

A Promise Fulfilled

GENESIS 20–21

FIRST DAY: Introduction

God is determined to fulfill His word to us! However, we often hinder, delay, and even jeopardize God's promises by our self-will, self-effort, and attempts at self-preservation. God is not looking for perfect people or perfect faith. God is, however, seeking to perfect our faith in order that He might fulfill His promises to us.

Abraham was not a perfect man, nor did he have perfect faith. He had observable lapses of faith in God's promise when:

- He went to Egypt and released Sarah to Pharaoh's harem
- He sired a child with the Egyptian maid, Hagar
- He again released Sarah, this time to Abimelech's harem

Yet, in spite of Abraham's follies, God still worked to:

- Protect his honor
- Preserve his life
- Mature his faith
- Fulfill His promise to him

In God's perfect time, will, and way, Abraham received God's promise.

Ask God to perfect your faith.

SECOND DAY: Read Genesis 20

1. According to Genesis 20:1–2, Abraham and Sarah *journeyed* south and came to Gerar, where Abimelech was king. Compare this with Genesis 12:10–15 to record and remark on what occurred once again.

2. As in the past, Abraham’s fear-based decision had consequences, yet God protected His promise. Use Genesis 20:3–16 to note and comment on the following:

a. God’s interaction with Abimelech (verses 3–7)

(1) Notice God called Abraham a *prophet*. One aspect of a prophet’s ministry was to intercede on behalf of others. How do you see Abraham fulfilling this role? See also Genesis 18:19.

b. Abimelech’s confrontation with Abraham (verses 8–10)

c. Abraham’s excuse (verses 11–13)

(1) Use Proverbs 29:25 to identify and remark on the flaws in Abraham’s excuse.

d. Abimelech's actions (verses 14–16)

(1) Abraham thought there was no *fear of God* in Gerar.
How do Abimelech's actions prove otherwise?

3. What happened when Abraham *prayed* for Abimelech and his household? Genesis 20:17–18

a. What evidence of God's mercy do you find in this situation?

4. Considering this entire confrontation, share any insights you received concerning:

a. God

b. Abimelech

c. Abraham

THIRD DAY: Read Genesis 21:1–7

1. In Genesis 21:1 God turned His attention to Sarah. Use this verse to fill in the blanks below:

And the LORD visited Sarah _____,

and the LORD did for Sarah _____.

- a. Link this with the following Scriptures and share what ministers to you:

(1) Numbers 23:19

(2) Habakkuk 2:3

(3) Hebrews 10:23

- b. Twenty-five years had passed since God's original promise to Abraham and Sarah. Yet, according to Genesis 21:2, Sarah *bore Abraham a son* at the *set time* which God had promised. How does this speak to you concerning:

(1) God's promises

(2) God's faithfulness

(3) God's timing

(4) The need for patience

2. Use Genesis 21:3–7 to capture the joy and wonder of this miraculous birth.
 - a. The name *Isaac* means *laughter*. Why was this a fitting name?
 - b. What further insight about this birth do you find in Hebrews 11:11?
3. Read Hebrews 6:12 and ask God to reveal an area in which you need *faith and patience* in order to receive God's promise to you.

FOURTH DAY: Read Genesis 21:8–21

1. According to Genesis 21:8, once Isaac was *weaned*, Abraham held a *great feast* to celebrate. What did Sarah witness at this *feast*? Genesis 21:9

a. *Therefore*, what did Sarah tell Abraham to do? Genesis 21:10

(1) Comment on Abraham's reaction to Sarah's concerns. Genesis 21:11

2. Use Genesis 21:12–13 to remark on God's word concerning:

a. Sarah

(1) It is important to realize that Ishmael was a young man, and according to the Hebrew word (*tsachaq*) was mocking and making sport of Isaac (Galatians 4:29). How does this justify Sarah's concern?

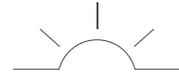
b. Isaac (verse 12b)

c. Ishmael (verses 12a, 13)

- (1) In the New Testament, we see that this conflict between Isaac and Ishmael has a spiritual application. The apostle Paul compared Hagar and Ishmael with the bondage of the life of the flesh, and Sarah and Isaac with the freedom of the spiritual life in Christ. With this in mind, read Galatians 4:22–31 to write your observations concerning:
- (a) The son of Hagar—the *bondwoman*

 - (b) The son of Sarah—the *freewoman*

 - (c) What does this convey to you concerning the necessity for us, as believers, to *cast out* the life of the flesh?
3. Of his own volition, Abraham *rose early* and sent Hagar and Ishmael away with provisions (Genesis 21:14a). Use Genesis 21:14b–16 to capture Hagar’s desperate plight as she *wandered* in the wilderness.
- a. *God heard the voice of the lad* and *called* out to Hagar. From Genesis 21:17–18, note and comment on what He told her.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Nowhere do we read that Ishmael caused great joy in Abraham’s home. From before his birth, Ishmael was a source of painful trouble, and after he matured, he caused even greater conflict. The old nature is not able to produce the fruit of the Spirit, no matter how hard it tries.

4. Describe God's miraculous provision for Hagar and Ishmael from Genesis 21:19.
 - a. How does God's care for Hagar and Ishmael minister to you?

5. Use Genesis 21:20–21 to summarize the life of Ishmael.
 - a. Ishmael became the father of the Arab nations. Link this with the prophecy concerning his future in Genesis 16:11–12, and share a way you see this prophetic word in effect today.

6. From your study today, share something that stands out to you concerning:
 - a. God's will

 - b. God's compassion

FIFTH DAY: Read Genesis 21:22–34

1. At this time, Abraham was still living in Abimelech's kingdom. In Genesis 21:22a Abimelech and his military *commander* came to Abraham. According to Genesis 21:22b–23, what did they:
 - a. Acknowledge (verse 22b)

 - b. Request (verse 23)
 - (1) What does this reveal to you about Abraham's witness among them?

 - (2) What witness do you desire to have?

2. Abraham swore to deal well with Abimelech (Genesis 21:24). However, why did he also rebuke Abimelech? Genesis 21:25

3. Abimelech claimed he did not *know* his *servants* had done this (Genesis 21:26). How did the men resolve this conflict? Genesis 21:27–31

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Beersheba means *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven*. The word *to swear* in Hebrew means *to bind by seven things*.

4. After making a *covenant at Beersheba*, the men parted ways (Genesis 21:32). What did Abraham do after this? Genesis 21:33–34

a. Abraham already knew God as *El-Elyon* (*God Most High*, Genesis 14:18,22) and *El-Shaddai* (*The All-Sufficient One*, Genesis 17:1). Yet, this was the first time he used the name *the LORD, the Everlasting God*, translated *El-Olam* (Genesis 21:33). What does this suggest to you concerning Abraham’s faith?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The tamarisk tree grows 20–30 feet high and is evergreen.

By planting this tree, Abraham was creating a legacy and staking his legal claim to be in Beersheba.

(1) These names of God represent aspects of His character and nature. Which name of God ministers to you presently?

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. The focal point of our study this week was the long-awaited fulfillment of God’s promise. Significantly, there are many parallels between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Jesus. Fill in the chart to explore some of these remarkable comparisons:

	ISAAC	JESUS	YOUR TAKEAWAY
<i>The Promise</i>	Genesis 17:17, 19	Isaiah 7:14	
<i>The Impossibility</i>	Genesis 18:13–14	Luke 1:34–35, 37	
<i>The Timing</i>	Genesis 21:1	Galatians 4:4	
<i>The Miracle</i>	Genesis 21:2, 7	Matthew 1:20–23; Luke 2:7	
<i>The Joy</i>	Genesis 21:6	Luke 1:46–47	

2. How are you blessed by the fact that Our Great Creator makes promises to us that *He* fulfills?