

Genesis 21

Verses 1-7

Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶ Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." ⁷ And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

Even though Sarah was past the age that she could bear a child and Abraham was unable to father a child, God kept His promise.

See Hebrews 11:11-12

¹¹ By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

¹² Therefore even from one man, and one who was as good as dead at that, there were born *descendants who were* just as the stars of heaven in number, and as the innumerable *grains of sand* along the seashore.

³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.

Isaac - means "laughter" and this time it was laughter of joy not unbelief.

Being circumcised was a sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. As mentioned before both parties have an obligation. We know what Jewish males had to do but what was God's role in this? For His part God would confer on them (the Jewish nation) the honor of being God's chosen people.

Verses 8-10

⁸ And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹ Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking *Isaac*. ¹⁰ Therefore she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave woman and her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be an heir with my son Isaac!”

⁸ And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

This occurred in his second or third year.

Given the size of Abrahams family (slaves, servants and paid workers) which probably numbers in the thousands by now, it must have been quite a feast.

⁹ Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking *Isaac*.

It was clear that Ishmael saw Isaac as a threat to his status and his attitude toward Ishmael was a red light (warning) to Sarah. Paul confirms this when he says that Ishmael persecuted Isaac.

See Galatians 4:28-30

²⁸ And you, brothers *and sisters*, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ But as at that time the son who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one *who was born according to the Spirit*, so it is even now. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say?

**“Drive out the slave woman and her son,
For the son of the slave woman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.”**

¹⁰ Therefore she said to Abraham, “Drive out this slave woman and her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be an heir with my son Isaac!”

Ishmael was 13 years older than Isaac. Given the age difference Isaac would not be able to defend himself against Ishmael and he may have been harmed or even killed.

Verses 11-13

¹¹ The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son *Ishmael*. ¹² But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the boy and your slave woman; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. ¹³ And of the son of the slave woman I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant.”

God gave Abraham two reason why it was ok to send Hagar and Ismael away.

1. Because his descendants would be named thru Isaac.
2. Ishmael will be blessed by God because he is a son of Abraham and Hagar would be blessed thru her son.

Verses 14-16

¹⁴ So Abraham got up early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water, and gave *them* to Hagar, putting *them* on her shoulder, and gave *her* the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. ¹⁵ When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, “May I not see the boy die!” And she sat opposite him, and raised her voice and wept.

¹⁴ So Abraham got up early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water, and gave *them* to Hagar, putting *them* on her shoulder, and gave *her* the boy, and sent her away.

Did Abraham send her away with some bread and one container of water? Was this any way for a man, especially a wealthy man, to treat his wife and son? Also, he could have given them a mule to lighten the burden. Who would send a woman and her 15 or 16 year old son into a wilderness with next to nothing?

Did Abraham assume that all would go well in the wilderness because God had told him that Ishmael would become a nation, and therefore they needed next to nothing as they were sent away?

Abraham was asked to leave Ur but God did not send him away with nothing.

See Genesis12:4 - 5

⁴ So Abram went away as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the people which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; so they came to the land of Canaan

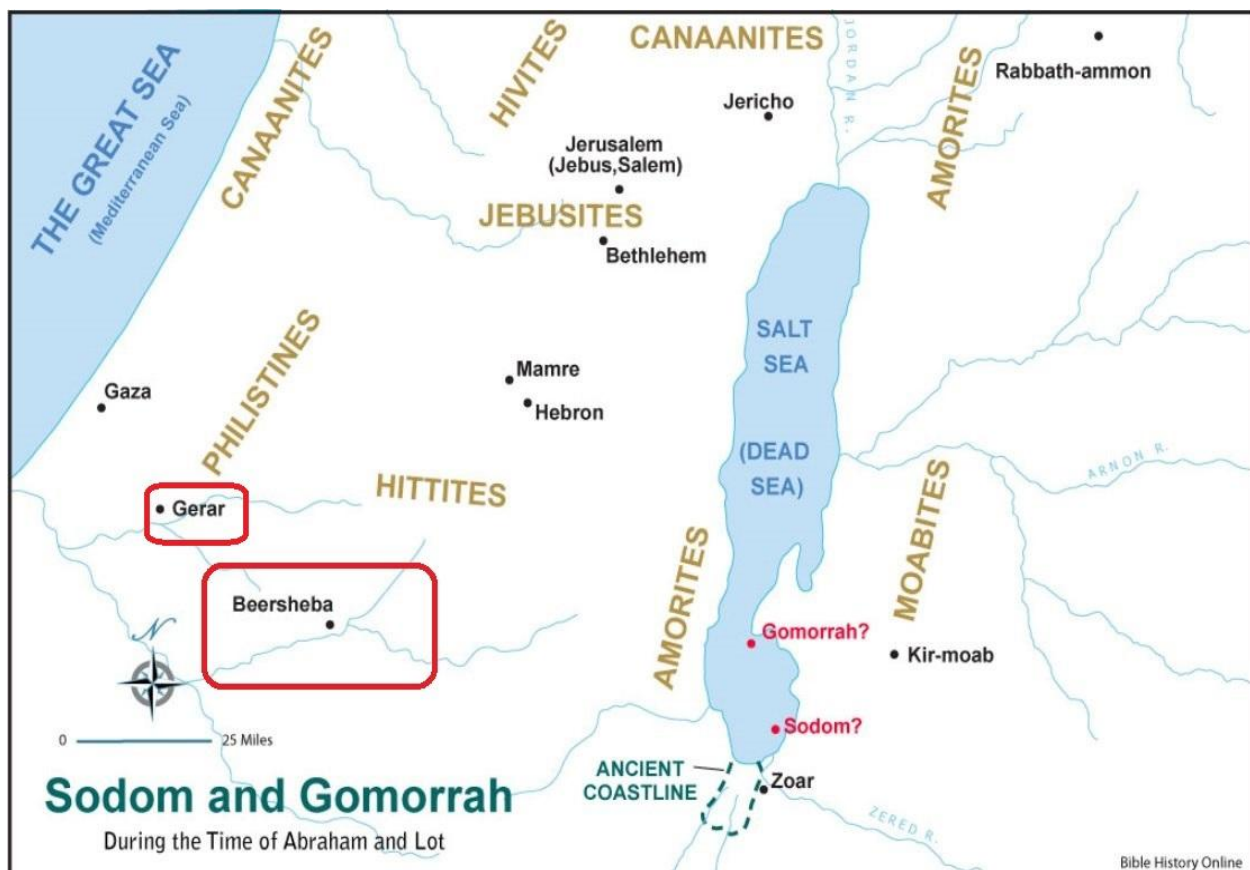
1. Abraham was 75 when he left Haran not 15 or 16.
2. He had a lot of possessions plus slaves and workers to help in his journey.

If Abraham were a pagan his behavior would be less offensive but being a man of faith, having great wealth, and having reached an age of 102 or 103 he should have treated his wife and son with more respect.

And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Abraham was living in Gerar so Hagar and Ishmael left there and were wandering around in the wilderness of Beersheba.

See pic 2105 Gerar and Beersheba



¹⁵ When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶ Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, “May I not see the boy die!” And she sat opposite him, and raised her voice and wept.

Hagar and Ismael were accustomed to a good life style and now they were homeless and without any means of support. Without God’s intervention this would have been a disaster.

Verses 17-21

¹⁷ God heard the boy crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸ Get up, lift up the boy, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ And God was with the boy, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

¹⁷ God heard the boy crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

This is a good reminder that God is concerned with the suffering of mankind.

¹⁸ Get up, lift up the boy, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.

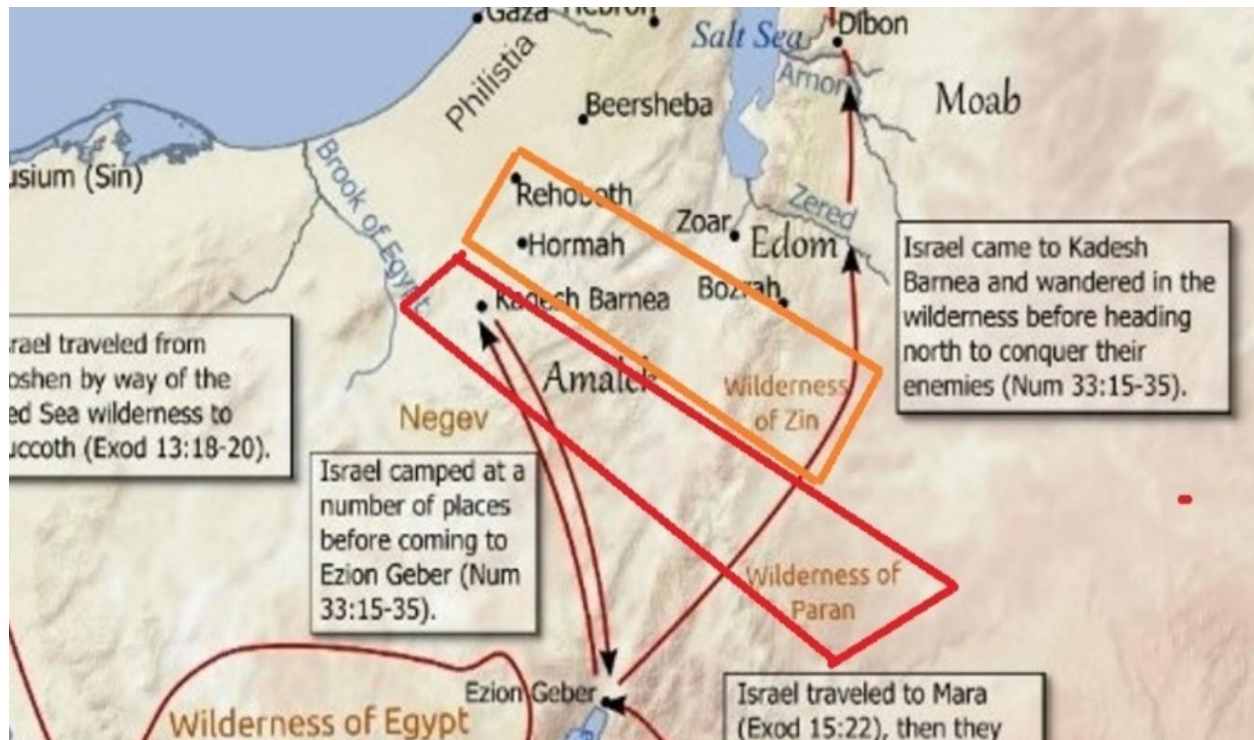
Ismael will have 12 sons and their descendants became much more numerous than Jacobs 12 sons. The Arab world has a combined population of around 464 million in 2022 and the Jewish population was around 15 million.

¹⁹ 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.

God cares for all people and nations. Our job is to become like Him.

²⁰ And God was with the boy, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. ²¹ He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

See Maps 2110 Wilderness of Paran



This event took place in the wilderness of Beersheba but in time they moved farther south to the wilderness of Paran (the area in Red).

Hagar chose a wife from Egypt (her homeland) for her son.

Verses 22-24

²² Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, “God is with you in all that you do; ²³ so now, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my descendants, but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have resided.” ²⁴ Abraham said, “I swear it.”

Abimelech didn't need his wise counselors to inform him that Abraham was blessed in all that he did. God had warned him in a dream that Abraham was a prophet and the king could see how the household of Abraham continued to increase.

However, the king was concerned that a conflict might arise between the two of them and the outcome would be detrimental to the Philistines. The best was to nip that in the bud would be And the king and his commander wanted to nip this problem in the bud

Abraham had greatly prospered from Abimelech and it was only right that he would promise to do the same to Abimelech and his people.

Verses 25 - 31

²⁵ But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. ²⁶ And Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor did I hear of it until today.” ²⁷ So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. ²⁸ But Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. ²⁹ Then Abimelech said to Abraham, “What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?” ³⁰ He said, “You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness for me, that I dug this well.” ³¹ Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath.

²⁵ But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized.

Abraham had been given permission to live in the land and it was not right that the servants of Abimelech had taken the well by force.

²⁶ And Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor did I hear of it until today.”

Abimelech was again innocent because he knew nothing about the conflict until Abraham brought the matter up.

²⁷ So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant.

Abraham gave him a good will offering of sheep and oxen and they made a covenant to guarantee a peaceful coexistence.

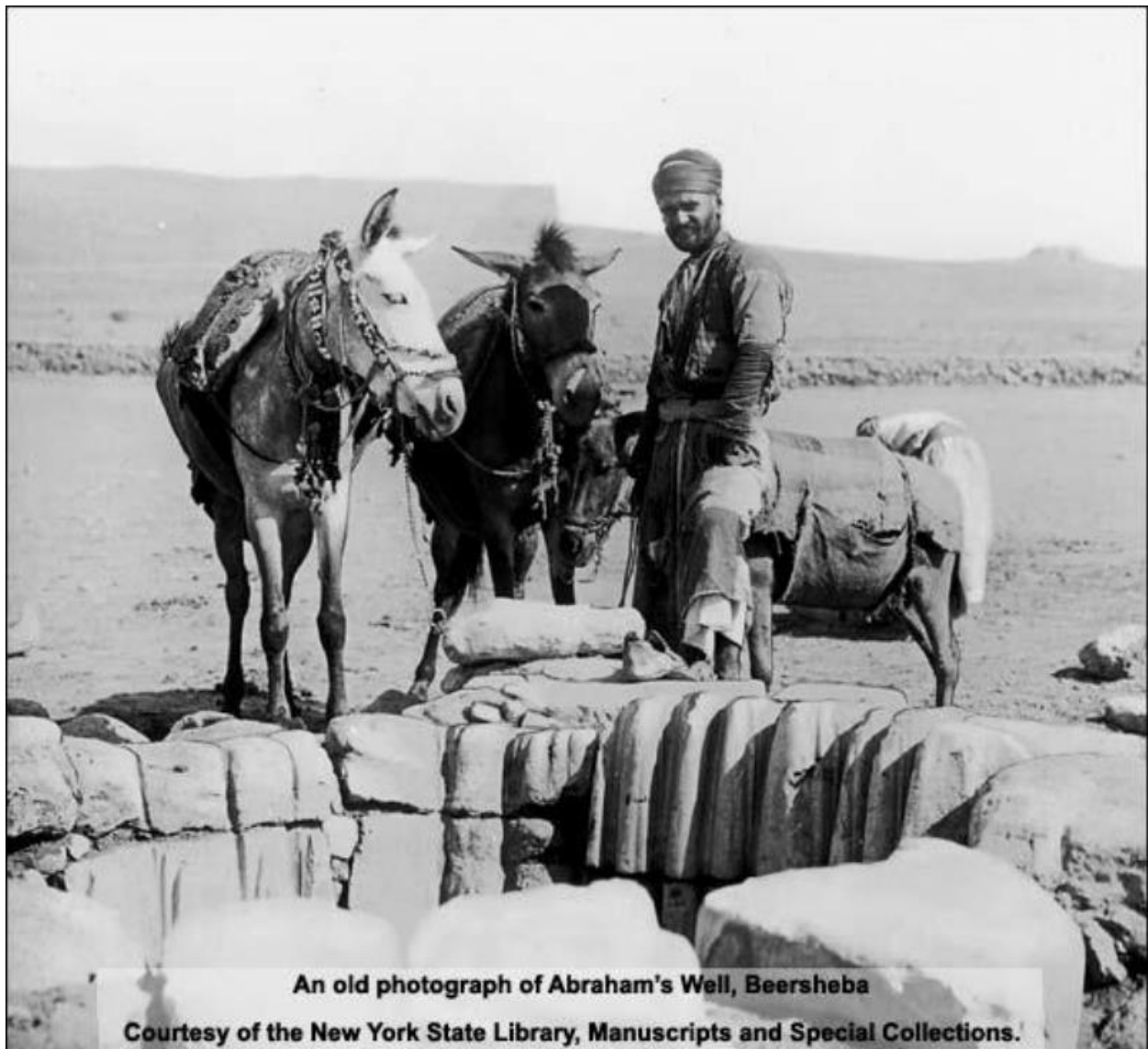
³⁰ He said, “You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness for me, that I dug this well.

Abraham had not done anything wrong this time but he may have felt obligated to prove it since he had deceived Abimelech in the past.

³¹ Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath.

Beersheba means “well of the oath”.

See pics 2115



An old photograph of Abraham's Well, Beersheba

Courtesy of the New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections.

The well is 121/2 feet in diameter, it is 44 feet from the top of the well to the surface of the water and the bottom 16 feet was excavated thru solid rock.

A few enhancements have been added to meet the needs of today's tourists and to protect their safety. Approximately 25,000 people a year visit this site.

See pics 2120



Verses 32-34

³² So they made a covenant at Beersheba; and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, got up and returned to the land of the Philistines.

³³ *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God. ³⁴ And Abraham resided in the land of the Philistines for many days.

The 3 men returned to their respective homes in Philistia.