהוּ) [pronounced *taw-GAWH*]. It means *to err; to go astray [by sin], to [physically, mentally] wander [about]; to stagger [from intoxication]; to perish*. *Tâ'âh* refers to wandering without a guide, to sheep going astray without a shepherd, to a person acting without a moral compass. Strong's #8582 BDB #1073. The problem is not that Abraham held back on the supplies, but that Hagar and Ishmael were someone aimless in their wandering. If they had a plan (such as, to go to Egypt), they never really acted on that plan. Or, they got mixed up and detoured in the desert-wilderness.

Let me suggest that one or more of these things took place: (1) Hagar or her son Ishmael did not really put together a plan of what to do; (2) they were too used to having things taken care of that they took for granted, because they lived on Abraham's compound; (3) if they had a destination, they got confused and turned around in the desert; and (4) they had not come across a well, which would have been necessary for their survival.

The second thing which concerns me is, *where is their mule? Why didn't Abraham give them a mule?* At this point, I will need to speculate—perhaps they were not really capable of taking care of a mule. Being thrown out of the compound happened suddenly. There is nothing to indicate that either one of them could have handled a mule.

Finally, if they are given too much by way of supplies, they would have possibly gone too far before stopping and trying to figure out what to do. It is clear that Abraham would have preferred for Ishmael to stay with them. This way, they cannot get too far away. And what is clear is, there continued to be contact between Ishmael and Abraham's family (we will find out about Ishmael's line later in the book of Genesis).



V. 14 reads: So Abraham arose early in the morning and took provisions and a container of water and gave these things to Hagar and the youth, putting them on her shoulders. Then he sent her away, and they departed and

wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba. *Beersheba* had not been named at this point in time. This was written in retrospect, not as a diary. So several years after Genesis 21:31 was written, when Beersheba was named, was when this was written. There are numerous places in Scripture where the writer alludes to a particular place and names it by its more modern name so that the reader can identify where it is that he is speaking of. This also, in some instances, helps us to pinpoint when a portion of Scripture was written; that is, when a city is named, that means the Scripture was written after the naming of that city.

The alternative view is, this name of this place was changed to the more modern name after the fact.

This is the viewpoint of *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: Beersheba: So called when Moses wrote; but not before Abraham's covenant with Abimelech (Genesis 21:31). Such instances of the figure prolepsis are not infrequent in the Pentateuch (Genesis 21:33 22:19 26:33 46:1 1Kings 19:3).*⁸⁴

All this means is, a more up-to-date name is used by a later writer or editor, so that the location of the place is still known. However, I am not sure that *prolepsis* is the right word to use here (unless this occurred before Beersheba was named that, but written about *after* Beersheba had been named). I would think that this is more likely a **gloss**.

Barnes: *The wilderness in Scripture is simply the land not profitable for cultivation, though fit for pasture to a greater or less extent. The wilderness of Beer-sheba is that part of the wilderness which was adjacent to Beer-sheba, where probably at this time Abraham was residing.*⁸⁵ I do not think that the wilderness was the dried desert that it is today; that is was well-watered, but it had not been tamed or cultivated.

In any case, Beersheba was sparsely populated during the time of Abraham and for many years after; and was a buffer zone between Egypt and the Palestine area. The wells throughout this area allowed traders to move back and forth between the areas.⁸⁶

We know that Hagar believes in Jehovah Elohim, because she has spoken to Him; and it is likely that Ishmael believes in Him as well. However, neither one of them appears to have received the love of the truth; and, therefore, Ishmael was unable to control his own feelings of jealousy when Isaac came on the scene.

This is the first time we hear of Beersheba, which is named her anachronistically. That is, when Hagar and Ishmael went into that desert area, it did not have that name. However, Abraham and company will move into that general region as well, in the latter half of Genesis 21, and we will see how this place gets its name.

Genesis 21:14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a skin container of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder. And he gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Beersheba is in the southern portion of Judah (the most southern territory of Israel), which puts Hagar and Ishmael near the Sinai desert. At that time, this was mostly an unpopulated area. The name of this place—Beersheba—will be given to this area later in



Hagar by VanderWerfft from the University of Virginia [website](#).

⁸⁴ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 21:14.

⁸⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:9–21.

⁸⁶ Coffman, <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

this chapter; and then the same name is given again to this place several decades later by Isaac—both, in fact, under very similar circumstances.

This suggests that, whoever recorded this narrative (probably Abraham, but it could have been Isaac), it was likely *after* Abraham’s meeting at the end of this chapter; or after Isaac’s meeting several chapters from now. That, or this is a gloss, which means a change of text after the fact, to give a more well-known name to a specific area.

The Dismissal of Hagar by Dutch painter Adriaen van der Werff. The obvious problem with this painting is, Ishmael is shown to be this sad little waif, when he is actually about age 17 at this time.

Genesis 21:14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a skin container of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder. And he gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. Hagar and Ishmael do not carefully note their supplies; they do not think ahead; they do not plan days in advance for when their water runs out.

Was Abraham remiss in the supplies he gave Hagar and Ishmael?

1. Did Abraham provide Hagar enough by way of supplies? That is a very tough question, because it does not appear that he provides them with very much.
2. Abraham does not give them a personal slave; he does not give them a mule; he does not give them much by way of provision. After all, Hagar and Ishmael will almost die out in the desert-wilderness; isn’t that proof the Abraham did not provide them with enough?
3. First of all, there is a lot in this narrative that we do not know. We do not know Sarah’s motivation, although we have speculated that it is for the safety of Isaac.
4. We don’t know if Sarah said more to Abraham than, “Get these people out of here; I want them gone!”
5. We do know that the inheritance from Abraham is an important consideration—it is specifically mentioned in v. 10.
6. Here is what we do know: God told Abraham to listen to Sarah and to do what she asks. If she told him to be skimpy on supplies, then Abraham would be obeying God. If she said, “I don’t even want them taking an ass out of here;” then Abraham would be obeying God by doing that. However, that is speculation. It is apparent that Sarah is upset over Hagar and Ishmael; and that this has festered for many years (over 16). So, it is reasonable that she was not willing for Abraham to do much of anything on their behalf.
7. We also know that God told Abraham that He would make a nation out of Ishmael. So, Abraham has God’s assurance of Ishmael’s well-being. Abraham could have pointed to the property edge and said, “Hit the road, you two” and he would know that God would oversee their future. Abraham knows clearly that what God promises, God is able to bring about.
8. We don’t know all that is in Abraham’s mind at this point. We know that he loves Ishmael deeply and that he does not want Ishmael to be taken from him. That is clear. Remember, Abraham said to God, “**O, that Ishmael might live before you!**” In essence he was saying, “Look, I am fine with You fulfilling Your promises through Ishmael.”
9. There is one more area of speculation—the more that Abraham gives to Hagar and Ishmael, the further they can travel away from him. It is not speculation that Abraham would prefer Ishmael to remain with him.
10. So, since God will fulfill His promises to Abraham about Ishmael becoming a nation; Abraham, by giving Hagar and Ishmael relatively few supplies, keeps Ishmael nearby. And whether he gives them a lot of provisions or just a few provisions, God must still keep His Word.

God Provides for Hagar and Ishmael

God Provides (graphic); Taken from **Tales from a Mother**; accessed September 10, 2014. This very much describes the section of the Word of God that we will study.

What is most important here—and emphasized by the Bible—is that God has given Hagar specific promises and God has given Abraham specific promises about Ishmael. These promises are key. God cannot make such promises and then not follow through.

Read this passage carefully. When the Angel of God speaks to Hagar, read it carefully—what will be emphasized is the Word of God more than the provisions that God will make for them.



And so is consumed the waters from the skin and so she casts the youth under one of the bushes.

Genesis
21:15

When the water was consumed from the skin-canteen, she left [lit., *cast off*] the youth under one of the bushes.

After they had consumed the water, she left her son under one of the bushes.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so is consumed the waters from the skin and so she casts the youth under one of the bushes.

Targum of Onkelos

And it was when they came to the entrance of the desert, they remembered to wander after strange worship; and Ishmael was seized with a burning thirst, and drank of the water till all the water was consumed from the cruse. And he was dried up, and withered in his flesh; and she carried him, and was exhausted, and she cried unto the Fear of his father, and He answered her not; and she laid the youth down at once under one of the trees. [JERUSALEM. And the water was consumed from the cruse, and she took up the youth.]

Latin Vulgate

And when the water in the bottle was spent, she cast the boy under one of the trees that were there.

Peshitta (Syriac)

And the water in the skin was spent, and she cast the boy under one of the shrubs.

Septuagint (Greek)

And the water failed out of the skin, and she cast the child under a fir tree.

Significant differences:

As usual, there is a lot of extra material in the targum.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

Finally the water in the flask ran out, and she put the boy down under one of the desert shrubs.

Contemporary English V.

...and after they had run out of water, Hagar put her son under a bush.

Easy English

When they had drunk all the water from the bottle, she put her son under one of the bushes there.

Easy-to-Read Version	After some time, all the water was gone. There was none left to drink. So Hagar put her son under a bush.
New Berkeley Version	...until the water in the skin-bottle was gone. Then she put the youth beneath one of the shrubs...
New Century Version	Later, when all the water was gone from the bag, Hagar put her son under a bush.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	However, [before long] the skin of water was empty. So she threw her child under a fir tree,...
Beck's American Translation	When the water in the skin was used up, she quickly laid the boy under one of the bushes.
Christian Community Bible	When there was no more water in the skin, she pushed the boy under one of the bushes,...
God's Word™	When the water in the container was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes.
International Standard V	Eventually, the water in the leather bottle ran out, so she placed the child under one of the bushes.
New Jerusalem Bible	When the skin of water was finished she abandoned the child under a bush.
Revised English Bible	When the water in the skin was finished, she thrust the child under a bush.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	The water finished from the wineskin, and she cast the boy under one of the greenery.
Bible in Basic English	And when all the water in the skin was used up, she put the child down under a tree.
Conservapedia	The water in the flask ran out, and she threw the child under a shrub.
The Expanded Bible	Later, when all the water was gone [finished] from the bag [skin], Hagar put her son under a bush.
New Advent Bible	And when the water in the bottle was spent, she cast the boy under one of the trees that were there.
NET Bible®	When the water in the skin was gone, she shoved [Heb "threw," but the child, who was now thirteen years old, would not have been carried, let alone thrown under a bush. The exaggerated language suggests Ishmael is limp from dehydration and is being abandoned to die. See G. J. Wenham, Genesis (WBC), 2:85.] the child under one of the shrubs.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	When the water in the skin was gone, she left the child under a bush.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and the water is finished off from the skin and she casts the child under one of the shrubs.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	When the water was gone from the skin, she left the child under one of the bushes,...
Judaica Press Complete T.	And the water was depleted from the leather pouch, and she cast the child under one of the bushes.
Kaplan Translation	When the water in the skin was used up, she set the boy under one of the bushes.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When the water in the bottle was all gone, Hagar caused the youth to lie down under one of the shrubs.
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Concordant Literal Version	And finishing are they the water from the flask. And flinging is she the boy under one of the shrubs.
Darby Translation	And the water was exhausted from the flask; and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.
English Standard Version Heritage Bible	When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. And the water was spent in the skin-bottle, and she threw the youth under one of the shrubs.
Kretzmann's Commentary	Ishmael's Life Saved And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. Apparently Hagar lost her way, or some miscalculation interfered, for the water in the skin was exhausted before she reached a spring. The ensuing suffering soon became so great that the boy was unable to support himself. For a while his mother supported him, drawing him along and half carrying him, in the hope of finding water. But at last she was obliged to let him sink down, her mother-love, however, selecting a shady place under a bush.
Syndein	And the water kept on being at an end in the bottle. She caused the casting down of the child under one of the shrubs.
World English Bible Young's Updated LT	The water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And the water is consumed from the bottle, and she places the lad under one of the shrubs.

The gist of this verse: Once they had drunk all of the water, Ishmael is completely out of energy and his mother lays him under a shrub.

Genesis 21:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâlâh (כָּלָה) [pronounced <i>kaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to complete, to finish; to be past, to go by; to consume, to waste, to destroy; to be completed or finished, to be accomplished or fulfilled; to be consumed [wasted or spent]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3615 BDB #477
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>mah-YIHM</i>]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4325 BDB #565
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
chêmeth (חַמָּת) [pronounced <i>KHAY-mehth</i>]	<i>waterskin, skin [canteen], container, bottle</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2573 BDB #332

Translation: When the water was consumed from the skin-canteen,...

There are a couple of things to be noticed with this narrative. The mother has the most strength and she is most able to function after the water is gone. This means that the son took very little water and let his mother take most of it. That speaks well of Ishmael.

John Trapp: *All creature comforts will fade and fail us; as the brook Cherith dried up while the prophet was drinking of it; as those pools about Jerusalem, that might be dried up, with the trappings of horse and horsemen. [2Kings 19:24] But they that drink of Christ's water shall never thirst; for it shall be in them (as the widow's oil, or Aaron's ointment) "a well of water springing up to eternal life". [John 4:14].⁸⁷*

Genesis 21:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlak ^e (שָׁלַךְ:) [pronounced shaw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to throw, to cast, to fling, to throw off, to cast away [off]; to shed; to reject; to cast about; to cast down, to overthrow</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7993 BDB #1020
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
yeled (יָלֵד) [pronounced YEH-led]	<i>child, one born; son, boy, youth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
'echâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone</i>	numeral adjective; construct form	Strong's #259 BDB #25
sîyach (שִׁיחַ) [pronounced SEE-ahkh]	<i>bush, shrub, plant</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #7880 BDB #967

Translation: ...she left [lit., cast off] the youth under one of the bushes.

The verb here is a little unusual, and it can be to throw, cast or fling something; but the idea here is, the cast something aside, to shed it. Even though the woman was given the most water and she was still alive, she cast away her son, because, apart from the water, he had done nothing on their behalf.

Genesis 21:15 *When the water was consumed from the skin-canteen, she left [lit., cast off] the youth under one of the bushes.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:15 *After they had consumed the water, she left her son under one of the bushes.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Barnes: *Ishmael was now, no doubt, thoroughly humbled as well as wearied, and therefore passive under his mother's guidance. She led him to a sheltering bush, and caused him to lie down in its shade, resigning herself to despair. The artless description here is deeply affecting.*⁸⁸

⁸⁷ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jtc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21>; accessed September 7, 2014, slightly edited.

⁸⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:9–21.

You are going to notice a very big difference between Abraham's response to God's promises and hers. In many ways, both of them were promised similar things. Although Isaac would be the next in line to continue God's promises to the line of Abraham; God also promised that Ishmael would become a nation. Now would be the time for Hagar to stand up and say to God, "Where are You? You promised us that my son would be a nation; You need to fulfill Your promise to us." However, it appears more as if she has just given up. That is a significantly different approach.

She and the boy have walked a great distance, and they are out of provisions. It is to the point where, it appears as though the boy has fainted or is very weak. She places him under a shrub, for shade, and walks a good distance away from him.

Keil and Delitzsch: *"to throw," signifies that she suddenly left hold of the boy, when he fell exhausted from thirst.*⁸⁹

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *his mother laid his head under one of the bushes to smell the damp while she herself, unable to witness his distress, sat down at a little distance in hopeless sorrow.*⁹⁰

Here is the problem: Hagar and Ishmael have been slaves all of this time. This means that all of their needs had been seen to. At no point in time did they have to worry about food and water; or a place to sleep. As slaves, these things were provided for them. So now, here they find themselves, free, but in a world where they must do for themselves, and they are not quite ready to do that.

Application: To be fair, nearly everyone in America, if they are suddenly thrust out into some wild area, could not take care of themselves. We are very dependent today upon the infrastructure of society. If the grocery store around the corner suddenly closed down, along with all of the others, that would change everything. If our electricity went off or we no longer had easy access to clean, fresh water, our lives would change dramatically, and many of us could not survive these changes.

Application: Yet, even with all of this infrastructure, we have many in our society who, if their checks from the government stopped coming in the mail, and if their food card stopped being replenished, would have no idea what to do either—even with all the infrastructure. Many of them are generational welfare recipients and they have become accustomed to not working or to only working 20–30 hours a week at low paying jobs. If, for any reason, they suddenly find themselves having to work 40 hours a week or perhaps 2 jobs just to make ends meet—this would be a great challenge to them, as they have been enslaved by their government through a bevy of welfare benefits. They have come to expect this level of care from the government, as something that they believe ought to be provided for them. Two generations ago, nearly no one would have thought that it was the government's job to feed our children. But today, there are significant portions of the United States where they simply expect government to do this.

So Hagar and Ishmael, who should have taken stock of their meager supplies and determined their next move days before these supplies ran out, came to a point where they needed food and water, and there was none to be found. They were in a hopeless situation; but they put themselves in that position. But, God's plan—the promise which He made to Abraham concerning Ishmael—is greater than any of their bad decisions.

⁸⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 21:14–16.

⁹⁰ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 21:15.

And so she goes and so she remains to her from what is conspicuous, as archers of the bow, for she had said, "Let me not look at death of the youth." And so she remains from what is conspicuous and so she lifts up her voice and so she weeps.

Genesis
21:16

And then she goes and sits by [lit., to] herself a ways off, a distance as a bowshot [away], for she had said, "Let me not look on the death of the youth." So she sat a ways off and she lifted up her voice and wept.

Then she went and sat by herself a ways off from the boy, for she thought, "I do not want to watch my child die." So she just sat there and wept.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she goes and so she remains to her from what is conspicuous, as archers of the bow, for she had said, "Let me not look at death of the youth." And so she remains from what is conspicuous and so she lifts up her voice and so she weeps.
Targum of Onkelos	And she went and sat on one side, <u>and cast away the idol (or the strange worship)</u> , and removed from <u>her son</u> , as the distance of an arrow from the bow; for she said, I am not able to see the death of the child. And she sat over against her son, and lifted up her voice and wept.
Latin Vulgate	And she went her way, and sat over against him <u>a great way off</u> , as far as a bow can carry, for she said: I will not see the boy die: and sitting over against, she lifted up her voice and wept.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she went and sat down opposite him about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the boy. And she sat down opposite him and lifted up her voice and wept.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she departed, and sat down opposite him at a distance, as it were about a bowshot, for she said, Surely I cannot see the death of my child: and she sat opposite him, and <u>the child</u> cried aloud and wept.
Significant differences:	The Hebrew is somewhat perplexing and I had a difficult time with the translation; so it is difficult to find fault with the other translations. As usual, the targum has additional text.

The Greek has Ishmael crying aloud; but the Hebrew only has Hagar crying aloud.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	She walked away from him about as far as a bow shot and sat down, telling herself, I can't bear to see the boy die. She sat at a distance, cried out in grief, and wept.
Contemporary English V.	Then she sat down a long way off, because she could not bear to watch him die. And she cried bitterly.
Easy English	She went and she sat down by herself. She did not want to see her child die. So she sat a little distance away, about as far as an *arrow goes. She sat there and she began to cry loudly.
Easy-to-Read Version	Hagar walked a short distance away. Then she stopped and sat down. Hagar thought her son would die because there was no water. She did not want to watch him die. She sat there and began to cry.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...and sat down about a hundred yards away. She said to herself, "I can't bear to see my child die." While she was sitting there, she began to cry.
<i>The Message</i>	...and went off, fifty yards or so. She said, "I can't watch my son die." As she sat, she broke into sobs.

New Berkeley Version	...and went to seat herself at a bowshot's distance opposite him, for she said, "I must not see the boy die." As she sat there, she wept audibly;...
New Century Version	Then she went away a short distance and sat down. She thought, "My son will die, and I cannot watch this happen." She sat there and began to cry.
New Life Bible	Then she sat down as far away from him as an arrow flies. For she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." As she sat there, she cried a loud cry.
New Living Translation	Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards [Hebrew a bowshot.] away. "I don't want to watch the boy die," she said, as she burst into tears.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...where she left him, and then she sat some distance across from him (a bow-shot away). And she said, 'I can't just watch my child die.' So she sat there across from him as her child bawled and cried.
Ancient Roots Translinear	She went and dwelled before him the distance of a bow's range. She said, "I do not want to see the death of the boy." She dwelled before him, lifting her voice, and wept.
Beck's American Translation	Then she went and sat down as far away as you stand when you shoot arrows, thinking, "I don't want to see the boy die." So she set at a distance and wept bitterly.
Christian Community Bible	...and then went and sat down about a hundred yards away, for she thought, "I cannot bear to see my son die." But as she sat there, the child began to wail.
God's Word™	Then she went about as far away as an arrow can be shot and sat down. She said to herself, "I don't want to watch the boy die." So she sat down and sobbed loudly.
International Standard V	Then she went and sat by herself about a distance of a bowshot away, because she kept saying to herself, "I can't bear to watch the child die!" That's why she sat a short distance away, crying aloud and weeping.
NIRV	Then she went off and sat down nearby. She was about as far away as a person can shoot an arrow. She thought, "I can't stand to watch the boy die." As she sat nearby, she began to sob.
New Jerusalem Bible	Then she went and sat down at a distance, about a bowshot away, thinking, 'I cannot bear to see the child die.' Sitting at a distance, she began to sob.
New Simplified Bible	She sat across from him at a distance. She thought: »I cannot watch the boy die.« She sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.
Revised English Bible	...then went and sat down some way off, about a bowshot distant. 'How can I watch the child die?' she said, and sat there, weeping bitterly.
Today's NIV	Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she [Hebrew; Septuagint the child] began to sob.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And she went some distance away, about an arrow flight, and seating herself on the earth, she gave way to bitter weeping, saying, Let me not see the death of my child.
Bullinger Bible	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 <i>the boy lifted up his voice and wept.</i>
Conservapedia	Then she went, and sat down about a bowshot away from him, because she said, "I don't want to see the child die." So she sat apart from him, raised her voice, and wept.
The Expanded Bible	Then she went a good way off, the distance of a bowshot, and sat down across from him. She thought, "My son will die, and I cannot watch this happen." She sat there across from him and began to cry.

Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and went and seated herself on the other side, for she said, "I shall not then see the lad's death." She rested on the other side, and she raised her voice and wept.
New Advent Bible	And she went her way, and sat overagainst him a great way off, as far as a bow can carry, for she said: I will not see the boy die: and sitting overagainst, she lifted up her voice and wept.
NET Bible®	Then she went and sat down by herself across from him at quite a distance, about a bowshot [A bowshot would be a distance of about a hundred yards (ninety meters).] away; for she thought [Heb "said."], "I refuse to watch the child die [Heb "I will not look on the death of the child." The cohortative verbal form (note the negative particle 'al (אֵל) [pronounced a]) here expresses her resolve to avoid the stated action.]." So she sat across from him and wept uncontrollably [Heb "and she lifted up her voice and wept" (that is, she wept uncontrollably). The LXX reads "he" (referring to Ishmael) rather than "she" (referring to Hagar), but this is probably an attempt to harmonize this verse with the following one, which refers to the boy's cries.].
NIV, ©2011	Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she [Hebrew; Septuagint the child] began to sob.
NIV – UK	Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bow-shot away, for she thought, I cannot watch the boy die. And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...and went and sat down at a distance, a bowshot away; for she thought, "Let me not look on as the child dies." And sitting thus afar, she burst into tears.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And she went and sat down from afar, at about the distance of two bowshots, for she said, "Let me not see the child's death." And she sat from afar, and she raised her voice and wept.
Kaplan Translation	She walked away, and sat down facing him, about a bowshot away. She said, 'Let me not see the boy die.' She sat there facing him, and she wept in a loud voice.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And going is she and sitting by herself, aloof from him, far off as a bow shot, for, she says, "I must not see the death of my boy. And sitting is she aloof from him. And the lad is lifting up his voice and lamenting.
Context Group Version	And she went, and she sat down across from him a good way off, as it were a bowshot. For she said, Don't let me see the child's death. And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice, and wept.
Darby Translation	...and she went and sat down over against [him], a bow-shot off; for she said, Let me not behold the death of the child. And she sat over against [him], and lifted up her voice and wept.
English Standard Version	Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.
Heritage Bible	And she walked, and sat down opposite, widening the distance from him about a bowshot, because she said, Let me not see the death of the youth. And she sat across from him, and lifted up her voice, and wept.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And she went and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice and wept. Here are further traits of a mother's undying love. She would not abandon the lad entirely, even if she might have gotten help; she could not bear to see him suffer and probably die before her eyes of thirst.

Syndein So she sat down at a distance equal to that usually taken by bowmen shooting at a target, and wept out loud in full abandonment to her grief.
 And she kept on going, and kept on sitting down in front of him . . . a good way off, as it were a bowshot from a bow {length you could shoot an arrow from a bow}. And she said, "Let me not keep on perceiving the death of the child." And she lifted up her voice, and kept on weeping.

Young's Updated LT And she goes and sits by herself over-against, afar off, about a bow-shot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the lad;" and she sits over-against, and lifts up her voice, and weeps.

The gist of this verse: Hagar sits down quite a distance from the child because she does not want to watch him die.

Genesis 21:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: And then she goes...

We find this verb used a lot in Scripture; many times to begin a series of actions. As before, we will have a number of imperfect verbs strung together with wâw consecutives, which suggests simply a logical progression of action. Now, other verbs in other forms will be thrown into the midst of this, but the imperfects and consecutives move the action along.

Genesis 21:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{BV}]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Genesis 21:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
neged (נָגַד) [pronounced NEH-ged]	<i>what is conspicuous</i> when it is a substantive and, as a preposition, <i>in front of, in the sight of, opposite to, before</i> (in the sense of being <i>in front of</i>)	preposition	Strong's #5048 BDB #617

Literally, these words mean *from before, from in front of, away from and opposite to*. Together, these words mean *from in front of, in front of, from before; a far off; in the presence of, before; from the front of; in front of, over against, opposite [to]; against; in opposition to*. When followed by the lamed preposition, these prepositions often mean *against*.

Without an object, *min neged* means *some way (s) off, from [at] a distance, a ways off; off; aloof*.

Translation: ...and sits by [lit., to] herself a ways off,...

Like most translators, I simplified the final few words of this phrase considerably. She is simply sitting a ways off from her child. It is sort of as if she is sitting off, opposite him, but I have difficulty explaining that in terms of *where* she is in relationship to her son (who is not actually named right here in this section of the verse).

Genesis 21:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
râchaq (רָחַק) [pronounced raw-KHAK]	<i>a removing, a removal, going afar off, going away [from, far]; being a distance from; being removed from [remote]</i>	Hiphil infinitive absolute	Strong's #7368 BDB #934
The infinitive absolute can act as a noun, a verb or an adverb. It takes the part of a noun, but with another verb (which may or may not be in the same stem), and it intensifies the verb's meaning, where it functions either as a complement of affirmation, and therefore translated <i>surely</i> or <i>indeed</i> ; or it may act as a complement of condition, and therefore be translated <i>at all, freely</i> or <i>indeed</i> . ⁹¹			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, just as; according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
ṭâchâh (טָחָה) [pronounced tau-KHAW]	<i>archers, those who draw the bow</i>	masculine plural Piel (Piipiel?) participle; construct form	Strong's #2909 BDB #377
qesheth (קֶשֶׁת) [pronounced KEH-sheth]	<i>bow; bowman, archer; strength, power; rainbow</i>	masculine/feminine singular noun	Strong's #7198 BDB #905

For whatever reason, this is listed as a masculine singular noun in 1Samuel 31:3; however, the identical noun is found as a feminine singular noun in Genesis 21:16 1Samuel 18:4. My guess is, this is properly a feminine singular noun.

These words together suggest *about the distance of a bowshot, about the distance between an archer and his intended target*.

⁹¹ Paraphrased from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

Translation: ...a distance as a bowshot [away],...

The first verb is mostly translated as a noun. This second verb is found only here. This phrase simply describes how far away that Hagar saw from her child, which would have been perhaps 100 yards (meters) or so.

Hagar is off a hundred yards away, not wanting to see her boy suffer and die from privation. They have not gotten to the point where, self-preservation kicks in, and they know they have to stop and provide food and water for themselves. That water flask and whatever other provisions that they had only takes them so far. They did not determine, at some point, that they needed to stop, and find water and a source of food, before moving on. This should have been done long before they used up their resources.

Gill: Not being able to bear the sight of her child in his agonies, and, as she apprehended, ready to expire, she went from the place where she had laid him, and sat down under one of the shrubs or trees to shade herself, right over against that where her child was, though at some distance...about as far off from him as an arrow can be shot, or is usually shot out of a bow.⁹²

It has been a long time since I have handled a bow. Seems like we shot at targets maybe 100 yards away. The Jews have this distance here at a half mile, which is considerably further.⁹³ There is a record set in 1987 by a hand-held bow at $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of a mile (**1336 yards**). In any case, I just don't see Hagar, under these circumstances, walking a half mile away. 100–200 yards seems like the most that she might travel from Ishmael.

Hagar is the one describing this (to someone at some point; probably to Ishmael 5 or 10 years off in the future). And she thinks of this distance as a bowshot. There is a certain immediacy in this description, which may be lost with all of the exegesis. This description does not sound like a woman looking back on an incident a long time ago; but described by a woman in the midst of this circumstance, living it. The reason I mention that is, we have the word *bowshot* here; and why would she think to use this descriptor? My educated guess is, affixed to Ishmael is a bow and some arrows. They have not been mentioned at all, but he will become known for his skill in using the bow (v. 20). She has to have seen her son use the bow in order to know how far a bowshot is. So, I don't believe that, years from that time, Ishmael makes a bow, and then she watches him use it, and associates his use in the future with the situation here. This is such a heartfelt, immediate description of these events, wherein the words themselves bear her personal feelings of despair and abandonment, that she would not find some circumstance of a happier time in the future to fit in here (watching her son shoot a bow a few years later), but that her point of reference, given her exhaustion and thirst, would have been based upon seeing Ishmael's bow right there. Given all of the emotion and immediacy of this narrative, I just do not see Hagar reaching into the future or into the past for the words to describe what is going on. At the brink of the death of her son, and then later, her imminent death, everything around her becomes an encasement of her experience, where she does not go outside of that experience to describe it.

What I am trying to say is, Ishmael does have a bow on him at this time and he does know how to use it. She does not speak of this bowshot as with any sort of hope, but her description is a clue as to how they will survive in the desert after God comes to them.

As a side note, Ishmael does not give this description himself because he does not know just how far away his mother is from him. He is near passed out; and he will come to when his mother gives him water.

Given what Hagar is doing, the language should have some sort of reference point regarding the boy, but it does not. Perhaps the idea is, she is trying not to think of her son dying; so she is trying not to even think of her son there—but of course, the visual of him, she cannot erase from her mind.

⁹² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:16.

⁹³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:16. Gill references Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 53. fol. 47. 4.).

The first part of v. 16 reads: *And then she goes and sits by [lit., to] herself a ways off, a distance as a bowshot [away],...* Now notice that she is sitting in a place in relation to where her son lies, but nowhere in this do we have the son referenced. It is as if she is trying to put him out of her mind; as if she is trying a set aside the horror of what is happening to them—both of them dying of thirst in the desert-wilderness—so, if just for a few seconds, she tries not to think of her son.

Genesis 21:16d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'al (אֵל) [pronounced al]	<i>no, not; nothing; none; neither, nor; do not, let not [with a verb];; let there not be [with an understood verb];</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
māveth (מוֹת) [pronounced MAW-veth]	<i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4194 BDB #560
yeled (יֶלֶד) [pronounced YEH-led]	<i>child, one born; son, boy, youth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

Translation: ...for she had said, “Let me not look on the death of the youth.”

Notice that *said* is in the perfect tense. She did not wander off and sit, and then come up with this thought. The Qal perfect here indicates that she had been thinking this for awhile. In fact, she does not even use the words *my child*; instead she uses the words *the youth, the child*. Obviously this is difficult for her. She can barely admit to herself what is happening.

However, it does not matter what she has said, how she feels, or how hopeless the situation is. God has already promised Abraham concerning Ishmael. He is not going to be some nobody. Because of being thrust into this situation, he is going to be tough and persistent; and a nation will be formed from him.

However, this scene here is why Hagar is out in the desert wandering about; and why Isaac is being raised up in the compound of Abraham. Abraham has faith in God's promises; Hagar does not. God has appeared to Hagar already. God has made it clear to Abraham that He has plans for this young man. She is behaving as if this is the end of the road for both of them.

They were apparently walking to Egypt and this skin of water was not enough to get them very far. Her son had been overindulged (spoiled) and was unable to take charge of the situation as some young men that age could

do. God had already promised Abraham concerning this son and it is not clear whether Hagar knew of these promises or not (see Genesis 17:20). Hagar has not appealed to God. She is only talking to herself.

Genesis 21:16e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{EV}]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
neged (נֶגֶד) [pronounced NEH-ged]	<i>what is conspicuous when it is a substantive and, as a preposition, in front of, in the sight of, opposite to, before (in the sense of being in front of)</i>	preposition	Strong's #5048 BDB #617

Literally, these words mean *from before, from in front of, away from and opposite to*. Together, these words mean *from in front of, in front of, from before; a far off; in the presence of, before; from the front of; in front of, over against, opposite [to]; against; in opposition to*. When followed by the lamed preposition, these prepositions often mean *against*.

Without an object, min neged means *some way (s) off, from [at] a distance, a ways off; off; aloof*.

Translation: *So she sat a ways off...*

She finds a place where she is probably able to see where her son Ishmael is lying, but cannot see his body. She is not just going to wander off; yet she cannot watch what she believes is the inevitable end of her son's life.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Her maternal love could not bear to see him die, and yet she would not lose sight of him.*⁹⁴

Consider the narrative that we are reading here. There are only two people here, and somehow, this narrative finds its way into the Bible. There are a few ways this could have happened. Hagar tells her son about this and what was going on, and he tells this to Abraham or to Isaac years later. Or the Revealed God observes this and gives this information to Abraham or to Isaac, which is then recorded.

Personally—and I don't have a lot to back this up—I don't think that any incident recorded in the Word of God was added as a narrative by God. I don't see God as, a few months or years later, sitting over, say, Jacob's shoulder, and saying, "Oh, this also happened." I believe that nearly everything in Scripture was recorded by a living, breathing human being who either saw the action himself or was told of the things that take place by someone else who witnessed it.

There will be a time when Isaac and Ishmael see each other again—at least at the funeral of their father. What happened when Ishmael was sent away and how he went from this point to what he was would have certainly been

⁹⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 21:14–16.

something which they would have discussed. Ishmael probably told Isaac this story (there appears to be no animosity between them years later); but Ishmael heard these details from his mother.

As we will see, again, much of this narrative really comes from Hagar's perspective—just as it did when she ran off from the Abraham compound because of Sarah's lousy treatment. She had to be the primary source for this narrative. This is another reason why I believe that she clearly believed in the Revealed God. This is another unique incident that only Hagar actually knew most of the details about, which is found in the Bible.

Genesis 21:16f			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i>]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced <i>baw-KAW</i>]	<i>to weep, to cry, to bewail</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113
This is the first time we have this very common verb in Scripture.			
The LXX reads, instead, <i>and the child lifted up his voice and wept</i> . Most have assumed that this was an attempt to smooth out the agreement of this text with the verse that follows.			

You will note the glaring difference between the LXX and the Masoretic text here. The fact that very few English Bibles even mention this, much less translate it, indicates that they believe the MT to be accurate.

Translation: ...and she lifted up her voice and wept.

Hagar is in a hopeless situation. She has one promise of God, and she does not cling to that promise. All she has is the desert wilderness all around her and a heart that cannot be consoled with her son's imminent death.

Although the Greek has *the child lifted up his voice and cried*, that is incorrect. These are feminine singular verbs, referring to Hagar and not to Ishmael. Ishmael is dying of thirst; his voice, at best, would be a rasp. He appears to be beyond the point of speaking or crying out.

Genesis 21:16 *And then she goes and sits by [lit., to] herself a ways off, a distance as a bowshot [away], for she had said, "Let me not look on the death of the youth." So she sat a ways off and she lifted up her voice and wept.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:16 Then she went and sat by herself a ways off from the boy, for she thought, "I do not want to watch my child die." So she just sat there and wept. (Kukis paraphrase)

If I was to make a guess, I believe that Hagar had the intention of going to Egypt, even though Egypt was too far away for them to get to, given their limited supplies. Thought should have been given to what they had, and since this would not take them to Egypt, an alternate plan needed to be formed. However, they developed no alternate plan. They were not used to planning ahead or planning on how to get their basic sustenance. They went until their supplies had been used up, and then stopped, expecting to die.

However, this is where God wanted them to be. God did not want Hagar and Ishmael to live in Egypt. We do not know if that was her intention for them to somehow get to Egypt. However, God has a plan for their lives in this desert-wilderness area, because they are associated with Abraham (Ishmael is his son by Hagar). Therefore, God is not going to cast these two aside.

Furthermore, Hagar believes in the Revealed God. God has appeared to her before. Therefore, God will not simply cast aside those who are His.

Matthew Henry: They were reduced to great distress there. Their provisions were spent, and Ishmael was sick. He that used to be full fed in Abraham's house, where he waxed fat and kicked, now fainted and sunk, when he was brought to short allowance. Hagar is in tears, and sufficiently mortified. Now she wishes for the crumbs she had wasted and made light of at her master's table.⁹⁵

Here is what we have studied so far:

Gen 21:9–16 But Sarah saw Ishmael mocking [the recently-weaned Isaac]. [Ishmael is] the one Hagar the Egyptian bore to Abraham. So Sarah said to Abraham, "Drive out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a co-heir with my son Isaac!" Now this was a very difficult thing for Abraham because Ishmael was his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be concerned about the boy and your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced through Isaac. But I will also make a nation of the slave's son because he is your offspring." [= blessing by association] Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them on Hagar's shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she said, "I can't bear to watch the boy die!" Therefore, as she sat nearby, she wept loudly.

As we studied previously, slaves are not good at providing their own basic needs. They have had food, clothing and shelter provided for them for most of their lives (Hagar was probably a teen when taken as a slave by Abraham and Sarah). Ishmael was still a young man, in his mid-teens (Abraham was 86 when Ishmael was born; Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born; and at this point, Isaac is being weaned from his mother).

It is likely that they needed to be separated from Sarah and her son Isaac, because Ishmael would have posed a real threat to his much younger half-brother, being poisoned with the hatred of his mother (which would have grown).

And so hears, Elohim, a voice of the youth. And so calls, a Messenger of Elohim unto Hagar from the [two] heavens, and so He says to her, "What to you, Hagar? Do not fear, for has heard, Elohim, unto a voice of the young man, in that he [is] there.

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But Elohim hears the voice of the youth and the Messenger of Elohim called unto Hagar from the heavens. He said to her, "What [is it] to you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, for Elohim has heard the voice to the young man, in the place where he [is].

⁹⁵ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:14–21.

But God heard the voice of the youth, and the Angel of God called out to Hagar from the heavens, saying, "What is wrong with you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, because God has heard the voice of the young man, from where he is.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so hears, Elohim, a voice of the youth. And so calls, a Messenger of Elohim unto Hagar from the [two] heavens, and so He says to her, "What to you, Hagar? Do not fear, for has heard, Elohim, unto a voice of the young man, in that He [is] there."
Targum of Onkelos	And the voice of the youth was heard before the Lord <u>for the righteousness</u> " sake of Abraham; and the Angel of the Lord called to Hagar from heaven, and said, What to you, Hagar? Faint not, for the voice of the youth is heard <u>before the Lord</u> ; <u>neither will judgment be according to the evil which he will do, but according to the righteousness of Abraham is mercy upon him</u> in the place where he is.
Latin Vulgate	And God heard the voice of the boy: and an angel of God called to Agar from heaven, saying: What are you doing, Agar? fear not; for God has heard the voice of the boy, from the place wherein he is.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God heard the voice of the child <u>from the place where he was</u> , and an angel of God called Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, What is it, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the child from the place where he is.
Significant differences:	The targum nearly always has additional text. The Greek has a little extra phrase near the beginning.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God heard the boy's cries, and God's messenger called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "Hagar! What's wrong? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy's cries over there.
Contemporary English V.	When God heard the boy crying, the angel of God called out to Hagar from heaven and said, "Hagar, why are you worried? Don't be afraid. I have heard your son crying.
Easy English	But God heard the boy's voice. So the *angel of God called from heaven. The *angel called to Hagar and he said this to her: `You need not be upset, Hagar. Do not be afraid, because God has heard the boy's voice. He has heard the boy there where he is.
Easy-to-Read Version	God heard the boy crying. And God's angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, "What is wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid! The Lord has heard the boy crying there.
<i>The Message</i>	Meanwhile, God heard the boy crying. The angel of God called from Heaven to Hagar, "What's wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid. God has heard the boy and knows the fix he's in.
New Berkeley Version	...but God heard the lad's call, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven: "Hagar, what is troubling you? Have no fear, for God has heard the lad's voice there where he is [Ishmael may have learned from his father to whom he might turn for help when all else has failed.].
New Life Bible	But God heard the voice of the boy. Then the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said, "Why are you so troubled, Hagar? Do not be afraid. For God has heard the cry of the boy.

New Living Translation But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, "Hagar, what's wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Well, God heard the voice of the child from the place where He was, and a messenger from God called to Hagar from the sky, and asked, 'Why are you concerned, Hagar? Don't worry, for God has heard the child's voice from where He is.

God's Word™ God heard the boy crying, and the Messenger of God called to Hagar from heaven. "What's the matter, Hagar?" he asked her. "Don't be afraid! God has heard the boy crying from the bushes.

International Standard V ***The LORD Rescues Hagar and Ishmael***
God heard the boy's voice, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven. He asked her, "What's wrong with you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, because God has heard the voice of the youth where he is.

New American Bible God heard the boy's voice, and God's angel called to Hagar from heaven: "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not fear; God has heard the boy's voice in this plight of his. Gn 16:7.

New Jerusalem Bible God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven. 'What is wrong, Hagar?' he asked. 'Do not be afraid, for God has heard the boy's cry in his plight.

New Simplified Bible God heard the lad crying. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her: »What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear! God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Revised English Bible God heard the child crying, and the angel of God called from heaven to Hagar, 'What is the matter, Hagar?' Do not be afraid: God has heard the child crying where you laid him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear God heard the voice of the lad, and the messenger of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What *is* with you, Hagar? Never fear, for God heard the voice of the lad and he's there.

Bible in Basic English And the boy's cry came to the ears of God; and the angel of God said to Hagar from heaven, Hagar, why are you weeping? have no fear, for the child's cry has come to the ears of God.

Conservapedia God heard the boy's voice, and the Messenger of God [Also known as the Angel of the Lord, a possible pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus Christ] called Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What's the matter with you, Hagar? You mustn't worry. God has heard the boy's voice from where He is."

The Expanded Bible God heard the ·boy crying [^lsound/voice of the boy], and God's ·angel [messenger; 16:7] called to Hagar from heaven. He said, "What is wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid! God has heard the ·boy crying [^lthe sound/voice of the boy] there.

New Advent Bible And God heard the voice of the boy: and an angel of God called to Agar from heaven, saying: What are you doing, Agar? fear not; for God has heard the voice of the boy, from the place wherein he i.

NET Bible® But God heard the boy's voice [God heard the boy's voice. The text has not to this point indicated that Ishmael was crying out, either in pain or in prayer. But the text here makes it clear that God heard him. Ishmael is clearly central to the story. Both the mother and the Lord are focused on the child's imminent death.]. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and asked her, "What is the matter [Heb "What to you?"]], Hagar? Don't be afraid, for God has heard [Here the verb heard picks up

the main motif of the name Ishmael ("God hears"), introduced back in chap. 16] the boy's voice right where he is crying.

NIV – UK God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible God heard the boy's voice, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What's wrong with you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, because God has heard the voice of the boy in his present situatio.

Judaica Press Complete T. And God heard the lad's voice, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is troubling you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the lad's voice in the place where he is.

Kaplan Translation God heard the boy weeping. God's angel called Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What's the matter Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy's voice there where he is.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version And hearing is the Elohim the voice of the lad from the place where he is. And calling is a messenger of the Elohim to Hagar from the heavens and is saying to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? You must not fear, for the Elohim hears the voice of your lad from the place where he is.

A Conservative Version And God heard the voice of the lad. And the agent of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, What troubles thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.

English Standard Version And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

Green's Literal Translation And God heard the voice of the young boy. And the angel of God called to Hagar out of the heavens. And He said to her, What ails you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the boy, there where he *is*.

Heritage Bible And God attentively heard the voice of the youth, and the Messenger of God called to Hagar out of the heavens, and said to her; What is with you, Hagar? Do not fear, because God has attentively heard the voice of the youth where he is.

Syndein And God heard {shama`} the voice of the lad. And the angel/messenger of 'Elohim/Godhead called to Hagar out of heaven, and kept on saying unto her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not. For 'Elohiym/Godhead keeps on hearing the voice of the lad."

World English Bible God heard the voice of the boy. The angel of God called to Hagar out of the sky, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Don't be afraid. For God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

Young's Updated LT And God hears the voice of the youth; and the messenger of God calls unto Hagar from the heavens, and says to her, "What to you, Hagar? fear not; for God has hearkened unto the voice of the youth where he *is*.

The gist of this verse: God hears the boy crying, and the Angel of God calls out to Hagar, asking her what is wrong, and telling her not to fear.

You will note, in the translation below, that I took a few liberties, which most other translators did as well.

Genesis 21:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
na'ar (נָעַר) [pronounced NAH-gahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: But Elohim hears the voice of the youth...

Many suggest that this is why the LXX changed the last verse. In the previous verse, we speak of the cry of Hagar; however, here, we speak of the cry of the son. What is likely the case is, both of them are dying (or believe they are dying), and so, both of them are crying. However, the cry of the boy would come from his soul. He is laid out under a tree or a bush with no voice remaining in him with which to speak. God's promises are made concerning him, so God has to keep track of where he is and what he is doing. His silent voice is heard by God.

As an aside, once I have completed most of the exegesis and writing, I look at about 50 or so commentaries to see if I missed anything (and I include many of their quotations as well). I can only recall one commentator, Ellicott, who seemed to realize that Ishmael was too weak and dry to actually speak.

Ellicott: *[I]t is not her loud lamentation, but the mute prayer of Ishmael that is heard, and an angel of God comes to her relief.*⁹⁶

Guzik: *As God protects and preserves them out in the desert; He answers them by hearing the voice of the lad. God is showing special favor to Ishmael because he is a descendant of Abraham.*⁹⁷

God, at times, exhibits an unusual sense of humor. Do you know what name is not found in this chapter? *Ishmael*. Between Genesis 17 and Genesis 25, Ishmael's name is not found. He is referred to over and over again in this chapter, but his name is not used. In the Hebrew, *Ishmael* is Yish^emâ'ê'l (יִשְׁמָעֵל) [pronounced yish-maw-GALE]. Strong's #3458 BDB #1035. In this verse, we have the Qal imperfect of *to hear*. That is yish^ema' followed by 'elôhîym; shorten God's name and we have *God hears* or *Ishmael*. *Ishmael* means *God hears*; and

⁹⁶ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

⁹⁷ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 21:15–21.

here, we are told that *God hears him*; and yet, this young man is without water, without strength, and he could not say a word if his life depended upon it. Nobody can hear Ishmael at this time; but *God hears Ishmael*.

Genesis 21:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
mal'âk' (מַלְאָךְ) [pronounced <i>mahl'-AWK</i>]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isaiah 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Hâgâr (חַגָּר) [pronounced <i>haw-GAWR</i>]	<i>flight, fugitive; transliterated Hagar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1904 BDB #212
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAH-yim</i>]	<i>heaven, heavens, skies; the visible heavens, as in as abode of the stars or as the visible universe, the sky, atmosphere, etc.; Heaven (as the abode of God)</i>	masculine dual noun with the definite article	Strong's #8064 BDB #1029

Translation: ...and the Messenger of Elohim called unto Hagar from the heavens.

God has communicated with Hagar before when He sent her back to Abraham and Sarah. Now He speaks to her again.

The boy is calling out, at this point, possibly for his mother and possibly for God; and the Angel of God speaks to Hagar. The Angel of God = Revealed Lord = the preincarnate Jesus Christ. See the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 21:17c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
Lit., this reads, <i>what to you?</i> It is variously translated <i>what is the matter with you, Hagar?</i> (CLV); <i>what troubles you?</i> (ESV); <i>what ails you?</i> (Green's literal translation, WEB); <i>what is with you?</i> (Heritage Bible); <i>what's the matter (God's Word™)</i> ; <i>what is troubling you</i> (JPTC). These are taken from Genesis 21:16.			
Hâgâr (הָגָר) [pronounced <i>haw-GAWR</i>]	<i>flight, fugitive; transliterated Hagar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1904 BDB #212

Translation: He said to her, "What [is it] to you, Hagar?"

This is an odd question. God literally asks her, "What to you?" This must be an idiomatic question. Some have rendered this, "What is the matter with you?" or "What troubles you?" As before, God initiates them talking with a question. This phrase is variously translated *what is the matter with you, Hagar?* (CLV); *what troubles you?* (ESV); *what ails you?* (Green's literal translation, WEB); *what is with you?* (Heritage Bible); *what's the matter (God's Word™)*; *what is troubling you* (JPTC).

Gill: *Or, what has befallen you? what is the matter with you? why do you cry, why are you weeping? this he said, not as being ignorant of her case, but in order to relieve and comfort her.*⁹⁸

It is curious that nearly every encounter with God has God beginning the conversation with a question. What appears to be the case is, when God speaks to an unbeliever or to a believer out of fellowship, then He initiates the conversation with a question—which requires an answer. When speaking to a believer in fellowship, God does not need to begin the conversation with a question.

⁹⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:17 (edited).

Genesis 21:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾal (אל) [pronounced a]l]	<i>no, not; nothing; none; neither, nor; do not, let not [with a verb];; let there not be [with an understood verb];</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39
yârêʾ (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

Translation: Don't be afraid,...

In many of the conversations which God initiates, often, this is the second thing which He says. He tells the hearer not to be afraid. This indicates that God is not here to judge them.

Genesis 21:17e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâmaʿ (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHĠ]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given	Strong's #413 BDB #39
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced koh]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
naʾar (נָעַר) [pronounced NAH-ġahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: ...for Elohim has heard the voice to the young man,...

He says that God has heard the voice of the young man, who is likely too hoarse to moan or cry. However, he likely feels on death's door, and is crying on the inside. Ishmael may not even have an actual voice at this time, being parched to the point of death; but his thoughts have apparently gone to God, as he looks to God—in his own

thinking—and calls out to the God of Abraham—again, in his own mind. He does not speak through an audible voice that your or I would have heard. But God heard his voice.

Hagar is a believer but she is out of fellowship. She has possibly been out of fellowship for the better part of the past fourteen years. She did not pray to God and God, when He called to her, had not heard her voice, but the sound of the lad. Qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced *kohl*] can mean *voice* or *sound*. Had she called to God in fellowship, He would have responded to her because of her prayer. God is responding to her because of Abraham.

Allow me to include some commentary by Keil and Delitzsch: *It was Elohim, not Jehovah, who heard the voice of the boy, and appeared as the angel of Elohim, not of Jehovah (as in Genesis 16:7), because, when Ishmael and Hagar had been dismissed from Abraham's house, they were removed from the superintendence and care of the covenant God to the guidance and providence of God the ruler of all nations.*⁹⁹ The Pulpit Commentary comments: *Elohim; Hagar and Ishmael having now been removed from the care and superintendence of the covenant God to the guidance and providence of God the ruler of all nations.*¹⁰⁰

I believe that this connection with Elohim rather than with Y^ehowah is significant. It seems that Y^ehowah Elohim is the God of Israel, the God Who knows this nation and Whose nation knows Him by His first name; by His principle name. Y^ehowah is both God’s covenantal and personal name with Israel. So, when Elohim speaks to Hagar and to Ishmael and when the Angel of Elohim provides for Hagar and Ishmael, this does not mean that they lack a relationship with Him. This does not mean that they are not good enough to be a part of the covenant. This simply means that they are not a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, which covenant all believing Jews in the era of Israel are a part of.¹⁰¹

Today, our relationship is not specifically with Y^ehowah Elohim (that is, we never read in the epistles of Paul an emphasis upon that name of God); our relationship with God is through Jesus Christ. He said, **“I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me.”** (John 14:6). There is no generalized relationship with some uncertain God of a uncertain character; our relationship with through Jesus Christ, Who is our righteousness; Who is perfect justice; Who paid for our sins.

It should be appended that, it was the Angel of Y^ehowah Who spoke to Hagar before (Genesis 16:11), when she had run away from the household of Abraham. However, He came to her with the purpose of placing her back into Abraham’s compound, which re-associates her with God’s covenant to Abraham.

Genesis 21:17f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong’s# none BDB #88
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong’s #834 BDB #81

The b^eyth preposition and ’ăsher together mean *where, wherever, wheresoever; in the place where.*

⁹⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 21:17–19.

¹⁰⁰ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 21:17.

¹⁰¹ This is a theory I am proposing; but I believe that it will be borne out by the Word of God elsewhere.

Genesis 21:17f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb is, is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
shâm (שם) [pronounced shawm]	there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

Shâm actually has three sets of meanings: ❶ it is a preposition of place and means *there*. When preceded by a relative pronoun, it means *where*. After verbs of motion, it means *to what place, to or toward* [a particular place or point]. ❷ Shâm is also used of time and can be rendered *at that time, then*. ❸ Finally, it is used to mean *therein, in that thing*.

Translation: ...in the place where he [is].”

It is a difficult call as to whether this is speaking of God or of Ishmael. I would guess that God is referencing Ishmael, or this would read “...from the place where he [is].” But God is simply telling Hagar that He knows what is going on. He knows that they are in the middle of the desert, dying of thirst.

Genesis 21:17 But Elohim hears the voice of the youth and the Messenger of Elohim called unto Hagar from the heavens. He said to her, “What [is it] to you, Hagar? Don’t be afraid, for Elohim has heard the voice to the young man, in the place where he [is]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:17 But God heard the voice of the youth, and the Angel of God called out to Hagar from the heavens, saying, “What is wrong with you, Hagar? Don’t be afraid, because God has heard the voice of the young man, from where he is. (Kukis paraphrase)

God hearing the voice of Ishmael *where he is* does not refer to geographical location only; but to his youth, his psyche and his inability to provide for himself and for his mother (at this moment). This all has to change. All of a sudden, Ishmael will have to go from being a snotty and angry teenager—sharing his mother’s anger for being cut out of a great inheritance—to providing for himself and for his mother, which set of circumstances causes him to grow up rather quickly.

Matthew Henry: *Note, God’s readiness to help us when we are in trouble must not slacken, but quicken, our endeavours to help ourselves.*¹⁰²

Up until now, Ishmael has led a rather idyllic existence, as the son of Abraham. It is certain that Moses, having but this one son, made the most of it and enjoyed their time together. What most parents would like for their children is to grow up innocent, barely exposed to the world, and sheltered, for as long a period of time as possible. Every child has a sin nature; but that does not mean that they need to be exposed to all of the evil in the world.

As an aside, slavery under Abraham, would have been an pastoral existence. The basic needs of Ishmael and his mother Hagar were always seen to by Abraham. They had water, they had food and they a place to sleep. Abraham clothed them. Furthermore, Abraham loved Ishmael. So, after years of this, it was not easy for Hagar and Ishmael to suddenly begin taking care of themselves, working to take care of themselves and planning ahead.

¹⁰² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:14–21.

Freedom and self-determination does not mean that everything is easy. Ishmael and his mother have to think; they have to plan; they have to determine day-by-day how to provide for themselves—something that they have never had to do before.

God continues to speak to Hagar:

Rise up; lift up the youth and take a hold with your hand in him for to a nation great I will make him."

Genesis
21:18

Rise up; lift up the youth and strengthen [support] him with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

Get up, lift up the youth and support him with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Rise up; lift up the youth and take a hold with your hand in him for to a nation great I will make him."
Targum of Onkelos	Arise, support the child, and strengthen your hand in him: for I have <u>set</u> him for a great people.
Latin Vulgate	Arise, take up the boy, and hold him by the hand, for I will make him a great nation.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Arise, take up the boy, and hold him <u>fast in your arms</u> ; for I will make him a great nation.
Septuagint (Greek)	Rise up, and take the child, and hold him in your hand, for I will make him a great nation.

Significant differences: The Syriac is somewhat different than Hebrew; Hagar is told, in the Syriac, to hold Ishmael *fast in your arms*. The targum has *set* instead of *make*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Get up, pick up the boy, and take him by the hand because I will make of him a great nation."
Contemporary English V.	Help him up and hold his hand, because I will make him the father of a great nation."
Easy English	Go and get the boy up. Hold him firmly with your hand. I will make him into a great nation.
Easy-to-Read Version	Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many, many people."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Get up, go and pick him up, and comfort him. I will make a great nation out of his descendants."
<i>The Message</i>	Up now; go get the boy. Hold him tight. I'm going to make of him a great nation."
New Berkeley Version	Rise up, raise the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."
New Living Translation	Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Ancient Roots Translinear	Rise, lift the lad, and fortify your hand on him, for I will set him as a great nation."
Beck's American Translation	Get up, lift the boy to his feet, and hold him by your hand, because I'm going to make him a great people."
Christian Community Bible	Get up, pick the boy up and hold him safely, for I will make him into a great nation."

<i>God's Word™</i>	Come on, help the boy up! Take him by the hand, because I'm going to make him into a great nation."
International Standard V	Get up! Pick up the youth and grab his hand, because I will make a great nation of his descendants [Lit. <i>of him</i>]."
New Jerusalem Bible	Go and pick the boy up and hold him safe, for I shall make him into a great nation.'
Revised English Bible	Go, lift the child and hold him in your arms, because I shall make of him a great nation.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Come, take your child in your arms, for I will make of him a great nation.
Conservapedia	"Now get up, lift up the boy, and take him by the hand, because I'm going to make a great nation out of him."
The Expanded Bible	Help [Get up and lift] him up and take him by the hand. I will make ·his descendants [^him] into a great nation." [^cIshmael is considered the ancestor of the Arab people.]
HCSB	Get up, help the boy up, and sustain him, for I will make him a great nation."
NET Bible®	Get up! Help the boy up and hold him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."
NIV – UK	Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Get up, lift the boy up, and hold him tightly in your hand, because I am going to make him a great nation."
exeGesés companion Bible	Rise! Lift the lad and strengthen him in your hand; for I set him to be a great goyim.
Judaica Press Complete T.	Rise, pick up the lad and grasp your hand upon him, for I shall make him into a great nation."
Kaplan Translation	Go and lift up the boy. Keep your hand strong on him [(Hirsch). Others, 'hold him tight.'], for I will make of him a great nation.'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Arise, raise up the youth and support him with your hand, for I intend to make him a great nation.
Concordant Literal Version	Rise! Lift up the lad, and encourage your hand in him, for a great nation will I constitute him.
Kretzmann's Commentary	Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. In this great extremity Ishmael forgot all his mocking and turned to the prayers which he had learned in his father's house. In answer to this prayer the Angel of God in the specific sense, the Son of God, who had appeared to her once before, Genesis 16:9-13, bade her not to fear, but to arise, to lift up her son, and to support him, since he was not to die, but to live, and to become the ancestor of a great people.
Syndein	Arise, lift up the lad, and cause to hold him in your hand. For I will keep on making a great nation {from him}.
World English Bible	Get up, lift up the boy, and hold him in your hand. For I will make him a great nation."
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Rise up, lift up the boy and hold him up with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

The gist of this verse: God tells Hagar to get up and go to the boy, and to comfort him, because He would make a great nation of him.

Genesis 21:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
<p>Nâsâ' actually has a variety of Qal meanings: It means ❶ <i>to take up, to lift up, to bear up</i>; ❷ <i>to lift up someone's head</i> (this is used in a favorable way; i.e., it is misused to mean <i>to make one cheerful or merry</i>); ❸ <i>to lift up one's own countenance, i.e., to be cheerful, full of confidence</i>, ❹ <i>to bear, to carry</i>, ❺ <i>to lift up in a balance, i.e., to weigh carefully</i>; ❻ <i>to bear one's sin or punishment</i>, ❼ <i>to lift up the voice</i> (this can be used in the sense of bewailing, crying, crying out, rejoicing, <i>to lift up any with the voice</i> (a song, an instrument); ❽ <i>to lift up the soul</i> (i.e., <i>to wish for, to desire</i>); ❾ <i>to have the heart lifted up</i> (i.e., they are ready and willing to do something); ❿ <i>to bear one's sin</i> (in such a way to expiate the sin, to make atonement for the sin, to pardon the sin). This list does not exhaust the various connotations for nâsâ'. BDB adds the following: <i>to support, to sustain, to endure; to take, to take away, to carry off, to forgive</i>.</p>			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
na'ar (נַעַר) [pronounced NAH-gahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: Rise up; lift up the youth...

Now that God has Hagar's attention, He begins to issue orders. My guess is, at age 17, Hagar is not going to be able to physically lift up Ishmael and carry him about. Therefore, what God is asking Hagar to do is to comfort and sustain Ishmael. She is not lifting him up physically to carry him about, but she is lifting up his spirits. Similarly, she did not simply chuck him under the tree (v. 15).

Genesis 21:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced khaw-ZAHK]	<i>to take hold [of something], to grab, to hold fast, to gain [take] possession of; to strengthen, to make strong, to support; to repair; to display strength [power]; to prevail [upon]</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Genesis 21:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd] can connote <i>power, strength, ability; control; leadership, guidance.</i>			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88

Translation: ...and strengthen [support] him with your hand,...

She is to give Ishmael strength and this is with her hand. Ishmael is conscious enough to be groaning; so that, he will respond to the voice and touch of his mother.

What is possibly the case is, from her vantage point, Hagar cannot see what God has provided for her. However, when she goes and comforts her child, she will look up, and there will be what God has provided for her.

Genesis 21:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
gôwy (גוי) [pronounced GOH-ee]	<i>people, nation</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1471 BDB #156
gâdôwl (גדול) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
sîym (שׂים) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (שׂום) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7760 BDB #962

Translation: ...for I will make him into a great nation.”

Although it is not clear whether Abraham ever shared with Hagar what God said about Ishmael (I would guess that he did); here God makes it clear that He has plans for Ishmael.

Genesis 21:18 **Rise up; lift up the youth and strengthen [support] him with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.**" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:18 **Get up, lift up the youth and support him with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.**" (Kukis paraphrase)

What is God doing here? He is *repeating* Bible doctrine. He is *repeating* His Word. He is *repeating* His promises. So, what are Hagar and the boy to do? They are to believe God's Word; they are to cling to His promises. They need to know Bible doctrine, and then to hold onto that. In Genesis 16:10 **The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."** (ESV) God also told Abraham that He had plans for Ishmael: **"As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation."** (Gen 17:20; ESV) (we do not know if Abraham shared this with Hagar; I would guess that, at some point, he did) God also told Abraham, in this chapter, in Gen 21:13 **"And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."** (ESV) It would logically make sense that Abraham tells Hagar what God said, as he boots her out of his compound. Therefore, Hagar and Ishmael cannot die out in the desert-wilderness. These promises of God will be fulfilled in Genesis 25:12–18 1Chronicles 1:29–31.

Incidentally, this gives us another reason for the genealogies in Scripture which do not lead to Jesus Christ. Some genealogies are a fulfillment of God's promise to principal characters in Scripture (in this case, Hagar and Abraham).

God sends her back to her boy, to hold up his head (I assume) with her hand. She is going to give him water.

God makes the same promise to Hagar as He did to Abraham. Even though the line of promise goes through both Abraham and Isaac, that does not mean that God simply discards Hagar and her son. They are both related to Abraham, and therefore blessed because for that. Blessing by association. Furthermore, God's appearance to Hagar indicates that she is a believer in the Revealed Lord (which fact should have been clear in a previous passage where God had appeared to her—Genesis 16:7–12). So, even though Hagar and Ishmael are not a part of the promises God made to Abraham, that does not mean that they have fallen outside of the plan of God.

And so opens, Elohim, her [two] eyes and so she sees a well of waters. And so she goes and so fills the skin [with] waters. And so she makes drink the youth.

Genesis
21:19

Then Elohim opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. Therefore she went [to the well] and filled the skin with water. Then she caused the youth to drink.

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a nearby well of water. Therefore, she walked over to the well, filled the skin with water, and caused the boy to drink.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so opens, Elohim, her [two] eyes and so she sees a well of waters. And so she goes and so fills the skin [with] waters. And so she makes drink the youth.

Targum of Onkelos

And the Lord opened her eyes, and showed her a well of water, and she went and filled the cruse with water, and gave the youth to drink.

Latin Vulgate

And God opened her eyes: and she saw a well of water, and went and filled the bottle, and gave the boy to drink.

Peshitta (Syriac)

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

Septuagint (Greek) And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of springing water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the child a drink.

Significant differences: In the Hebrew text, it is Hagar who sees the water well; in the targum, God shows it to her.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went over, filled the water flask, and gave the boy a drink.

Contemporary English V. Then God let her see a well. So she went to the well and filled the skin with water, then gave some to her son.

Easy English Then God showed to her a well with water. She had not seen the well before. So she went. And she took the bottle that someone had made out of skin. She filled it with water and she gave a drink to the boy.

Easy-to-Read Version Then God allowed Hagar to see a well of water. So Hagar went to the well and filled her bag with water. Then she gave water to the boy to drink.

Good News Bible (TEV) Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well. She went and filled the leather bag with water and gave some to the boy.

The Message Just then God opened her eyes. She looked. She saw a well of water. She went to it and filled her canteen and gave the boy a long, cool drink.

New Life Bible Then God opened Hagar's eyes. And she saw a well of water. She went and filled the leather bag with water and gave the boy a drink.

New Living Translation Then God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well full of water. She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Then God opened her eyes and she saw a life [sustaining] well of water, so she went and filled the skin with water and gave the child a drink.

*God's Word*TM God opened her eyes. Then she saw a well. She filled the container with water and gave the boy a drink.

International Standard V Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. So she went, filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

Revised English Bible Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well full of water; she went to it, filled the water-skin, and gave the child a drink.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear God unsealed her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the wineskin with water, and watered the lad.

Bible in Basic English Then God made her eyes open, and she saw a water-spring, and she got water in the skin and gave the boy a drink.

Bullinger Bible And God opened her eyes, and she saw a *digged well* of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

Conservapedia Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went to it, filled the flask with water, and gave some of it to the boy to drink.

The Expanded Bible Then God [^lopened her eyes and] showed Hagar a well of water. So she went to the well and filled her ·bag [skin] with water and gave the boy a drink.

NET Bible[®] Then God enabled Hagar to see a well of water [Heb "And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water." The referent (Hagar) has been specified in the translation for clarity.]. She went over and filled the skin with water, and then gave the boy a drink.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Judaica Press Complete T. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the pouch with water and gave the lad to drink.

Kaplan Translation God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, giving the boy some to drink.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the [empty] bottle with water and caused the youth to drink.

Concordant Literal Version And unclosing is the Elohim her eyes, and seeing is she a well of living water, and is going and filling the flask with water, and giving the lad a drink.

Green's Literal Translation And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin *with* water, and gave drink to the young boy.

Heritage Bible And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she walked, and filled the skinbottle with water, and gave the youth drink.

Kretzmann's Commentary 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. Help had been so near at hand, but Hagar, in her own exhausted condition, had not noticed the spring which welled forth at a small distance. Now she filled the skin which she carried and refreshed her son, thus saving his life.

Syndein And 'Elohiym/Godhead kept on opening her eyes, and she kept on perceiving {ra'ah} a well of water. And she kept on going, and intensively filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad causing him to drink.

Young's Updated LT And God opens her eyes, and she sees a well of water, and she goes and fills the bottle with water, and causes the youth to drink.

The gist of this verse: They apparently were not sitting too far from an actual well, which neither of them saw at first. God causes her to see this well, and she fills up the water-skin and gives water to her son.

Genesis 21:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâqach (פָּקַח) [pronounced paw-KAHKH]	<i>to open [one's eyes and ears]; to restore sight; to enable [someone] to see [things which are hidden from the eyes of mortals]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6491 BDB #824
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 21:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Translation: So Elohim opened her eyes...

One of the great themes of the Bible is God making a person to be able to see. The truth is right in front of us, but so often, we do not see it. God has made promises already to Abraham about this child; so God must fulfill these promises. Therefore, He must see to the needs of Hagar and Ishmael.

Genesis 21:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
b ^ê r (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #875 BDB #91
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>mah-YIHM</i>]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun; pausal form	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Translation: ...and she saw a well of water.

Quite obviously, near where both she and the boy are is a well, which she had not noticed before. However, all of a sudden, Hagar sees a well (possibly a spring). She is able to see the provision that God has made for her; a provision which He made for her in eternity past.

Now, my understanding of ancient wells is, they are not much more than a hole in the ground. If this is a spring, then she obviously needed to be sitting at a particular position in order to see it. While she is comforting her child, she is possibly able to see this source of water.



Hagar's Extremity (a graphic) from [Public Clip Art Collection](#); accessed September 10, 2014. This is one of the few pieces of art (I think this is a water color), where Ishmael is portrayed as a full-grown lad.

Note the priorities: God first gave her the doctrine and then God made her aware of where the well is. She needed to have doctrine in her soul first; then she was able to see the well. She needed to remember God's promises first, and then she was able to see God's provision.

In the midst of this desert, she sees a well, which had eluded her before. This provides them enough water to survive. This provision by God suggests that both Hagar and Ishmael are believers; that they believe in Jehovah Elohim (which would make sense, working so closely with Abraham and Sarah; her son being raised by Abraham). For all we know, Ishmael's prayers while dying of thirst may have been his salvation prayer (you do not have to pray in order to be saved, but a prayer would have indicated faith in the Revealed God).

It says that **God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water**. I am sure you have had this experience—you take the same route to work each and every day, and on the 1000th time, you look over to the left and you see a business, a house, a park, a church, or some prominent structure that you have never seen before. It just never entered into your field of vision before, even though you have driven by that structure a thousand times before. This is what happened to Hagar. The well has been there all of this time, but she just did not see it until *God opened her eyes*.

Genesis 21:19c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: *Therefore she went [to the well]...*

She then walks over to the well (or to the spring). This set of imperfect verbs simply indicates the order in which she took these actions.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *God...directed her to a fountain close beside her, but probably hid amid brushwood, by the waters of which her almost expiring son was revived.*¹⁰³

The appropriate New Testament verse is 2Timothy 2:13 **if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself**. (HCSB) Hagar either forgot the promises of God or did not regard them in her heart at this time. But when God makes a promise, He has to bring it to pass. God cannot drop the ball when it comes to His Word. God's Word depends upon God's character. His Word is intertwined with His character. God cannot make such promises to Hagar, and then say, "You know what, she doesn't see a need to keep this in the forefront of her mind, so I don't need to keep the promise. If she forgot it, then I will forget it as well." But, that is legalism, and God does not operate in legalism. He operates in grace.

Genesis 21:19d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mâlê' (מלא) [pronounced <i>maw-LAY</i>]	<i>to fill, to make full, to fill up, to fulfill; to overflow</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #4390 BDB #569

¹⁰³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 21:19.

Genesis 21:19d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
chêmeth (חֶמֶת) [pronounced <i>KHAY-mehth</i>]	<i>waterskin, skin [canteen], container, bottle</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2573 BDB #332
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>mah-YIHM</i>]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Translation: ...and filled the skin with water.

Her comfort for her child is going to be greater if she has water in the skin. God does not bring the water to Ishmael. "There's the well, you are carrying a water skin, you can fill it up." We were designed to function with some independence.

Genesis 21:19e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâqâh (שָׁקָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAW</i>]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink, to make drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
na'ar (נָעַר) [pronounced <i>NAH-gahr</i>]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: Then she caused the youth to drink.

She take the provision given to her by God and revives her son with water.

Recall that, Ishmael is around 17 or 18, which is a young man. And, quite obviously, he allowed his mother to drink the water when he did not. However, apart from that, he does not appear to have taken the lead in terms of determining what they both needed to do. They just wandered aimlessly, he showing no leadership skills; and his mother is still taking the lead in everything. However, this appears to change with the next verse.

Hagar and Ishmael painted by Carl Bauerle and engraved by W. Roffe from [Ancestry Images](#).

Now, why doesn't God the Holy Spirit say, instead, "Then God caused her to look over to the left, and there was the well of water"? This narrative is analogous to the gospel; this is analogous to our Lord offering springs of eternal waters to us. When we believe in Christ, at that point, God has *opened our eyes* to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We may have heard the gospel a 1000 times, but suddenly, we hear it and it makes sense and we understand that there is a decision to be made. The mechanics are, God the Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit (as an unbeliever, we are spiritually dead, which means our human spirit is not functioning) and thereby the Holy Spirit makes spiritual information understandable to us (spiritual information is not something the unbeliever can fully understand—1 Corinthians 2:14). The Holy Spirit takes the gospel of Jesus Christ so that it suddenly make sense. We have heard "Christ died for your sins" a thousand times; but then, one day we hear it, and we understand this applies to us, and that all we need to do is believe in Him. This becomes a decision that we must make.



Hagar and Ishmael (painted by Carl Bauerle; engraved by W. Roffe). From [Ancestry Images](#).

As a child, I learned all of the Christmas hymns and sang them at school, but I did not really know what they meant. I sing them today in church, and they are filled with profound spiritual meaning; but as a child, I only knew them as relating to Jesus being born. All of the other doctrinal information found in many of these songs was completely lost on me. I had only the most basic understanding of Jesus at the time—therefore, since I had not believed in Him, there was no foundation upon which to build spiritual understanding.

Furthermore, insofar as I recall, God did not open my eyes to the gospel then.

Genesis 21:19 [Then Elohim opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. Therefore she went \[to the well\] and filled the skin with water. Then she caused the youth to drink.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:19 [Then God opened her eyes and she saw a nearby well of water. Therefore, she walked over to the well, filled the skin with water, and caused the boy to drink.](#) (Kukis paraphrase)

[Genesis 21:19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin-canteen with water, and gave drink to the boy.](#)

Here, God the Holy Spirit chooses language intentionally so that we can take this real life narrative and derive a spiritual application from it. A few verses back, Paul took a passage from this narrative and gave it a whole new twist. Ishmael makes fun of his new half-brother, and Hagar and Ishmael are expelled from the household of Abraham. Then Paul sets up the analogy of grace believers and legalists, or law versus grace. Just like Paul, we can take an historical narrative and give it a doctrinal application. However, to be clear, you cannot make a brand new doctrine up based upon a parallel to an historical narrative. You must take a truth which is clearly taught, and then certain historical narratives will, by analogy, teach that same truth. That is what Paul did. He used the existing Scriptures as his authority, even though this is just an analogy that he presented.

Hence, taking this passage and showing parallels to hearing and understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ is valid, because the principles related in the gospel are true and real. In this way, the passage can be illustrative of an established truth.

<p>And so is Elohim with the youth and so he grows up [or, becomes renown]. And so he lives in the desert-wilderness. And so he is multiplying a bowman.</p>	<p>Genesis 21:20</p>	<p>And Elohim is with the youth as [lit., and] he grows up [and becomes well-known]. He [continued to] lived in the desert-wilderness. He became great [as] an archer.</p>
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And God was with the youth as he grew up and became well-known. He continued living in the desert-wilderness, increasing his prowess as an archer.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so is Elohim with the youth and so he grows up [or, becomes renown]. And so he lives in the desert-wilderness. And so he is multiplying a bowman.
Targum of Onkelos	And the <u>Word of the Lord</u> was the helper of the youth, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became a skillful master of the bow.
Latin Vulgate	And God was with him: and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became a <u>young man</u> , an archer.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And God was with the boy; and he grew up and dwelt in the wilderness of Paran and learned to become an archer in the wilderness of Paran.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God was with the child, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

Significant differences: Both the targum and the Latin add a little extra text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God remained with the boy; he grew up, lived in the desert, and became an expert archer.
Contemporary English V.	God blessed Ishmael, and as the boy grew older, he became an expert with his bow and arrows.
Easy English	So God was with the boy. The boy grew up and he lived in the desert. He became skilful with a bow and *arrows.
Easy-to-Read Version	God continued to be with the boy while he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became a hunter. He learned to shoot a bow very well.
Good News Bible (TEV)	God was with the boy as he grew up; he lived in the wilderness of Paran and became a skillful hunter.
<i>The Message</i>	God was on the boy's side as he grew up. He lived out in the desert and became a skilled archer.
New Century Version	God was with the boy as he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became an archer.
New Life Bible	God was with the boy and he grew. He lived in a place where no people live, and became very good in using the bow.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	God was with that child, so he grew up living in the desert and he became an archer.
Beck's American Translation	God was with the boy. He grew up and lived in the wilderness and learned to shoot with a bow.
Christian Community Bible	God was with the boy. He grew up and made his home in the wilderness and became an expert archer.

God's Word™	God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became a skilled archer.
International Standard V	God was with the boy as he grew up. He settled in the wilderness and became an expert archer.
New American Bible	God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert bowman.
NIRV	God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and learned to shoot with a bow.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	God was with the lad. He grew, and dwelled in the wilderness, and was a multiplier of bows.
Bible in Basic English	And God was with the boy, and he became tall and strong, and he became a bowman, living in the waste land.
Conservapedia	God was with the boy, and he grew up, and lived in the desert, and became a great bowman.
The Expanded Bible	God was with the boy as he grew up. Ishmael lived in the ·desert [wilderness] and became an archer.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Thus GOD gave life to the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the desert, and became a mighty archer,...
New Advent Bible	And God was with him: and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became a young man, an archer.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation	God was with the boy. [The boy] grew up and lived in the desert, where he became an expert archer [See Genesis 21:16.].
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And God was with the youth, and he developed; and he dwelt in the wilderness and became an archer.
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it that the Elohim is with the lad, and he is growing up. And dwelling is he in the wilderness, and becoming great with his bow.
English Standard Version	And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow.
Green's Literal Translation	And God was with the boy. And he grew up. And he lived in the wilderness and became a great archer.
New RSV	God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.
Syndein	And 'Elohiym/Godhead was with the lad. And he kept on growing, and kept on dwelling in prosperity in the desert, and became an archer/bowman {qashshath}.
Young's Updated LT	And God is with the youth, and he grows and dwells in the wilderness, and is an archer.

The gist of this verse: God stays with the youth, and he grows up and becomes an archer, living in this desert-wilderness.

Earlier, I said a few things about the wâw consecutive and the imperfect tense. This gives an idea as to how we can have continuous action associated with the wâw consecutive (which would contradict that nonsense about a wâw conversative).

Genesis 21:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
naʿar (נָעַר) [pronounced <i>NAH-ğahr</i>]	<i>boy, youth, young man; personal attendant; slave-boy</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: [And Elohim is with the youth...](#)

Quite obviously, God is with Ishmael not for a short time, but this suggests that God stays with this youth over the long haul. This would suggest that both he and Hagar are believers (God's two appearances to Hagar suggest as well that she has believed in Him).

As we will see in the rest of Genesis, some of the people in the line of Christ will seem—at least on the surface—as inferior people to those whom they supplanted. What Ishmael does here is great. He and his mother move into the desert, just two people, and they not only survive, but Ishmael will thrive.

It should be clear that, even though Ishmael obviously allowed his mother more water than he took from the canteen; that, apart from this consideration, he was all but useless in this trip out into the desert. When it comes to basic survival techniques, it appears as if he brings very little to the table here at this time. However, this will change; and it would have to change quickly.

Genesis 21:20b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
gâdal (גָּדַל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DAHL</i>]	<i>to be [become] great; to grow; to be greatly valued [celebrated, praised]; to twist together, to bind together</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; pausal form	Strong's #1431 BDB #152

Translation: [...as \[lit., and\] he grows up \[and becomes well-known\].](#)

The verb here means more than Ishmael simply growing up; what is implied is, *he becomes great, celebrated, well-known*. So, out in the middle of nowhere, Ishmael makes a name for himself. Ishmael went from being pretty much useless to his mother into being a well-known and (even) great person of the desert.

For whatever reason, Ishmael did not, by age 17 or 18, really have a clue what to do as a man. However, this changed over the next few years, and, because God was with him, he matured into a young man—a man who has become known.

Genesis 21:20c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{bV}]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
mid ^e bâr (הַבְּדֵי) [pronounced <i>mid^e-BAWR</i>]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness; mouth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4057 BDB #184

Translation: He [continued to] lived in the desert-wilderness.

Therefore, Ishmael and Hagar had no reason to come back from the desert-wilderness. They had no need to move back to Canaan; nor did Hagar feel any need for them to move to Egypt, where she is from. Ishmael apparently comes to a point where he is able to provide food, shelter and water for he and his mother while living in this harsh wilderness.

There were two kinds of blessings given here: blessing by association and logistical grace. Hagar, who did not call upon God's name and did not deserve to be kept alive, was saved, as was her son. God provided the basic necessities on their behalf as a part of logistical grace. Even having seen this and having lived with Abraham all of this time, they could have been great spiritually, but they were not. Merely because of God's relationship to Abraham were they preserved and eventually prospered.

Genesis 21:20d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Genesis 21:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
râbâh (הָבַר) [pronounced raw ^b -VAWH]	<i>to become much, to become many, to multiply, to increase in population and in whatever else; to become [or grow] great</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7235 BDB #915
qashshâth (תִּשֶׁק) [pronounced kahsh-SHAWTH]	<i>bowman, archer</i>	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #7198 BDB #905

Translation: He became great [as] an archer.

There are a couple of verbs here strung together, indicating that Ishmael becoming good as an archer was a process. It took some time. He did not discover that he had this great talent; he had to develop it. All talents require time, effort and attention.

Ishmael and his mother had to eat and drink. The well provided for them their water-needs. Ishmael realized that he had to do something in order to feed them. It is likely that Abraham taught him how to use a bow, but that he did not really apply this skill until now, when he absolutely had to. At this point, such a skill became absolutely necessary. Developing this skill, which probably required him to actually construct a new bow and arrows, was no doubt a part of his growth. He and his mother survive because Ishmael develops a useful skill.

The reason that we associate Ishmael with archery, besides this passage, is, in Genesis 21:16, he is said to be about a *bowshot* from his mother. Given the immediacy of the narrative, I would say that term *bowshot* was appropriately used, as his mother saw the bow with him and was familiar with his use of the bow.

Application: This is quite simple, and yet possibly rarely taught in any church: a young man needs to develop some marketable skills. Prior to this, Ishmael is, for all intents and purposes, helpless, even unable to feed himself. He develops skill as a hunter, and he is able to survive, and to feed both himself and his mother.

At this point, I would think that this doctrine might be interesting to those who either use a bow or know some in the line of Ishmael.

The latter half of v. 20 reads: He [continued to] lived in the desert-wilderness. He became great [as] an archer. The verb, *to become great*, also means *to become much, to become many, to multiply, to increase in population and in whatever else*. Strong's #7235 BDB #915.

Gill, on the Legacy of the Bow in the Line of Ishmael

[Ishmael's] posterity the Kedarenes, who sprung from his son Kedar, were famous for archery (Isaiah 21:17); and the Ituraeans, from Jetur, another of his sons (Genesis 25:15), were remarkable for their bows, of which Virgil (m) speaks; and so the Arabians that live in the deserts and round about them, called Nabathees, from Nabaioth, another son of Ishmael, are now extraordinary marksmen for bows and arrows, and to sling darts which are made of cane (n): the Saracens got their living not by the plough, but chiefly by the bow, and were all of them warriors, and lived upon wild flesh, and as rapacious as kites (o); and now the troops of the governor of Mecca, whereabouts Ishmael, by the Arabs, is supposed to live, which are only infantry, are called Al-Harrabah, that is, archers, or dart men (p).

Having a history like this suggests that this narrative and this particular point of the narrative is all compatible.

Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:20. Gill drew from the following sources: (m) "Ithyraeos taxi curvantur in arcus". Georgic. l. 2. ver. 448. (n) Rauwolff's Travels, par. 2. ch. 4. p. 118. by Ray. (o) Ammian. Marcellin. l. 14. p. 8. Ed. Vales. (p) Sharif al Edrisi, apud Pocock. Specim. Arab. Hist. p. 122, 124.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 21:20 And Elohim is with the youth as [lit., *and*] he grows up [and becomes well-known]. He [continued to] lived in the desert-wilderness. He became great [as] an archer. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:20 And God was with the youth as he grew up and became well-known. He continued living in the desert-wilderness, increasing his prowess as an archer. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:20 And God was with the boy, and he grew, and lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.

The water from the well is gives them enough to survive. What is implied here is, Ishmael becomes an archer in order to kill food with a bow and arrow. He may have even learned this from his father, Abraham. Again, Ishmael is in his early or mid-teens, which is a reasonable time for him to take responsibility for himself and for his mother. It was quite a shock—a reversal of fortune, if you will—to go from being heir to one of the greatest private fortunes in the ancient world to dying of privation out in the desert. However, with God's help and guidance, Ishmael and his mother adjust to their new life. Ishmael learns how to develop a skill which will provide them with food. It is even possible that Abraham had given Ishmael a bow at some point—perhaps as a part of their provisions.

And so he stays in a wilderness of Paran and so takes for him, his mother, a women from a land of Egypt.

Genesis
21:21

Ishmael [lit., *he*], therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran and his mother took a wife from the land of Egypt for him.

Ishmael, therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran while his mother found a wife for him from Egypt.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he stays in a wilderness of Paran and so takes for him, his mother, a women from a land of Egypt.
Targum of Onkelos	And he dwelt in the wilderness of Pharan, <u>and took for a wife Adisha, but put her away.</u> And his mother took for him Phatima to wife, from the land of Mizraim.
Latin Vulgate	And he dwelt in the wilderness of Pharan, and his mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he dwelt in the wilderness, and his mother took him a wife out of Paran of Egypt.

Significant differences: The Syriac is short a good deal of text. The targum adds in a whole new narrative about another wife.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He lived in the Paran desert, and his mother found him an Egyptian wife.
Contemporary English V.	He lived in the Paran Desert, and his mother chose an Egyptian woman for him to marry. For whatever reason, the CEV has this as a part of v. 20.
Easy English	He lived in the desert called Paran, and his mother chose an *Egyptian wife for him.

Easy-to-Read Version	His mother found a wife for him in Egypt. They continued living in the Paran desert.
Good News Bible (TEV)	His mother got an Egyptian wife for him.
<i>The Message</i>	He lived in the Paran wilderness. And his mother got him a wife from Egypt..
New Berkeley Version	He made the Paran desert his home and his mother got him a wife from the land of Egypt.
New Living Translation	...and he settled in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And as he was living there in the desert, his mother found a woman for him in Pharan, Egypt.
Christian Community Bible	He lived in the desert of Paran and his mother chose a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
International Standard V	Later he settled in the desert area of Paran, and his mother chose a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
New Jerusalem Bible	He made his home in the desert of Paran, and his mother got him a wife from Egypt.
Revised English Bible	...and his mother got him a wife from Egypt.
Today's NIV	While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He dwelled in the wilderness of Central-Sinai, and his mother took a woman for him from the land of Egypt.
Bible in Basic English	And while he was in the waste land of Paran, his mother got him a wife from the land of Egypt.
Conservapedia	He lived in the Paran Desert, and his mother took for him a wife from Egypt.
The Expanded Bible	He lived in the Desert of Paran [^c a region in the eastern Sinai peninsula], and his mother found a wife for him in Egypt [^c Hagar's original homeland].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and settled in the desert of Paran; and she took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
HCSB	He settled in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
New Advent Bible	And he dwelt in the wilderness of Pharan, and his mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.
NET Bible®	He lived in the wilderness of Paran [The wilderness of Paran is an area in the east central region of the Sinai peninsula, northeast from the traditional site of Mt. Sinai and with the Arabah and the Gulf of Aqaba as its eastern border.]. His mother found a wife for him from the land of Egypt [Heb "And his mother took for him a wife from the land of Egypt."].
NIV – UK	While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	He lived in the Pa'ran Desert, and his mother chose a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and he settles in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother takes him a woman from the land of Misrayim.
Kaplan Translation	He settled in the Paran Desert [South of Beer Lachai Roi. See notes on Genesis 14:6, 16:12.], and his mother got him a wife from Egypt [Her homeland, Genesis 16:1 (Bereshith Rabbah 53; Rashi). The Targum Yonathan states that the wife's name was Fatima.].

The Scriptures 1998

And he dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Mitsrayim.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And dwelling is he in the wilderness of Paran. And his mother is taking a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
Context Group Version	And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. And his mother took him a woman {or wife} out of the land of Egypt.
Green’s Literal Translation	And he lived in the wilderness of Paran. And his mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.
Kretzmann’s Commentary	And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. Ishmael grew up as a true son of the desert, living in the great wilderness which extends on the southern boundary of Canaan from Egypt to Arabia. The blessing of God rested upon him. He became very skilful with the bow and married an Egyptian woman whom his mother selected for him. This fact, unfortunately, strengthened the heathen element in the Ishmaelites and probably caused their abandoning of the true God in a very short time.
Syndein	And he kept on dwelling in prosperity in the desert of Paran. And his mother kept on fetching him a wife out of the land of Egypt.
Young’s Updated LT	And he dwells in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother takes for him a wife from the land of Egypt.

The gist of this verse:

Ishmael and his mother live in the Paran desert-wilderness and his mother finds a wife from him from Egypt.

Genesis 21:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{EV}]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3427 BDB #442
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong’s# none BDB #88
mid ^e bâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced <i>mid^e-BAWR</i>]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness; mouth</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong’s #4057 BDB #184
Pâ’rân (פְּרָאן) [pronounced <i>paw-RAWN</i>]	(possibly) <i>boughs; abounding in foliage [or caverns]; and is transliterated Paran</i>	proper noun/location; pausal form	Strong’s #6290 BDB #803

Translation: Ishmael [lit., *he*], therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran...

The general area of Paran lies between the Arabah (desert) to the east and the desert-wilderness of Shur on the west, a few days march from Sinai.¹⁰⁴ Essentially, they have traveled half-way to Egypt and settled down in the desert.

Paran is not a desert as we think of one. A desert is a sparsely occupied wilderness area. The desert of Paran is a broad desert-wilderness plain in the east central portion of the Sinai Peninsula, directly north of the Red Sea. Israel will cross through this desert during the Exodus (Num. 10:12 12:16 13:3–26). David fled to Paran after Samuel's death (1Samuel 25:1).

Once they had some water and settled into this area, Ishmael learned to hunt for food, an immediate necessity at which time he finally begins to grow up. He became responsible for his life and for his mother's life.

Map of the Wilderness of Paran.

Adrichomius describes Paran: *Paran or "Pharan is a wilderness, very large, desolate, impassable, and without water, containing, from Mount Sinai to Kadeshbarnea, a journey of eleven days; its land can neither be ploughed nor sown, is wholly dry, barren, and uncultivated; uninhabitable to men, destitute of villages, houses, and cottages; where neither men are seen, nor beasts nor birds; yea, neither trees nor any grass, only rocks and high rough stony mountains; it is taken sometimes for the first part of the desert of Arabia, near Mount Sinai, and sometimes for the last part, towards the land of promise; sometimes it is called the desert of Sin, and sometimes the desert of Sinai, from the mount; but this name Pharan seems to be the most general of the names of this very long desert.*¹⁰⁵

The problem is, he is describing Paran during his lifetime, which is **1533–1585**. Times change. No doubt, during his time, this land went downhill. Remember who occupied this area at this time. A lot of evil, misguided Arabs; and so God gave them a crappy place in which to live.

We know that, for many centuries, a variety of people lived in these areas. They are desert now, but things have changed since the time of Ishmael. The word *desert* is used to describe these areas, but that word is really *desert-wilderness*, and can simply refer to uninhabited (mostly) and uncultivated (mostly) lands.

In order to become established, Ishmael and his mother needed a home and they needed a regular supply of food. They never had to do this before; and now they find themselves forced to take care of themselves, and they do it. Becoming established is the first step. Hagar cannot simply go to Egypt and say, "My son and I are camping out in the desert, next to a well; do you want to marry him?" She also needs to show a prospective bride pictures on her iphone of their home and of the family bbq's in order to entice her. Hagar must sell her son as someone who is self-sufficient, self-reliant; and who has made a life for himself in the wilderness. Hagar can certainly do this, as long as it is accomplished beforehand.



From Map 24 of the Bible Atlas from e-sword. Egypt is to the far left of the map.

¹⁰⁴ M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Paran.

¹⁰⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:21. Gill is referencing Theatrum Terrae, S. p. 116.

The wilderness of Paran is below Edom, which is just south of the Dead Sea. It is just north of the Sinai Peninsula. At this time, they would be right in the middle of a desert-wilderness area. It is less barren in our narrative than it is today; but it was sparsely populated. Edom is the land that will eventually be controlled by Esau, who will marry one of the descendants of Ishmael.

Genesis 21:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i>]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>mits-RAH-yim</i>]	<i>Egypt, Egyptians</i>	proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...and his mother took a wife from the land of Egypt for him.

This appeared to be a common practice among ancient peoples, to marry others that they have some racial relation to (Moses, however, will buck this tradition with his second wife).

As was done quite often in those days, the parents would find the husband or wife for their children. This is not a bad practice. During the time in which we live, we find men and women sampling each other, choosing several different mates when the others have not worked out, and people make, in general, very poor choices for themselves; and with all this, the breakup of marriages in at **roughly 40%** in the U.S. and the breakup of

marriages who lived together first is higher and the breakup of those who just live together is higher yet. The point being is that the parents of a young person are smarter and wiser, in general, know by experience which attributes are important (attributes that people who choose marriage partners for themselves underestimate) and have their child's best interests at heart. One can never depreciate parental input when it comes to choosing a partner for one's life. Certainly there are parents who want to run a child's life up until age 60; however, many of them do so with their child's best interests at heart.

There is also the concept of a lifetime commitment, which has certain eluded many people in the United States. We have a great many divorces based upon some difficult times or experiences. Such things often help to strengthen a marriage, as the partners learn to lean on one another.

Unfortunately, Hagar, an Egyptian, will seek out another Egyptian woman, rather than perhaps a woman who believes in Y^ehowah Elohim. This is one of the many places where the life of Isaac and Ishmael will unfortunately diverge.

Obviously, time has passed here. Hagar and Ishmael did not stumble across this well, and then, 2 days later, Hagar finds a wife for her son. Obviously they have established themselves in the region of Paran to the point where they could take care of themselves—a process which may have taken years or even decades—and then, when they were well enough established, Hagar went looking to find a wife for Ishmael.

In terms of finding a wife, this appears to be common in the ancient world for one or both parents or a servant to be sent out to find a suitable woman for a son.

Dr. Thomas Constable: The concluding description of Ishmael's experiences (Genesis 21:14-21) provides information essential to understanding and appreciating later references to him and his descendants in the text. Ishmael became the father of 12 sons (Genesis 25:13-16) as Jacob did. From his sons came the Arab nations that have ever since been the chief antagonists of the Israelites. The term "Arab" (someone from Arabia) came into use for the first time in the ninth century B.C. [Note: Wenham, Genesis 16-50, p. 156.] Hagar chose a wife for her son from her homeland, Egypt.¹⁰⁶

Ishmael will enjoy another reversal of fortune and become the father of 12 great Arab tribes in that region south of Canaan, which we will study in Genesis 25:12–18.

Genesis 21:21 *Ishmael [lit., he], therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran and his mother took a wife from the land of Egypt for him.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:21 *Ishmael, therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran while his mother found a wife for him from Egypt.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:21 *And he lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him out of the land of Egypt.*

Hagar and Ishmael apparently became established there in Paran, and afterward, Hagar, an Egyptian by birth, went down to Egypt and found a woman to bring back to Ishmael.

Therefore, we may reasonably assume that, after a few years, they established some sort of residence—probably living in tents—and they established a regular resource of food and water. And with this, made a life reasonable enough to where Hagar can return to her home country and find a woman willing to marry her son Ishmael (which we will examine in greater detail in Genesis 25:12–18).

In fact, very likely, Hagar did not simply make this trek alone, but, Ishmael may have even purchased some slaves from caravans which passed through there. He may have raised donkeys or camels and other animals. It is still a long trek from where they are to Egypt, so it is unlikely that Hagar set out one day on foot to take care of this.

¹⁰⁶ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

You will notice what God did not do. God did not provide them with food—or if He did, it was not on a continual basis. God expects us to take care of ourselves. Work is fundamental to humankind. God did not expect Hagar and Ishmael to find a park bench, sit on it, and wait for wild game to wander up to them—that is a perversion of the faith we are to have in God. Ishmael used his time to develop skill as an archer, and he was able to provide food for himself and his mother in this way.

As we have seen in the United States; and as we will study the Exodus generation, if food is simply provided, then dependence is formed in the souls of those who simply take what is given to them. After that, a sense of entitlement develops—all of which is taught in the book of Exodus. In fact, one generation became so entitled and yet so lacking in faith, that God killed them in the desert before taking their sons and daughters into the Land of Promise (Num. 14:28–30 Psalm 95:7–11 Hebrews 3:10–11, 17–19).

Work is fundamental to the human race. For some reason, we have this vision of dying and then going up to heaven and sitting around on clouds with angels playing harps. This is silly. God had work for Adam in the garden before he sinned; God had work for Adam that was even more difficult after he sinned. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine that, after we have died and are face to face with Jesus Christ that we will have responsibilities related to work at that time as well. If you understand work as being important and fulfilling, then you will understand this.

Work is a part of the laws of divine establishment. It is, in fact, one of the **divine institutions**, something that we studied back in **lesson #90**. Man (I am using *man* in the generic sense, to stand for *men and women*) was designed to work. For most men, there is a satisfaction of accomplishment that comes with work. Without it, men become less focused and more prone to errant behavior.

I have personally known several people on various forms of welfare, and, in nearly all cases, this was not a temporary subsistence but a lifelong lifestyle; and for most of them, it led to their being involved in personally destructive behavior—because they had the time and money to mess up their own lives. When a person works one or two jobs, then it is more difficult for them to screw up their own lives—they don't have time to do that.

By way of application, God did not design us to sit around and receive a check from the government. Nor will Ishmael and Hagar sit around in their tents and wait for God to provide them with food.

Making a second application; God did not design us to retire. As we get older, it makes more sense for us to slow down; and, if we have been doing things as we should, we are able to reduce our work load; but we are not designed to spend the last 20–30 years of our lives on vacation.

I had a grandfather who worked until around age 90. My mother, who is in her mid-80's, only recently retired from her own business but continues to work at another. This is a good thing. This is healthy. And this is God's plan.

I believe that Abraham is the author of this portion of God's Word late in life. He certainly loved Ishmael and did what he could to learn of Ishmael's whereabouts and life. The information following their expulsion from his household is sketchy, possibly obtained from God directly, but likely from his own servants.

The quick movement from the expulsion of Ishmael and Hagar, to a short dissertation on their life and then back to a covenant with Abimelech suggests that this is all the same author. With the details about Abraham's life and the lives of those Abraham knew, it seems ridiculous to suggest that Moses wrote the first draft of Genesis. Moses may have edited it, but most if not all of Genesis was likely written down by other authors and then copied word-for-word by Moses under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

We will pick up with Ishmael again in Genesis 25:12–18.

We now leave Ishmael in the desert with his wife and mother and return to Abraham, concerning whom much of Genesis is about. Abraham is not just a nomad with a wife, a child, and a couple of servants. We have already seen how he pursued and defeated 4 kings; here his presence is formidable enough to the king of Gerar to require that king ally himself with Abraham.

Abimelech makes a Treaty with Abraham

In previous lessons, we have studied the separation of Ishmael from his father Abraham; and we looked at Paul using that as a springboard for teaching grace versus legalism. Then we followed Ishmael and his mother Hagar in the area of Beersheba.

Now we have a switch of scenery. This is a *meanwhile, back on the ranch* change. We leave Hagar and Ishmael, and return to Abraham and his life. However, what may have been the case is, the writer of this portion of Scripture mentions Beersheba, and then thinks, *perhaps I should say why is it named "Beersheba."*

At this point, we go in a completely different direction. This is a completely new section in this chapter, and the author does not really set the scene for it, so allow me to do that. Abimelech has come to Abraham for them to sign a lease contract; but this contract was also to represent their alliance, as Abimelech recognizes Abraham's relationship with the Revealed God.

Abraham takes this opportunity to come before Abimelech and his council to lodge a complaint. So, Abraham is dwelling on Abimelech's land, temporarily, and he has had a problem with Abimelech's soldiers, who took a well away from Abraham. Therefore, since Abimelech is sovereign of the land, he must adjudicate this matter. This council includes, ostensibly, a neutral 3rd party, Ochozath, and a possibly interested party, Phicol, who is commander over Abimelech's army. This meeting appears to take place at Abraham's compound, as evidenced by v. 32, so Abimelech apparently wants to get a look at what the argument is about in order to render a decision.

*Matthew Henry: We have here an account of the treaty between Abimelech and Abraham, in which appears the accomplishment of that promise (Genesis 12:2) that God would make his name great. His friendship is valued, is courted, though a stranger, though a tenant at will to the Canaanites and Perizzites.*¹⁰⁷

*Keil and Delitzsch: Through the divine blessing which visibly attended Abraham, the Philistine king Abimelech was induced to secure for himself and his descendants the friendship of a man so blessed; and for that purpose he went to Beersheba, with his captain Phicol, to conclude a treaty with him.*¹⁰⁸

What appears to be the case is, there was a dispute between Abraham and some of Phicol's soldiers. Now, with some heathen peoples, they would have simply killed Abraham and everyone in his compound, and the matter would be solved. However, it does not appear that Abimelech runs a might makes right sort of shop. It appears that Phicol has come back to Abimelech and reported what happened; and Phicol has then returned to Abraham with Abimelech and Ochozath. Abimelech is named first, because he is king over this land. Phicol is the commander over Abimelech's army, so it is right he should be there to give his soldiers' side of the story. Ochozath, a neutral third party, comes there possibly to break the tie, or to give his opinion as a neutral party. We do not find his name in the Hebrew text, but in the Greek.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge dates¹⁰⁹ this incident 1886 B.C. We do not have a date from them for Isaac's birth. There is a dramatic difference in dating here. If you look at the chart in the introduction, Brent MacDonald has the date of Isaac's birth at 2064 B.C.; and Reese's Chronological Bible, subtracting 17 years, puts Isaac's birth at 1881 B.C. This incident at the end of Genesis 21, is quite difficult to date, but just to round things off, let's say

¹⁰⁷ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:22–32.

¹⁰⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 21:22–30.

¹⁰⁹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 21:22.

it occurs 30 years after Isaac's birth (which allows time for Ishmael to establish himself). MacDonald would be 2034 B.C., Reese 1851 B.C. and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1886 B.C. That is quite a range on the time frame. Even if we put this at 20 years later, there is that built-in disparity of as much as 200 years.

Application: One of the keys to this section of Genesis 21 is, even though the birth of Isaac was one of the great spiritual events of this chapter, Abraham still lives in the real world. Therefore, Abraham must take care of business in the real world. Isaac's birth is real world, but it represents a very important set of spiritual truths. All of this time, Abraham has lived in the Philistine region with his family, and he has to interact with them. So, even though you personally may be living in the Word, so to speak, you also live on planet earth and you have various things happening on planet earth which you must attend to.

Although I **found** a chiasm for this section, it was not quite right.

<p>And so he is in the time the this, and so says Abimelech [and Ochozath his friend], and Phichol a chief of his army, unto Abraham, to say, "Elohim with you in all that you are doing.</p>	<p>Genesis 21:22</p>	<p>And it comes to pass at this same time, [that] Abimelech, Ochozath [or, Ahuzzath] his friend, and Phichol, the commander of his army, said unto Abraham, "Elohim [is] with you in all that you do.</p>
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And it came to pass, during this same time period, that Abimelech, Ochozath his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in all the you do.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is in the time the this, and so says Abimelech [and Ochozath his friend], and Phichol a chief of his army, unto Abraham, to say, "Elohim with you in all that you are doing.
Targum of Onkelos	And it was at that time that Abimelek and Phikol, chief of his host, spake to Abraham, saying, The Word of the Lord is in your aid in all whatsoever you do.
Latin Vulgate	At the same time Abimelech, and Phicol the general of his army, said to Abraham: God is with you in all that you do.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass at that time that Abimeleck and Phichol, the general of his army, said to Abraham, God is with you in all that you do.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech, <u>and Ochozath his friend</u> , and Phichol the chief captain of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, God is with you in all things, in all that you do.

Significant differences: The Greek has another person not found in the other languages.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham's treaty with the Philistines At that time Abimelech, and Phicol commander of his forces, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything that you do.
Contemporary English V.	About this time Abimelech and his army commander Phicol said to Abraham, "God blesses everything you do!
Easy English	Abraham and Abimelech make a *covenant, 21:22-34 Then Abimelech and Phicol (the head of Abimelech's army) said this to Abraham: "God is with you. He is present in everything that you do.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abimelech and Phicol spoke with Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelech's army. They said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.

The Message	At about that same time, Abimelech and the captain of his troops, Phicol, spoke to Abraham: "No matter what you do, God is on your side.
New Century Version	Abraham's Bargain with Abimelech Then Abimelech came with Phicol, the commander of his army, and said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.
New Life Bible	The Agreement At Beersheba At that time, Abimelech with Phicol, the head of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do.
New Living Translation	Abraham's Covenant with Abimelech About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham. "God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do," Abimelech said.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	The time came when AbiMelech, OchoZath (his trusted friend), and Pichol (the head of his army) [came to] AbraHam and said, 'God is with you [and has blest] everything you do. This person (Ochozath) isn't listed in the Hebrew text, but his name is found in the Septuagint version's description of AbraHam's oath to King AbiMelech (at Genesis 21:22, 32). This unusual extra detail is another of several that gives these translators the opinion that the Greek text may in fact be more accurate than the current Hebrew texts. Of particular interest is Ochozath's actual relationship with AbiMelech. The Greek word that is used to describe him is nymphagogos, which means 'bride bringer,' and it refers to a close friend who would procure a bride or brides for the king (in this case).
Beck's American Translation	Treaty with King of Philistines At that time Abimelech and Phicol, general of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.
God's Word™	At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.
International Standard V	A Covenant with Abimelech About that time, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, told Abraham, "God is with you in everything that you're doing.
New American Bible	<i>The Covenant at Beer-sheba.</i> At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham: "God is with you in everything you do. Of the two related promises of progeny and land, that of progeny has been fulfilled in the previous chapter. Now the claim on the land begins to be solidified by Abimelech's recognition of Abraham's claim on the well at Beer-sheba; it will be furthered by Abraham's purchase of the cave at Machpelah in chap. 23. Two levels of editing are visible in the story: (1) vv. 22-24, 27, 32, the general covenant with Abimelech; (2) vv. 25-26, 28-30, 31, Abraham's claim on the well. Both versions play on the root of the Hebrew word sheba, which means "seven" and "swear," and the place name Beer-sheba.
NIRV	The Peace Treaty at Beersheba At that time Abimelech and Phicol spoke to Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelech's army. They said, "God is with you in everything you do.
New Jerusalem Bible	About then, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, 'Since God is with you in everything you do,...
Revised English Bible	About that time Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham: 'God is with you in all that you do.
Today's NIV	The Treaty at Beersheba At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	It was in that period that Abimelech and Phicol, the leader of his host said to Abraham, "God is with you and in all that you do.
Bible in Basic English	Now at that time, Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of his army, said to Abraham, I see that God is with you in all you do.
Conservapedia	As it happened, at that time King Abimelech, and Phicol his commander-in-chief, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do."
The Expanded Bible	Abraham's Bargain with Abimelech ·Then [At that time] Abimelech came with Phicol, the commander of his army, and said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	It was about this time that Abimelek, and Pikol the commander of his army, addressed Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do.
NET Bible®	At that time Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you [God is with you. Abimelech and Phicol recognized that Abraham enjoyed special divine provision and protection.] in all that you do.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation	<i>The Treaty at Beer-sheba</i> Around that time, Abimelekh and his general Pikhoh made a declaration to Abraham, saying, 'God is with you [See Genesis 26:28.] in all that you do.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it at that season that Abimelech with Ahuzzath, his associate, and Phicol, the chief of his host, is speaking to Abraham, saying, "The Elohim is with you in all that you are doing.
Context Group Version	And so be it, at that time, Abi Melech and Pichol the governor of his host say to Abraham, saying, Elohim is with you in all you work: ...
English Standard Version	At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do.
Green's Literal Translation	And it happened at that time Abimelech and Phicol, the general of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, God is with you in all that you do.
Heritage Bible	And at that time Abimelech and Phicol, the chief ruler of his host, spoke to Abraham, saying, God is with you in all that you do;...
Syndein	And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech {king} and Phicol the chief general of his army/host kept on speaking unto Abraham, saying, " 'Elohiym/Godhead . . . {with you in all that you} do/manufacture {'asah}."
World English Bible	It happened at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the captain of his host spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do.
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass at that time that Abimelech speaks—Phicol also, head of his host—unto Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you are doing.

The gist of this verse: Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and the leader of his army, Phicol, pay a visit to Abraham, apparently because there is a dispute that Abraham had with some of Phicol's men over a well. Abimelech acknowledges to Abraham that God is with him in all that he does.

Genesis 21:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָא) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
'êth (תֵּת) [pronounced bayth]	<i>time, the right time, the proper time; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6256 BDB #773
With the bêyth preposition, this means <i>at the right time, at the proper time</i> .			
hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

These three words together seem to mean *at this time, at that time; during this same time, during this same time period*.

Translation: [And it comes to pass at this same time,...](#)

During this same time period, indicates that we first were with Abraham and Sarah, as they had a child. Then Hagar and Ishmael were put out of their compound. Then we follow Hagar and Ishmael to the point where Ishmael is married (say, age 30 or so?). And now we return to Abraham and Sarah. So, during the time that Hagar and Ishmael are out in the desert, and later, when Hagar goes to get a wife for Ishmael, the following incident takes place.

The translation *it happened at that time* is fairly accurate. There are ways to indicate, in the Hebrew, this one incident follows another incident. Often this is done with, *and so it is*; but it can be even more specific with *and so it is after these things*. But that is not what we have here. We do not have this event following the events surrounding Hagar and Ishmael becoming established in the desert-wilderness. So the events of this part of the chapter probably take place after Isaac is weaned and Hagar and Ishmael is expelled; but before Ishmael is established and married, living in the desert-wilderness, not really too far from here.

We are going to find out where Abraham was living, which is not really that far from where Hagar and Ishmael were staying; in Beersheba. In this second half of Genesis 21, we will find out what *Beersheba* means and how it was named. This would suggest, if this and the previous half of this chapter are simultaneous incidents, that the use of Beersheba back in v. 14 was anachronistic (or, a *gloss*). That is, when Hagar and Ishmael went to live in that general area, it did not have the name *Beersheba*; however, it acquired that name around the same time that they moved there.

Furthermore, this suggests that Abraham and Sarah and Isaac did not live that far away from Hagar and Ishmael, even though there appears to be very little contact between them.

Genesis 21:22b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'Ăbiymelek ^e (אבִּימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^p -vee-MEH-lek]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4
The LXX adds ...and Ochozath [or, Ahuzzath] his friend,...			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Pîykôl (פִּיכּוֹל) [pronounced pee-KOLE]	<i>strong; the mouth of all; ruling all; and is transliteration Phichol, Phicol</i>	proper masculine singular noun	Strong's #6369 BDB #810
sar (שַׂר) [pronounced sar]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
tsâbâ' (צָבָא) [pronounced tsaw ^b -VAW]	<i>army, war, or warfare</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6635 BDB #838
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִירָאִם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: ...[that] Abimelech, Ochozath [or, Ahuzzath] his friend, and Phichol, the commander of his army, said unto Abraham,...

We know Abimelech from the previous chapter. My theory is, the writer of these chapters knew that this was coming, that we would talk about Abraham and Abimelech; so he decides to slip in, in the previous chapter, a narrative which describes how Abraham and Abimelech know one another. As suggested in that chapter, Genesis 20 did not necessarily occur between Genesis 19 and 21. It was possibly just thrown in so that we have some background material on Abraham and Abimelech; the author anticipating this narrative. The writer may or may not have known exactly when this occurred in Abraham's life, but it belonged, topically close to Genesis 21, so that we get a fuller view of Abraham's dealing with the Philistine ruler.

These 2 or 3 men come to Abraham, and this is going to give us an idea as to Abraham's impact on the people around him. Since this is the king of Gerar, there are probably a number of guards with him. They do not take part in the negotiations, so they are not named. But the king did not wake up one day and hop on his donkey with 2 of his friends and head out to find Abraham. Abraham would have been located first; and then this would have been an entourage. This is a cordial visit.

Spoke is in the masculine singular because only one of them spoke these words. This is the same Abimelech that Abraham had lied to concerning Sarah in chapter 20. It is clear to Abimelech that God is on the side of Abraham, regardless of the way that he behaved at times. Also, Abimelech, a believer in the Revealed God (Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form), recognizes the importance of allying himself with Abraham. Abimelech is a man of honor and a man of principal, as Abraham should be, and he remembers what how Abraham deceived him. He desires this alliance, but emphasizes the honesty factor.

We do not know who recorded this portion of Genesis, although logically, it would have been Abraham; and possibly Isaac who did. Again, I believe that this narrative (in fact, all the book of Genesis) is passed along verbally, from one generation to the next (I believe that this was the case for the books of Genesis and Job); and these were actually committed to writing around the time of Moses or earlier when the Jews were enslaved to Egypt.

The way this verse begins suggests that this took place somewhere around this time, but whether it is before or after the birth of Isaac, is not indicated. However, it would be illogical for this to take place before the birth of Isaac, given the other incident which occurred between Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech before Isaac was born. Logically, this short section is in chronological order regarding the narrative of Abraham in general. However, it probably took place after Ishmael and Hagar began to establish themselves, but before Hagar got a wife for Ishmael.

Why is this not placed chronologically? The Bible is not going to spend a lot of time following Ishmael. So we examine his life and its basics, but then return back to Abraham, Sarah and Isaac.

Let's also look at this from the viewpoint of the human author. Whether this is Abraham or Isaac writing this, they spoke of Ishmael and Hagar traveling down by Beersheba. This reminds the author of why that area had the name of Beersheba, so that is what is covered here, at the end of Genesis 21. This happened about the same time, and explains how Beersheba was named.

In fact, it is interesting, how these various groups of people lived in the same area, not far from one another. It may or may not have been at the same time, however.

You will recall Abimelech king of Gerar from the previous chapter, where Abraham convinced him that his wife, Sarah, was not his wife; and, as a result, Abimelech took Sarah into his harem. However, that has all been since straightened out. Abraham came clean and Abimelech released Sarah back to Abraham's care. **Genesis 20** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Guzik questions¹¹⁰ whether this is the same Abimelech, as that is a title, and not the name of the king of Gerar. However, this takes place maybe 5–10 years after Genesis 20, so there is no reason to think this is a different king. Although Abimelech in Genesis 20 treated Abraham graciously, there was no formal treaty made that we are aware of. So Abimelech wanted there to be a treaty between them, as he realized that God's blessings would overflow from Abraham to his country of Gerar.

This will not simply be a treaty that says, "We're friends." Given what takes place, this is likely a land-lease treaty, with some protections provided. Abraham *pays* Abimelech for this. But this relationship with Abimelech is blessed by God. Abimelech recognizes that Abraham has a real relationship with the Revealed God. So, maintaining a friendly relationship with Abraham benefits Abimelech and his land of Gerar.

¹¹⁰ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 21:22–24.

This is fascinating, because so many people think that we are a blank slate and life determines our behavior (except for homosexuality; and most people *wrongly* believe that is 100% genetic). Abimelech, in the previous chapter, saw Abraham at his worst. When Abraham should have been trusting God, he was concerned for his own safety—and he had no reason to be. And he therefore liked to Abimelech about Sarah. However, all of that has been straightened out, and despite Abraham’s wrongdoing, Abimelech recognizes his integrity and his relationship with God. On the other hand, Lot lived with Abraham; Lot got to see Abraham close up, day after day, and to observe his great honor. And yet he left Abraham’s compound, and ended up with a sad and sorry life. My point is, Lot, by all accounts, should have been willing to live with or near Abraham; and Abimelech should have steered clear of Abraham—based upon their personal experiences. However, Abimelech has positive volition toward the Revealed God, and Lot did not. They were both believers; but Abimelech understood more about God and believed more about God than Lot did. Abimelech saw this relationship with Abraham as beneficial; Lot did not. This all goes back to the person’s volition, which arises often in spite of their environment.

Despite the fact that Abraham was wrong in his behavior, Abimelech also recognized that God was with him. This notion was helped along by God appearing to Abimelech in a dream, warning that He would kill Abimelech if he kept Sarah. This was a very powerful dream, and Abimelech was strongly affected by it, as was his state department (Genesis 20:2). Therefore, we may reasonably conclude that Abimelech is a believer in the Revealed Lord—in the God of Abraham. Phicol, who leads Abimelech’s army, is also a believer in the Revealed Lord. That is why Abimelech brings him along. The Greek includes the name of a third man, *Ahuzzath* (also spelled *Ochozath*), who is called Abimelech’s friend (or associate).

This is a marvelous vignette because we will find a similar occurrence in the life of Isaac several decades off into the future (at the end of Genesis 26).

Genesis 21:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510
ʾâmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
ʾĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong’s #430 BDB #43
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #5973 BDB #767
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong’s# none BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong’s #376 BDB #35

Together, these mean *anyone, any man, every man, everyone*.

Genesis 21:22c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	you (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	doing, making, manufacturing, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing; producing	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation:...“Elohim [is] with you in all that you do.

I left out the *to say* in my translation, but it is properly put in here. Because of their previous encounter, which Abraham acted like a fool, Abimelech still realized that God was with Abraham. You will recall that Abraham had deceived Abimelech, and Abimelech took Sarah as his wife; but that it turned out, as we well know, that Sarah was Abraham's wife; and that relationship was important. It would be proper for Abraham and Sarah to bear the child next in line for the bloodline that will lead to Joseph, Moses, David and Jesus.

Anyway, they know that Abraham has an “in” with God because of the events that took place in Genesis 20.

Genesis 21:22 **And it comes to pass at this same time, [that] Abimelech, Ochozath [or, Ahuzzath] his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said unto Abraham, “Elohim [is] with you in all that you do.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:22 **And it came to pass, during this same time period, that Abimelech, Ochozath his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, “God is with you in all the you do.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:22 **And it happened at that time, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, “God is with you in all that you do.**

Abraham and his compound live in Beersheba (not called by that name yet), and this is an area controlled by Abimelech from Gerar, but an area that is sparsely populated. Abimelech and Phicol have to travel a bit of distance to get to Abraham. However, they obviously know where Abraham is and they have no problem with him living on Philistine-controlled territory (which this appears to be, at this time).

They recognize that Abraham has a close association with God, and this is the reason why these men come to see Abraham.

Matthew Henry: *The inducement to it was God's favour to Abraham (Genesis 21:22): “God is with you in all that you do, and we cannot but take notice of it.”* Note, (1.) God in his providence sometimes shows his people such tokens for good that their neighbours cannot but take notice of it (Psalm 86:17). Their affairs do so visibly prosper, and they have such remarkable success in their undertakings, that a confession is extorted from all about them of God's presence with them. (2.) It is good being in favour with those that are in favour with God, and having an interest in those that have an interest in heaven (Zechariah 8:23). “We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” We do well for ourselves if we have fellowship with those that have fellowship with God, 1John 1:3.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:22–32 (edited).

You may recall that, after Abraham was exposed as having lied about Sarah, Abimelech returns Sarah to Abraham and then Abraham prays on behalf of Abimelech. This suggests that his prayer was efficacious, and that Abimelech recognized the benefits of this prayer.

And now, let you will swear to me in Elohim here, though, you will [not] lie to me and to my offspring and to my posterity. As the grace which I have done with you, you will do with me and with the land that you temporarily reside in her.”

Genesis
21:23

Now, therefore, you will swear to me by Elohim [right] here, [that] you will not lie [possibly, *cause harm*] to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. According to the grace which I have done with you, you will do with me and with the land wherein you temporarily reside.”

Now, therefore, you will swear to me by your God, right here that you will not lie to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. Instead, you will act toward me as graciously as I have acted with you and with regards to the land where you now temporarily reside.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And now, let you will swear to me in Elohim here, though, you will [not] lie to me and to my offspring and to my posterity. As the grace which I have done with you, you will do with me and with the land that you temporarily reside in her.”
Targum of Onkelos	And now, swear to me here, by the Word of the Lord, that you wilt not be false with me, nor with my son, <u>nor with the son of my son</u> : according to the kindness which I have done with you, you will do with me, and with the land in which you dwell.
Latin Vulgate	Swear therefore by God, that you will not <u>hurt</u> me, nor my posterity, nor my stock: but according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me, and to the land wherein you have lived a stranger.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Now therefore swear to me by God in this place that you will never deal falsely with me, nor with my family, nor with my descendants; but according to the kindness that I have done to you, you shall do to me and to the land wherein you have sojourned.
Septuagint (Greek)	Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not <u>injure</u> me, nor my seed, nor my name, but according to the righteousness which I have performed with you, you shall deal with me, and with the land in which you have sojourned.
Significant differences:	The additional text of the targum is noted above. The Hebrew has Abimelech asking Abraham not to lie; the Latin and Greek call for Abraham not to injure.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	So give me your word under God that you won't cheat me, my children, or my descendants. Just as I have treated you fairly, so you must treat me and the land in which you are an immigrant."
Contemporary English V.	Now I want you to promise in the name of God that you will always be loyal to me and my descendants, just as I have always been loyal to you in this land where you have lived as a foreigner."
Easy English	So promise this very seriously to me here in God's name. Promise that you will not cheat me or my family or *descendants. I have been kind to you. So promise very seriously that you will be kind to me. And promise very seriously that you will be loyal to this country where you are living.'

Easy-to-Read Version	So make a promise to me here before God. Promise that you will be fair with me and with my children. Promise that you will be kind to me and the country here where you have lived. Promise you will be as kind to me as I have been to you."
Good News Bible (TEV)	So make a vow here in the presence of God that you will not deceive me, my children, or my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so promise that you will also be loyal to me and to this country in which you are living."
<i>The Message</i>	So swear to me that you won't do anything underhanded to me or any of my family. For as long as you live here, swear that you'll treat me and my land as well as I've treated you."
New Century Version	So make a promise to me here before God that you will be fair with me and my children and my descendants. Be kind to me and to this land where you have lived as a stranger-as kind as I have been to you."
New Life Bible	So promise me here by God that you will not work against me, or my son, or any children after me. I have shown you kindness. So return kindness to me and to the land where you have come."
New Living Translation	"Swear to me in God's name that you will never deceive me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you are living as a foreigner."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So, swear to me by God that you won't harm me, my seed, or my name; because you should deal with me in the same righteous way that I've dealt with you in this land that you're living in.'
Beck's American Translation	Here and now, swear to me by God that you will not deceive me, my offspring, or my descendants but will treat me and the country you've been a foreigner in as kindly as I treated you."
Christian Community Bible	...swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my descendants, but instead you will show to me and the country where you are living the same kindness that I have shown to you."
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Now, swear an oath to me here in front of God that you will never cheat me, my children, or my descendants. Show me and the land where you've been living the same kindness that I have shown you."
International Standard V	Therefore swear an oath here by God that you won't deal falsely with me, my sons, or my descendants. Just as I've dealt graciously with you, won't you do so with me and with the land in which you live as a foreigner?"
New American Bible	So now, swear to me by God at this place* that you will not deal falsely with me or with my progeny and posterity, but will act as loyally toward me and the land in which you reside as I have acted toward you." This place: Beer-sheba (v. 31). Abimelech had come from Gerar (20:2), about thirty miles west of Beer-sheba.
NIRV	Now make a promise to me here while God is watching. Take an oath that you will treat me fairly. Promise that you will treat my children and their children the same way. "I've been kind to you. Now you be kind to me. And be kind to the country where you are living as an outsider."
New Jerusalem Bible	...swear to me by God, here and now, that you will not act treacherously towards me or my kith and kin, but behave with the same faithful love to me and the land of which you are a guest as I have behaved to you.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Now swear to me here by God that you will not falsify with me, and my grandson, and my great-grandson. Do with me and with the land in which you stayed the mercy I did with you."
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Bible in Basic English	Now, then, give me your oath, in the name of God, that you will not be false to me or to my sons after me, but that as I have been good to you, so you will be to me and to this land where you have been living.
Bullinger updated Bible	Now therefore swear unto me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the <i>kind acts</i> that I have done unto you, you will do unto me, and to the land wherein you have sojourned."
Conservapedia	"So now, swear to me by God that you will not play me false, nor my son, nor my descendants, but just as I treated you kindly, I ask that you treat me with that same consideration, and also so treat the country where you have lived as a guest."
The Expanded Bible	So ·make a promise to me here before [swear to me by] God that you will ·be fair [-not deal falsely] with me and my children and my descendants. Be ·kind [loyal] to me and to this land where you have lived as a ·stranger [sojourner; wanderer; resident alien]-as ·kind [loyal] as I have been to you."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So now take an oath to me before God, that you may not deceive, and to my children and posterity, that the kindness which I have shown to you, you will show to me, and to the land where you have been a foreigner."
HCSB	Now swear to me here by God that you will not break an agreement with me or with my children and descendants. As I have kept faith with you, so you will keep faith with me and with the country where you are a resident alien."
New Advent Bible	Swear therefore by God, that you will not hurt me, nor my posterity, nor my stock: but according to the kindness that I have done to you, you shall do to me, and to the land wherein you have lived a stranger.
NET Bible®	Now swear to me right here in God's name [Heb "And now swear to me by God here."] that you will not deceive me, my children, or my descendants [Heb "my offspring and my descendants."]. Show me, and the land [The word "land" refers by metonymy to the people in the land] where you are staying [The Hebrew verb means "to stay, to live, to sojourn" as a temporary resident without ownership rights.], the same loyalty [Or "kindness."] that I have shown you [Heb "According to the loyalty which I have done with you, do with me and with the land in which you are staying."]."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	...and now oath to me here by Elohim that you falsify neither with me, nor with my offspring, nor with my posterity: but according to the mercy I work to you, you also work to me - and to the land wherein you sojourn.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my kith and kin, but will deal with me and with the land in which you have sojourned as loyally as I have dealt with you."
Kaplan Translation	Now swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my children, or with my grandchildren. Show to me and the land where you were an immigrant the same kindness that I have shown to you.'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So now, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my son or with my posterity; but as I have dealt with you kindly, you will do the same with me and with the land in which you have sojourned.
Concordant Literal Version	And now, swear to me by the Elohim. Behold! Should you be false to me and to my propagator and to my progeny--! According to the kindness which I do to you shall you do with me, and with the land in which you sojourn.

Context Group Version	Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. But according to the family allegiance { Hebrew: hesed } that I have done to you, you shall do to me, and to the land { or earth } in which you have sojourned.
English Standard Version	Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity, but as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned."
Green's Literal Translation	And now swear to me here by God, that you will not lie to me, and to my son, and to my heir, according to the kindness which I have sworn to you. Do to me and to the land in which you have lived.
Heritage Bible	And now swear to me here by God that you will not cheat me, nor my son, nor my son's son; you shall do to me according to the mercy that I have done to you, and to the land where you have temporarily resided.
Kretzmann's Commentary	The Covenant Between Abraham and Abimelech And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest; now, therefore, swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son, but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee thou shalt do unto me and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. Abraham was still living in the land of the Philistines, and the latter were unable to deny that a special blessing of God rested upon Abraham. This fact finally prompted Abimelech to propose a covenant between himself and Abraham, in order to secure the friendship of this man for himself and his children. The chief condition was that there was to be no false or double dealing, and Abimelech reminds Abraham of the fact that he had shown merciful kindness to him at the time when he lived in Gerar, Genesis 20:15. His appeal was to Abraham's generosity, gratitude, and faithfulness. V. 23 is included for context.
New King James Version	Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt."
Syndein	Now therefore swear yourself unto me here by 'Elohim/Godhead that you will not keep on dealing falsely {shaqar} with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son . . . but according to the grace that I have done/manufactured {'asah - out of respect for the Lord} unto you, you shall do/manufacture {'asah - also out of respect for the Lord} unto me, and to the land wherein you have sojourned/'temporarily dwelled.
World English Bible	Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. But according to the kindness that I have done to you, you shall do to me, and to the land in which you have lived as a foreigner."
Young's Updated LT	And now, swear to me by God here: do not lie to me, or to my continuator, or to my successor; according to the kindness which I have done with you, you do with me, and with the land in which you have sojourned."
The gist of this verse:	Abimelech is essentially holding a trial, and he swears in Abraham. He makes a gentleman's request for Abraham to be honest with him, but swearing this honesty before God.

There are two kinds of quotations which are fascinating in the Bible: that which is said by God, which is often very complex and difficult to understand; and that which is said by a non-Jew, which is often difficult simply because there are grammatical problems or the vocabulary and its use is a little weird.

Genesis 21:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿattâh (עַתָּע) [pronounced <i>gaht-TAWH</i>]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w ^e + the adverb ʿattâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
shâba ^c (שָׁבַע) [pronounced <i>shaw^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Niphal imperative; with the cohortative hê	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
This is the first occurrence of this word, which occurs nearly 190 times in the Old Testament.			
The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with <i>let</i> or <i>may</i> ; in the plural, this can be <i>let us</i> . The cohortative is designed for the 1 st person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Generally there is the hê suffix to indicate this.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
hênnâh (הֵנָּה) [pronounced <i>HAYN-naw</i>]	<i>hither, here</i>	adverb	Strong's #2008 BDB #244

Translation: Now, therefore, you will swear to me by Elohim [right] here,...

This is Abimelech speaking, so we will not expect that his Hebrew will be perfect. There are two things I might have expected here: for him to either speak of Y^ehowah or for him to use the words *your Elohim*. The fact that he does neither suggests to me that he is allowing for his gods and for Abraham's God to be a part of this oath. As was suggested back in Genesis 20, Abimelech is a believer in Y^ehowah Elohim; but that he possibly goes back and forth between his gods and the True God. I am inclined, based upon what has happened before and his treatment of Abraham right here, to accept that he is a believer in the Revealed God of Abraham. This would be why he would actually come to Abraham and make a pact as he does. If Abraham worships the true God, and Abimelech comes to make a pact, the idea is to have assurance of a peripheral relationship with Abraham's God.

Genesis 21:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
When following an oath, either stated or implied, ʾîm, by itself, functions as an emphatic negative.			
shâkar (שָׁכַר) [pronounced shaw-KAHR]	<i>to lie, to deceive, to deal falsely, to do falsely; to trick, to cheat</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8266 BDB #1055
The Greek and Latin have <i>harm, injure</i> here instead.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nîyn (יָיִן) [pronounced neen]	<i>offspring, posterity, progeny; son</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5209 BDB #630
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
neked (נֶכֶד) [pronounced NEH-keh ^d]	<i>progeny, posterity; grandson</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5220 BDB #645

Translation:...[that] you will not lie [possibly, cause harm] to me or to my offspring or to my posterity.

Recall that Abimelech and Abraham have already had dealings with one another and Abraham lied to Abimelech. So, this is not out of the blue that Abimelech says, "You will not lie to me or to those who come after me." So, Abimelech is asking Abraham to swear by God that he will not lie, trick, cheat or deceive Abimelech.

The Greek and Latin have *harm, injure* here. Although this is something that Abimelech would not want; it seems less likely that he would petition this of Abraham. The Pulpit Commentary even suggests¹¹² that this treaty was a non-aggression-type treaty, because Abimelech was concerned that Abraham was getting too powerful. However, there is nothing in their mutual history to suggest that Abraham would kill Philistines or try to take their land. After all, Abraham has never acted aggressively towards Abimelech; nor are there any signs that he would.

¹¹² *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 21:23.

Genesis 21:23c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, just as; according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2617 BDB #338
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'āsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
'āsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: According to the grace which I have done with you, you will do with me...

Abraham apparently travels to different areas with his flocks and cattle, and this would be for pastureland, but also to trade and to do business elsewhere. He is in Philistine territory and Abimelech both knows Abraham because of their run-in in Genesis 20; and that they came to a mutual agreement, in part, because of that meeting.

Abimelech is also rightly noting that he has been gracious to Abraham and he has treated him honestly and fairly throughout their friendship. Again, we look back in Genesis 20 to confirm that, even though Abraham lied to Abimelech, Abimelech still treated Abraham fairly (although, quite obviously, Abimelech would have been concerned with angering Abraham's God if he crossed Abraham).

Genesis 21:23d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Genesis 21:23d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
gûwr (גּוּר) [pronounced goor]	<i>to temporarily reside, to sojourn; to gather together with, band together with</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1481 BDB #157
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88

Translation: ...and with the land wherein you temporarily reside.”

This final phrase seems to be stuck out on the end of this oath, almost for no reason. However, Abraham is allowed to come onto Philistine land and to travel about undisturbed, and probably, untaxed as well. In order to make this fit into the verse and to make sense, two phrases are often reversed, as in: *And now swear to me here by God that you will not cheat me, nor my son, nor my son's son; you shall do to me according to the mercy that I have done to you, and to the land where you have temporarily resided.* (The Heritage Bible). Abimelech has dealt honestly, fairly and graciously with Abraham and with allowing him to come into his land; and he is asking for Abraham to deal graciously with him as well.

Genesis 21:23 *Now, therefore, you will swear to me by Elohim [right] here, [that] you will not lie [possibly, cause harm] to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. According to the grace which I have done with you, you will do with me and with the land wherein you temporarily reside.”* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:23 *Now, therefore, you will swear to me by your God, right here that you will not lie to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. Instead, you will act toward me as graciously as I have acted with you and with regards to the land where you now temporarily reside.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Essentially, Abimelech is saying to Abraham, “Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” So he is being sworn in to a formal hearing. The oath Abraham is taking is personalized between himself and Abimelech, as they have a history.

Abimelech knows that Abraham has a special relationship with God, and, for that reason, wants to deal honestly and fairly with him. However, from the little we know about Abimelech, this is his natural character, to deal with others honestly and fairly.

Abimelech believes that Abraham has a true relationship with the God of the universe; but he also distrusts Abraham, since he lied to him in the previous chapter. Therefore, he asks for Abraham to swear by Y^ehowah in their dealings, with him, his son and his grandson. Abimelech is certain that, if Abraham swears by his God, then Abimelech will get the straight dope from him.

This is an unfortunate fact that, no believer lives up to Jesus Christ. This is often the complaint lodged against Christians in the outside world: “You’re nothing but a hypocrite!” Which is true of everyone, if you dig down deep enough (unless they claim to have no standards whatsoever—which is true of very few people). In any case, because Jesus is perfect, our shortcomings as believers are much more apparent by comparison. This is not to be touted or excused, but simply recognized; and we have the means by which to deal with this (rebound, or naming our sins to God; followed by the intake of Bible doctrine).

Abimelech seems to accept that Abraham has been dishonest with him, but that Abraham is also closely related to God. Abimelech insures that this agreement will be upheld, as he requires Abraham to swear by Elohim (= God).

Abimelech has control over the area where Abraham is grazing his sheep and cattle. However, Abimelech is not looking to restrict Abraham or to cause him any sort of grief, but to secure a covenantal relationship with him.

So, what is Abimelech's motivation? Why does he grab his top general and go find Abraham, and try to make a pact with him? Abimelech knows that Abraham is related to God, so he understands clearly that a pact with Abraham secures blessing for himself and for his nation. Abimelech says it straight out: "[God is with you, Abraham, in all that you do.](#)" **Blessing by association** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))—is a concept which many of those in the ancient world understood, but which we do not appear to understand today. In fact, most believers and unbelievers do not understand this concept today (which is not a surprise as believers today understand very little Bible doctrine). For most believers, all they can understand is a 5-page Bible, at most (that is, if they were to write down everything that they know about the spiritual life and their relationship to God through Jesus Christ, they might fill up 5 pages). Abimelech, a gentile, recognizes Abraham's relationship to God and he wants a piece of it, even if only by means of a contract.

Matthew Henry: *The tenour of it was, in general, that there should be a firm and constant friendship between the two families, which should not upon any account be violated. This bond of friendship must be strengthened by the bond of an oath, in which the true God was appealed to, both as a witness of their sincerity and an avenger in case either side were treacherous, Genesis 21:23. Observe, (1.) He desires the entail of this league upon his posterity and the extension of it to his people. He would have his son, and his son's son, and his land likewise, to have the benefit of it. Good men should secure an alliance and communion with the favourites of Heaven, not for themselves only, but for theirs also. (2.) He reminds Abraham of the fair treatment he had found among them: According to the kindness I have done unto thee. As those that have received kindness must return it, so those that have shown kindness may expect it.*¹¹³

And so says Abraham, "I [even] I swear."

Genesis
21:24

And Abraham said, "I [even] I swear [this oath]."

And Abraham said, "I bind myself with this oath."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Abraham, "I [even] I swear."
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham said to him, I swear.
Latin Vulgate	And Abraham said: I will swear.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham said, I will swear.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham said, I will swear.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham said, "I give you my word."
Contemporary English V.	And so, Abraham promised.
Easy English	So Abraham replied, 'I promise it very seriously.'

¹¹³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:22–32.

Easy-to-Read Version	And Abraham said, "I promise to treat you the same way you have treated me."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham said, "I promise."
New Berkeley Version	Abraham answered, "I so swear."
New Life Bible	Abraham said, "I promise."
New Living Translation	Abraham replied, "Yes, I swear to it!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Christian Community Bible	And Abraham said, "Yes, this I swear."
<i>God's Word™</i>	Abraham said, "I so swear."
International Standard V	And Abraham replied, "I agree!"
New American Bible	Abraham replied, "I so swear."
NIRV	Abraham said, "I promise with an oath that I'll do it."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham said, I will give you my oath.
Conservapedia	Abraham said, "I will swear."
The Expanded Bible	And Abraham said, "I promise [swear]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And Abraham replied, "I will take the oath."
HCSB	And Abraham said, "I swear <i>it</i> ."
NET Bible®	Abraham said, "I swear to do this." Heb "I swear." No object is specified in the Hebrew text, but the content of the oath requested by Abimelech is the implied object.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And Abraham says, I oath.
Kaplan Translation	'I will swear,' replied Abraham.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Abraham, "I will swear."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Abraham said, I will swear. He was ready to make such a covenant; he had no hopes for the personal possession of Canaan. But before he subscribes to any further promises, he distinguishes between political and private rights.
Syndein	And Abraham kept on saying, "I keep on swearing."
World English Bible	Abraham said, "I will swear."
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham says, "I—I do swear."

The gist of this verse: Abraham swears before God to be honest with Abimelech.

Genesis 21:24

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Genesis 21:24

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'Ab ^e râhâm (אַבְרָהָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
shâba ^c (שָׁבַע) [pronounced <i>shaw^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	1 st person singular, Niphal imperative	Strong's #7650 BDB #989

Translation: And Abraham said, "I [even] I swear [this oath]."

Abraham uses the emphatic *I*, which indicates that he is sincerely applying this oath to himself. The oath is that he will be honest with Abimelech and his descendants.

Genesis 21:24 [And Abraham said, "I \[even\] I swear \[this oath\]."](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:24 [And Abraham said, "I bind myself with this oath."](#) (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham readily swears to deal honestly with Abimelech.

Matthew Henry: *An honest mind does not startle at giving assurances: if Abraham say that he will be true to Abimelech, he is not afraid to swear it; an oath is for confirmation.*¹¹⁴

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Here a proof of the promise (Genesis 12:2) being fulfilled, in a native prince wishing to form a solemn league with Abraham. The proposal was reasonable, and agreed to [Genesis 21:24].*¹¹⁵

Gill: *Before Abraham swore and entered into covenant with Abimelech, he thought it advisable to inform him of an affair that had happened concerning a well of water, which in those hot and dry countries, as the southern parts of the land of Canaan were, was an affair of great importance; and to make complaint of the ill usage of Abimelech's servants with respect to it, and to reason with him about it, that the thing might be adjusted to mutual satisfaction, and so a firm basis and foundation be laid for the continuance of friendship for the future; which was wisely done before their league and covenant was ratified: this it seems was a well.*¹¹⁶

And so rebuked Abraham Abimelech upon a causes of a well of waters which took servants of Abimelech.

Genesis 21:25

Then Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of the water well that servants of Abimelech had seized.

Then Abraham complained to Abraham about the water well which army personnel of Abimelech's army had taken violently from Abraham.

¹¹⁴ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:22–32.

¹¹⁵ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 21:22–34.

¹¹⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:25.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so rebuked Abraham Abimelech upon a causes of a well of waters which took servants of Abimelech.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham remonstrated with Abimelek concerning the well of water of which the servants of Abimelek had deprived him.
Latin Vulgate	And he reprov'd Abimelech for a well of water, which his servants had taken away by force.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham reprov'd Abimeleck because of a well which Abraham's servants had dug and which Abimeleck's servants had seize.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of the wells of water, which the servants of Abimelech took away.

Significant differences: Nothing significant.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	One day, Abraham told Abimelech, "Some of your servants have taken over one of my wells."
Easy English	But Abimelech's servants had seized a well that contained water. That well belonged to Abraham, so Abraham complained to Abimelech.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Abraham complained to Abimelech. Abraham complained because Abimelech's servants had captured a well of water.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well which the servants of Abimelech had seized.
<i>The Message</i>	At the same time, Abraham confronted Abimelech over the matter of a well of water that Abimelech's servants had taken.
New Berkeley Version	Abraham complained to Abimelech because of a water-well, which Abimelech's servants had seized;...
New Life Bible	But Abraham spoke to Abimelech about a well of water that the servants of Abimelech had taken.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then AbraHam complained to AbiMelech about some water wells that his servants had taken from him.
Beck's American Translation	Then Abraham complained to Abimelech because Abimelech's servants had taken a well of water away from him.
International Standard V	But then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized.
New American Bible	Abraham, however, reproached Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had seized by force.
NIRV	Then Abraham objected to Abimelech about what Abimelech's servants had done. They had taken over a well of water.
Revised English Bible	It happened that Abraham had a complaint to make to Abimelech about a well which Abimelech's men had seized.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham tested Abimelech over the cause of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants robbed.
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Bible in Basic English	But Abraham made a protest to Abimelech because of a water-hole which Abimelech's servants had taken by force.
Conservapedia	Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech on account of a water well of which Abimelech's servants had violently dispossessed him.
The Expanded Bible	Then Abraham ·complained to [reproved; reproached] Abimelech about Abimelech's servants who had seized a well of water.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Abraham then reprovved Abimelek about the affair of the well of water, which the servants of Abimelech had stolen.
HCSB	But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the water well that Abimelech's servants had seized.
New Advent Bible	And he reprovved Abimelech for a well of water, which his servants had taken away by force.
NET Bible®	But Abraham lodged a complaint [The Hebrew verb used here means "to argue; to dispute"; it can focus on the beginning of the dispute (as here), the dispute itself, or the resolution of a dispute (Isa 1:18). Apparently the complaint was lodged before the actual oath was taken.] against Abimelech concerning a well [Heb "concerning the matter of the well of water."] that Abimelech's servants had seized [The Hebrew verb used here means "to steal; to rob; to take violently." The statement reflects Abraham's perspective].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And Abraham reproves Abi Melech because of a well of water, which the servants of Abi Melech stripped.
Hebrew Names Version	Avraham complained to Avimelekh because of a water well, which Avimelekh's servants had violently taken away.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Abraham contended with Abimelech about the well of water that the servants of Abimelech had forcibly seized.
Kaplan Translation	Abraham then complained to Abimelekh about the well that Abimelekh's servants had taken by force.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When Abraham complained to and reasoned with Abimelech about a well of water [Abimelech's] servants had violently seized,... This is a rarity for the Amplified Bible to knit two verses together.
Concordant Literal Version	Yet Abraham corrected Abimelech on account of the case of a well of water which had been snatched by the servants of Abimelech.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But Abraham reprovved Abimelech,—on account of the well of water, which the servants of Abimelech had seized.
English Standard Version	When Abraham reprovved Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized,...
Green's Literal Translation	And Abraham reprovved Abimelech on account of a well of water which the slaves of Abimelech had seized.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham set Abimelech right because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had plucked off.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Abraham reprovved Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. That was a grievance which required adjustment before any pact could be made.
Syndein	And Abraham chide Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's slaves had seized {from Abraham}.
A Voice in the Wilderness	But Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized.

World English Bible

Abraham complained to Abimelech because of a water well, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

Young's Literal Translation

And Abraham reasoned with Abimelech concerning the matter of a well of water which Abimelech's servants have taken violently away.

The gist of this verse:

Abraham lodged his formal complaint, that servants of Abimelech (soldiers) had seized his well.

Genesis 21:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâkach (יָכַח) [pronounced <i>yaw-KAHK</i>]	when there is no dispute involved, this word means: it means <i>to correct [with punishment], to convince; to rebuke, to refute, to reprove; to punish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3198 BDB #406
When there is a dispute involved: <i>to hammer out a decision or an agreement to resolve a conflict, to render a decision</i>			
ʾAb ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
ʾĂbiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>u^b-vee-MEH-lek</i>]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah]</i>	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ʾôwdôth (אוֹדוֹת) [pronounced <i>oh-DOTH</i>]	<i>cause, reason for; the occasion of; causes, circumstances; properly turnings</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #182 BDB #15
Together, ʿal ʾôwdôth (עַל אוֹדוֹת) [pronounced <i>gahl-oh-DOTH</i>] mean <i>on account of the causes, on account of; because of; concerning; on the occasion of</i> . With the 1 st person singular suffix, <i>for my sake</i> .			
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #875 BDB #91
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>mah-YIHM</i>]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

Translation: Then Abraham reprovved Abimelech because of the water well...

“As long as you are here,” Abraham says to Abimelech, “I have a complaint that I need to lodge with you.”

This does not appear to be a separate incident, because Abimelech and Phicol will gather themselves up and leave for the land of the Philistines in v. 32. So Abraham has not traveled to Gerar to come before Abimelech to lodge a formal complain; Abraham is taking the opportunity to do that right now.

Having a well of water is the difference between life and death in the desert, as we just saw with Hagar and Ishmael. Therefore, this is a very serious matter. Abraham is responsible for perhaps a compound of 1000 people, including the women and children, so he must see to the wells which provide his compound with water.

*Clarke: Wells were of great consequence in those hot countries, and especially where the flocks were numerous, because the water was scarce, and digging to find it was accompanied with much expense of time and labor.*¹¹⁷

God has blessed the United States with abundant clean water, where each spout in every house supplies innumerable gallons of clean, fresh water. However, this is not the situation throughout much of the world. Those who must depend upon wells for water appreciate this passage far more than most of us, who simply open a spigot to satisfy the need for clean water. In fact, there are many of us who have a swimming pool in our back yard, filled to the brim with cool, refreshing water. So this passage is more difficult to relate to. But Abraham's compound worked hard to dig these wells; and had hundreds of people and thousands of animals dependent upon these wells for survival.

The Pulpit Commentary describes a well: *discovered by Robinson in Bir-es-seba, in the Wady-es-seba, twelve miles to the south of Hebron, with two deep wells of excellent water. "The great well has an internal diameter at the mouth of twelve feet six inches, or a circumference of nearly forty feet. The shaft is formed of excellent masonry to a great depth until it reaches the rock, and at this juncture a spring trickles perpetually. Around the mouth of the well is a circular course of masonry, topped by a circular parapet of about a foot high; and at a distance of ten or twelve feet are stone troughs placed in a concentric circle with the well, the sides of which have deep indentions made by the wear of ropes on the upper edges The second well, about 200 yards farther south, is not more than five feet in diameter, but is formed of equally good masonry, and furnishes equally good water".*¹¹⁸

Now, there must have been some slight apprehension on Abraham's part, because, here he is, asking Abimelech for justice, whereas he himself had not treated Abimelech honestly in their first meeting in Genesis 20. However, that was in the past, and it seems as though both men are willing to move forward with their relationship. Particularly after making this pact with one another.

This will also give us another glimpse at Abimelech, to better see what kind of man he was. This is somewhat important, because this indicates the time and place and environment that Abraham was in. Had Abraham entered the land say, 100 years before or 100 years later, his life of prosperity in the land might not have been as prosperous. Here, we see that Abraham is given a fair hearing; a fair informal trial, despite the fact that he is technically in opposition to a Philistine general in Abimelech's [traveling] Philistine court. That is, Abraham is going to blame Abimelech's servants; and, generally speaking, that means we are talking about the military men under Phicol.

Genesis 21:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

¹¹⁷ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:25.

¹¹⁸ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 21:31. They take this description from "Byeways in Palestine," by James Finn, M.R.A.S., p. 190.

Genesis 21:25b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
gāzal (גָּזַל) [pronounced gaw-ZAHL]	<i>to flay [skin off another's body]; to remove, to take [carry] away from; to pluck off [away from]; to absorb, to drink up; takes to oneself, claims for oneself; to despoil [with fraud, injustice]</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1497 BDB #159
‘ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced GE ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
’Ābiymelek ^e (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^p -vee-MEH-lek]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4

Translation: ...that servants of Abimelech had seized.

What Abraham is claiming is, he has a well which soldiers from Abimelech's army took from him. Obviously, such a well is necessary for Abraham's survival in the desert wilderness.

Genesis 21:25 Then Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the water well that servants of Abimelech had seized. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:25 Then Abraham complained to Abraham about the water well which army personnel of Abimelech's army had taken violently from Abraham. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:25 Then Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

Abraham did have a beef with Abimelech. There was a water well that Abraham had used for awhile and Abimelech's servants (probably members of his army) took this well away from Abraham's men, using violence and/or intimidation.

Notice how these incidents of these two chapters are all tied together, and how the writer was thinking. He sets up the relationship between Abraham and Abimelech by recounting their first interaction. Then he speaks of the absolute importance of a well in the desert—apart from that water, Hagar and Ishmael would die of thirst. And now we come to find that there is another dispute between Abraham and Abimelech (properly, with Abimelech's soldiers) over a well in the desert, which would be necessary for Abraham and his men to survive. So you see that, besides many of the same people populating these chapters, there are also continuity of themes at work here as well.

The information found here, unlike the previous verses dealing with Ishmael, are so detailed that no one other than the participants would have remembered and recorded these things. A well near Abraham's place of occupancy was of extreme importance to Abraham and his livestock. Although Abimelech had given him carte blanche to live wherever in his realm he chose (Genesis 20:15), this was useless when his water supply was cut off or reduced. Abimelech was not aware of this, and, although it is not stated, his concern is implied and his involvement on Abraham's behalf would probably soon follow.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ This could be interpreted another way. If Abimelech was less than honorable, he could have had that well seized in order to force Abraham into a pact with him. However, there is nothing revealed in Scripture thus far to indicate that he would be this duplicitous.

We also get a basic lesson in court justice: what a judge decides ought to be based upon the merits of the case and not on the relative importance of the people at the trial. Abimelech has his lead general there, Phicol, representing the interests of his soldiers. Quite obviously, Abimelech is going to lean toward deciding in Phicol's favor. If Abimelech is a dishonest man, then Phicol has won the judgment already, and his being there is only a formality. However, we are going to find the Abimelech is still an honest and honorable man.

Abimelech first swears in the complainant (the plaintiff). The judge swears in the complainant¹²⁰ and then listens to his testimony.

Some translations tie vv. 25 and 26 directly together: [When Abraham reproved Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized, Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today."](#) (ESV) This is a legitimate way of translating these verses, but it is also allowing for some interpretation.

And so says Abimelech, "I had not known who had done the word the this, and also you had not made conspicuous to me, and also I [even] I had not heard except today."

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Abimelech replied, "I did not know who had done this thing; you had not [previously] made [this] known to me; and, furthermore, I [even] I had not heard until today."

Abimelech replied, "I did not know until today who had done this thing; and, you know, you have not informed me of this until today."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Abimelech, "I had not known who had done the word the this, and also you had not made conspicuous to me, and also I [even] I had not heard except today."
Targum of Onkelos	And Abimelek said, I knew not who did this thing; neither have you shown it to me; nor have I heard it <u>from others</u> , till to-day from you.
Latin Vulgate	And Abimelech answered: I knew not who did this thing: and you did not tell me, and I heard not of it till today.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abimeleck said, I do not know who has done this thing; neither did you tell me, nor have I heard of it until today.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abimelech said to him, I know not who has done this thing to you, neither did you tell it to me, neither did I hear it until today.

Significant differences: The targum, in many respects, functions like a commentary, and often throws in an extra thought here or there to fill in the gaps which they perceive to be. So there are a couple of extra words in the targum which perform that exact function.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this, and you didn't tell me. I didn't even hear about it until today."
Contemporary English V.	"This is the first I've heard about it," Abimelech replied. "Why haven't you said something before? I don't have any idea who did it."
Easy English	Abimelech replied, 'I do not know who did this. You did not tell me. Until today, I had not heard about it.'

¹²⁰ He just got assurances from Abraham, swearing before his God, that he would not deal dishonestly with Abimelech.

Easy-to-Read Version	But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this thing. You never told me about this before today!"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abimelech said, "I don't know who did this. You didn't tell me about it, and this is the first I have heard of it."
<i>The Message</i>	Abimelech said, "I have no idea who did this; you never told me about it; this is the first I've heard of it."
New Berkeley Version	...to which Abimelech replied, "I do not know who did this; you never told me and I never heard of it till today." Abimelech denied responsibility, which he should exercise; hence Abraham's demand for an oath
New Century Version	But Abimelech said, "I don't know who did this. You never told me about this before today."
New Living Translation	"This is the first I've heard of it," Abimelech answered. "I have no idea who is responsible. You have never complained about this before."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

Beck's American Translation	"I don't know who did this" Abimelech answered. "You didn't tell me, and I didn't hear about it till today."
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Abimelech replied, "I don't know who did this. You didn't tell me, and I didn't hear about it until today."
International Standard V	"I don't know who did this thing," Abimelech replied. "You didn't report this to me, and I didn't hear about it until today."
New American Bible	"I have no idea who did that," Abimelech replied. "In fact, you never told me about it, nor did I ever hear of it until now."
NIRV	But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You didn't tell me. Today is the first time I heard about it."
New Jerusalem Bible	'I do not know who has done this,' Abimelech said. 'You yourself have never mentioned it to me and, for myself, I heard nothing of it till today.'
Revised English Bible	Abimelech said, 'I do not know who did this. Up to this moment you never mentioned it, nor did I hear of it from anyone else.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Abimelech said, "I never knew who did this word. You also said nothing to me, and I also heard nothing unto today."
Bible in Basic English	But Abimelech said, I have no idea who has done this thing; you never gave me word of it, and I had no knowledge of it till this day.
Conservapedia	Abimelech said, "I don't know who did this. You didn't tell me, and I didn't even hear about it until today."
The Expanded Bible	But Abimelech said, "I don't know who did this. You never told me [L?and I have not heard] about this before today."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Abimelek answered, "I did not know myself of that matter; and neither did you report it to me; and I never heard it until to-day."
HCSB	Abimelech replied, "I don't know who did this thing. You didn't report anything to me, so I hadn't heard about it until today."
New Advent Bible	And Abimelech answered: I knew not who did this thing: and you did not tell me, and I heard not of it till today.
NET Bible®	"I do not know who has done this thing," Abimelech replied. "Moreover [Heb "and also."], you did not tell me. I did not hear about it until today."
NIV – UK	But Abimelech said, 'I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Avimelekh answered, "I don't know who has done this. You didn't tell me, and I heard about it only today."
exeGesese companion Bible	And Abi Melech says, I neither perceived who worked this word: nor told you me, nor yet I - I hear until today.
Kaplan Translation	Abimelekh said, 'I don't know who could have done such a thing. You never told me. I heard nothing about it until today.'
The Scriptures 1998	And Abimelek said, "I do not know who has done this deed. Neither did you inform me, nor did I hear until today."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Abimelech to him, "Not know do I who did this thing. And, moreover, you did not tell me. Moreover, also I did not hear, barring today.
Green's Literal Translation	And Abimelech said, I do not know who has done this thing; and also you have not told me; even I have not heard, except today.
Heritage Bible	And Abimelech said, I do not know by seeing who has done this word, and you did not cause it to stand out boldly to me, and I have not heard it except today.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing, neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but today. This explanation, accompanied, as it was, with the order to return the well to its rightful owner; was satisfactory; it showed the fairness of Abimelech in all his doing.
Syndein	And Abimelech kept on saying, "I did not know {yada} about the doing/manufacturing {asah} of this matter/word {dabar}. neither did you tell me . . . neither had I heard {shama`} . . . but today."
World English Bible	Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this thing. Neither did you tell me, neither did I hear of it, until today."
Young's Updated LT	And Abimelech says, "I have not known who has done this thing, and even you did not declare to me, and I also, I have not heard save to-day."

The gist of this verse: Abimelech claims not to have known about this matter and that he is just hearing of it today.

Again, since this is a non-Hebrew speaking, there will be some peculiarities. Notice how Abimelech repeats the same conjunctions, the same negatives; and also, how he uses a lot of personal pronouns, even when they are not necessary. My point in this is, we should not look to things Abimelech says as perfect Hebrew grammar or examples of how the Hebrew should be used; but we ought to look at this, understanding that this is said by a foreigner. He has also, apparently, chosen to speak in the Hebrew language to Abraham. So it is his speech which seems to be stilted and not Abraham's.

Genesis 21:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'Âbiymelek ^e (אבימלך) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4

Genesis 21:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lō' (לוּל or לוֹ) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHĠ]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Translation: Abimelech replied, “I did not know who had done this thing;...

Abimelech is being apologetic here. He is first saying that he did not know what had happened; he had not heard about this before, or he would have dealt with it before.

This suggests, but not conclusively, that Abraham and his crew attempted to find other means of attaining water; or that they did not report this immediately. However, bear in mind, Abimelech could be acting carefully, realizing that Abraham has a connection to God. That is, he wants it on the record, before God, that nothing had been done about this, because he is hearing about it for the first time today.

Assuming that Abimelech had not heard about this dispute earlier suggests that he may be traveling about through his own country land collecting tribute from those who live in it. That may have been his original purpose in coming to Abraham at this time.

Genesis 21:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168

Genesis 21:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
'attâh (אתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...you had not [previously] made [this] known to me;...

Abraham knows that he never spoke of this to Abimelech before, and Abimelech is simply pointing out this fact. So, what appears to be the case is, there was this dispute between Abraham and some of Abimelech's soldiers; but that Abimelech had not heard about this dispute until this particular day.

Again, this suggests that Abimelech is coming to Abraham on another matter—in this case, an agreement between them. Abimelech may have off-handedly asked, “And how are things here on your compound? Are you making good use of the land that you rent from me? Are there any problems?” At that point, Abraham would lodge the formal complaint concerning the well.

Or, it is even more likely that, part way through the pact agreement that Abimelech had hoped to achieve, Abraham stops him and says, “Look, I have a serious problem here on your land.”

It is not unusual to conclude that Abimelech is careful around Abraham, because he knows influential entities in high places.

Genesis 21:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168

Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean *together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore*.

Genesis 21:26c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾānôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied)	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâma' (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHÇ</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
bil'etîy (בִּלְעִי) pronounced <i>bill'-TEE</i>	<i>without, besides, except</i>	preposition/adverb;	Strong's #1115 BDB #116
Owens says this is in a construct state, which is not usual for an adverb. Normally, the adverb is not put into a construct form; and there is no difference between the form found in the text and its vocabulary form.			
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: ...and, furthermore, I [even] I had not heard until today.”

Even though we may question of the use of the final adverb here; it is likely that Abimelech means *until today*.

Genesis 21:26 Abimelech replied, “I did not know who had done this thing; you had not [previously] made [this] known to me; and, furthermore, I [even] I had not heard until today.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:26 Abimelech replied, “I did not know until today who had done this thing; and, you know, you have not informed me of this until today.” (Kukis paraphrase)

The Ferar-Fenton Bible gives a good translation of this verse: *Then Abimelek answered, “I did not know myself of that matter; and neither did you report it to me; and I never heard it until to-day.”* As I have suggested, this means that Abimelech and Phicol are there on a different matter (to sign an alliance agreement), and Abraham brings up the problem with the well.

Clarke: *The servants of Abimelech had committed these depredations on Abraham without any authority from their master, who appears to have been a very amiable man, possessing the fear of God, and ever regulating the whole of his conduct by the principles of righteousness and strict justice.*¹²¹

It appears that this dispute occurred awhile ago; Abimelech expressing surprise at not hearing about this matter until today suggests that Abraham and his compound had made use of alternate water sources. Let me suggest that there was a well, spring or wadi a further distance off, which Abraham used.

Abimelech says that this is the first time he is hearing about this matter. In other words, he did not send out his own men to take the well—or, to appropriate the use of this well—from Abraham. Abimelech would not have done this. We know this why? Because of Abraham's relationship to God. Abimelech is not going to cause Abraham

¹²¹ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:26.

grief for that reason. However, it is clear that some of the people of Gerar—specifically some of Phicol’s soldiers (here, called Abimelech’s servants)—are expressing their own souls by harassing Abraham.

And so takes Abraham sheep and oxen and so he gives [them] to Abimelech. And so cut two of them a covenant.

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Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave [them] to Abimelech. Then the two of them cut a covenant.

Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and he gave them to Abimelech. Then the two of them entered into a pact.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Abraham sheep and oxen and so he gives [them] to Abimelech. And so cut two of them a covenant.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave to Abimelech; and they both made a covenant..
Latin Vulgate	Then Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech: and both of them made a league.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham took sheep and calves, and gave them to Abimelech, and they both made a covenant.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle, and then the two men made a peace treaty.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement. Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle as proof of the agreement.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then Abraham gave some sheep and cattle to Abimelech, and the two of them made an agreement.
<i>The Message</i>	So the two of them made a covenant. Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech.
New Life Bible	So Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech. Then the two men made an agreement.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

International Standard V	So Abraham took sheep and oxen and presented them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant.
NIRV	So Abraham gave Abimelech sheep and cattle. The two men made a peace treaty.
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham then took sheep and cattle and presented them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made an agreement together.
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Conservapedia	Abraham gave Abimelech a present of sheep and oxen, and they both made a solemn treaty. As ever, men made covenants in those days by splitting several animal bodies in saggital section and then walking between them, to signify that either man would be within his rights to do the same thing to the other for breaking that covenant.
The Expanded Bible	Then Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle, and they made an agreement [covenant; treaty].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Abraham then took sheep and oxen, and gave to Abimelek, and the two of them entered into a treaty.
HCSB	Then Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant.
New Advent Bible	Then Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech: and both of them made a league.
NET Bible®	Abraham took some sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech. The two of them made a treaty [Heb "cut a covenant."].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Judaica Press Complete T.	And Abraham took flocks and cattle, and gave them to Abimelech, and they both formed a covenant.
Kaplan Translation	Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelekh, and the two of them made a treaty.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a league or covenant.
Concordant Literal Version	And taking is Abraham a flock and a herd, and is giving them to Abimelech. And they two are contracting a covenant.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And Abraham took sheep and oxen, stud gave to Abimelech,—and they two solemnised a covenant.
English Standard Version	So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant.
Green's Literal Translation	And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave to Abimelech, and both of them cut a covenant.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham took flock animals and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech, and both of them cut a covenant.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. The presents were the token of the covenant on the part of Abraham which was now formally entered upon by both.
Syndein	And Abraham kept on taking sheep and oxen, and kept on giving them unto Abimelech. And both of them kept on cutting/making a covenant.
World English Bible	Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech. Those two made a covenant.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham takes sheep and oxen, and gives to Abimelech, and they make, both of them, a covenant.

The gist of this verse: Abraham takes some sheep and oxen and gives them to Abimelech. They also make a covenant.

As has been mentioned several times in the past, when there are imperfect verbs strung together with wâw consecutives, that we are simply looking at successive actions. Almost every English translation connects the first two phrases with the final phrase in this verse. However, there is no reason why this must be done. The first two

phrases appear to be connected; but the third phrase could have occurred later and been unrelated to the first two. However, in this case, I believe, like the many translators, that these are all connected.

Genesis 21:27a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Also spelled ts ^e ôwn (צֹנַי) [pronounced <i>tseh-OWN</i>].			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i>]	<i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133

Translation: Then Abraham took sheep and oxen...

This gives us a look back into the culture of that day. As a part of their previous land contract, Abraham gets some sheep and oxen. What seems to be likely is, these are for Abimelech in consideration of this contract, which involves Abraham being in Abimelech's land. There is more to it than that; there is likely an alliance to where Abraham will be safe in this land, and have an alliance with the Philistines if there are any problems.

There is also this to be considered: this land is guarded by Abimelech's soldiers. They cruise around through this land, not unlike policemen patrolling a neighborhood. So it does appear as if this is remuneration to Abimelech, who must also pay his soldiers to keep law and order throughout this land. Therefore, these sheep and oxen are tribute that Abraham is paying to Abimelech.

Genesis 21:27b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 21:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אָבִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^p -vee- MEH-lek]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4

Translation: ...and gave [them] to Abimelech.

Abraham then gives these sheep and oxen to Abimelech. Again, this is probably in consideration of the contract which they had concerning the land where Abraham was living. Every year (or whatever), Abimelech and his lead general would go about and collect rent, tribute and taxes.

Clarke suggests¹²² that these animals might be designed for offerings, but that does not appear to be the case. It simply says that Abraham gave the animals to Abimelech. *That* is a payment; it is not animals offered up for sacrifice.

When a contract is written between two parties, one party generally receives something from the other, which he pays for (or provides some sort of remuneration for). I have been in and out of the real estate business for years. You can offer all the earnest money contracts that you want, but unless there is an actual dollar amount in the contract, and a check written for that same amount, the contract is not necessarily valid, because there is no consideration offered (sometimes an earnest money contract is written without earnest money, but that is a rarity). A better example might be rental contracts. I have known of landlords who take an application and take a deposit at the same time. This is not the textbook way of doing things. The tenant really has nothing in hand in exchange for his money. He may think that he has the house, but if the landlord has just taken the application, then the landlord can reject the prospective tenant. Similarly, there have been prospective tenants who have shown up to sign a rental contract, but they bring no money with them. There must be consideration, generally speaking, in order for the contract to be valid. The tenant receives a contract, which gives them rights and privileges and responsibilities concerning a piece of property; and the landlord receives consideration, which is the money. The two things go hand-in-hand.

Abraham is likely signing a lease agreement for the land on which he is living; and some of the terms of the contract possibly include the protections of Abimelech's army, which might go through the area once a month (or, whatever). Abimelech gets the animals.

Throughout this time period, Abimelech's soldiers are traveling about this country keeping law and order; and watching out for unsavory sorts of characters who might pillage their land tenants.

This actually suggests a number of things. Abimelech was comfortable enough to travel his own land and meet face to face with his own subjects. The fact that he entertains Abraham's complaint indicates that he is able to deal honestly and fairly with whatever problems his tenants have. You see, in many similar situations, a king might simply send out Phicol with a number of soldiers, and they would collect rents and tributes and bring them back to the king.

Genesis 21:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

¹²² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:27.

Genesis 21:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kâraṯh (כָּרַח) [pronounced kaw- RAHTH]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
sh ^e nêym (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh ^e -NĀM]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	dual numeral construct with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
b ^e rîyṯh (בְּרִית) [pronounced b ^e reeth]	<i>covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

Translation: Then the two of them cut a covenant.

At the end, these two men entered into a mutually agreed upon pact. So, what is suggested here is something which goes beyond the simple dispute that Abraham brought before Abimelech. It is possible that they are simply renewing their land contract, and with it will be the added clause that a particular well, previously disputed, will actually be for Abraham's exclusive use.

If there is an animal offered up, as a part of this contract (which often was a part of their contracts in that era), it is not spoken of here.

Abimelech and Abraham discuss the problem with the wells (a graphic) from the **One Year Skeptic**; accessed September 9, 2014. This particular incident did not inspire a lot of artwork (this is all that I found).

All of this reveals a legal sophistication in Palestine, circa 2000 B.C. What is logically conveyed to Abraham in this contract is the use of the land upon which he has his compound; and the terms of remuneration are likely stated in this contract as well. There is probably a friendship amendment, of sorts, reaffirming the mutual respect that these men have for one another.

Genesis 21:27 Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave [them] to Abimelech. Then the two of them cut a covenant. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:27 Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and he gave them to Abimelech. Then the two of them entered into a pact. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and both of them made a covenant [= a contract, a pact].

Apparently, for the use of the well, Abraham has set aside some sheep and oxen for Abimelech. Or, Abraham is paying court costs or putting up some kind of a financial guarantee. In any case, they come to a mutual agreement concerning their relationship, the land where Abraham lives, and this well.

Abraham was essentially entering into a lease agreement with the king of that land. This was the way things were done in that day. Abimelech controlled the land, and Phicol, his top general, patrolled it. This was a land-lease that was being enacted between these two parties.



Gen. 21:22–27 At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity, but as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned." And Abraham said, "I will swear." When Abraham reproved Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized, Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant.

Keil and Delitzsch: *The Philistine king Abimelech was induced to secure for himself and his descendants the friendship of a man so blessed; and for that purpose he went to Beersheba, with his captain Phicol, to conclude a treaty with him. Abraham was perfectly ready to agree to this; but first of all he complained to him about a well which Abimelech's men had stolen, i.e., had unjustly appropriated to themselves. Abimelech replied that this act of violence had never been made known to him till that day, and as a matter of course commanded the well to be returned. After the settlement of this dispute the treaty was concluded, and Abraham presented the king with sheep and oxen, as a material pledge that he would reciprocate the kindness shown, and live in friendship with the king and his descendants.*¹²³

Several commentators¹²⁴ suggest that Abimelech made a covenant with Abraham because he was afraid of his growing military might. The problem with that idea is, Abraham is the one giving the cattle and sheep to Abimelech. That is something Abraham would do in a land-lease contract; but that is not how payments would go if Abimelech was worried about Abraham.

About the only commentator who seemed to actually notice that Abraham was giving cattle and sheep to Abimelech was L. M. Grant (I am sure that they all noticed it, but had no explanation for it). He wrote: *It may seem that, rather than Abraham giving gifts of sheep and oxen to Abimelech at this time, it would have been more becoming the other way around.*¹²⁵ However, Grant's problem is, he could not explain why. Grant, who is usually one of the better commentators, wrote *Abraham is showing the genuineness of his covenant; whatever the heck that means.*

And so stations Abraham seven ewe-lambs of the flock to their separation.	Genesis 21:28	Then Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves.
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Then Abraham set apart seven ewe-lambs by themselves.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so stations Abraham seven ewe-lambs of the flock to their separation.
Latin Vulgate	And Abraham set apart seven ewelambs of the flock.
Targum of Onkelos	And Abraham set seven lambs apart and separated them from the oxen.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham set seven ewe lambs by themselves.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹²³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 21:22–30.

¹²⁴ Even Peter Pett <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

¹²⁵ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham separated seven female lambs from his flock of sheep,... Abraham also put seven [The Hebrew word for "seven" is like the Hebrew word for "oath" or "promise" and it is like the last part of the name Beersheba. The seven animals were proof of this promise.] female lambs in front of Abimelech.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham set aside seven sheep from his flock.
New Berkeley Version	When Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock,...
New Century Version	Abraham also put seven female lambs in front of Abimelech.
New Living Translation	But Abraham also took seven additional female lambs and set them off by themselves.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible <i>God's Word</i> TM	Then AbraHam set aside seven female lambs. Then Abraham set apart seven female lambs from the flock.
International Standard V	Then Abraham set aside seven ewe lambs, so Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set aside?" V. 29 is included for context.
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham put seven lambs of the flock on one side.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Abraham stationed seven sheep lambs alone.
Bible in Basic English	And Abraham put seven young lambs of the flock on one side by themselves.
Conservapedia	Abraham set seven ewe lambs from his flock apart from the rest.
The Expanded Bible	Abraham also put seven female lambs ·in front of Abimelech [^apart by themselves].
HCSB	But Abraham had set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	...and Abraham stations seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.
Kaplan Translation	Abraham then put seven female sheep [In Hebrew, seven is sheva, having the same root as shevua, an oath. An oath thus obligates a person through everything that was made in the seven days of creation (Hirsch). It also obligates a person through the power of all the seven Noachide commandments (Midrash HaGadol). See note on Genesis 21:31.] aside by themselves.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And stationing is Abraham seven ewe lambs of the flock alone.
English Standard Version	Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock apart.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham stationed seven ewe lambs out of the flock separate.
Syndein	And Abraham kept on causing the setting of the seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.
World English Bible	Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham sets seven Lambs of the flock by themselves.

The gist of this verse: While all of this is taking place, Abraham sets aside seven young lambs aside, separate from the flocks and cattle which he has given to Abimelech.

Genesis 21:28			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâtsab (בָּצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH ^b V]	<i>to station oneself, to take one's stand, to stand up, to set something upright, to erect; to fix, to establish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5324 BDB #662
ʾAb ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְחָם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sheba ^c (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced she ^b -VAHG]	<i>seven</i>	masculine numeral	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
kibsâh (קִיבֹּסָה) [pronounced kihb-SAW]	<i>ewe-lamb, lamb, a female lamb</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #3535 BDB #461
tsô ⁿ (צֹאן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bad (בַּד) [pronounced bah]	<i>separation, by itself, alone</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #905 BDB #94

Together, the lâmed preposition and bad (בַּד) mean *in a state of separation, by itself, alone, apart*.

Translation: Then Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves.

Then Abraham does something which is a little odd. He takes seven ewe-lambs and sets them apart from everything else. So, he has already taken some from his livestock and given them to Abimelech, but then he sets these seven lambs aside, separate from all else. Apparently, they are not mentioned in the lease agreement.

Genesis 21:28 Then Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:28 Then Abraham set apart seven ewe-lambs by themselves. (Kukis paraphrase)

Clarke: These [ewe-lambs] were either given as a present, or they were intended as the price of the well; and being accepted by Abimelech, they served as a witness that he had acknowledged Abraham's right to the well in question.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:28.

What Abraham does here is unique in the Bible. We do not find this particular custom repeated. Witness to what Abraham is doing is himself, Abimelech, and Phicol (and there might have been that third guy as well).

And so says Abimelech unto Abraham, “Why these—seven ewe-lambs the these which you have stationed to their separation?”

Genesis
21:29

So Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why these, these seven ewe lambs that you have set by themselves?”

So Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why did you set these seven ewe lambs by themselves?”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Abimelech unto Abraham, “Why these—seven ewe-lambs the these which you have stationed to their separation?”
Targum of Onkelos	And Abimelek said to Abraham, What are these seven lambs which you have set apart?.
Latin Vulgate	And Abimelech said to him: What mean these seven ewelambs which thou hast set apart?
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abimeleck said to Abraham, What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs of the flock which you have set by themselves?
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abimelech said to Abraham, What are these seven ewe lambs which you have set alone?

Significant differences: No dramatic differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Easy-to-Read Version	...and Abimelech asked, "Why have you done this?" Abimelech asked Abraham, “Why did you put these seven female lambs by themselves?”
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i> New Berkeley Version	...and Abimelech asked him, "Why did you do that?" Abimelech said, "What does this mean? These seven sheep you've set aside." ...Abimelech asked him, “What about those seven ewe lambs you have set apart?”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Christian Community Bible New American Bible	And AbiMelech asked him, 'Why have you set those seven female lambs aside?' Abimelech said to him, “Why have you put aside these seven ewe lambs?” ...and Abimelech asked him, "What is the purpose of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?"
NIRV	Abimelech asked Abraham, "What's the meaning of these seven female lambs? Why have you taken them out and put them by themselves?"
New Jerusalem Bible Revised English Bible	'Why have you put these seven lambs on one side?' Abimelech asked Abraham. ...and when Abimelech asked him why he had done so,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why station these seven lambs alone?" Then Abimelech said, What are these seven lambs which you have put on one side?
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Conservapedia	Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart like that?"
The Expanded Bible	Abimelech asked Abraham, "Why did you put these seven female lambs by themselves?"
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Abimelek then ask Abraham, "What are these seven lambs for, which you have put by themselves?"
NET Bible®	Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these [Heb "What are these?"] seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeser companion Bible	And Abi Melech says to Abraham, What are these seven ewe lambs you station by themselves?
Kaplan Translation	Abimelekh asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewes that you have set aside?"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Abimelech to Abraham, "What are they, these seven ewe lambs of the flock which you station alone?"
English Standard Version	And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?"
Heritage Bible	And Abimelech said to Abraham, What are these seven ewe lambs which you have stationed separate?
Green's Literal Translation	And Abimelech said to Abraham, What <i>are</i> these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?
Syndein	And Abimelech kept on saying unto Abraham, "What mean by these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?"
Updated Webster's Bible T	And Abimelech said to Abraham, What [mean] these seven ewe-lambs, which you have set by themselves?
Young's Literal Translation	Abimelech said to Abraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves mean?"
Young's Updated LT	And Abimelech says unto Abraham, "What are they—these seven lambs which you have set by themselves?"

The gist of this verse: Abimelech then asks Abraham why he set these ewe lambs aside.

Genesis 21:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced waw]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'Ăbi melek ^e (אבִּי מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4

Genesis 21:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'el (לָא) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ab ^e râhâm (אֲבִרְאָהִם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4

Translation: So Abimelech said to Abraham,...

You will note that Abimelech gives Abraham respect, which is indicated by the preposition which is used.

Genesis 21:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
hêmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced haym-mawh]	<i>they, those; themselves; these [with the definite article]</i>	3 rd person feminine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
sheba' (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced she ^b -VAHG]	<i>seven</i>	masculine numeral	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
kibsâh (כִּיבָּשָׁה) [pronounced kihb-SAW]	<i>ewe-lamb, lamb, a female lamb</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #3535 BDB #461
'êlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH ^β V]	<i>to station oneself, to take one's stand, to stand up, to set something upright, to erect; to fix, to establish</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5324 BDB #662
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bad (בַּד) [pronounced bah]	<i>separation, by itself, alone</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #905 BDB #94

Together, the lâmed preposition and bad (בַּד) mean *in a state of separation, by itself, alone, apart*.

Translation:...“Why these, these seven ewe lambs that you have set by themselves?”

Again, because Abimelech is speaking in the language which Abraham knows, we have a superfluous personal pronoun (or adjective). Both of them are translated *these*, although they are different words. In any case, Abimelech asks the question we are all asking ourselves: “What’s the deal with the seven ewe-lambs?”

Abimelech asks, “Why have you done this? What are these ewe lambs all about? They are not named in our contract. I don’t get it.”

Genesis 21:29 So Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why these, these seven ewe lambs that you have set by themselves?” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:29 So Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why did you set these seven ewe lambs by themselves?” (Kukis paraphrase)

What Abraham is doing here is going to stick in the minds of Abimelech and Phicol. Anytime there will be anything said about these wells of Abraham, Abimelech and Phicol will think back to these 7 ewe lambs. They will act as something which will stay in their minds forever more. So, if there is ever a dispute about ownership and control of these wells, all Abraham has to do, when talking to Abimelech, is say, “Remember those 7 ewe lambs?”

Gill: [Abimelech] understood what the sheep and oxen were for, that they were presents to him, at least some of them, and the rest were for the solemnizing and ratifying the covenant between them; but what these were for he could not devise.¹²⁷

And so he said, “For seven ewe-lambs you will take from my hand because you will to me for a witness that I dug the well the this.”

Genesis
21:30

And he replied [lit., said], “Because, you will take [these] seven ewe-lambs from me [lit., from my hand] in order that you will be my witness that I have dug this well.”

And he replied, “Here’s why: you will take these seven lambs from me in order to establish that I dug this well.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he said, “For seven ewe-lambs you will take from my hand because you will to me for a witness that I dug the well the this.”
Targum of Onkelos	That you may take the seven lambs from my hand, to be a testimony for me that I have dug this well.
Latin Vulgate	But he said: You will take seven ewe-ambs at my hand: that they may be a testimony for me, that I dug this well.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he said, For these seven ewe lambs you shall take of my hands that they may be a witness for me that I have digged this well.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham said, You shall receive the seven ewe lambs from me, that they may be for me as a witness, that I dug this well.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹²⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:29.

Common English Bible	Abraham said, "These seven lambs that you take from me will attest that I dug this well."
Contemporary English V.	Abraham told him, "I want you to accept these seven lambs as proof that I dug this well."
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham answered, "When you accept these lambs from me, it will be proof that I dug this well."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham answered, "Accept these seven lambs. By doing this, you admit that I am the one who dug this well."
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham said, "It means that when you accept these seven sheep, you take it as proof that I dug this well, that it's my well."
New Berkeley Version	He answered, "Accept these seven ewe lambs from me to be my witness that I have dug this well."
New Century Version	Abraham answered, "Accept these lambs from me to prove that you believe I dug this well."
New Living Translation	Abraham replied, "Please accept these seven lambs to show your agreement that I dug this well."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And AbraHam replied: 'I'm giving my seven female lambs to you as testimony to the fact that I dug this well.'
Beck's American Translation	"By accepting these seven she-lambs from me" he answered, "you declare I dug this well."
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Abraham answered, "Accept these lambs from me so that they may be proof that I dug this well."
International Standard V	He replied, "You are to accept from me these seven ewe lambs as a witness that I have dug this well."
New American Bible	Abraham answered, "The seven ewe lambs you shall accept from me that you may be my witness that I dug this well."
New Jerusalem Bible	He replied, 'You must accept these seven lambs from me as evidence that I have dug this well.'
Revised English Bible	...he said, 'Accept these seven lambs from me as a testimony on my behalf that I dug this well.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He said, "Take these seven lambs from my hand. It is my testimony that I dug this well."
Bible in Basic English	And he said, Take these seven lambs from me as a witness that I have made this water-hole.
Conservapedia	And he said, "You may take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, to bear witness for me, that I was the one who dug this well."
The Expanded Bible	Abraham answered, "Accept these lambs from me [^L my hand] to prove that you believe [verify/witness that] I dug this well."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	"You take these seven lambs from my hand," he answered, "that they may be an evidence for me that I dug this well."
HCSB	He replied, "You are to accept the seven ewe lambs from my hand so that this act will serve as my witness that I dug this well."
NET Bible [®]	He replied, "You must take these seven ewe lambs from my hand as legal proof [Heb "that it be for me for a witness."] that I dug this well." This well. Since the king wanted a treaty to share in Abraham's good fortune, Abraham used the treaty to secure ownership of and protection for the well he dug. It would be useless to make a treaty to live in this territory if he had no rights to the water. Abraham consented to the treaty, but added his rider to it.

NIV – UK He replied, 'Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible And he says,
Take these seven ewe lambs from my hand,
to become a witness to me that I digged this well.
Kaplan Translation 'Take these seven ewes from my hand,' replied [Abraham]. 'It will be my proof that I dug this well.'

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version And saying is Abraham, that "The seven ewe lambs are you taking from my hand in order to become a testimony to me that I delved this well.
English Standard V. – UK He said, "These seven ewe lambs you will take from my hand, that this [Or you] be a witness for me that I dug this well."
Kretzmann's Commentary And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me that I have digged this well. This was a special transaction with reference to the well which the servants of Abimelech had taken from Abraham. Abimelech's surprised question as to the meaning of this action received the answer that the king was to take them from the hand of Abraham for a witness to the latter that he had caused this well to be dug. Not to redeem the well, therefore, but to secure his property against any possible claims in the future Abraham set the seven ewe lambs aside.
Syndein And he {Abraham} kept on saying, For these seven ewe lambs hall you keep on taking of my hand, hat they may be a witness unto me, hat I have dug this well."
World English Bible He said, "You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that it may be a witness to me, that I have dug this well."
Young's Updated LT And he says, "For—the seven lambs you accept from my hand, so that it becomes a witness for me that I have dug this well;"

The gist of this verse: Abraham says that the seven ewe lambs will stand as a witness that Abimelech acknowledges that the well was dug by Abraham, and therefore, he has exclusive rights to this well.

Genesis 21:30a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'êth (את) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 21:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
sheba ^c (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>she^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>seven</i>	masculine numeral	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
kibsâh (קִיבֹּסָה) [pronounced <i>kih^b-SAW</i>]	<i>ewe-lamb, lamb, a female lamb</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #3535 BDB #461
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Yâd (יָד) [pronounced *yawd*] can connote *power, strength, ability; control; leadership, guidance*.

Translation: *And he replied* [lit., *said*], “*Because, you will take [these] seven ewe-lambs from me* [lit., *from my hand*]...”

Abimelech has just asked Abraham what the deal was with the sheep. Abraham had taken seven lambs and had set them apart from all the rest of the animals.

Abraham begins with the preposition/conjunction *kîy*, which indicates that he is answering Abimelech’s question. In the less literal translation of this verse, I put: *And he replied, “Here’s why:...”* What would follow would be the explanation for the ewe-lambs.

Abraham first tells Abimelech what he is going to do: “*You will take these ewe-lambs from me.*” These 7 lambs are going to become a part of the contract. Sheep live for 10–12 years (and some as long as 20 years), and I suspect that these sheep, being closer to creation, lived much longer. Since Abraham will live to age 175, I would reasonably expect these sheep to live 30–50 years. Every time that Abimelech or any of his servants look at these sheep, they will be reminded that they came from Abraham and that they were related to this contract.

Also, bear in mind that this land where Abraham was, is under the jurisdiction of Abimelech. So, even though Abraham has dug a well, this well is on Abimelech’s property. Therefore, there is going to be some consideration given for the use of that well on Abimelech’s land. This is what the seven lambs would be.

Furthermore, the verb for *to swear an oath* is very similar to the word *seven*.

Genesis 21:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ba‘ăbûwr (בְּאוּר) [pronounced <i>bah-ġu^b-VOOR</i>]	<i>because of, for, that, for the sake of, on account of, in order that; while</i>	preposition/conjunction; substantive always found combined with the <i>bêyth</i> preposition	Strong's #5668 BDB #721

Genesis 21:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Actually a combination of the bêyth preposition (<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before</i>) and 'âbûwr (רֹבֵעַ) [pronounced <i>gaw'-BOOR</i>] which means <i>a passing over, a transition; the cause of a crossing over; the price [of transferring ownership of something]; purpose, objective</i> . Properly, it is the passive participle of Strong's #5674 BDB #720. Strong's #5668 BDB #721.			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êdâh (הִדַּע) [pronounced <i>gay-DAW</i>]	<i>witness, testimony</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5713 BDB #729
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
châphar (חָפַר) [pronounced <i>chaw-FAHR</i>]	<i>to dig [a well or pit]; to dig for, to search for, to search for that which is hidden, to search by digging; to explore</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2658 BDB #343
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91
zô'th (זֹאת) [pronounced <i>zoth</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb; with the definite article	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260

Translation: ...in order that you will be my witness that I have dug this well.”

Abraham continues with the explanation. The specific reason is, Abimelech himself will be Abraham's witness that he dug this well. What happened here stands as a witness to Abraham and Abimelech, and to the two witnesses.

Apparently, nowhere in the court proceedings—those recorded and those which are off the record—did Abimelech establish ownership of the well that Abraham dug. At no time did he say, “I rule that Abraham the Hebrew contracted for this well to be built; and therefore, he has ownership of said well.”

Now, what appears to be true is, Abraham has a recurring contract allowing him to come on to Abimelech's land and to feed his livestock on Abimelech's land. I am sure there were considerations and agreements about this arrangement. Obviously, Abraham would not allow his livestock graze on a piece of land until it was eaten bare. There were considerations for such a privilege, which considerations would have been some of the sheep and cattle (as per v. 27).

These lambs in particular will stand out in their minds. They will be somewhat of a placeholder in this agreement. Abimelech probably has dozens and maybe even more tenants on his land—the land which he protects. And with all of his tenants, he has a specific agreement which involves whatever it is that they are producing on his land—be it livestock or crops. What Abraham does here is unusual, so that Abimelech is not going to forget this transaction—and he will not forget about the well. That is the key. Abraham does not want Abimelech to leave, and then forget that there have been problems with this well.

What Abraham is establishing here is clear ownership of this well, which is on Abimelech's land; but has been dug by Abraham's crew.

Genesis 21:30 *And he replied [lit., said], "Because, you will take [these] seven ewe-lambs from me [lit., from my hand] in order that you will be my witness that I have dug this well."* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:30 *And he replied, "Here's why: you will take these seven lambs from me in order to establish that I dug this well."* (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:30 *And he said, "For you will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, so that they may be a witness to me that I have dug this well."*

Abimelech is to take these ewe lambs, so that, every time he looks at them, he realizes that there is a portion of land which belongs to Abraham, and that he actually dug the well in question. In fact, Abimelech does not have to even see the lambs, as they will stand out in his mind as a unique occurrence of however many covenants which he agreed to. Furthermore, he is acknowledging that this well had been taken from Abraham.

Gen. 21:28–30 *Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock apart. And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?" He said, "These seven ewe lambs you will take from my hand, that this may be a witness for me that I dug this well."* (ESV)

What Abraham wants is full rights to the well which he has dug; and these ewe lambs are either a present or a payment for these rights.

Several prominent commentators, include Barnes and Guzik, have no commentary on this section; and I am not aware of any which suggests any significance beyond the narrative itself. What is found below is a sum total of all the wisdom on this particular passage from the 14 of so commentators which I draw from e-sword.¹²⁸

*Matthew Henry: Many are suspected of injustice and unkindness that are perfectly innocent, and we ought to be glad when they clear themselves. The faults of servants must not be imputed to their masters, unless they know of them and justify them; and no more can be expected from an honest man than that he be ready to do right as soon as he knows that he has done wrong. (3.) He took care to have his title to the well cleared and confirmed, to prevent any disputes or quarrels for the future (Genesis 21:30). It is justice, as well as wisdom, to do thus, in perpetuum rei memoriam – that the circumstance may be perpetually remembered. He made a very handsome present to Abimelech (Genesis 21:27). It was not any thing curious or fine that he presented to him, but that which was valuable and useful - sheep and oxen, in gratitude for Abimelech's kindness to him, and in token of hearty friendship between them. The interchanging of kind offices is the improving of love: that which is mine is my friend's.*¹²⁹

Gill: These [ewe-lambs] were to be a testimony that the well that had been taken away from Abraham was one that he had dug, and was his property, and which Abimelech acknowledged by his acceptance of these seven lambs; and very probably Abraham received a note from the hand of

¹²⁸ I have about 50 commentaries on e-sword, but only 14 of them comment on this particular chapter of Genesis. A few additional have footnotes on this chapter.

¹²⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:22–32 (slightly edited).

*Abimelech, owning his reception of the seven lambs, and his title to the well, which these were a witness of.*¹³⁰

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Abraham] selected seven lambs and set them by themselves; and when Abimelech inquired what they were, he told him to take them from his hand, that they might be to him (Abraham) for a witness that he had dug the well. It was not to redeem the well, but to secure the well as his property against any fresh claims on the part of the Philistines, that the present was given; and by the acceptance of it, Abraham's right of possession was practically and solemnly acknowledged.*¹³¹

The Meaning of the Ewe-Lamb Narrative:

Vv. 28–30: Then Abraham set apart seven ewe-lambs by themselves. So Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why did you set these seven ewe lambs by themselves?” And he replied, “Here’s why: you will take these seven lambs from me in order to establish that I dug this well.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Abraham first gives the sheep and oxen to Abimelech as a sign of his good faith, and then culls out seven lambs to show that he personally had dug the well which the men of Abimelech had seized. This is likely some kind of custom in those days which has been lost to history. In order to live, Abraham required water, and Abimelech had allowed him to occupy any portion of land that he chose. Therefore, there was nothing wrong with Abraham digging a well. Likely this well was dug some distance from where they camped and out where they were grazing their many herds. Some of Abimelech's men liked the area, liked the well, and required that it be given to them. Abraham had not mentioned that this was taken from him until they met to make a treaty. During this process is the ideal time to air grievances.

Now, let’s stop for a moment and ask, *just why is this narrative here?* There are two very important things which are associated with Isaac: his birth and his being sacrificed by his father. These are foremost in the plan of God. His unique birth tells us about the birth of Jesus to come; and Abraham offering up Isaac as a sacrifice speaks of Jesus dying for our sins. But in between, we have Hagar and Ishmael being separated from the Abraham household, and then we have this treaty between Abraham and these gentiles. Why are these things here?

God the Holy Spirit knows the end from the beginning; He inserts narratives and tells narratives in such a way with purpose. Nothing in the Bible is just random.

Jesus, through the first half of His ministry, went to the Jews and offered them the kingdom. Although many believed in Him, many Jews rejected Him, including those of the pharisees and sadducees, who actually knew some Scripture. During this first half, Jesus also did many miracles and signs and wonders, but these men still rejected Him, finally saying that He was doing these things in the power of Beelzebub (a reference to Satan). At that point, there was a separation and a limitation of His gracious works. Jesus no longer went to the Jews in general—they had been given enough time to know about Him and to either accept Him or reject Him.

At that point, Jesus began to perform fewer healings, they were often done before a very private audience, and those who witnessed it (or were cured) were told *not* to tell others about it (see Luke 8:37, 51, 54–56 11:29 Matthew 9:30). At that point, Jesus began to speak of gentiles (He mentions Jonah, who was a prophet to gentiles in Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba, who comes to Solomon for His wisdom—Luke 11:29–31). What Jesus is talking about is the response of gentiles to Him, to His disciples, and to His ministry.

Then Jesus excoriates the pharisees, who ought to know Who Jesus is, who ought to be rejoicing at His presence, but who have soundly rejected Him (Luke 11:37–54). Then Jesus warns that he will bring division within a family (Luke 12:51–53). Then He mourns Jerusalem, that kills the prophets (Luke 13:34–35). Then Jesus tells a

¹³⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:30.

¹³¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Job 21:22–30.

parable, about a man who has a supper, and he invites his friends, all of whom reject this invitation (these are the Jews rejecting Jesus), so then this man opens up this dinner to anyone who will come (and those who come represent the gentiles who will accept Jesus' invitation). Luke 14:16–24. Then He makes this remarkable statement: **"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."** (Luke 14:26; MKJV) In Luke 16, Jesus spoke of this Jew who was in torments while a beggar, Lazarus, was in Abraham's bosom. The Jew in torments knew Abraham, and invoked Abraham's name, but he remained in torments. Then he asked for word to be sent to his family's house, that his brothers might avoid torments. And Jesus said, **"And he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead."** (Luke 16:31)

Jesus would, at this point, also go to the gentiles, beginning with the Samaritans who are half Jewish (Luke 17:11–19). In the first half of Luke 18, Jesus teaches the fallacious thinking of the Jews at that time. He teaches about his being rejected by the Jews in Luke 20:1–18. Isaiah warns the Jews that they would do this: **Behold, You shall call a nation that You do not know; a nation that did not know You shall run to You because of Jehovah Your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified You. Seek Jehovah while He may be found; call on Him while He is near** (Isaiah 55:5–6; MKJV).

Let's sum this up. There is a separation which is taking place in the ministry of Jesus Christ, from those who have rejected Him and His offer of the kingdom, which is many Jews, who should have believed in Him. This is the people (the family) which should have accepted Him but did not. Hagar and Ishmael represent those who have rejected Jesus, who should have accepted Him. They rejected Isaac, the promised one of God, and so they were separated from the household of Abraham. Just as all the Jews should have accepted and recognized Jesus Christ, so Hagar and Ishmael should have accepted and recognized the importance of Isaac. A separation will take place because they did not accept Isaac for whom he was.

In the second narrative, there are gentiles who went out of their way to establish an association with Abraham (Abimelech and Phicol), just as there would be a great ministry to the gentiles, both during the public ministry of Jesus and the ministries of His disciples (Paul is particularly well-known for going to the gentiles with the gospel—Acts 13:46 18:6 28:28).

There is one more thing that is important in these narratives: *water*, which often represents the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Jesus stood up and loudly proclaimed, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'**" (John 7:37b–38; Isaiah 58:11; see also John 3:5). Water is the key to the survival of Hagar and Ishmael. Without that well of water, they would have died right there, within 24 hours. They did believe in the God of Abraham, although they did not take their faith any further, as did Abraham and Sarah (Romans 4:20–21 Hebrews 11:11–12).

Water also represents Bible doctrine (Ephesians 5:26 1John 5:6). Once we are saved, then we are nourished daily by the water of the Word of God. This is what Abraham secured for himself when in the land of Abimelech. He got complete and total access to the well of water, which sustained him and his family.

Therefore, the water of the Word of God saves us and that same water sustains us.

Like everywhere else in the Bible, this is a real historical incident involving real historical people; however, it looks forward to the ministry of Jesus Christ, which will, despite His close association with the Jewish race, also allow for a covenant with the gentiles.

Now that we know what these narratives represent, we can return to them.

Upon so, he called to the place the that Beer-sheba, for there swore an oath two of them. Genesis 21:31 **For this reason, he named that place Beer-sheba, for the two of them swore an oath there.**

For this reason, Abraham named that place Beer-sheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Upon so, he called to the place the that Beer-sheba, for there swore an oath two of them.
Targum of Onkelos	Therefore he called that well the Well of the Seven Lambs; because there they two did swear.
Latin Vulgate	Therefore that place was called Bersabee; because there both of them did swear.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Therefore he called that place Beer-sheba, because there they swore both of them.
Septuagint (Greek)	Therefore he named the name of that place, The Well of the Oath, for there they both swore.
Significant differences:	None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Therefore, the name of that place is Beer-sheba [Or Well of seven; or Well of giving one's word] because there they gave each other their word.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	So they called the place Beersheba, because they made a treaty there. Abimelech and Abraham declared an *oath to each other there and Abraham called the place Beersheba.
Easy-to-Read Version	So after that, the well was called Beersheba [This name means "well of the oath."] He gave the well this name because it was the place where they made a promise to each other.
<i>The Message</i>	That's how the place got named Beersheba (the Oath-Well), because the two of them swore a covenant oath there.
New Century Version	So that place was called Beersheba [This name means "well of the promise" or "well of seven."] because they made a promise to each other there.
New Life Bible	So he gave that place the name Beersheba because both of them made a promise there.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And he named that place, 'The Well of the Oath,' because that's where they swore their oath...
Beck's American Translation <i>God's Word</i> TM	The place is called Beer-sheba ["Well-of-Oath"] because both of them swore there. This is why that place is called Beersheba, because both of them swore an oath there.
International Standard V	Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba [The name <i>Beer-sheba</i> in Heb. means <i>well of the seven-fold oath</i>], because the two of them swore an oath.
New American Bible NIRV	This is why the place is called Beer-sheba; the two of them took an oath there. That place was named Beersheba. That's because there the two men made a promise with an oath.
Revised English Bible	This is why that place was called Beersheba, because there the two of them swore an oath.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Bible in Basic English	So he called over that place Beersheba (Well of Seven), for there the two swore. So he gave that place the name Beer-sheba, because there the two of them had given their oaths.
Conservapedia	For that reason he called the place Beer-sheba, because in that place both men swore. Beer-sheba literally means "house of seven."
The Expanded Bible	So that place was called Beersheba [21:14; ^C meaning either "well of seven" or "well of promise"] because they made a promise to each other [swore an oath] there.
Ferar-Fenton Bible NET Bible®	They accordingly called that place the Well of the Oath,... That is why he named that place [Heb "that is why he called that place." Some translations render this as an impersonal passive, "that is why that place was called."] Beer Sheba [The name Beer Sheba (B ^e ēr Shâbaʿ (בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced b ^e ayr SHAW ^B -vahj)] means "well of the oath" or "well of the seven." Both the verb "to swear" and the number "seven" have been used throughout the account. Now they are drawn in as part of the explanation of the significance of the name.], because the two of them swore [The verb forms a wordplay with the name Beer Sheba.] an oath there.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGeses companion Bible	So he calls that place Beer Sheba; because there they oath - the two of them:...
Kaplan Translation	That area was therefore called Beer-sheba [<i>Beer Sheva</i> in Hebrew, literally, 'Well of the Seven,' alluding to the seven ewes (Midrash HaGadol). See note on Genesis 21:28. See notes on Genesis 20:15, 21:14.], since the two had made an oath there.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Therefore that place was called Beersheba [well of the oath], because there both parties swore an oath.
Concordant Literal Version	Therefore he called the name of that place Beer-sheba, for there they swore, they two.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Therefore he named the name of that place, The Well of the Oath, for there they both swore.
English Standard Version	Therefore that place was called Beersheba, because there both of them swore an oath.
Kretzmann's Commentary	Wherefore she called that place Beersheba, because there they sware both of them. With an oath they confirmed their covenant, and therefore the place of their meeting was ever afterward known as Beersheba, "the well of the oath. " It is about twenty-five miles from Hebron, on the road to Egypt, where there are two wells to this day.
New RSV	Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba [That is Well of seven or Well of the oath]; because there both of them swore an oath.
Syndein	Wherefore he called that place Beersheba {B@'er Sheba` - means well of the sevenfold oath} because there they swore both of them.
Third Millennium Bible	Therefore he called that place Beersheba [that is, The well of the oath], because there they swore, both of them.
World English Bible	Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because they both swore there.
Young's Updated LT	Therefore has he called that place "Beer-Sheba," for there have both of them sworn.

The gist of this verse:

This well was known as Beersheba, because these two men had established an agreement there and swore an oath

Genesis 21:31a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, ‘al kên (כֵּן עַל) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason.</i>			
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
When followed by a lâmed, as it is here, it means <i>to give a name to.</i>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מוֹקֵם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; with the definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
B ^e ēr Shâba' (בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>b^eayr SHAW^e-vahg</i>]	<i>well of the oath [seven] and is transliterated Beersheba, Beer-sheba</i>	proper noun; location; pausal form	Strong's #884 BDB #92

Translation: For this reason, he named that place Beer-sheba,...

As you noted in the Hebrew exegesis, Beer-sheba means *well of the oath; well of the seven*. The reason for the two names is, *to swear an oath* and the word *seven* are very similar words. The word *oath* here (*sheba*) is the same root word as *seven*; so the name of this well has a double meaning. It refers to an oath made (technically, Abimelech makes an oath to Abraham); and it also refers to the 7 ewe lambs which are given in payment for the well.

This verse and the verse which follows makes it clear that court was held in Beersheba, where Abraham was temporarily staying, where the actual well was.

Also, anytime you see a place with the name *beer* in it, we are speaking of a well.

I hope you are seeing how these things are all interrelated. Hagar took her son into the desert, to Beersheba, as per v. 14. Here, we see how that place was named. It is also clear that Abraham probably traveled here regularly,

so Hagar and Ishmael were not simply wandering off into nowhere. This is a place that they were somewhat familiar with.

Could it be possible that the well that Hagar and her son stumbled across was also a well dug by Abraham? Obviously, the digging of such a well would have occurred long before this meeting and before the birth of Isaac. The problem here would be, when did Abraham pass through here before? He went through this way when going to Egypt and coming back—but we do not know if he took the time to dig a well on the way there or back. That is a major undertaking. Therefore, more than likely, Abraham did not dig the well that Hagar was shown by God.

Genesis 21:31b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
shâba' (שָׁבַע) [pronounced <i>shaw^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	3 rd person plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
sh ^e nêym (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^e-NĀM</i>]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	dual numeral construct with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040

Translation: ...for the two of them swore an oath there.

The name of this place is based upon Abraham and Abimelech entering into a mutual agreement or swearing an oath with one another.

Genesis 21:31 For this reason, he named that place Beer-sheba, for the two of them swore an oath there. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:31 For this reason, Abraham named that place Beer-sheba, because the two of them swore an oath there. (Kukis paraphrase)

Beer-sheba means *well of the seven-fold oath*. *Sheba* means *to take an oath; to seven oneself*. What appears to have happened is, Abraham will give this area the name *Beersheba*; but this name will not be retained by the local population. However, Abraham's son, Isaac, will later make a similar covenant with the next generation of Philistines, and he will give this well the very same name, and, when he does that, that name will stick. Forever after, this area would be known as Beersheba.

Beer means *well* and *sheba* means *seven*. Some claim that it means *well of the oath*, and many translations translate this as *therefore he called the place Beer-sheba because there both of them swore an oath*. However, the word *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], *therefore*, can refer only to an antecedent statement. *The New Bible Dictionary* claims that the particle translated *because* should be translated *when* because it introduces an independent temporal clause; the previous statement tells why it was done and this statement tells when it was done. However, BDB, for the Hebrew word *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] gives the basic meanings *that, for* and *when*. Strong's claims that it is a causal participle, indicating causal relationships of all kinds, whether antecedent or consequent. If anything, those in the early portion of the Old Testament were notorious for word plays, and I would think that it is likely that both meanings were in Abraham's mind when he named this well. ZPEB agrees with this.

Gill: "therefore the place was called Beersheba", for two reasons, one implied, the other expressed; one was, because of the seven lambs before mentioned; so the Targum of Jonathan, "and therefore he called the well the well of seven lambs;" "Beer" signifying a well, and "sheba" seven; the other...because there they swore both of them; by the living God, to keep the covenant inviolably they had made between them.¹³²

These wells are major achievements. *The New Bible Dictionary* mentions one well from this area which was 12¼ feet in diameter, the water was forty feet down, and the digging of the well involved going through 16 feet of solid rock. So when Abraham claims a well, it was after a great deal of work and the survival of his household and his herds depended upon these wells.

Barnes: Abraham takes occasion to remonstrate with Abimelek about a well which his people had seized. Wells were extremely valuable in Palestine, on account of the long absence of rain between the latter or vernal rain ending in March, and the early or autumnal rain beginning in November. The digging of a well was therefore a matter of the greatest moment, and often gave a certain title to the adjacent fields. Hence, the many disputes about wells, as the neighboring Emirs or chieftains were jealous of rights so acquired, and often sought to enter by the strong hand on the labors of patient industry. Hence, Abraham lays more stress on a public attestation that he has dug, and is therefore the owner of this well, than on all the rest of the treaty. Seven is the number of sanctity, and therefore of obligation. This number is accordingly figured in some part of the form of confederation; in the present case, in the seven ewe-lambs which Abraham tenders, and Abimelek, in token of consent, accepts at his hand. The name of the well is remarkable as an instance of the various meanings attached to nearly the same sound. Even in Hebrew it means the well of seven, or the well of the oath, as the roots of seven, and of the verb meaning to swear, have the same radical letters. Bir es-Seba means "the well of seven or of the lion."¹³³

Ellicott describes the wells: Robinson found the exact site in the Wady-es-Seba, with its name still preserved as Bir-es-Seba. There are there two wells of solid construction, the first twelve and a half feet in diameter; the other, situated about 200 yards to the south, much smaller, being only five feet in diameter. Both are lined with solid masonry, and reach down to never-failing springs in the rock. Around are stone troughs for watering the cattle, and the parapet of the larger well is worn into deep indentations, by the ropes used in drawing the water.¹³⁴

Matthew Henry: [Abraham and Abimelech] ratified the covenant by an oath, and registered it by giving a new name to the place (Genesis 21:31), Beer-sheba, the well of the oath, in remembrance of the covenant they swore to, that they might be ever mindful of it; or the well of seven, in remembrance of the seven lambs given to Abimelech, as a consideration for his confirming Abraham's title to that well.¹³⁵

A Review of Genesis 21:22–31:

Now, let's look back and review, and then tie things together:

Genesis 21:22–23 And it came to pass, during this same time period, that Abimelech, Ochozath his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in all the you do. Now, therefore, you will swear to me by your God, right here that you will not lie to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. Instead, you

¹³² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:31. Gill also references ארקי "vocatus", V. L. Calvin, Piscator. The Hebrew word here is neither *beer* or *sheba*. This is the Hebrew word *to name, to call*.

¹³³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:25–26. This is how it is marked in my e-sword version; however, this should have been Genesis 21:25–31.

¹³⁴ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/ebc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014. Ellicott cites Finn, *Bye-ways in Palestine*, p. 190.

¹³⁵ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:22–32.

will act toward me as graciously as I have acted with you and with regards to the land where you now temporarily reside.”

Abimelech, the king of Gerar, recognized that Abraham had a relationship with God, and that he desired blessing by association for himself, his family and his kingdom. They had met before when Abraham had lied to him about his wife Sarah, claiming that she was his sister (making it appear as if she was fair game). Abimelech took her as his wife and God came to Abimelech and warned him that, she was Abraham’s wife and that if he did not release her to Abraham, God would kill him and his family. This put the fear of God into Abimelech and to his state cabinet, and he straightened out things right away.

At the same time, he developed a relationship with Abraham and allowed Abraham to live on his land.

Here he comes to Abraham to make a treaty, where Abraham would mutually agree to treat one another honestly and graciously, and for that to continue. Abraham would be allowed, therefore, to continue to live on this land. Although Abimelech apparently is looking in on his tenants and renewing leases with them, as well as picking up the rents due, his agreement with Abraham is more personal than that.

This is one of the many times that the promise of Genesis 12:1–3 was fulfilled: Jehovah said to Abram, “Leave your land and your family and your father’s home, and go to the land I will show you. Then I will make you into a great people and I will bless you; and I could make your reputation in that land great. Therefore, be a blessing to all you meet. Consequently, I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. Furthermore, all mankind will be blessed because of you.”

Abraham bound himself to an oath with Abimelech—an oath of mutual allegiance.

Genesis 21:24–25 And Abraham said, “I bind myself with this oath.” Then Abraham complained to Abraham about the water well which army personnel of Abimelech’s army had taken violently from Abraham.

Abraham agreed, but then complained about the disagreement that he had had with men from Abimelech’s army.

Genesis 21:26 Abimelech replied, “I did not know until today who had done this thing; and, you know, you have not informed me of this until today.”

From all we have seen, Abimelech appears to be an honorable man, so claiming ignorance here was likely the truth.

Genesis 21:27–29 Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and he gave them to Abimelech. Then the two of them entered into a pact. Then Abraham set apart seven ewe-lambs by themselves. So Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why did you set these seven ewe lambs by themselves?”

Abraham sets aside sheep and oxen as a part of this contract, but then sets aside 7 ewe lambs as well. Abimelech is confused by this. That is because they were not a part of the contract that they had agreed upon.

Genesis 21:30–31 And he replied, “Here’s why: you will take these seven lambs from me in order to establish that I dug this well.” For this reason, Abraham named that place Beer-sheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

Abraham wants these lambs to be a witness to his complete control of the well that his men dug.

Recall that Abimelech is the political leader of his city—one of the great Philistine cities of that era; and Phicol is his general. And yet, they come to Abraham, who lives on the land, but does not own any of it (apart from a burial plot which he will purchase in Genesis 23)—a man whom God has greatly blessed. These Philistines recognize the spiritual power of Abraham. They recognize that he is related to God. These are two (or three¹³⁶) very powerful men of that era; great celebrities of that era. Yet they go to Abraham, not because they are afraid of him or because they think Abraham might rise up against them, but they go to Abraham in order to further bind themselves to the God of Abraham by association with Abraham; by a treaty with Abraham. Blessing by association.

How did Abimelech know this? He was able to view with his own eyes the prosperity of Abraham. But also, because of Genesis 20:6–7 *And God said to Abimelech in a dream, "I too know that you did this with the innocence of your heart, and I too have withheld you from sinning to Me; therefore, I did not let you touch Abraham's wife [whom Abimelech had taken to himself]. And now, return the man's wife, because he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live; but if you do not return her, know that you will surely die, you and all that is yours."* And you will recall that had a very powerful effect, not only upon Abimelech, but upon his state department as well. *And Abimelech arose early in the morning, and he summoned all his servants, and he spoke all these words in their ears; and the men were very frightened* (Genesis 20:8; JPCT). So Abimelech understood that Abraham was God's man; and that Abimelech preserved and even prospered his own people based upon his relationship with Abraham.

So far, all of this is review, but let's tie these narratives together.

Let's go back to Hagar and Ishmael. They would have moved about with Abraham's compound for a period of perhaps 20 years (Ishmael for his entire life, which was probably around 17 years at this time). Therefore, they knew Beersheba. Abraham had taken his flock to Beersheba, which meant his entire compound would have moved there. He is not living there at the same time that Hagar goes there—that is, these are not incidents which occur within a month or two of each other. The one we are studying probably occurs after the first half of the narrative about Hagar. However, the human author speaks of Hagar and Ishmael going to Beersheba, so this human author explains why they took that route (they were familiar with the area); and how this place got its name (which is the narrative we are studying now).

Since Abimelech speaks to Abraham about having an honest agreement, we can reasonably assume that this contract agreement occurs after Abraham had lied to Abimelech about Sarah.

There is a certain logic to the order of these narratives (the birth of Isaac, the separation of Hagar and Ishmael, the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech).

Why aren't these narratives in exact chronological order? That would be because God the Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of this passage. First, we must have Hagar and Ishmael reject Isaac; and then God turns toward the gentiles with positive volition. So, what these two narratives represent come in the order that this passage is written; however, the way that this passage is written is not chronological. The second narrative explains (1) why Hagar chose that route (she was familiar with it) and (2) where the name Beersheba came from. So the second narrative is added by the human author in order to explain the first.

However, the 4 narratives of Genesis 21–22 do find their parallels in the New Testament; and in the New Testament, the incidents they parallel are in chronological order.

Let's sum up these parallels:

¹³⁶ The third name is in the Greek text, but not in the Hebrew.

The Parallels from Genesis 21–22 to the Ministry of our Lord	
Genesis 21–22	The Ministry of Jesus
Isaac’s unique birth.	Our Lord’s unique birth.
Those with a relationship to Abraham reject the uniquely-born son.	Those descended from Abraham reject the uniquely-born Son. Matthew 8:34 12:22–28 Luke 11:15
Those who reject Abraham uniquely-born son are cast out into the desert. Genesis 21:8–16	Those who reject God’s uniquely-born Son are cast out of the Kingdom of God because they reject the offer of the King. Matthew 10:14–15 11:20–24 Luke 10:13–15
Those who are not related to Abraham who desire a relationship with God through Abraham are granted this request. Genesis 21:22–32	Those who are not related to Abraham who desire a relationship with God through Jesus are granted this request.
The planting of the tamarisk tree suggests that Abraham would spend some time among the gentiles with whom he had developed a relationship. Genesis 21:33	When Jesus first sent out His disciples, they were only to go to the lost sheep of Israel and not to the Gentiles or to the Samaritans (Matthew 10:5–8). However, this changed after Jesus was soundly rejected by the Jews. Then Jesus went among the gentiles and sent his disciples to them as well. Matthew 12:14–24 Luke 9:52 10:33 17:16 John 4:39–40 Acts 9:15
Abraham the father offers as a sacrifice Isaac, his uniquely-born son. Genesis 22	God the Father offers as a sacrifice His uniquely-born Son.
The rejection of Jesus by His Own people is quite significant in the gospels and results with a new approach by our Lord. This was later echoed in the ministry of the apostle Paul in Acts 18:5–6 13:46–47.	
Insofar as I know, nowhere else can you find these parallels. Luckily, during the time that I was studying and writing about Genesis, my pastor Bobby Thieme is covering the Life of Jesus Christ in church, so that these parallels became apparent.	
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

<p>And so they cut a covenant in Beer-sheba. And so rise up Abimelech [and Ochozath his friend] and Phicol a chief of his army and so they return unto a land of Philistines.</p>	<p>Genesis 21:32</p>	<p>After they made a covenant in Beersheba, Abimelech, [Ochozath his friend,] and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and they returned to the land of the Philistines.</p>
<p>After they made a covenant in Beersheba, Abimelech, his friend Ochozath and the commander of his army, Phichol, arose and they returned to the land of the Philistines.</p>		

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so they cut a covenant in Beer-sheba. And so rise up Abimelech [and Ochozath his friend] and Phichol a chief of his army and so they return unto a land of Philistines.
Targum of Onkelos	And they struck a covenant at the Well of the Seven Lambs. And Abimelek and Phikol the Chief of his host arose and returned to the land of the Philistae.

Latin Vulgate	And they made a league for the well of oath. And Abimelech and Phicol, the general of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Palestines.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba; then Abimeleck and Phichol, the general of the army, rose up and returned to the land of the Philistines.
Septuagint (Greek)	And they made a covenant at the Well of the Oath. And there rose up Abimelech, Ochozath his friend, and Phichol the commander-in-chief of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	After they drew up a treaty [Or covenant] at Beer-sheba, Abimelech, and Phicol commander of his forces, returned to the land of the Philistines.
Contemporary English V.	When the treaty was completed, Abimelech and his army commander Phicol went back to the land of the Philistines.
Easy English	So Abimelech and Abraham had made a *covenant at Beersheba. After that Abimelech and Phicol, the head of Abimelech's army, stood up. And they went back to that country where the *Philistines lived.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and his military commander went back to the country of the Philistines.
Good News Bible (TEV)	After they had made this agreement at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol went back to Philistia.
<i>The Message</i>	After they had made the covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech and his commander, Phicol, left and went back to Philistine territory.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...and made their treaty. So AbiMelech, his trusted friend OchoZath, and Pichol (the head of his army) got up and returned [home] to the land of the Philistines.
Christian Community Bible	After making the treaty at Beersheba, Abimelech went away with Phicol, the commander of his army, and returned to the land of the Philistines.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	After they made the treaty at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, left and went back to the land of the Philistines.
International Standard V	So after they had made a covenant in Beer-sheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, left and returned to Philistine territory.
New American Bible	When they had thus made the covenant in Beer-sheba, Abimelech, along with Phicol, the commander of his army, left to return to the land of the Philistines. [The name] <i>Philistines</i> [refers to] one of the Sea Peoples, who migrated from Mycenaean Greece around 1200 B.C. and settled on the coastland of Canaan, becoming a principal rival of Israel. Non-biblical texts do not use the term "Philistine" before ca. 1200 B.C.; it is probable that this usage and those in chap. 26 are anachronistic, perhaps applying a later ethnic term for an earlier, less-known one.
NIRV	After the peace treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech went back to the land of the Philistines. His army commander Phicol went with him.
Revised English Bible	When they had made the pact at Beersheba, Abimelech departed with Phicol the commander of his army and returned to the country of the Philistines.
Today's NIV	After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	They cut the covenant in Beersheba. Abimelech and Phichol, the leader of his host, rose and returned to the land of Palestine (Gaza Strip).
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Bible in Basic English	So they made an agreement at Beer-sheba, and Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of his army, went back to the land of the Philistines.
Conservapedia	In that manner they made a covenant at Beer-sheba. Then Abimelech got up, along with Phichol his commander-in-chief, and they returned to the country of the Avvites. The modern Gaza Strip, classically known as "Philistia" and later as "Palestine." The Avvites occupied the Strip first, and then a "Caphthorite" (Mycenaeans, and most likely Cretan) expedition displaced them and lived there instead. The name of Philistines actually means "The Immigrants." Likely, both the Avvites and the later Caphthorites were invaders from the Greek islands. In Hebrew תְּשִׁילִי (philisth), means "invasion, incursion, inroad, overrun," etc. Thus "Philistine" means simply "Immigrant" and is not a true native name.
The Expanded Bible	After Abraham and Abimelech made the agreement [cut a covenant/treaty] at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, went back to the land of the Philistines [a region on the southern Mediterranean coast of Canaan]..
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and he entered into a treaty at the Well of the Oath, with both Abimelek and Pikol, the commander of his army. Then they returned to the land of the Philistines.
New Advent Bible	And they made a league for the well of oath. And Abimelech and Phicol, the general of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Palestines. The New Advent Bible, like many Bibles, is slightly out-of-synch with the KJV, so the verses are misaligned. This is v. 32–33a in the Latin and in the New Advent Bible.
NET Bible®	So they made a treaty [Heb "cut a covenant."] at Beer Sheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, returned [Heb "arose and returned."] to the land of the Philistines. The Philistines mentioned here may not be ethnically related to those who lived in Palestine in the time of the judges and the united monarchy. See D. M. Howard, "Philistines," Peoples of the Old Testament World, 238.
NIV, ©2011	After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	When they made the covenant at Be'er-Sheva, Avimelekh departed with Pikhoh the commander of his army and returned to the land of the P'lishtim.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and they cut a covenant at Beer Sheba: then Abi Melech and Pichol the governor of his host rise and return to the land of the Peleshethiy.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And they formed a covenant in Beer-sheba, and Abimelech and Phicol his general arose, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.
Kaplan Translation	They thus made a treaty in Beer-sheba. Abimelekh and his general Pikhoh then left, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And contracting are they a covenant in Beer-sheba. And rising is Abimelech and Ahuzzath, his associate, and Phicol, the chief of his host, and returning are they to the land of the Philistines.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And when they had solemnised a covenant in Beer-sheba,—then arose Abimelech, with Phicol chief of his host, and returned unto the land of the Philistines.
English Standard Version	So they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army rose up and returned to the land of the Philistines.
Fred Miller's Revised KJV	Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up and Phichol the chief captain of his host and they returned into the land of the Philistines.
Green's Literal Translation	And they cut a covenant in Beer-sheba. And Abimelech and Phicol, the general of his army, rose up; and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

Kretzmann's Commentary	Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech rose up and Phicol, the chief captain of his host, and they returned in to the land of the Philistines, that is, to Philistia proper, which was along the Mediterranean Sea.
Syndein	Thus they kept on cutting/making a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the chief commander/general of his army/host, and they kept on returning into the land of the Philistines.
World English Bible	So they made a covenant at Beersheba. Abimelech rose up with Phicol, the captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.
Young's Updated LT	And they make a covenant in Beer-Sheba, and Abimelech rises—Phicol also, head of his host—and they turn back unto the land of the Philistines.

The gist of this verse: After the treaty had been made, Abimelech and Phicol return to the land of the Philistines.

Genesis 21:32a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kârath (תָּרַח) [pronounced kaw-RAHTH]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
b ^e rîyth (תִּיְרָב) [pronounced b ^e reeth]	<i>covenant; pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, contract</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
B ^e êr Shâba' (בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced b ^e ayr SHAW ^b -vahg']	<i>well of the oath [seven] and is transliterated Beersheba, Beer-sheba</i>	proper noun; location; pausal form	Strong's #884 BDB #92

Translation: After they made a covenant in Beersheba,...

All three men came to an agreement in Beersheba. This indicates that Abimelech and his entourage came to Abraham and held court in his tent (or out under the tree). Their standard lease agreement was renewed, but with an addendum covering the control and ownership of the wells that Abraham's men dug—with 7 ewe-lambs as a witness.

In a previous chapter, 3 men came to Abraham, and he made them a great meal. It is reasonable to suppose that Abraham did the same for these 3 men. It is possible that, not only did Abraham give his testimony concerning the well, but that they actually went to the well to see it. So, there is a lot in this story which possibly occurred, but was never recorded.

No doubt, the commander of the army, Phicol, was called upon to testify, but his testimony is not preserved for us either.

Barnes points out: *In the transactions with Hagar and with Abimelek, the name God is employed, because the relation of the Supreme Being with these parties is more general or less intimate than with the heir of promise. The same name, however, is used in reference to Abraham and Sarah, who*

*stand in a twofold relation to him as the Eternal Potentate, and the Author of being and blessing. Hence, the chapter begins and ends with Yahweh, the proper name of God in communion with man.*¹³⁷

In all cases, the God of Abraham is also the God of Hagar and the God of Abimelech. However, it is Abraham with whom God has established an eternal, covenantal relationship. Hagar and Abimelech are peripheral parties to this relationship. They believe in this Revealed God of the Covenant; but the primary covenant is established with Abraham. In many respects, Abraham acts as the intermediary, and, in this office, he represents Jesus Christ, the true intermediary between God and man. Abraham is the type; Jesus Christ is the antitype.

Abraham, Abimelech and the Abimelech’s 4-star general, Phicol, all come to an agreement here.

What has happened is, Abraham was treated unjustly by some high-ranking official Philistines—probably members of Phicol’s army, who were supposed to patrol the area and keep it protected, and to take note of any new people settling on their land. They essentially stole a well from Abraham and are using it themselves. Abraham does not even go to Gerar and track down Abimelech to lodge a complain; Abimelech comes to him. God, for all intents and purposes, brings Abimelech to Abraham, to settle this problem, even though Abimelech does not realize that is, in part, why he is going to see Abraham. He has a completely different agenda. But God uses all of this to Abraham’s advantage to gain some lawful justice for Abraham.

As discussed in a previous lesson, Abimelech is a believer. This is why God has appeared to him. Furthermore, many of those in his cabinet (if not all of them) are believers. He goes to Abraham, knowing that Abraham has a special relationship with the True God. His covenant with Abraham will insure a proper relationship with God, as well as peace through Abraham with God. In fact, the emphasis of this narrative is upon the relationship between Abraham and Abimelech, because of Abraham’s relationship with God. We do not know if that was foremost on Abimelech’s mind, but it was apparently a part of his agenda. I have assumed, throughout this narrative, that a part of what is taking place is the renewal of a lease agreement—which is suggested, but not clearly specified in this chapter.

In any case, what takes place in this half of the chapter sets up a pattern. The Jews become priests for the world; and Israel will become a priest nation to the world. Abimelech, by establishing a relationship with Abraham, a priest to the Most High God, Abimelech has representation before God; and consideration from God. A priest represents man to God; a prophet represents God to man. So, by his relationship with Abraham, Abimelech has representation before the God of the Universe. For the next 2000 years, Israel will become the way that individuals establish a relationship with God by going through either individuals or through the nation Israel. There will be many times when individuals from Israel will go out and evangelize on behalf of their God as well.

Regarding Beersheba, Gill notes: *in Jerom’s time Beersheba was a large village, twenty miles from Hebron to the south.*¹³⁸

Genesis 21:32b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

¹³⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:32–34.

¹³⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:32. Gill cites De loc. Heb. fol. 89. F. Quite frankly, I don’t know what “de loc” is. **Word Sense** (accessed September 6, 2014) says that de + loc gives us the adverb deloc, which means (*not*) at all.

Genesis 21:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qûwm (קום) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
ʾĀbiymelek ^e (אבימלך) [pronounced u ^b -vee-MEH-lek]	<i>my father is Melek, my father is king; transliterated Abimelech</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #40 BDB #4
The LXX adds ...and Ochozath his friend,...			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Pîykôl (פיקול) [pronounced pee-KOLE]	<i>strong; the mouth of all; ruling all; and is transliteration Phichol, Phicol</i>	proper masculine singular noun	Strong's #6369 BDB #810
sar (שר) [pronounced sar]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
tsâbâ' (צבא) [pronounced tsaw ^b -VAW]	<i>army, war, or warfare</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6635 BDB #838

Translation: ...Abimelech, [Ochozath his friend,] and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose...

Again, the Septuagint (the Greek text) adds in *Ochozath, his friend*. It would seem reasonable for a third party to be brought in, to give his opinion on the matter.

Genesis 21:32c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שוב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'el (אל) [pronounced eh/]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Genesis 21:32c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	<i>land of sojourners [wanderers, temporary residents]; transliterated Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun); with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

Here, this is spelled P^elish^etîym (פְּלִשְׁתִּיִּם) [pronounced p^e-lish-TEEM].

Translation: ...and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

Although I cannot recall what Bob Thieme says about this, most of the commentators say that this is a different group of men, and not the Philistines that we are used to dealing with.

When Abimelech and Phicol (and their entourage) leave, they would have gone westward toward the Mediterranean Sea.

Genesis 21:32 After they made a covenant in Beersheba, Abimelech, [Ochozath his friend,] and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and they returned to the land of the Philistines. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:32 After they made a covenant in Beersheba, Abimelech, his friend Ochozath and the commander of his army, Phichol, arose and they returned to the land of the Philistines. (Kukis paraphrase)

Egyptian sources do not have the Philistines in the land of Palestine until the 12th century B.C., and this chapter is occurring 800 years previous. This gives us two options: (1) this is a different group of people by race; or (2) if this is the same group of people, then we simply do not have all of the records from Egypt, but that some of them have been lost to time. Not having records of a specific people living in a specific place at a specific time does not negate them living there.

This portion of Scripture has been thought by some to be in error. We recall the Philistines as being a sea people from 1200 B.C. The primary reason for doubting this reference is that there is no corroborating evidence that the Philistines lived in this land at this time. In fact, we do not know from whence they originated in secular history. For this reason, some scholars state unequivocally that they did not occupy the land of Canaan during Genesis 21. It is claimed that at best, this was added later by another author. However, lack of corroborating evidence is not enough reason to dismiss a clear passage of Scripture. Groups of people change and go through various transitions. Here, the Philistines appear to be generally speaking, on good terms with Abraham and there is no indication that they are a sea-faring people. However, they could have come with the early Aegean trade and migration. Historians for centuries doubted the historicity of the Hittites; they looked upon Sodom and Gomorrah as purely legendary and unhistorical. This did not make the Bible incorrect; eventually the Bible was vindicated for its accuracy in these two cases. So it will be with the Philistines. They are a real people who occupy the land with Abraham and they have a different relationship with Abraham than their ancestors will have with his ancestors later on in history.

We do have more references to the Philistines during the time of Samson, as an enemy of Israel. They are geographically located in the same place as we find them here; there are just more of them and they have become enemies of Israel (Judges 13–16). Time-wise and population-wise, this would make sense.

This is a very desirable plot of land, in this era (even today, it is). Therefore, it is hard to imagine that this would go for centuries on end without significant inhabitation. It would also make little sense for the Jews to be at constant war with a people who are not even there. It would also make little sense for the Jews to first conquer this land, and then for the Philistines to show up after the fact. The wars between the Jews and the Philistines which follow suggest that these are two very entrenched set of peoples.

Many people take the name of the place where they reside. I am thought to be a Texan or a Houstonian by some; and by some here, a Californian. However, I was not born in Texas or in California. Similarly, the people with whom Abraham is interacting here may or may not be related to the Philistines with whom Israel will engage in war with throughout many centuries. These people that Abraham has a covenant with may or may not have intermarried with the Philistine sea peoples, which are so described in the Egyptian documents. There may be a tie between them, and there may be no tie between them. The Philistines documented in Egyptian literature may have settled into this area and destroyed all the ancestors of Abimelech, Phicol and their people. However, because they all live in this land called *Palestine*, they are all called *Philistines*. The modern-day version of that title is *Palestinian*. The people who occupy Palestine today are probably not even remotely related to the Philistines of King David's era (those Philistines appear to have Greek roots). Nevertheless, they are given the same title (which names are transliterated into English from other ancient languages) because they live on the same plot of land. As far as I know, no one definitively knows the full story of the history of the Philistines from this point in time down to the time of David. The best history that has been recorded in in the Bible, and that has some very big gaps in it (from Genesis to Exodus, there is nearly a 400 year gap¹³⁹).

When Critics Ask takes on this question of the Philistines.

When Critics Ask, on the Philistines in Palestine in the era of Abraham

GENESIS 21:32, 34 —Did the Bible mistakenly place the Philistines in Palestine at the time of Abraham?

PROBLEM: The earliest allusion to Philistines by Palestinian or Egyptian sources is the twelfth century B.C., yet these verses place them in the area some 800 years earlier.

SOLUTION: This is not the first time critics have come to false conclusions based on the general lack of historical knowledge concerning this period. Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of cities the Bible mentioned that were supposedly not historical. When the Ebla tablets were discovered, the charge of myth was refuted. These tablets contained references to both cities. It may just be a matter of time before similar evidence turns up to confirm the biblical testimony here regarding the Philistines. Until then, we can rest assured that the biblical record is accurate in this case, having confidence in the Scriptures based on its past record of trustworthiness. Furthermore, the critics' argument is the traditional fallacious argument from ignorance. Simply because we lack evidence from extra-biblical sources of the earlier date for the Philistines does not mean they didn't exist then. It simply means we lack the information.

Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Genesis 21:32.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The *problem* with the Philistines is not really a problem.

Peter Pett on the Philistines

This passage contains the first mention of 'Philistines' as being in the land. Some have doubted this on the

¹³⁹ This particular time frame is also disputed. Some think this time frame to be around 200 years.

Peter Pett on the Philistines

grounds that the Philistines arrived later in 12th century BC in the wave of Sea Peoples invading among others the coasts of Lebanon, ancient Phoenicia, sweeping down through the coastal plains of Palestine (named after them) and troubling Egypt, where they are referred to as Prst.

It is, of course, true that in the sense of the Philistines as a ruling nation and a threat to others in Palestine, the 12th century BC is the commencement of their presence, but the peoples from whom they came were certainly evidenced in the Ancient Near East before that.

There is clear archaeological evidence of trade between Caphtor (home of the Philistines - see 10:14; Jeremiah 47:4; Amos 9:7) and the mainland around this time, including trade with Ugarit and Hazor, and also Egypt; and a tablet from Mari (18th century BC) records the sending of gifts from the king of Hazor to Kaptara (Caphtor). There is therefore nothing unlikely in a trading set up being established in Palestine around this time, on the trading route between Mesopotamia and Egypt, by people from Caphtor, whence came the Philistines (Jeremiah 47:4; Amos 9:7). They were a sea people.

"Philistines" may be a later modernisation of an archaic term for them originally found in the text, so that the reader could identify them, but as we do not know the origin of the name, it may easily have applied to a section of the people of Caphtor in the time of Abraham, some of whom came as peaceful traders to Palestine long before their later arrival. On the whole people only get mentioned in inscriptions when they have made their presence felt.

The reference in Genesis 21 to 'the land of the Philistines' may thus simply be an indication of the presence of a trading group from Caphtor who have established themselves there, not necessarily very numerous, but very noteworthy in that part of Canaan. It is possibly significant that Abimelech is called king of Gerar in 20:2 but king of the Philistines in 26:1, 8; suggesting either a later increase in the Philistine presence, or that Abraham did not know who they were until later, which would be evidence of the genuine ancient provenance of the accounts. (He first arrives in the region of Gerar and meets an unknown people, he later learns that the area is called by many 'the land of the Philistines', he then discovers that it is Philistines with whom he has been dealing at Gerar, and all this is discovered between the recording of the different covenants).

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 7, 2014.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Gill has the original Philistines as coming out of Egypt.¹⁴⁰ I don't know what he bases this on.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Abraham Dwells in the Land of the Philistines

And so he plants a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and so he calls there in a name of Y^howah 'Êl Everlasting.

Genesis
21:33

Then Abraham [lit., he] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Y^howah 'Êl Everlasting.

Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Jehovah the Eternal God.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

¹⁴⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:32.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he plants a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and so he calls there in a name of Y ^e howah 'Él Everlasting.
Targum of Onkelos	And he planted a garden, (lit., "a paradise,") at the Well of the Seven Lambs, and prepared in the midst of it food and drink for them who passed by and who returned; and he preached to them there, Confess you, and believe in the Name of the Word of the Lord, the everlasting God.
Jerusalem targum	And Abraham planted a <u>paradise in Beer Sheba, and prepared in the midst of it food and drink for those who arrived at the border; and they ate and drank, and sought to give him the price of what they had eaten and drunk, but he willed not to receive it from them; but our father Abraham discoursed to them of that which he had said, that the world was by His word. Pray before your Father who is in heaven, from whose bounty ye have eaten and drunk. And they stirred not from their place until the time when he had made them proselytes, and had taught them the way everlasting. And Abraham praised and prayed there in the name of the word of the Lord, the God of Eternity.</u>
Latin Vulgate	But Abraham planted a <u>grove</u> in Bersabee, and there called upon the name of the Lord God eternal.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham planted a <u>grove</u> in Beer-sheba and called there on the name of the LORD Everlasting.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham planted a <u>field</u> at the Well of the Oath, and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.
Significant differences:	Although the translation <i>tamarisk tree</i> in the Hebrew sounds a lot different than planting a <i>grove</i> (Latin and Syriac), these are both legitimate translations for the Hebrew. The targums both go crazy-excessive in this verse.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and he worshipped there in the name of the Lord, El Olam [Or the eternal God].
Contemporary English V.	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and worshiped the eternal LORD God.
Easy English	Abraham planted a tamarisk (a kind of tree) in Beersheba. And he prayed to the *Lord, the God who is always the same.
Easy-to-Read Version	Abraham planted a special tree at Beersheba. At that place, Abraham prayed to the Lord, the God who lives forever.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and worshiped the LORD, the Everlasting God.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and worshiped GOD there, praying to the Eternal God.
New Century Version	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba and prayed to the Lord, the God who lives forever.
New Life Bible	Abraham planted a tree at Beersheba. He called there on the name of the Lord, the God Who lives forever.
New Living Translation	Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he worshiped the Lord, the Eternal God [Hebrew El-Olam.].

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then AbraHam planted a field at The Well of the Oath, and started calling on the Name of the God of the ages, Jehovah.
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God's Word™	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba and worshiped the LORD, the Everlasting God, there.
International Standard V	Abraham [Lit. <i>He</i>] planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD God Everlasting.
New American Bible	Abraham planted a tamarisk at Beer-sheba, and there he invoked by name the LORD, God the Eternal. God the Eternal: in Hebrew, 'el `olam, perhaps the name of the deity of the pre-Israelite sanctuary at Beer-sheba, but used by Abraham as a title of God; cf. Is 40:28.
New Jerusalem Bible	And Abraham planted a tamarisk at Beersheba and there he invoked the name of Yahweh.
Revised English Bible	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he invoked the LORD, the Everlasting God, by name.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He planted a tamarisk in Beersheba, and there called on the name of Yahweh God forever.
Bible in Basic English	And Abraham, after planting a holy tree in Beer-sheba, gave worship to the name of the Lord, the Eternal God.
Bullinger Bible	And <i>Abraham</i> planted a – grove [of trees] in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, – the everlasting God.
Conservapedia	Abraham planted a stand of tamarisk in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. The tamarisk, or salt cedar (<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>), commonly grows in thick stands on riverbanks. It is native to Eurasia and the Middle East but was introduced to the American Southwest near the year 1900.
The Expanded Bible	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba and prayed to the Lord, the ·God who lives forever [eternal God].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	They also planted tamarisk trees by the Well of the Oath, and called there on the name of the EVER-LIVING ETERNAL GOD.
New Advent Bible	But Abraham planted a grove in Bersabee, and there called upon the name of the Lord God eternal.
NET Bible®	Abraham [Heb "and he"; the referent (Abraham) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] planted a tamarisk tree [The planting of the tamarisk tree is a sign of Abraham's intent to stay there for a long time, not a religious act. A growing tree in the Negev would be a lasting witness to God's provision of water.] in Beer Sheba. There he worshiped the LORD [Heb "he called there in the name of the Lord." The expression refers to worshiping the Lord through prayer and sacrifice (see Gen 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 26:25). See G. J. Wenham, <i>Genesis (WBC)</i> , 1:116, 281.], the eternal God.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And he plants a grove in Beer Sheba and calls on the name of Yah Veh, the eternal El:
Kaplan Translation	[Abraham] planted a tamarisk [Eshel in Hebrew (see Ibn Janach; Radak, <i>Sherashim</i>). Also see 1 Samuel 22:6, 31:13. The Targum also renders it as a tree. The tamarisk is a wide tree of the <i>Tamarix</i> family, with small leaves like a cypress. Some identify it with the shittim wood used in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:5; cf. <i>Bereshith Rabbah</i> 94; <i>Tanchuma. Terumah</i> 9). In the Talmud, however, the eshel is identified as an orchard or an inn for wayfarers (<i>Sotah</i> 10a; <i>Rashi</i>).] tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called in the name of God, Lord of the Universe [Or 'Eternal Lord.'].]

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.
Concordant Literal Version	And planting is Abraham a tamarisk in Beer-sheba, and is calling there on the name of Yahweh, the El eonian.
Darby Translation	And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the Eternal God.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And Abraam planted a field at the well of the oath, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.
Syndein	And Abraham kept on planting a grove in Beersheba, and kept on calling there on the name of Jehovah/God, the everlasting 'El/God.
World English Bible	Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God.
Young's Updated LT	And Abraham plants a tamarisk in Beer-Sheba, and preaches there in the name of Jehovah, God age-during.

The gist of this verse: Abraham plants a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and then begins to proclaim the name of Y^ehowah Elohim, the Everlasting God.

Genesis 21:33a

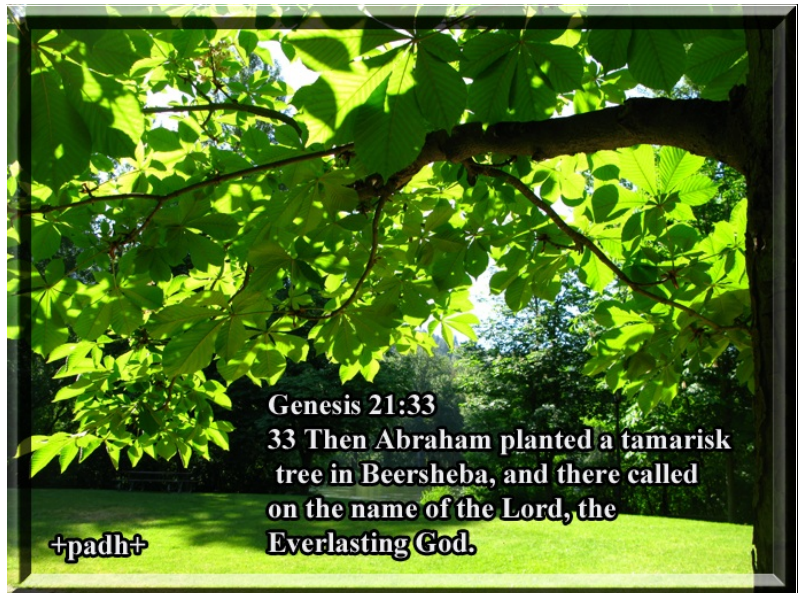
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâṭa' (נָטַע) [pronounced <i>naw-TAHG</i>]	<i>to set upright; to plant; to place; to fix, to fasten [with a nail]; to pitch [a tent], to set up; figuratively to establish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5193 BDB #642
'êshel (אֶשֶׁל) [pronounced <i>AY-she</i>]	<i>tamarisk tree, tree; trees, grove</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #815 BDB #79
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: <i>The original word eshel, has been variously translated a grove, a plantation, an orchard, a cultivated field, and an oak; but it may denote a kind of tamarisk, as it is rendered by Gesenius.</i> ¹⁴¹			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
B ^e êr Shâba' (בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>b^eayr SHAW^B-vahg</i>]	<i>well of the oath [seven] and is transliterated Beersheba, Beer-sheba</i>	proper noun; location; pausal form	Strong's #884 BDB #92

¹⁴¹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 21:33.

Translation: Then Abraham [lit., he] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba...

People plant trees because they intend on staying there for a long time. When someone rents a property and plans to stay there for 1 or 2 years, they rarely plant trees. They will even mow down volunteer trees which could come to look quite nice. They will never see the tree grow to any height; and, therefore, planting a tree seems unimportant to them (as a tenant, I often planted trees where I lived). However, Abraham plans on staying in this spot for a great deal of time.

Adam Clarke: *The original word $\kappa\omega\lambda$ eshel has been variously translated a grove, a plantation, an orchard, a cultivated field, and an oak. From this word, says Mr. Parkhurst, may be derived the name of the famous asylum, opened by Romulus between two groves of oaks at Rome; ($\mu\epsilon\theta\omicron\rho\iota\omicron\nu\ \delta\upsilon\omicron\iota\nu\ \delta\rho\upsilon\mu\omega\varsigma$, Dionys. Hal., lib. ii. c. 16).*¹⁴²



Genesis 21:33 (graphic). Taken from [P.A.D.H. Photography](#); accessed September 10, 2014.

Clarke on the early worship of man: *In the first ages of the world the worship of God was exceedingly simple; there were no temples nor covered edifices of any kind; an altar, sometimes a single stone, sometimes consisting of several, and at other times merely of turf, was all that was necessary; on this the fire was lighted and the sacrifice offered. Any place was equally proper, as they knew that the object of their worship filled the heavens and the earth. In process of time when families increased, and many sacrifices were to be offered, groves or shady places were chosen, where the worshippers might enjoy the protection of the shade, as a considerable time must be employed in offering many sacrifices. These groves became afterwards abused to impure and idolatrous purposes, and were therefore strictly forbidden. See Exodus 34:13; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 16:21.*¹⁴³

Gill on the grove planted by Abraham: *The Jewish writers (w) are divided about the use of this grove, as Jarchi relates; one says it was for a paradise or orchard, to produce fruits out of it for travellers and for entertainment; another says it was for an inn to entertain strangers in; it rather was for a shade, to shelter from the sun in those sultry and hot countries; and perhaps for a religious use, and to be an oratory, as the following words seem to suggest: in the midst of it very likely Abraham built an altar, and sacrificed to the Lord; hence might come the superstitious use of groves among the Heathens; and, when they came to be abused to idolatrous purposes, they were forbidden by the law of Moses, which before were lawful.*¹⁴⁴

Where Abraham was before, he was near Sodom and Gomorrah; and Abraham was a witness for God before these people. However, their degeneracy became such a problem that God destroyed these cities. Therefore, there would be little done in the way of trading in that area, because one of the greatest populated areas was no more. So, Abraham decided simply to move elsewhere, which is how he ends up in Philistine territory (he moved closer to the Mediterranean Sea). In discussing this, the Bible is never clear as to Abraham's motivation for

¹⁴² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33.

¹⁴³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33.

¹⁴⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33. He references In T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.

moving; but trade and sadness about Lot and the burning heap Sodom and Gomorrah could have all been contributing factors.

Genesis 21:33b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
When this is followed by the bêyth preposition, and then the name of God (in whatever form), it means <i>to celebrate, to praise God; to implore His aid</i> . ¹⁴⁵ Let me suggest that the speaker is doing both the work of an evangelist and of a teacher when this phrasing is found.			
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'Êl (אֵל) [pronounced <i>ALE</i>]	<i>God, god, mighty one, strong, hero; transliterated <i>EI</i></i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #410 BDB #42
'ôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced <i>ô-LAWM</i>]	<i>properly what is hidden [time]; of [in] times past, from ancient time, old, antiquity, long duration, everlasting, eternal, forever, perpetuity; for future time, futurity; of the world, worldly</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Translation: ...and there he proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah 'Êl Everlasting.

Periodically, throughout Abraham's life, the Bible reveals that he called upon God's name. The Bible certainly does not reveal every instance in which this was done; however, it speaks of this many of the times. Abraham believed God and God was as real to him as Isaac and Sarah.

¹⁴⁵ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 740.

The following doctrine needs to be expanded upon.

Dr. Shuckford on, Calling on the Name of the LORD

*“Our English translation very erroneously renders this place, he called upon the name of Jehovah; but the expression **קרא בשם אלהים** kara beshem never signifies to call upon the name; **קרא שם אלהים** kara shem would signify to invoke or call upon the name, or **קרא אל שם אלהים** kara el shem would signify to cry unto the name; but **קרא בשם אלהים** kara beshem signifies to invoke In the name, and seems to be used where the true worshippers of God offered their prayers in the name of the true Mediator, or where the idolaters offered their prayers in the name of false ones, 1Kings 18:26; for as the true worshippers had but one God and one Lord, so the false worshippers had gods many and lords many, 1Corinthians 8:5. We have several instances of **קרא** kara, and a noun after it, sometimes with and sometimes without the particle **אל** el, and then it signifies to call upon the person there mentioned; thus, **קרא יהוה** kara Yehovah is to call upon the Lord, Psalm 14:4; Psalm 17:6; Psalm 31:17; Psalm 53:4; Psalm 118:5, etc.; and **קרא אל יהוה** kara el Yehovah imports the same, 1Samuel 12:17; Jonah 1:6, etc.; but **קרא בשם אלהים** kara beshem is either to name By the name, Genesis 4:17; Num. 32:42; Psalm 49:11; Isaiah 43:7; or to invoke In the name, when it is used as an expression of religious worship.”*

From Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33. He takes this from Connex. vol. i., p. 293.

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Clark on the phrase *the Everlasting God*: *The everlasting God, in the Hebrew, is **אלהים אלהים** (Yehovah el olam), or “Jehovah, the Strong God, the Eternal One.” This is the first place in Scripture in which **אלהים אלהים** olam occurs as an attribute of God, and here it is evidently designed to point out his eternal duration; that it can mean no limited time is self-evident, because nothing of this kind can be attributed to God. The Septuagint render the words **Θεος αἰωνιος**, which translates to “the ever-existing God.” ... There he invoked the name of the Lord, the eternal God... From this application of both the Hebrew and Greek words we learn that **אלהים אלהים** olam and **αἰων** aion originally signified “Eternal, or duration without end.” **אלהים אלהים** alam signifies “he was hidden, concealed, or kept secret;” and **αἰων**... is compounded of **αἰ**, “always,” and **ων**, “being” ... God [is called this]... because He was always existing... Hence we see that no words can more forcibly express the grand characteristics of eternity than these. It is that duration which is concealed, hidden, or kept secret from all created beings; which is always existing, still running On but never running Out; an interminable, incessant, and immeasurable duration; it is That, in the whole of which God alone can be said to exist, and that which the eternal mind can alone comprehend... forms and appearances of created things may change, but the counsels and purposes of God relative to them are permanent and eternal, and none of them can be frustrated; hence the words, when applied to things which from their nature must have a limited duration, are properly to be understood in this sense, because those things, though temporal in themselves, shadow forth things that are eternal.¹⁴⁶*

Gen 21:33 uses the phrase and title, *the Everlasting God*.

Scofield on, the Everlasting God

- (1) The Hebrew "Olam" is used in Scripture:
 - (a) of secret or hidden things (for example (Leviticus 5:2) "hidden"; (2Kings 4:27); "hid"; (Psalm 10:1); "hidest");
 - (b) an indefinite time or age (Leviticus 25:32); "at any time"; (Joshua 24:2) "in old time"). Hence the word is used to express the eternal duration of the being of God, (Psalm 90:2). "From everlasting to everlasting"), and is the Hebrew synonym of the Greek "aion," meaning "age" or "dispensation".
- (2) The ideas therefore of things kept secret and of indefinite duration combine in this word. Both ideas

¹⁴⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33 (edited).

Scofield on, the Everlasting God

inhere in the doctrine of the dispensations or ages. They are among the "mysteries" of God (Ephesians 1:9 Ephesians 1:10 Ephesians 3:2–6 Matthew 13:11). The "everlasting" God (El Olam) is therefore that name of Deity in virtue of which He is the God whose wisdom has divided all time and eternity into the mystery of successive ages or dispensations. It is not merely that He is everlasting, but that He is God over everlasting things.

C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33.

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Gill: *...and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God; who, is from everlasting to everlasting, or "the God of the world" (z), the Creator and Upholder of it, and the Preserver of all creatures in it; Him Abraham invoked in this place, prayed unto Him, and gave Him thanks for all the mercies he had received from Him.*¹⁴⁷

This last phrase reads: *...and there he proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah 'Él Everlasting*. We have come across this phrase many times. On the surface, it may sound as if Abraham stands outside and calls out God's name, until he gets hoarse or breaks for lunch. However, this would be both crazy and unproductive. Do you recall a single instance where Abraham is calling out for God (using this terminology), and God says, "Here I am"? That would be a legitimate translation and interpretation, but, again, such action would be crazy and unproductive.

What we have here is the Qal imperfect of the verb *qârâ'* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*], which means *to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name* [when followed by a lamed]. When this verb is followed by the *bêyth* preposition (as we find here), followed by the name of God (in whatever form), it means *to celebrate, to praise God; to implore His aid*.¹⁴⁸ Strong's #7121 BDB #894.

Let me suggest that the speaker is doing both the work of an evangelist and of a teacher when this phrasing is found. Literally, this reads: *...and there he proclaimed the name* [= *reputation, character essence*] *of Y^ehowah 'Él Everlasting*. Abraham is not out there yelling, "God, God, where are you? I want to talk with you." He is out there teaching the Word of God; teaching the values of God; he is teaching divine viewpoint. The word name is *shêm* (שֵׁם) [pronounced *shame*], and it does mean *name*, but it also means *reputation, character, essence*. Strong's #8034 BDB #1027.

Therefore, Abraham is speaking about the reputation and character of God. He is speaking about God the Eternal One. He has both his own experiences and, if you will recall, Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek a few chapters back, and we discussed then, why did Abraham pay tithes to Melchizedek? Abraham, at that point in time, had spoken with God face to face three times (if memory serves) and he had just defeated the greatest military power of his day with 318 men (again, I am giving these numbers from memory). So, why would Abraham treat Melchizedek with such respect? I suggest that, Melchizedek began speaking to Abraham the first few chapters of Genesis (or Job), and Abraham recognized this as the truth of God. I also suggested that this was a spiritual handoff, that Melchizedek had the Word of God and he gave the Word of God to Abraham. Furthermore, I don't think it had to be in written form, as I believe that men's brains functioned much better then than they do today. Therefore, Abraham could hear and understand and memorize what was being said.

Don't think this is a ridiculous notion; we have people today with photographic memories; we have people today who remember every single day of their lives—you give them a date and they can tell you what happened on that date, both in their own lives and in the world. So, there is no reason that we ought to doubt that Abraham had a better brain than we have today, given that life expectancy was much longer at that time as well. Some of us

¹⁴⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33 (slightly edited). Gill's footnote (z): *לֵאמֹר "Dei seculi"*, Pagninus, Hontanus, Calvin; so Ainsworth.

¹⁴⁸ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 740.

doubt Abraham's mental capabilities because we have the false notion of evolution that influences our thinking. But, we have devolved as a people; not evolved.

It is my contention that men did not write anything down for the first 1000 or so years, not because they were unable to write or lacked the implements that they could use in order to write, but simply because they did not need to write anything down—they heard it, everyone around them heard it, and they all remembered it.

So, when we have treaties being established between, say, Abraham and Abimelech, nothing is written down to establish the terms of the treaty; all three (or four) men are there, they all hear what is decided upon and they all agree to it; and consideration is given as a part of the treaty.

We came originally from the hand of God, and Adam lived nearly 1000 years. Abraham will live 175 years, and between them, we see a gradual exponential decrease in the ages of the men in the line of Abraham. For this reason, I would suggest also a gradual decrease in the mental abilities of man, which would match up with his decrease in mental abilities.

So, Abraham has what he has learned from Melchizedek, which I believe to be the first 11 or 12 chapters of the book of Genesis, and possibly in greater detail than the way that we what we have. He may also have the book of Job as well. Therefore, Abraham has this little oasis, not too far from a Philistine metropolis, and he would see people often—traders, people from Philistia, or whatever—and Abraham would proclaim to them the essence of Y^ehowah, the Everlasting God.

Previously, Abimelech and Phicol, his general, had come to Abraham in order to make a treaty with him. They made this treaty in order to insure their own relationship with the Living God. In part, this may have been a land-lease contract¹⁴⁹; but this relationship with Abraham also insured blessing to overflow from Abraham onto the people of Gerar. The caravan of men who came to speak with Abraham understood blessing by association, which puts them ahead of many believers today. Abraham also settled a legal dispute with them at the time concerning access to a well that he dug.

Did you notice? Abraham did not have to track down Abimelech and complain to him about the problem with the well, and how some of his military men were trying to take it from Abraham. Abimelech came to Abraham; and Abimelech knew nothing about what was going on with that well. But God caused Abimelech to come there, with his head military man, and, as a result, this would be a semi-permanent place for Abraham, because he needed water to survive and Abimelech and Phicol would see to it that Abraham's use of the well would be unimpeded.

Genesis 21:33 Then Abraham [lit., *he*] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah 'Él Everlasting. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:33 Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Jehovah the Eternal God. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:33 And Abraham planted a tree in Beersheba, and there, Abraham called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

This verse helps to explain the previous couple chapters. Then Abraham [lit., *he*] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah 'Él Everlasting. What was Abraham doing? What did God have Abraham do? What was God's plan for Abraham's life? Abraham, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, traveled west, toward the Mediterranean Sea, and settled in an area near a Philistine area (perhaps not the Philistines that we come to know later); and it is here that he teaches about Jesus Christ, the Creator God, as the son of promise begins to grow up.

¹⁴⁹ Recall that it is Abraham who gives the animals to Abimelech; not the other way around.

Let's summarize what is going on here:

What Abraham is doing in Beersheba on the outskirts of Gerar

1. Abimelech, the king of Gerar, and Phicol, his lead general, have just come and established a treaty with Abraham. Be Abraham paid him with cattle and sheep, this was probably a land lease contract.
2. In return, Abraham gets to live on this land, graze on the land, and have the protection of the Philistine army.
3. Abraham had one very serious dispute with his life in what was then a territory of Gerar—the soldiers of Gerar were come and shutting off his water (filling up his water wells). This was disconcerting and a great deal of trouble, as wells required so much time to dig and set up. However, a part of their deal allows for Abraham to feel confident that he can dig a well and use it and not be interfered with.
4. He plants a grove of trees (possibly a tamarisk tree?). This suggests that he is going to live here for awhile.
5. He has just sired his son Isaac and he is beginning to grow. Abraham is going to keep him in a stabilized place.
6. Because of the attitude of Abimelech and Phicol (they want a relationship with Abraham), Abraham feels safe and at ease here, which is what God wants.
7. Abraham likely had the Scriptures in hand—the book of Job and the first 12–20 chapters of Genesis. From his place, he teaches the Word of God, as it was known in that era. He knows about God's character and faithfulness, and Abraham teaches this.
8. Based upon the reaction of Abimelech's cabinet after he dreamt of God, these men sound as if they not only believe in the Revealed God, but would worship Him as well.
9. This allows Abraham to have a wonderful teaching ministry here, called *proclaiming the name of Y^ehowah God Everlasting*.

We may reasonably assume that Abraham is having the time of his life, enjoying the blessings of God. This is the good life for him and Sarah (remember, there is only one woman under his roof now).

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Interestingly enough, I wrote those points above, describing Abraham's days at Beersheba, and there are remarkable similarities between what I and many other commentators have deduced about this time.

Various Commentators on Abraham's Life in Beersheba

Commentator

Description

Albert Barnes

Barnes describes Abraham's life in this way: *The planting of a grove implies that Abraham now felt he had a resting-place in the land, in consequence of his treaty with Abimelech. He calls upon the name of the Lord with the significant surname of the God of perpetuity, the eternal, unchangeable God. This marks him as the "sure and able" performer of his promise, as the everlasting vindicator of the faith of treaties, and as the infallible source of the believer's rest and peace. Accordingly, Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.*¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33–34.

Various Commentators on Abraham's Life in Beersheba

Commentator	Description
Joseph Benson	<i>And called there on the name of the Lord - Probably in the grove he planted, which was his oratory, or house of prayer: he kept up public worship, in which, probably, some of his neighbours joined with him. Men should not only retain their goodness wherever they go, but do all they can to propagate it, and make others good. The everlasting God - Though God had made himself known to Abraham as his God in particular, yet he forgets not to give glory to him as the Lord of all, the everlasting God, who was before all worlds, and will be when time and days shall be no more.</i> ¹⁵¹
John Calvin	<i>It hence appears that more rest was granted to Abraham, after the covenant was entered into, than he had hitherto enjoyed; for now he begins to plant trees, which is a sign of a tranquil and fixed habitation; for we never before read that he planted a single shrub...his condition was improved because he was permitted to lead (as I may say) a settled life. The assertion, that he called on the name of the Lord, I thus interpret; he instituted anew the solemn worship of God, in order to testify his gratitude. Therefore God, after he had led his servant through continually winding paths, gave to him some relaxation in his extreme old age. And he sometimes so deals with his faithful people, that when they have been tossed by various storms, he at length permits them to breathe freely. As it respects calling upon God, we know that Abraham, wherever he went, never neglected this religious duty. Nor was he deterred by dangers from professing himself a worshipper of the true God; although, on this account, he was hateful to his neighbors. But as his conveniences for dwelling in the land increased, he became the more courageous in professing the worship of God. And because he now lived more securely under the protection of the king, he perhaps wished to bear open testimony, that he received even this as from God. For the same reason, the title of the everlasting God seems to be given, as if Abraham would say, that he had not placed his confidence in an earthly kings and was not engaging in any new covenant, by which he would be departing from the everlasting God.</i> ¹⁵²
Thomas Coke	<i>In the grove dedicated to the Divine service, he worshipped the Lord, the everlasting God, that Jehovah, who alone enjoys an essential underived existence, without beginning or end of duration, and from whom all other beings are derived; the God, who is, and was, and is to come.</i> <i>Here for a while he settles in comfort, yet has not a home, but a lodging; but wherever his abode, there shall be a house of prayer. He plants a grove, a place for contemplation, meditation, and prayer, and probably an open oratory, set apart not only for his own private, but also his family devotions, and those of any of his neighbours who choose to join with him; and the object of his worship is the Everlasting God. Happy they who follow his steps, and find the everlasting arms of this everlasting God under them, as Abraham did!</i> ¹⁵³
Dr. Thomas Constable	<i>By planting a tree Abraham indicated his determination to stay in that region. Tamarisk trees (Genesis 21:33) were long-lived and evergreen. [Note: Mathews, Genesis 11:27-50:26, p. 282.] This tree was an appropriate symbol of the enduring grace of the faithful God whom Abraham recognized as "the Everlasting God" (El Olam). Abraham now owned a small part of the land God had promised him.</i> ¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/rbc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

¹⁵² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33.

¹⁵³ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014 (slightly edited).

¹⁵⁴ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=21> accessed September 8, 2014.

Various Commentators on Abraham's Life in Beersheba

Commentator	Description
Matthew Henry	<i>Abraham, having got into a good neighbourhood, knew when he was well off, and continued a great while there. There he planted a grove for a shade to his tent, or perhaps an orchard of fruit-trees; and there, though we cannot say he settled, for God would have him, while he lived, to be a stranger and a pilgrim, yet he sojourned many days, as many as would consist with his character, as Abraham the Hebrew, or passenger...There he made, not only a constant practice, but an open profession, of his religion: There he called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God, probably in the grove he planted, which was his oratory or house of prayer. Christ prayed in a garden, on a mountain...Abraham kept up public worship, to which, probably, his neighbours resorted, that they might join with him.¹⁵⁵</i>
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown	<i>Here Abraham planted a tamarisk and called upon the name of the Lord (vid., Genesis 4:26), the everlasting God. Jehovah is called the everlasting God, as the eternally true, with respect to the eternal covenant, which He established with Abraham (Genesis 17:7). The planting of this long-lived tree, with its hard wood, and its long, narrow, thickly clustered, evergreen leaves, was to be a type of the ever-enduring grace of the faithful covenant God.¹⁵⁶</i>
Keith Krell	<i>After planting the tree, Abraham "called on the name of the Lord."¹⁸ This is a phrase that suggests worship and public proclamation (cf. 4:26). In honor of the Lord, Abraham called on "the Everlasting God." The Hebrew phrase El Olam is only used here (21:33).¹⁹ This name stresses God's everlasting nature. God's promises and covenant are everlasting because God Himself is eternal. Abraham has now found God to be what He claimed earlier to be, a shield to him (cf. 21:22; 15:1). He, further, seems to be growing in his conception of God; He is now the Everlasting God. Even through this time of conflict in his family and among his neighbors, Abraham kept a real, live walk with God. Conflict can drive us away from God, but we should allow it to push us closer to Him.</i>
Keith Krell (continued)	<i>The last three verses tell of the positive results of this peace treaty: 1. Abimelech and his men returned home (21:32). 2. Abraham worshipped God in Beersheba (21:33). 3. Abraham lived in peace for a long time (21:34). Abraham now owned a small part of the land God had promised him. By granting Abraham rights to a well, Abimelech had made it possible for Abraham to live there permanently and had acknowledged his legal right, at least to water. In other words, after so many delays the promises of land and descendants at last seem on their way to fulfillment. God encourages us when we are moving in the direction of inheriting the promises. We ought to take notice when small things happen to us that take a step towards inheriting what we know to be God's will for our lives. God is still alive. He still gives us affirmations of His will.¹⁵⁷</i>

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V. 33 reads: [Then Abraham \[lit., he\] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Y^ehowah 'Él Everlasting.](#)

¹⁵⁵ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33–34.

¹⁵⁶ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 21:33.

¹⁵⁷ From <https://bible.org/seriespage/dealing-conflict-and-living-tell-about-it-genesis-2122-34> accessed September 9, 2014.

Clarke's final points on Genesis 21:33

1. Faithfulness is one of the attributes of God, and none of his promises can fall. According to the promise to Abraham, Isaac is born; but according to the course of nature it fully appears that both Abraham and Sarah had passed that term of life in which it was possible for them to have children. Isaac is the child of the promise, and the promise is supernatural. Ishmael is born according to the ordinary course of nature, and cannot inherit, because the inheritance is spiritual, and cannot come by natural birth; hence we see that no man can expect to enter into the kingdom of God by birth, education, profession of the true faith, etc., etc. Those alone who are born from above, and are made partakers of the Divine nature, can be admitted into the family of God in heaven, and everlastingly enjoy that glorious inheritance. Reader, are you born again? Has God changed your heart and your life? If not, can you not suppose that in your present state you cannot possibly enter into the paradise of God? I leave your conscience to answer.
2. The actions of good men may be misrepresented, and their motives suspected, because those motives are not known; and those who are prone to think evil are the last to take any trouble to inform their minds, so that they may judge rightly. Abraham, in the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael, has been accused of cruelty. Though objections of this kind have been answered already, yet it may not be amiss farther to observe that what he did he did in conformity to a Divine command, and a command so unequivocally given that he could not doubt its Divine origin; and this very command was accompanied with a promise that both the child and his mother should be taken under the Divine protection. And it was so; nor does it appear that they lacked any thing but water, and that only for a short time, after which it was miraculously supplied. God will work a miracle when necessary, and never till then; and at such a time the Divine interposition can be easily ascertained, and man is under no temptation to attribute to second causes what has so evidently flowed from the first. Thus, while he is promoting his creatures' good, he is securing his own glory; and he brings men into straits and difficulties, that he may have the fuller opportunity to convince his followers of his providential care, and to prove how much he loves them.
3. Did we acknowledge God in all our ways, he would direct our steps. Abimelech, king of Gerar, and Phicol, captain of his host, seeing Abraham a worshipper of the true God, made him swear by the object of his worship that there should be a lasting peace between them and him; for as they saw that God was with Abraham, they well knew that he could not expect the Divine blessing any longer than he walked in integrity before God; they therefore require him to swear by God that he would not deal falsely with them or their posterity. From this very circumstance we may see the original purpose, design, and spirit of an oath, viz., Let God prosper or curse me in all that I do, as I prove true or false to my engagements! This is still the spirit of all oaths where God is called to witness, whether the form be by the water of the Ganges, the sign of the cross, kissing the Bible, or lifting up the hand to heaven. Hence we may learn that he who falsifies an oath or promise, made in the presence and name of God, thereby forfeits all right and title to the approbation and blessing of his Maker.

From Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 21:33 (edited).

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And so temporarily resides Abraham in a land of the Philistines days many. Genesis 21:34 **Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines [for] many days.**

Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines for many days.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew) [And so temporarily resides Abraham in a land of the Philistines days many.](#)

Targum of Onkelos	There is no text in the targum which matches our text.
Latin Vulgate	And he was a sojourner in the land of the Palestines many days.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines for a long time.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Abraham lived as an immigrant in the Philistines' land for a long time.
Contemporary English V.	Then Abraham lived a long time as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines.
Easy English	Abraham stayed in that country where the *Philistines lived. He stayed there for a long time.
Easy-to-Read Version	And Abraham stayed a long time in the country of the Philistines.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Abraham lived in Philistia for a long time.
<i>The Message</i>	Abraham lived in Philistine country for a long time.
New Berkeley Version	For many a day Abraham lived as a stranger in the land of the Philistines.
New Century Version	And Abraham lived as a stranger in the land of the Philistines for a long time.
New Living Translation	And Abraham lived as a foreigner in Philistine country for a long time.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

International Standard V	After this, Abraham resided as a foreigner in Philistine territory for a long period of time.
New American Bible	Abraham resided in the land of the Philistines for a long time.
New Jerusalem Bible	Abraham stayed for a long while in Philistine territory.
Revised English Bible	He lived as an alien in the country of the Philistines for many years.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	And Abraham went on living in the land of the Philistines as in a strange country.
Conservapedia	Abraham stayed several days in Avvite country.
The Expanded Bible	And Abraham lived as a ·stranger [wanderer; sojourner; resident alien] in the land of the Philistines for ·a long time [^l many days].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So Abraham remained in the land of the Philistines many days.
NET Bible®	So Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for quite some time [Heb "many days."].
New Heart English Bible	Abraham lived as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines many days.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Avraham lived for a long time as a foreigner in the land of the P'lishtim.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and Abraham sojourns in the land of the Peleshethiym many days.
Kaplan Translation	Abraham lived [there] in the land of the Philistines [Beer-sheba was on the border of the Philistine lands (see note on Genesis 20:15).] for many days.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And sojourning is Abraham in the land of the Philistines many days.
Heritage Bible	And Abraham resided temporarily in the land of the Palestinians many days.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days. As he had done in other places, Genesis 12:8; Genesis 13:18, so Abraham did here. Having planted a tamarisk, a tree which grew to a remarkable height and furnished a wide shade, he

proclaimed there the name of the eternal God, chiefly to his own household, but also to others that might come along this way. This he continued as long as he lived this nomadic life in the territory of the Philistines, for they considered this section a part of the country under their control. That is the chief work of the believers on earth, to praise the name, the mercy, the faithfulness of God and to proclaim His Word. Thus they do what they can to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth.

New RSV
 Syndein
 World English Bible
 Young's Updated LT

And Abraham resided as an alien for many days in the land of the Philistines.
 And Abraham sojourned/'dwelled temporarily' in the Philistines' land many days.
 Abraham lived as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines many days.
 And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.

The gist of this verse: Proclaiming the essence of God is what Abraham did for a long time, living in the land of the Philistines.

Genesis 21:34			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
gûwr (גור) [pronounced goor]	to temporarily reside, to sojourn; to gather together with, band together with	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1481 BDB #157
'Ab ^e râhâm (אברהם) [pronounced ahb ^{ve} -raw-HAWM]	father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
'erets (ארץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	land of sojourners [wanderers, temporary residents]; transliterated Philistines	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun); with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
Here, this is spelled P ^e lish ^e tîym (פְּלִשְׁתִּיִּם) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEEM].			
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
rab (רַב) [pronounced rah ^{bv}]	many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912

Translation: Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines [for] many days.

It sounds as though the Philistines are somewhat larger than Abraham and company during this time period and they apparently had a good relationship. It is also possible that this is a gloss (i.e., the Philistines did occupy this area, but it is not clear whether they were occupying this area at this time; a later copyist indicated that this became the land of the Philistines). However, that seems unlikely, as Abimelech (probably the son of this Abimelech) is called the king of the Philistines in Genesis 26:1. So, what seems most likely is, the people of Abimelech were known as Philistines because the land that they lived in was called Philistia (and later Palestine). The key letters are the same. Anyone who occupied this territory after has been called Philistines (or, today, Palestinians), even if there is no relationship between the peoples who have lived here with the name.¹⁵⁸

The same area and the same place can have a different reaction to the gospel of Jehovah Elohim, depending upon the time that it is given. Gary Horton, an evangelist, came to the public school where I worked on several occasions. The first time, he taught in a double classroom, and that room was overflowing with kids. The kids begged their teachers throughout the day to be able to go and to hear Gary speak. It was amazing—it was if there was a magnet which just drew those kids into the room. A few years later, Gary spoke to the students during lunch, a congregation of maybe 600 kids in the auditorium, and you could hear a pin drop in that auditorium. The bell rang, and, most of the time, you would hear 20 wiseguys saying, “Lunch; that was the lunch bell; time to go.” Gary said, “Just give me 5 more minutes of your time, would you;” and the kids sat there transfixed. No one moved. If memory serves me correctly, this was unusual for Gary Horton, an evangelist for Jesus Christ, to be evangelizing in a public school. So, I believe it was that instance where Gary did not even use the name of Jesus Christ, but everyone knew of Whom he spoke.

However, many years later, the 3rd or 4th time that Gary spoke at this school, I heard a different reaction from some of the students, many who muttered things like, “We shouldn’t have religion in school” or words to that effect.

So, there are times when there is positive volition and there is times when there isn’t. Abraham enjoyed many days of positive volition, where I suspect men from all over the land came to hear him speak, to proclaim the Name of Y^ehowah, ’EÎ Everlasting.

Genesis 21:34 **Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines [for] many days.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 21:34 **Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines for many days.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 21:34 **Consequently, Abraham lived in the Philistines' land many days.**

Jewish writers say that Abraham continued to live in this area for a period of 26 years.¹⁵⁹

Keil and Delitzsch: The expression “in the land of the Philistines” appears to be at variance with Genesis 21:32, where Abimelech and Phicol are said to have returned to the land of the Philistines. But the discrepancy is easily reconciled, on the supposition that at that time the land of the Philistines had no fixed boundary, at all events, towards the desert. Beersheba did not belong to Gerar, the kingdom of Abimelech in the stricter sense; but the Philistines extended their wanderings so far, and claimed the district as their own, as is evident from the fact that Abimelech's people had taken the well from Abraham. On the other hand, Abraham with his numerous flocks would not confine himself to the Wady es Seba, but must have sought for pasture—ground in the whole surrounding country; and as Abimelech had given him full permission to dwell in his land (Genesis 20:15), he would still, as heretofore, frequently come as far as Gerar, so that his dwelling at Beersheba (Genesis 22:19) might be correctly described as sojourning (nomadizing) in the land of the Philistines.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Laban, the brother of Rebekah, the wife of Isaac, was called an Aramæan in Genesis 25:20.

¹⁵⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 25:34. He cites Jarchi & Bereshit Rabba, sect. 54. fol. 48. 4.

¹⁶⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 21:34.

What appears to be the case is, Abraham continued to live in Beersheba, which is in southern Judah, and that this land was controlled principally by the Philistines (which may not be related to the Philistines who later occupy this same land area).

The concept of land ownership may have been somewhat of a gradual thing in the ancient world. When the Philistines had determined that they could watch over or guard this or that area, then that area became theirs. When the people of that area rebelled against them, then they either left it alone or the reasserted their control or entered into legal contracts with the people on this land (as they did with Abraham).

Understanding this professional or legal relationship between Abraham and Abimelech helps us to better understand David, when he expected payment for protecting the husband of Abigail.

In this era, it was common for a powerful nation to exert its power over a foreign city and demand tribute from them—which often kept that city from being invaded and destroyed. We saw this back in Genesis 14. The powerful nation does not take ownership over that land; they just require tribute from the inhabitants of that land. Some foreign powers set up outposts in these cities and areas to maintain their control (we will see a lot of this during the reign of Kings David and Saul).

It was simple pragmatism. A large army could come into a village and raze it, and take everything that they see; but, if they went into the village and showed their military might, and then demanded yearly tribute, then that village became a money-making operation for them for many years. And, if the villages rebelled, then they army could go back into the village and destroy them then.

It was when the children of Abraham enter into the Land of Promise (that is where Abraham is right at this point in our narrative), that national and tribal boundaries were set with great precision. In the second half of the book of Joshua, the boundaries of Israel and the different tribes will be specified, and essentially border lines will be drawn from one city to the next. What was done in Israel was either a reflection of the times or revolutionary; but, from that time forward, we had very specific boundaries drawn (which would change with the various power struggles between nations). The boundaries would, of course, expand and contract, but they would be very specific from that point on.

This particular area where Abraham lived was controlled by the Philistines, but you will notice that when Abimelech and Phicol go to Abraham, it is not to assert their ownership of the land in which he lives, but to form a relationship by means of a contract.

Essentially, this is what we gentiles do in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We do not have a natural familial relationship to Him; but we adhere to the terms of His covenant, which is specifically, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**. Of all people in this world, the person I want to establish a covenant with, first and foremost, is with God through Jesus Christ. Abimelech and Phicol could not establish a relationship directly with the God of Abraham. They had to go through a intermediary, who is Abraham. Until the ministry of Jesus, men established their relationship with God through intermediaries, like Abraham. Abraham, in this way, is a type of Christ. **Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but through Me."** (John 14:6). Jesus is our way to God. We need someone to mediate between God and us. Jesus is equal to man and Jesus is equal to God; therefore, He can act as the intermediary between God and man.

Abraham, in this narrative, represents this concept. Abimelech and Phicol can establish a relationship with God going through Abraham. They know that Abraham is directly related to the True God. Therefore, a pact made with Abraham also establishes for Abimelech and Phicol a pact with the True God. This explains the verses which we have studied: **At that time Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. Now swear to me here by God that you will not break an agreement with me or with my children and descendants. As I have kept faith with you, so you will keep faith with me and with the country where you are a resident alien."** (Genesis 21:22–23; HCSB).

We only know one term of this contract (concerning the well), but we do not know all the terms which they agreed to. However, we do not need to, because this is all representative of establishing a relationship with God through Abraham. This incident is real, and it is recorded accurately (that is the human author side of this narrative), but God the Holy Spirit is teaching us about gentile salvation here, setting up a pattern.

People are confused about a great many things in the Old Testament. Some think that all Jews are saved and all gentiles are not. This is a false concept, just as the idea of being saved by the Mosaic Law is a false concept as well.

This may be slightly premature to introduce this doctrine, as there is no nation Israel yet; there are only 3 Jews (Abraham, Sarah and Isaac); so, quite obviously, everyone else who is saved is a gentile.

Gentile Salvation in the Old Testament

1. Throughout the Old Testament, we find that the gentiles were never kept from the gospel of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All men could believe in Him, and thereby be saved (as per Genesis 15:6).
2. The Revealed Lord told Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:3; NLT). In the life of Abraham, there are essentially 3 Jews: Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Therefore, those blessed by a relationship with Abraham during his time would be gentiles. We have many instances of this: Abraham's relationship here to Abimelech; Abraham delivering the people of Sodom; Abraham's compound, which included at least 318 men able to go to war, and their families.
3. There are many specific examples in the Bible of Gentiles who adhere to the God of Abraham.
 - 1) Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl. We may assume that she is saved because God spoke to her twice. Genesis 16:7–13 21:17–20
 - 2) Abimelech in Genesis 21.
 - 3) Rahab the prostitute, who chooses to ally herself with the Israelites rather than with her people in Jericho (Joshua 2).
 - 4) Ruth, a Moabite, who remains with her Jewish mother-in-law, despite the passing of her husband. The book of Ruth.
 - 5) The Queen of Sheba, who comes to Solomon because of his great wisdom. 1Kings 10
 - 6) Jonah going to the Assyrians in Nineveh to evangelize them, even though he hated the Assyrians. The book of Jonah.
 - 7) There is no reason to assume that this list includes all of the gentiles who had faith in the God of Abraham. These are examples from a variety of situations and circumstances.
4. The nations all around Israel, if they believed that Israel had a real relationship with the true God, went through Israel (or through individuals in Israel) to have a relationship with their God. Israel or people in Israel became intermediaries between God and them.
5. Israel, as a nation, had the responsibility to bring the gospel to the gentiles: He says [to Israel], "It is not enough for you to be My Servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations [= gentiles], to be My salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6; HCSB). Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the Lord rises to shine on you. Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the Lord rises and appears over you. All nations will come to your light; mighty kings will come to see your radiance (Isaiah 60:1–3; NLT). Many nations will join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they, too, will be My people. I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord of Heaven's Armies sent me to you (Zechariah 2:11). See also the book of Jonah; Isaiah 56:6 Jer. 16:19 Mal. 1:11.
6. The God of Israel is the God of all mankind. Praise Y^ehowah, all nations; praise Him, all peoples (Psalm 117:1). See also Deut. 32:43 Psalm 18:49
7. God Himself would go to the gentiles. Listen, You shall call a nation You do not know; yea, a nation not knowing You [= a gentile nation] shall run to You, because of Y^ehowah Your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified You [the Son glorifies the Father—John 13:31 14:13]. [Therefore], seek Y^ehowah while He may be found; call on Him while He is near (Isaiah 55:5–6). This is actually a warning to the Jews.

Gentile Salvation in the Old Testament

8. What about nations which are so far from Israel as to not have any interaction with them?
 - 1) First of all, mankind essentially began in the fertile crescent (the land around the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers) and spread out from there (Genesis 10). We have observed and will observe interaction between Israel and those in the far east. So, for a time, there was a lot of interaction between Israel and nations on its periphery.
 - 2) However, let us assume, just for the sake of argument, that there is a nation or city so far out there that there was no interaction with Israel, what about that?
 - 3) We apply God's justice and righteousness to this situation. If there is someone who has a desire to have a relationship with the Revealed God, then God will see to it that the gospel of the Revealed Lord comes to that person, no matter where that person is.
 - 4) There is no reason to assume that the book of Jonah is entirely unique. How often did God send out men from Israel and from Judah to speak of the Revealed God? We have no idea. However, when we combine what we know about God's righteousness and justice with the book of Jonah, it is reasonable to assume that evangelism of some sort took place wherever there was positive volition.
 - 5) Furthermore, we know from the book of Job that Job's friends, despite their misunderstandings about God, worshiped the same God that Job worshiped. Therefore, it is reasonable that the Revealed God was known apart from the nation Israel. However, it is the nation Israel which, after a time, became charged with the responsibility of teaching about the Revealed God.
 - 6) God is not responsible to bring the gospel to someone who would reject it. Therefore, knowing that God **is not willing that any should perish** (2Peter 3:9), we can rest assured that the message of the Revealed God went wherever it needed to go. Wherever there was positive volition, then God is always responsible to get that message to those people with positive volition. If God is able to create the universe and all mankind, we may assume that He can work out the logistics to get the gospel of the Revealed Lord to any place in the world.
9. Paul confirms God coming to the gentiles as well in the Old Testament in Romans 15:9–12, 15–16. In this way, Paul was the apostle to the gentiles. Ephesians 3:1–2, 8
10. In the far future, all men would bow to the God of the Jews. **All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord. All the families of the nations will bow down before You** (Psalm 22:27; HCSB). **He will not fail nor be discouraged till He has set justice in the earth. And in His name Gentiles will hope** (Isaiah 42:4; ACV; LXX, with references to God capitalized).
11. Although Jesus at first offered the Kingdom of God to the Jews, He was rejected by a majority of them, including by the priests and pharisees who should have known better. After this, He began to speak to Samaritans and to gentiles (which was almost unheard of among the Jews).

Many of these passages came from [Christianity Stack Exchange](#).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Genesis 21:34](#) Consequently, Abraham lived in the Philistines' land many days.

This was a good set up for Abraham. There was law and order, righteousness and justice provided by Abimelech, the ruler over Philistia. We know from this and the previous chapter that Abimelech was an honorable man who entered into honest contracts with those in his realm. We know that he was willing to listen to complaints and to rule on them justly. We know that his dealings with Abraham were on the basis of honesty, contract and a fair judicial system; and that is a good environment for Abraham to live in.

This helps to explain the move. Where Abraham had lived before, he was not too far from Sodom and Gomorrah, and this was a place of lawlessness and sexual perversion. Men would come to town and the males of that town would gang-rape them out of sexual and power lust. Their lawlessness became so bad, God finally destroyed these cities and their inhabitants. This massive destruction near where Abraham lived would have ended caravans traveling through that specific region (a caravan of traders was essentially a traveling Walmart).

Abraham is going to move to a new area for several reasons. New pastureland, a reputable administration of justice, and caravan travel. We may assume that there are groups of travelers and caravans going through this area of Palestine near Gerar quite often, and that Abraham provided shade and water and possibly even a meal for those who traveled through. And, most importantly, he proclaimed the essence and character of Jehovah, the Everlasting God, to all who would listen (Genesis 12:8 13:4 21:33).

You must live in the Word; but you must also live in the world. Therefore, you must acquit yourself among men with grace and doctrine throughout all of your life.

I want you to notice how Abraham interacted with Abimelech and Phicol. He did not use his relationship with them to try to steal a well from someone else. This was a well that he dug, and by the laws of the land, this well belonged to him. He was appealing to the laws of the land to get back what was his. A person without doctrine or without an understanding of the laws of divine establishment might use his relationship with Abimelech to take what is not his. That is not what Abraham is doing.

Application: Even though Abraham is the beginning of the Hebrew people—a people who are tied to God until the end of time—Abraham also lives on planet earth, and he lives in Philistine territory. Therefore, he has important interactions which take place in the real world (the spiritual aspect of Abraham is also real, but you know what I mean). Abraham has a physical existence and that is take place in Philistine territory. So, at the end of this chapter, we see Abraham taking care of business—so to speak—on earth with other men. You, as a believer in Jesus Christ, will always have these *other men* to interact with. You will take note of the fact that two of them view Abraham favorably (Abimelech and Phicol); and there are another set of men—those who stole Abraham’s well from him—who treated Abraham with contempt. This would be the life of all Hebrew people in the land; and this is our life as believers living on planet earth. You must live in the Word; but you must also live in the world. Therefore, you must acquit yourself among men with grace and doctrine throughout all of your life.

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A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 21:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When

the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

We have had a lot of eventful chapters since God promises Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son a year later. Now the time has come.

Genesis 21:1 And הויה visited Sarah as He had said, and הויה [= *YHWH*, *Y^howah*] did for Sarah as He had spoken.

Sarah's reproductive system was made as good as new; and the same was true for Abraham.

Genesis 21:2 So Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which Elohim [= *God*] had spoken to him.

Sarah gives birth to a son when she is 90 and Abraham is 100. It took place when God said that it would.

Genesis 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Yitshaq [= *Isaac*].

Isaac means laughter. When Sarah, at age 89, overheard God promise Abraham that she would have a son, she quietly laughed inside. So God saw to it that she would have laughter inside her for nine months.

Genesis 21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Yitshaq when he was eight days old, as Elohim had commanded him.

All recently born children in Abraham's camp were to be circumcised on day eight. Of course, Isaac, the child of promise, would be circumcised.

Genesis 21:5 And Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Yitshaq was born to him.

Abraham is 100 years old when Isaac is born.

Genesis 21:6 And Sarah said, "Elohim has made me laugh, and everyone who hears of it laughs with me."

When Sarah overheard God tell Abraham that she would be pregnant, she quietly laughed inside. And now, having given birth to Isaac, everyone who hears will laugh with her.

Genesis 21:7 And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."

She asks, "Who would have said that this is even possible?"

Genesis 21:8 And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Yitshaq was weaned.

On the day that Isaac is old enough to be weaned, Abraham held a great feast.

Genesis 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Haġar the Mitsrian [= *Egyptian*], whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.

Hagar's son, Ishmael, mocks this new son. In many cases, an older brother would take a protective view of a new younger brother. This is not the case. Isaac was literally in danger due to Ishmael.

Genesis 21:10 So she said to Abraham, "Drive out this female servant and her son, for the son of this female servant shall not inherit with my son, with Yitsḥaq."

Sarah is concerned and she asks Abraham to drive away Hagar and her son. Ishmael is not going to inherit side-by-side with her son.

Genesis 21:11 And the matter was very evil in the eyes of Abraham because of his son.

Abraham did not like this. He very much loved Ishmael.

Genesis 21:12 But Elohim said to Abraham, "Let it not be evil in your eyes because of the boy and because of your female servant. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice, for in Yitsḥaq your seed is called.

God tell Abraham, "Don't let this be evil in your eyes. Listen to Sarah and do what she says. In Isaac, your seed is called.

God when He looks at Isaac and Ishmael does not make a personal judgment call and decide, "This Isaac is going to be a much greater man than Ishmael. So Ishmael's out and Isaac is in." It does not work that way.

God looks at Isaac and he sees his line continue on for many generations all the way to Jesus. God sees this unbroken line leading to His Son. This is the line of fulfilled promise.

God also views Ishmael and his line. Although both Ishmael and his mother believe in Abraham's God, this is not going to be true for his seed. Three or four generations from now, nearly no one coming from the loins of Ishmael will believe in the Revealed God. Furthermore, many of them will resent God's chosen people.

Genesis 21:13 "And of the son of the female servant I also make a nation, because he is your seed."

God assure Abraham that He is not going to abandon Ishmael. "He will be made into a great nation because he is descended from you."

Genesis 21:14 And Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, which he gave to Haḡar, putting it on her shoulder, also the boy, and sent her away. And she left and wandered in the Wilderness of Be'ersheba.

Abraham put together some provisions for Hagar and her son and he sends them away. They both wander through the wilderness of Beersheba (southern Judah, if memory serves).

Genesis 21:15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.

But there came a point where the water was gone, and they were both very thirsty. Hagar places her son under one of the shrubs (to get him out of the sun).

Genesis 21:16 And she went and sat down about a bowshot away, for she said, "Let me not see the death of the boy." And she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.

Hagar cannot bear to watch her son die.

Genesis 21:17 And Elohim heard the voice of the boy, and the messenger of Elohim called to Haḡar from the heavens, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Haḡar? Do not fear, for Elohim has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

God has heard her voice and He has heard Ishmael's voice. Even though Ishmael is no longer connected to Abraham, God hears the boy right where he is.

If Hagar had been interested in what God said to Abraham, she would know that there are promises which could spill over onto Ishmael.

Genesis 21:18 "Arise, lift up the boy and hold him with your hand, for I make a great nation of him."

"Go to your boy," God tells her. "I will make a great nation of him."

Genesis 21:19 And Elohim opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

It turns out that they are not too far from a well of water. She just did not see it. She fills the skin with water and takes it to Ishmael.

That was true literally and this thing is representative as well. Hagar should have seen and understood the promises of God. She should not have spoken disparagingly to her son about Sarah or about her son.

Genesis 21:20 And Elohim was with the boy, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

God is with this boy and he learned to live in the wilderness, killing prey with a bow and arrow.

Genesis 21:21 And he dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Mitsrayim.

I believe that Paran is further south. His mother finds an Egyptian girl for him to marry. Ishmael was half-Semitic and half Egyptian.

Genesis 21:22 And it came to be at that time that Abimelech and Phicol [= Phicol], the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "Elohim is with you in all that you do."

Since Abimelech had given Abraham and Sarah carte blanc to live anywhere on his land, they are probably still there. Phicol is the head of his army. Both men recognize that God is with Abraham in all that he does.

Genesis 21:23 "And now, swear to me by Elohim, not to be untrue to me, to my offspring, or to my descendants. Do to me according to the loving-commitment that I have done to you and to the land in which you have dwelt."

Abimelech is a smart gentile. He recognizes that Abraham has a relationship with the true God, therefore, why not establish a bond between himself and Abraham?

Why are we given this interlude? Abimelech is an intelligent gentile recognizing the blessing that will come by having a relationship with Abraham. Hagar should have recognized how much she was blessed living with Abraham and Sarah; and she should have appreciated that. She should have taught the same thing to Isaac.

So, we have two gentiles—Abimelech and Phicol—who understand God blesses Abraham and it is a good thing to get part of this; and we have two gentiles—Hagar and her son Ishmael—who should have recognized the blessing of where she was, but did not.

Genesis 21:24 And Abraham said, "I swear."

Abraham agrees to this treaty.

Genesis 21:25 And **A**braham reproved **A**bimeleḵ because of a well of water which **A**bimeleḵ's servants had seized.

Abraham mentions that there is a problem. He dug a well and some people of Abimelech seized this well.

Genesis 21:26 And **A**bimeleḵ said, "I do not know who has done this deed. Neither did you inform me, nor did I hear until today."

Abimelech says that he knew nothing about this until today.

Genesis 21:27 So **A**braham took sheep and cattle and gave them to **A**bimeleḵ, and the two of them made a covenant.

As a part of the covenant, Abraham gave some livestock to Abimelech.

Genesis 21:28 And **A**braham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

Abraham then set of seven ewe lambs by themselves.

Genesis 21:29 And **A**bimeleḵ asked **A**braham, "What are these seven ewe lambs which you have set by yourselves?"

Abimelech asks about the lambs.

Genesis 21:30 And he said, "Take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, to be my witness that I have dug this well."

Abraham gives the seven ewe lambs to Abimelech as a witness that he dug the well.

Genesis 21:31 So he called that place **B**e'ērsheḇa, because the two of them swore an oath there.

Abraham calls this place Beersheba, as they had both sworn an oath there.

Genesis 21:32 Thus they made a covenant at **B**e'ērsheḇa. And **A**bimeleḵ rose with **P**iḳol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines.

After making this covenant, Abimelech and Phicol return to the land of the Philippians.

Genesis 21:33 And he planted a tamarisk tree in **B**e'ērsheḇa, and there called on the Name of יהוה, the Everlasting Ĕl.

Abraham plants a tamarisk tree there and he calls on the name of the Lord there. This means that Abraham would like to continue interactions with God throughout the rest of his life.

Genesis 21:34 And **A**braham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.

Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

Addendum

Let's step back and look at this chapter as a whole: (1) we have the birth of Isaac, which parallels in many ways the birth of Jesus. (2) Then we have a separation which takes place, which essentially protects Isaac (a hedge

is placed around him, so to speak). Hagar and Ishmael rejected Isaac's place as heir to Abraham, and so they were cast out. (3) And here, we have a treaty with the gentile world. In fact, these gentiles seek Abraham out. (4) In the next chapter, we will have Abraham offering up his uniquely-born son to God.

(1) In the gospels, we have the birth of Jesus, the unique Son of God. (2) He is then protected throughout His youth; and separated from those who are related to Him (Matthew 12:44–50). (3) And Jesus—the Messiah to the Jews—will have a special relationship to Gentiles as well (Matthew 8:11–12 21:42–43). (4) Finally, Jesus will offer Himself up as a sacrifice for all mankind.

Again, all the history that we are studying here is real—these are real people and real events. But they are also forward looking, because, at this point in time, Isaac very much is a type of Jesus in his birth.

I see a parallel structure between the lives of Ishmael and Abraham; son and father, not living too far apart from one another in the desert.

The Parallel Lives of Ishmael and Abraham

Structure	Text/Commentary
Hagar and Ishmael leave Abraham's compound and go into the desert (v. 14)	So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.
The water crisis; the unconditional covenant of God (vv. 15–19)	When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.
Ishmael's life in Paran (vv. 20–21)	And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
Abimelech and Phicol leave Gerar and go to Abraham (vv. 22–24)	At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity, but as I have dealt kindly with you, so you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned." And Abraham said, "I will swear."
The water crisis; the conditional covenant between Abraham and Abimelech.	When Abraham reproved Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized, Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant. Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock apart. And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?" He said, "These seven ewe lambs you will take from my hand, that this may be a witness for me that I dug this well." Therefore that place was called Beersheba, because there both of them swore an oath. So they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army rose up and returned to the land of the Philistines.

The Parallel Lives of Ishmael and Abraham

Structure

Text/Commentary

Abraham's life in Beersheba (vv. 33–34)

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

Notice that Abraham's life is more closely aligned with spiritual objectives.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Why Genesis 21 is in the Word of God

1. The birth of Isaac is an amazing occurrence, not just fulfilling God's promises to Abraham, but looking forward to the birth of our Lord in so many ways. Hidden in this chapter and elsewhere are dozens of parallels between the births of Isaac and Jesus.
2. The many parallels between the births of Isaac and Jesus is yet another proof of the divine nature of Scriptures.
3. We see just how important it is for there to be a separation established—in this case, between the line of promise and Ishmael's line (separation is a recurring theme in Scripture).
4. Paul makes some unique references and applications of a portion of this chapter in Galatians 4:21–31. Paul does not interpret the chapter or explain the incident in this chapter; he uses it as an allegory.
5. The latter half of this chapter is a fascinating study of contracts and relationships during the patriarchal period of the Age of Israel. During this time, God began to seemingly concentrate on the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So, where does that leave the larger population of gentiles? This chapter—particularly the latter half of it—explains the relationship between God, Abraham and the gentile population at large.
6. There is an amazing set of parallels in this and the next chapter with the life of our Lord, revealed here for the first time in any commentary (insofar as I know).
7. One of the several uniquenesses in this study is the actual meaning of the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech as well as the meaning of the 7 ewe lambs.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

What We Learn from Genesis 21

1. We looked at the meaning of circumcision again.
2. We studied the many parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus Christ.
3. Because of the birth of Isaac, we studied type and antitype again.
4. We studied some of the grand themes of Scripture.
5. We studied the meaning of Isaac's name.
6. We briefly studied more reasons why the Bible is truly the Word of God.
7. We studied the doctrine of legalism.
8. We studied the highly politicized nature of present-day science.
9. We examined the reasons why Sarah wanted Hagar and Ishmael thrown out; and we see the necessity of this.
10. We studied the meaning and purpose of the Mosaic Law.
11. We briefly studied the killing of fetuses in the United States.

What We Learn from Genesis 21

12. We studied how welfare enslaves a people.
13. We briefly studied the Philistines and how there is nothing historically wrong about references to the Philistines along the coast of the Mediterranean during this time period.
14. We studied gentile salvation in the Old Testament.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time

CONCERNING ABIMELECH; AND CONCERNING ISMAEL THE SON OF ABRAHAM; AND CONCERNING THE ARABIANS, WHO WERE HIS POSTERITY.

2. Now in a little time Abraham had a son by Sarah, as God had foretold to him, whom he named Isaac, which signifies Laughter. And indeed they so called him, because Sarah laughed when God (25) said that she should bear a son, she not expecting such a thing, as being past the age of child-bearing, for she was ninety years old, and Abraham a hundred; so that this son was born to them both in the last year of each of those decimal numbers. And they circumcised him upon the eighth day and from that time the Jews continue the custom of circumcising their sons within that number of days. But as for the Arabians, they circumcise after the thirteenth year, because Ismael, the founder of their nation, who was born to Abraham of the concubine, was circumcised at that age; concerning whom I will presently give a particular account, with great exactness.

3. As for Sarah, she at first loved Ismael, who was born of her own handmaid Hagar, with an affection not inferior to that of her own son, for he was brought up in order to succeed in the government; but when she herself had borne Isaac, she was not willing that Ismael should be brought up with him, as being too old for him, and able to do him injuries when their father should be dead; she therefore persuaded Abraham to send him and his mother to some distant country. Now, at the first, he did not agree to what Sarah was so zealous for, and thought it an instance of the greatest barbarity, to send away a young child (26) and a woman unprovided of necessaries; but at length he agreed to it, because God was pleased with what Sarah had determined: so he delivered Ismael to his mother, as not yet able to go by himself; and commanded her to take a bottle of water, and a loaf of bread, and so to depart, and to take Necessity for her guide. But as soon as her necessary provisions failed, she found herself in an evil case; and when the water was almost spent, she laid the young child, who was ready to expire, under a fig-tree, and went on further, that so he might die while she was absent. But a Divine Angel came to her, and told her of a fountain hard by, and bid her take care, and bring up the child, because she should be very happy by the preservation of Ismael. She then took courage, upon the prospect of what was promised her, and, meeting with some shepherds, by their care she got clear of the distresses she had been in.

4. When the lad was grown up, he married a wife, by birth an Egyptian, from whence the mother was herself derived originally. Of this wife were born to Ismael twelve sons; Nabaioth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mabsam, Idumas, Masmaos, Masaos, Chodad, Theman, Jetur, Naphesus, Cadmas. These inhabited all the country from Euphrates to the Red Sea, and called it Nabatene. They are an Arabian nation, and name their tribes from these, both because of their own virtue, and because of the dignity of Abraham their father.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed April 10, 2012. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 12b.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter , entitled *The Flood*.

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 21

Birth of Isaac

-

Ishmael sent away

At last the time had come when the great promise to Abraham should receive its fulfillment. The patriarch was in his hundredth and Sarah in her ninetieth year when Isaac was born to them. Manifestly, it had been the Divine purpose to protract as long as possible the period before that event; partly to exercise and mature Abraham's faith, and partly that it should appear the more clearly that the gift of the heir to the promises was, in a manner, supernatural. As we have seen, the very name of their child was intended to perpetuate this fact; and now Sarah also, in the joyousness of her heart, said, "God has made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me," - literally, "Laughter has God prepared for me; every one that hears it will (joyously) laugh with me." Thus, as Abraham's laughter had been that of faith in its surprise, so the laughter of Sarah was now in contrast to that of her former weakness of trust, one of faith in its gratitude. But there might be yet a third kind of laughter, - neither of faith, nor even of unbelief, but of disbelief: the laughter of mockery, and it also would receive its due recompense. According to God's direction (Genesis 17:12), Abraham had circumcised Isaac on the eighth day. When the period for weaning him arrived, the patriarch made, after the manner of those times, a great feast. We can scarcely say what the age of the child was, - whether one year, or, as Josephus implies, three years old. In either case, Ishmael must have been a lad, springing into manhood - at least fifteen, and possibly seventeen years of age. "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking," - literally, "that he was a mocker." As a German writer observes: "Isaac, the object of holy laughter, serves as the target of his unholy wit and profane banter. He does not laugh; he makes merry. 'What! this small, helpless Isaac, the father of nations!' Unbelief, envy, and pride in his own carnal pre-eminence, - such were the reasons of his conduct. Because he does not understand, 'Is anything too hard for Jehovah?' therefore he finds it laughable to connect such great issues with so small a beginning." It was evidently in this light that the apostle viewed it, when describing the conduct of Ishmael in these words.

"As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." (Galatians 4:29) On this ground, and not from jealousy, Sarah demanded that the bondwoman and her son should be "cast out." But Abraham, who seems to have misunderstood her motives, was reluctant to comply, from feelings of paternal affection quite natural in the case, till God expressly directed him to the same effect. The expulsion of Ishmael was necessary, not only from his unfitness, and in order to keep the heir of the promise unmixed with others, but also for the sake of Abraham himself, whose faith must be trained to renounce, in obedience to the Divine call, everything, - even his natural paternal affection. And in His tender mercy God once more made the trial easier, by bestowing the special promise that Ishmael should become "a nation." Therefore, although Hagar and her son were literally cast forth, with only the barest necessities for the journey - water and bread, - this was intended chiefly in trial of Abraham's faith, and their poverty was only temporary. For, soon afterwards we read in Scripture, that, before his death, Abraham had enriched his sons (by Hagar and Keturah) with "gifts;" (Genesis 25:6) and at his burying Ishmael appears, as an acknowledged son, by the side of Isaac, to perform the last rites of love to their father. (Genesis 25:9)

Thus "cast out," Hagar and her son wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, probably on their way to Egypt. Here they suffered from what has always been the great danger to travelers in the desert - want of water. The lad's strength failed before that of his mother. At length her courage and endurance also gave way to utter exhaustion and despondency. Hitherto she had supported the steps of her son; now she let him droop "under one of the shrubs," while she went "a good way off," not to witness his dying agony, yet still remaining within reach of him. To use the pictorial language of Scripture, "She lift up her voice and wept." Not her cry, however, but that of Abraham's son went up into the ears of the Lord; and once more was Hagar directed to a well of

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 21

water, but this time by an "angel of God," not, as before, by the "Angel of Jehovah." And now also, to strengthen her for the future, the same assurance concerning Ishmael was given to Hagar which had previously been made to Abraham. This promise of God has been abundantly fulfilled. The lad dwelt in that wide district between Palestine and Mount Horeb, called "the wilderness of Paran," which to this day is the undisputed dominion of his descendants, the Bedouin Arabs.

Bitter as the trial had been to "cast out" Ishmael, his son, it was only a preparation for a far more severe test of Abraham's faith and obedience. For this - the last, the highest, but also the steepest ascent in Abraham's life of faith - all God's previous leadings and dealings had been gradually preparing and qualifying him. But even so, it seems to stand out in Scripture alone and unapproached, like some grand mountain - peak, which only one climber has ever been called to attain. No, not one; for yet another and far higher mountain peak, so lofty that its summit reaches into heaven itself, has been trodden by the "Seed of Abraham," Who has done all, and far more than Abraham did, and Who has made that a blessed reality to us which in the sacrifice of the patriarch was only a symbol. And, no doubt, it was when on Mount Moriah - the mount of God's true "provision" - Abraham was about to offer up his son, that, in the language of our blessed Lord (John 8:56), he saw the day of Christ, "and was glad."

From <http://www.lewendwater.org/books/v1bhot.pdf> accessed .

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Genesis 21

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

The birth of Isaac

And Y^ehowah visited Sarah, just as He had said [He would]; consequently, Y^ehowah did for Sarah just as He had promised [her]. Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age by a set time which Elohim had promised him.

And Jehovah visited Sarah, just as He said He would. Consequently, Jehovah made it possible for Sarah to become pregnant, as He had promised her. Sarah conceived and then gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age, at the time which God had foreordained.

Abraham called the name of his son, the one being born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised Isaac, [his] son, [at] eight days, just as Elohim had commanded him. Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.

Abraham called the name of his son, Isaac (the boy whom Sarah bore to him). And Abraham circumcised Isaac, his son, when he was 8 days old, just as God had commanded him to do. Abraham was 100 years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him.

And Sarah said, "Elohim made laughter to me; everyone hearing [this] will laugh with me." Then she said, "Whoever spoke to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child'? And yet [lit., *when, for*] I have born a son [to him] regardless of [lit., *regarding*] his old age."

And Sarah said, "God has made this laughter with regards to me; everyone who hears this will laugh with me." Then she said, "Whoever said to Abraham, 'Sarah will nurse a child?' Yet I have given birth to his son despite his old age."

Isaac and Ishmael are separated from one another

So the child grew and was weaned. Therefore, Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

So the child grew and was weaned. On that day, Abraham prepared a great feast for Isaac.

A Complete Translation of Genesis 21	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (the Egyptian [woman]), whom she had given birth to for Abraham, making sport with her son Isaac.	But Sarah saw the son of Hagar (this is the Egyptian woman whom had given birth to him for Abraham); and he was making fun of her son Isaac.
Consequently, she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave-woman and her son, for the son of this slave-woman will not inherit with my son Isaac."	Consequently, she said to Abraham, "Throw this slave-woman out along with her son. No son of a slave-woman will inherit along side my son, Isaac."
But this thing is very displeasing in the eyes of Abraham on account of his son [Ishmael]. But Elohim said to Abraham, "[Let this thing] not be displeasing in your sight because of the boy and because of your female servant. All that Sarah says to you, listen [and go along with] what she says [lit., <i>in her voice</i>], for your Seed will be called in Isaac. Furthermore, I will make the son of [this] slave-woman into [lit., <i>for</i>] a nation, because he [is] your seed."	This was all wrong, in Abraham's opinion, on account of his son Ishmael. But God said to Abraham, "Don't be upset over this; don't worry about the lad or about Hagar. Listen to what Sarah is asking you to do, and go ahead and do it, for your Seed will be called in Isaac. Furthermore, I will make this son of a slave-woman into a nation, because you are his father."
So Abraham arose early in the morning and he took food [lit., <i>bread</i>] and a skin of water and gave [them] unto Hagar, putting [them] upon her shoulders; [and he gave them] to the youth. Then he sent her way and she departed and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba.	So Abraham arose early in the morning and took provisions and a container of water and gave these things to Hagar and the youth, putting them on her shoulders. Then he sent her away, and they departed and wandered in the desert-wilderness of Beersheba.
The Angel of God, Hagar and Ishmael in the desert-wilderness	
When the water was consumed from the skin-canteen, she left [lit., <i>cast off</i>] the youth under one of the bushes. And then she goes and sits by [lit., <i>to</i>] herself a ways off, a distance as a bowshot [away], for she had said, "Let me not look on the death of the youth." So she sat a ways off and she lifted up her voice and wept.	After they had consumed the water, she left her son under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat by herself a ways off from the boy, for she thought, "I do not want to watch my child die." So she just sat there and wept.
But Elohim hears the voice of the youth and the Messenger of Elohim called unto Hagar from the heavens. He said to her, "What [is it] to you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, for Elohim has heard the voice to the young man, in the place where he [is]. Rise up; lift up the youth and strengthen [support] him with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation."	But God heard the voice of the youth, and the Angel of God called out to Hagar from the heavens, saying, "What is wrong with you, Hagar? Don't be afraid, because God has heard the voice of the young man, from where he is. Get up, lift up the youth and support him with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation."
Then Elohim opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. Therefore she went [to the well] and filled the skin with water. Then she caused the youth to drink.	Then God opened her eyes and she saw a nearby well of water. Therefore, she walked over to the well, filled the skin with water, and caused the boy to drink.

A Complete Translation of Genesis 21	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
And Elohim is with the youth as [lit., <i>and</i>] he grows up [and becomes well-known]. He [continued to] lived in the desert-wilderness. He became great [as] an archer. Ishmael [lit., <i>he</i>], therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran and his mother took a wife from the land of Egypt for him.	And God was with the youth as he grew up and became well-known. He continued living in the desert-wilderness, increasing his prowess as an archer. Ishmael, therefore, lived in the desert-wilderness of Paran while his mother found a wife for him from Egypt.
Abraham and King Abimelech enter in to a lease agreement	
And it comes to pass at this same time, [that] Abimelech, Ochozath [or, <i>Ahuzzath</i>] his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said unto Abraham, "Elohim [is] with you in all that you do. Now, therefore, you will swear to me by Elohim [right] here, [that] you will not lie [possibly, <i>cause harm</i>] to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. According to the grace which I have done with you, you will do with me and with the land wherein you temporarily reside."	And it came to pass, during this same time period, that Abimelech, Ochozath his friend, and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in all the you do. Now, therefore, you will swear to me by your God, right here that you will not lie to me or to my offspring or to my posterity. Instead, you will act toward me as graciously as I have acted with you and with regards to the land where you now temporarily reside."
And Abraham said, "I [even] I swear [this oath]."	And Abraham said, "I bind myself with this oath."
Then Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the water well that servants of Abimelech had seized.	Then Abraham complained to Abraham about the water well which army personnel of Abimelech's army had taken violently from Abraham.
Abimelech replied, "I did not know who had done this thing; you had not [previously] made [this] known to me; and, furthermore, I [even] I had not heard until today."	Abimelech replied, "I did not know until today who had done this thing; and, you know, you have not informed me of this until today."
Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave [them] to Abimelech. Then the two of them cut a covenant.	Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and he gave them to Abimelech. Then the two of them entered into a pact.
Then Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves. So Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why these, these seven ewe lambs that you have set by themselves?"	Then Abraham set apart seven ewe-lambs by themselves. So Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why did you set these seven ewe lambs by themselves?"
And he replied [lit., <i>said</i>], "Because, you will take [these] seven ewe-lambs from me [lit., <i>from my hand</i>] in order that you will be my witness that I have dug this well." For this reason, he named that place Beer-sheba, for the two of them swore an oath there.	And he replied, "Here's why: you will take these seven lambs from me in order to establish that I dug this well." For this reason, Abraham named that place Beer-sheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.
After they made a covenant in Beersheba, Abimelech, [Ochozath his friend,] and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and they returned to the land of the Philistines.	After they made a covenant in Beersheba, Abimelech, his friend Ochozath and the commander of his army, Phicol, arose and they returned to the land of the Philistines.
Abraham's life in Beersheba	

A Complete Translation of Genesis 21	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Then Abraham [lit., <i>he</i>] planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Y ^e howah ʾĒl Everlasting.	Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and there he proclaimed the name of Jehovah the Eternal God.
Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines [for] many days.	Consequently, Abraham temporarily resided in the land of the Philistines for many days.
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Genesis 21			
	Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr.	1976 Abraham (Genesis 11:26–22:24) (#600)	#92	Genesis 21:1–8
Ken Reed	https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/		Genesis 38–50
Dr. Robert Dean	https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem		Genesis 1–50
Bill Wenstrom	https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&view=libwritten&selCat=2&Itemid=124		Genesis 1–50
Jack M. Ballinger	http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html		Genesis 1–49
Ron Snider	http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html		Genesis 1–50

* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).

