

## ***In the Beginning***

### **Studies in Genesis**

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Jersey Shore Baptist Church

Pastor Phil Erickson

October 7, 2015 (revised from original Sunday School Series started in January 2008)

### **Chapter Twenty-One – The Birth of Isaac**

#### **Memory Verse – Genesis 21:1**

*And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.*

#### **I The Arrival of Isaac (vs. 1 – 9)**

#### **II The Alienation of Ishmael (vs. 9 – 22)**

#### **III The Agreement with Abimelech (vs. 22 – 34)**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter twenty-one we finally arrive at the birth of Isaac. Isaac had been promised 25 years ago to Abraham and Sarah, and now he has finally arrived. He was the child of promise; the child that would be in the lineage of our Saviour. In the previous chapter, we saw Abraham and Sarah struggling again with a sin that was conceived back in Ur of the Chaldees. That sin had to be dealt with before this child could be brought forth. Isaac is a picture of the new birth; and as the sinner must come to terms with sin and its wages before he can be given the new birth; so did Abraham and Sarah have to face their sin before God would bless with the child. God always does what He says He will do; but sometimes we must wait until we are ready to receive the blessing.

We will notice in this chapter many similarities between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Christ. It is amazing how God can take real events of the past and use them to illustrate events that are yet future. God did the miraculous in bringing forth Isaac; so the Israelites could trust Him to bring forth the Messiah; and we can trust Him to do all that He said He would do for us.

#### **I The Arrival of Isaac (vs. 1 – 9)**

##### **A The Miracle of Conception in the Birth of Isaac (vs. 1 – 2)**

1 The age of Sarah and Abraham (Genesis 17:17; 18:11 – 13; Romans 4:19)

2 The timing of the event (Genesis 18:10)

##### **B The Model of Christ in the Birth of Isaac**

The birth of Isaac bears a striking resemblance to the birth of Christ in many ways making Isaac's birth a type or a picture of the birth of our Lord. A. W. Pink in his work, *Gleanings in Genesis*, points out the following:

- 1 Isaac was the promised seed and son; and so was Christ. (Genesis 17:16; 3:5; Isaiah 7:14)
- 2 In both cases there was a long period of time between the promise of birth and the fulfillment of that promise. (Genesis 12:7)
- 3 In both cases the announcement of the birth to the mothers and the reception of the news were similar. (Genesis 18:12 – 14; Luke 1:34 – 37)
- 4 In both cases the name of the child was specified before birth. (Genesis 17:19; Matthew 1:21)
- 5 Both births occurred at an appointed time. (Genesis 21:2; Galatians 4:4)
- 6 Both births were miraculous. (Consider also the birth of Samuel and the birth of John the Baptist)
- 7 The name Isaac, which means *laughter*, was given by Abraham indicating the delight of the father. So too did Jesus' Father declare His delight, when He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

These types, which are replete throughout the *Book of Genesis*, remind us of the infallibility of the Word of God. How could any human instrument paint such an accurate and beautiful picture of our Lord centuries before His birth?

## **II The Alienation of Ishmael (vs. 9 – 22)**

After the birth of Isaac, Ishmael had to be sent away. We see the true nature of Ishmael, who is a picture of the flesh, in his mocking. Remember, we are told by God that Isaac was the child of promise; therefore, Ishmael is not merely mocking the child, or his parents; he is mocking God. Notice that the true nature of Ishmael is not revealed until after the birth of Isaac. We will look at this passage in both a practical way, and we will examine it as a picture or type of the flesh.

### **A The Practical Teaching**

- 1 Early on in the life of Isaac, there was conflict between him and his brother.
- 2 Sarah wanted to remove the conflict; so she ordered her husband to send Ishmael and his mother away.
- 3 Abraham is grieved by what Sarah asks; but is assured by God that He will take care of Ishmael; which He does.
- 4 Abraham gives no inheritance to Ishmael. He only gets a small supply of water and bread.

### **B The Picture Treasury**

- 1 Isaac is a picture of the new birth; the new creature. The new birth is a miracle performed by God. The deadness of Sarah's womb reminds of the dead spirit of man, which must be quickened or brought to life by God.
- 2 Ishmael is a picture of the flesh; the old nature. There is no miracle in the natural birth. The minute that the new man is born, there is conflict between him and the old man. (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:14 - 25)
- 3 Hagar is a picture of the Law; thus Ishmael was born under the Law. (Galatians 4:22 - 31)
- 4 Sarah is a picture of grace; thus Isaac was born under grace.
- 5 Abraham gave nothing to Ishmael; except provide for his most basic physical needs. The Bible tells us: "*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*" (Romans 13:14)
- 6 Ishmael had to be sent away. The flesh needs to be put to death. (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5; Galatians 5:24)
- 7 It grieved Abraham to send Ishmael away. It is difficult for us to deny the flesh, and put away the lusts thereof. We want to hold on to things that God wants us to surrender.
- 8 Isaac grew stronger; and Ishmael goes off the scene. (v 8) Our new man will grow when we put off the old man; and feed the new man through the nourishment of the Word of God. (1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12 - 14)

*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (1 Peter 2:2)*

### **III The Agreement with Abimelech (vs. 22 - 34)**

I have often wondered why this particular event is recorded here in this chapter. It almost seems like it was unnecessary. But in light of what we have mentioned here regarding the birth of Isaac being a picture of the new birth, consider the following:

#### **A The Fearfulness of Abraham Before the Birth of Isaac (Genesis 20)**

Jesus said, *the flesh is weak*. The servant of God who attempts to do the will of God and the work of God in the flesh will be powerless. We see Abraham as powerless before Abimelech in chapter 20; but this was before the birth of Isaac, before the *new birth*.

#### **B The Fearlessness of Abraham After the Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21)**

The man who is born of God, who walks after the Spirit of God, will have power in the world.