



LESSON 11

God sends baby Isaac

GENESIS 21:1-14



God is faithful to keep His promises.



“And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him” (Gen 21:2).

Supporting Truths

1. God keeps His promises.
2. God is sovereign, able to keep His promises.
3. Because God is faithful, God's promises should be received by faith.
4. God is faithful to bless through His covenant with Abraham.
5. God is faithful to bless through the promised Messiah.

Objectives

1. Describe how God kept His promise to give Sarah a son.
2. Explain how God was able to give a baby when it seemed impossible.
3. Describe what Abraham and Sarah did that showed they received Isaac by faith.
4. Explain how Ishmael's rejection and prosperity were connected to the covenant.
5. Explain how Isaac's birth looked forward to the birth of his descendant, Jesus.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends baby Isaac • Genesis 21:1–14



Lesson Summary

God, faithful to His promise, gave Abraham and Sarah the son they had been expecting for 25 years. Abraham received Isaac by faith by naming him and circumcising him just as God had instructed him to do. Sarah received Isaac by faith. She rejoiced and declared in that God was the one who had caused him to be born. Unfortunately, their past sin caused pain when Ishmael mocked baby Isaac. Even so, Abraham and Sarah acted by faith by sending Ishmael away, proving that they trusted God and God alone.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The gospel began when God promised Eve that her seed would crush the serpent, and the gospel continued when God chose Abraham to be the ancestor of the promised seed. But the promise seemed like a failure for 25 years, until God proved His faithfulness and power by causing old and barren Sarah to have a son, Isaac. Abraham and Sarah had learned to trust God, and through their faith God provided a way for the promised seed to come. Jesus, the seed of Abraham, has come to save all who have faith like Abraham's.

LAST WEEK



God judges Sodom
and Gomorrah
Genesis 18:16–19:29

THIS WEEK



God sends baby Isaac
Genesis 21:1–14

NEXT WEEK



God tests Abraham
Genesis 22:1–19

PROMISE

Lesson Commentary

God is faithful to keep His promises.

When Abraham was 75 years old, God promised to make him the father of a great nation and a blessing to the whole world (Gen 12:2-3). Now, 25 years later, God finally gave Abraham the son who would make this all possible. During the long wait, Abraham and Sarah struggled to believe, but God's timing is always best (2 Pet 3:8-9). God used the delay to correct Abraham and Sarah's doubt until they stood strong in faith, ready to believe both God's promise and His method.



THINK ABOUT IT

Because God is faithful believers have hope when all seems hopeless.

Abraham and Sarah received Isaac from God by faith (21:1-7)

The story first emphasizes God's character. God is faithful (Deut 7:9). He does

what He promises. He promised Sarah a son, and now He gave her a son "as He had promised" (Gen 21:1). God's faithfulness is personal, because He cares about individual people. Just as God remembered Noah (8:1), so God visited Sarah and did "for Sarah" what He had promised (21:1). It is good to know that God is not controlling life from a distance. He is intimately involved, faithfully doing good to those who trust Him (Lam 3:22-23).

God is also sovereign: He controls all things, including the timing of all things (Dan 2:21). He specified the time when the son would come (Gen 18:10), and He gave the son at the appointed time (21:2). As the one in control, He is also **omnipotent**, able to do whatever He pleases (Jer 32:27). He was able to give Abraham and Sarah a son even though Sarah had always been barren, and even though they had for a long time now been too old to have children (Gen 21:2, 5, 7). To reaffirm that God had done exactly as He said, Genesis 21:3 emphasizes that this was the son "whom Sarah bore him," not the son of Hagar.

God makes good promises and keeps them according to His specific plan. It is wise to follow His plan.

Instead of doubting as at previous times, Abraham and Sarah responded with whole-hearted **faith: they trusted, believed, and followed God.** It

might seem that faith would be easy now that God had fulfilled His promise, but it is difficult, even when we receive blessings, to remember to worship God as the giver of all good. Abraham and Sarah did remember. Abraham acknowledged God as the giver by obediently naming his son Isaac (21:3; cf. 17:21). Abraham also obeyed by circumcising Isaac on the eighth day. **Circumcision** is performing a special surgery that was the sign of God's covenant (21:4; cf. 17:12).

Sarah responded with thanks by crediting God as the source of her joy: "God has made laughter for me" (21:6; cf. Heb 11:11). In fact, the name Isaac means "he laughs." Sarah's laughter is meant to recall the time when she laughed in doubt (Gen 18:12), showing that Sarah joyfully acknowledged that she had been wrong to doubt. Also, when Sarah says that everyone will laugh with her (21:6), she shows that she believes in the whole of God's promise to create a great nation and bless all nations through her child (12:2-3). We should rejoice with Sarah, for God is faithful. Through the nation that came from her God sent Jesus.

Abraham sent Ishmael away by faith (21:8-14)

Unfortunately, not everyone rejoiced with Sarah. Ishmael made fun of Isaac. This happened when Isaac was 2 or 3 years old and Ishmael about 16. Sarah responded by urging Abraham to drive Ishmael and Hagar away (21:10). This was not the first time Sarah had desired this. But before, Sarah had herself driven Hagar away by mistreating her (16:6). However, now

THINK ABOUT IT

Do we pause in the midst of blessing to thank God?



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Abraham was the one responsible to make the decision and sent Ishmael away. Abraham wrestled with what to do (21:11), facing the painful consequences of his past sin. Ishmael was his son, and he loved him. But God gave Abraham the assurance he needed by reminding Abraham that God had chosen Isaac's **offspring**—Isaac's children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and on. Also, God promised that Ishmael would become great for Abraham's sake (21:12–13). The previous time Sarah had driven out Hagar, Abraham had let his wife take the lead and did not seek God's counsel (16:6). This time, although Abraham did as his wife said, he heard God's counsel and acted according to his responsibility to lead. Abraham provided Hagar and Ishmael with what water and food they could carry and sent them on their way (21:14).



THINK ABOUT IT
Contemplating the consequences of sin is a powerful guard against choosing sin.

This seems like a harsh reaction to teenage teasing, but there is a much bigger picture. First, Ishmael and Hagar represented human efforts to secure God's promise (Gal 4:22–31). When Abraham sent them away despite his love for

Ishmael, he demonstrated his trust in God, not in man, to fulfill the promise. Second, when Ishmael mocked Isaac, and when Hagar despised Sarah (Gen 16:4), they made themselves enemies of the covenant. There is no blessing apart from the blessing through Abraham, for those who curse the line of Abraham will be cursed (12:2–3). Hagar and Ishmael brought their own punishment upon themselves. Third, Abraham only sent Ishmael away once he knew God would care for his son. God promised to make Ishmael great for Abraham's sake (21:13), and God did just that by preserving Ishmael's life and making him strong (21:19–20).

God applies these same principles today. Blessing still comes by faith in God, not in man (Jer 17:5–8). There is still no blessing apart from the line of Abraham, for only those who come to God by faith in Jesus are saved from God's wrath (John 3:36). It is true that, like Ishmael, those who reject the **covenant**, God's promise, still enjoy many blessings on this earth because of those who do believe. But true, eternal blessing only comes to those who believe God's promise in God's way, just as Sarah and Abraham learned to do (Hab 2:4). May we become blessed children of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:29). Only those whose sins are forgiven in Jesus Christ will experience the spiritual blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants.

THINK ABOUT IT
Ishmael, like his cousin Lot, was blessed by God for Abraham's sake.



Lesson Outline

God is faithful to keep His promises.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God gave baby Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, just as He had promised (21:1–7).
2. Abraham and Sarah believed that Isaac, not Ishmael, was the promised child (21:8–14).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Abraham and Sarah received Isaac from God by faith (21:1–7).
 - The LORD gave Sarah a son exactly as He had promised (21:1–2).
 - Abraham received him in faith by naming him Isaac and circumcising him (21:3–4).
 - Sarah received Isaac in faith by rejoicing in God (21:6).
 - They knew God had done the impossible (21:5, 7).
2. Abraham sent Ishmael away by faith (21:8–14).
 - Ishmael mocked Isaac at Isaac’s party (21:8–9).
 - Sarah told Abraham to drive out Hagar and Ishmael because Isaac was the heir (21:10).
 - God encouraged Abraham to send them away by promising that He would make Isaac the heir and also make Ishmael great (21:12–13).
 - Abraham sent them away, but kindly gave them food and water (21:14).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who was the special baby God promised to Abraham?**
Isaac.
- 2. How old were Abraham and Sarah when God provided baby Isaac?**
Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90.
- 3. How did Ishmael react?**
He treated Isaac badly.
- 4. Where were Ishmael and Hagar sent?**
They were sent into the wilderness, but God still took care of them.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. When did God say that Abraham and Sarah would have Isaac?**
God told Abraham and Sarah that Isaac would be born within one year (Gen 17:21).
When Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90.
- 2. Why was Isaac's birth a miracle?**
Sarah was too old to have a baby.
- 3. Why did Abraham and Sarah name their son Isaac?**
God told Abraham to name his son Isaac (17:19).
- 4. What did Abraham and Sarah do after Isaac was born?**
Abraham made a great feast for everyone (21:8). He rejoiced that he had a son from Sarah.
- 5. What did Sarah tell Abraham to do?**
Sarah told Abraham to “cast out this bondwoman and her son” (21:10). Abraham did not like what Sarah said but God told Abraham to listen to what Sarah wanted.
- 6. Why did God tell Abraham to listen to what Sarah had said?**
God told Abraham, “In Isaac your seed shall be called” (21:12). God wanted Abraham to know that Isaac, not Hagar's son, would receive God's covenant promise.
- 7. Do you think that God took care of Hagar and her son?**
Yes, God took care of them because God is faithful and He promised to make Ishmael great for Abraham's sake (21:13).
- 8. Why was God making His covenant promise to Isaac and not to Ishmael?**
God is sovereign and He chooses what to do. We can trust in God that He will make wise choices. Isaac, not Ishmael, was the answer to God's promise.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

FAMILY PORTRAIT

Let each child draw and color a picture of his family on a blank sheet of paper. Talk about the fact that our families all are different—some have lots of sisters and brothers, some don't have any, etc.—but that God gave each of us the family that is best for us, just as God gave Abraham and Sarah to Isaac to be his daddy and mommy.

TEACH A PUPPET BIBLE NAMES

Introduce a new puppet to the children. Help the puppet learn the names of the Bible characters that the children have been hearing about over the last few weeks. Let the children review with the puppet as they talk about Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah. Introduce them to Isaac and Ishmael in anticipation of today's lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

BABY TALK

Show a baby doll to the children. Ask if any of them were ever babies. Ask the children to tell you who gives babies to mommies and daddies. Explain that God gave Abraham and Sarah a baby even though Sarah was too old to have children.

WAITING...

Ask the children if any of them have a birthday coming up. Then ask them if it is hard to wait until their birthday actually arrives. Do they wait with a happy face or a grumpy face? Explain that Abraham and Sarah had to wait 25 years before God gave them baby Isaac. Tell them that God used this long wait to teach Abraham and Sarah to trust in Him.



APPLY

REVIEW NECKLACE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Yarn, glue, scissors, crayons, masking tape, hole punch, craft page.

Directions: Provide pieces of yarn and sets of pictures from craft book with holes punched in the top of the pictures. Have the children color the pictures and then help them string them onto the yarn. Tie the yarn to make a necklace.



Review Necklace
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

GUESS WHO

Bring a baby picture of yourself to class. Hold up the picture so the class can see it. Have the children guess who the baby is (you could also bring in baby pictures of other children or adults known by the children). Once the answer is given, explain that in today's lesson, they will learn about a promised baby, Isaac.

PROMISE KEEPER

At the beginning of class, promise the children a small gift or treat. Tell the children that you will give it to them at the end of class. Ask the children why they have faith that you will keep your promise. Explain that God always keeps his promises because He is good and cannot lie (Num 23:19). Tell the children that in today's lesson they will see God keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah by giving them a son, Isaac. Give the children the gift or treat at the end of class and remind them that God keeps His promises.



ILLUSTRATE

FAMILY PICTURE

Show the class a picture of your extended family. Point out aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, etc. Explain that all these people came from one family, and point out the patriarch and matriarch from which all these family members came. Tell the children that Abraham and Sarah were the first mommy and daddy that God chose to begin His special family, the Israelites. Explain that their son, Isaac, was God's choice to receive the blessings of God's promises to Abraham and his descendants.

FAVORITE DAY

Ask the children what their favorite day of the year is (answers might include their birthday, a holiday, a family vacation, last day of school, etc.). Figure out how long the children will have to wait until this special day arrives. Then ask the children if it is hard to wait for this day. Tell the children that Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years for their special day, the birth of their son, Isaac. Explain that God used this delay to teach them to trust in Him.



APPLY

GOD SENDS BABY ISAAC

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft page, card stock, tissue paper, scissors, tape, and crayons.

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page on card stock and a piece of tissue paper. Tell the children to color baby Isaac. After coloring, tell the children to cut out baby Isaac and his cradle. Make sure the children make cuts on all of the dotted lines. Have the children fold the cradle on each solid black line. Put the cradle together, using tape to secure the corners on the inside. Wrap baby Isaac in tissue paper and lay him in the cradle.

God Sends Baby Isaac
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

WAITING

Ask the children whether they have ever waited a long time for something. Were they happy when it finally arrived? Ask whether they are waiting for something now. Ask them what they would think if it would take 25 years to happen. Abraham and Sarah had been waiting for 25 years for the birth of their son, Isaac.

PROMISES

Ask children to explain what a promise is. Then ask the children if they have ever made a promise. Did they keep their promise? If not, why? Tell the children that God is not like us. He has made many promises in the Bible, and He always keeps His promises. God never lies (Num 23:19), and there is nothing or no one that can stop God from keeping His promise. Not even the age of Sarah was able to stop God from keeping His promise. In today's lesson, we will see how God allowed Sarah to become the mother of Isaac even though she was already too old to have children.



ILLUSTRATE

FAMILY CHAIN

Bring in a chain and show it to the class. Point out that a chain is made up of individual links connected one to another. Use this object to teach the children about baby Isaac's place in the family line of Jesus. Using Matthew 1, explain that Abraham is the first "link" in the chain and Jesus is the last. Point out that Isaac is the second "link" in the line of the Messiah. Using Matt 1, you might also point out other links in the line of Christ (Jacob, Boaz, David, Solomon, Joseph, etc.).

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD

Sarah was too old to have a baby when Isaac was born, but that was no problem for God. God is able to do whatever He desires. Ask the children if they can remember any other miracles recorded in the Bible (answers might include: creation of heavens and earth, 10 plagues, crossing of the Red Sea, water from a rock, manna and meat from heaven, battle of Jericho, birth of Jesus, etc.).



APPLY

REVIEW GAME

Review the questions from the lesson time with a small group of children. Ask them about struggles they have with waiting and patience. Talk with them about being patient with their parents and doing what they said. Brainstorm four or five areas that your children struggle with regarding believing and trusting God's promises. Have the other children think of ways to put their trust in God.