

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Genesis 21:13-14, 17-21; 26:2-5, 12-13

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L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be the answers to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. In what way or ways did God keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah?

God intervened in their old age and supernaturally made it possible for Sarah to conceive and give birth to Isaac. Though they did not see this in their lifetime, God gave them many descendants through Isaac that still exist today.

2. In what way or ways did God keep His promise to Abraham and Hagar?

God intervened and saved Ishmael, their natural born son, from death in the wilderness. Though they did not see this in their lifetime, God gave them many descendants through Ishmael that still exist today.

3. Do you think Abraham taught Hagar and Ishmael about the true God? Give a reason for your answer.

Yes, because Abraham had many experiences with the true God and he kept all of God's commands and laws. Yes, because Abraham loved Ishmael and would have wanted to encourage Hagar and Ishmael with the promise of God to them. Yes, because in this way Hagar had two witnesses to the promise of God: one from Abraham who reported God's promise and one from God himself, from “the angel of the LORD.” Yes, because as one who knew God, Abraham would want others to know the true God too.

4. What reason does God give Isaac for blessing him and his descendants (see Genesis 26:5)? What might this reason mean to Isaac as a father of Esau and Jacob? What might this reason mean to all parents everywhere?

Abraham kept all of God's laws and commands, and Abraham did whatever God told him to do. God told Isaac that he had received God's blessings because of Abraham's obedience (this would be a matter of Isaac receiving the grace of God: he had not earned God's blessing by his own obedience). Therefore, one reason Isaac might want to obey God too was so his children could be blessed by God. This becomes a reason for all

parents to obey God and teach their children about God. The blessings of God can be handed down to children by their parents if they obey God and teach their children about the true God and the importance of believing and obeying God and His word.

5. As an alien in the land, in what way or ways might Isaac have demonstrated and taught about the nature of the true God to others?

In spite of all the odds against him as an alien, God blessed Isaac. He was blessed by the true God and not because he worshiped the gods of the land in which he resided. His neighbors watched the God he worshiped bless him, and he could tell them that his blessings came from the true God. However, this does not mean that his neighbors would come to love and obey the true God, or even come to like Isaac as their neighbor. We learn that their idolatry and evil practices became worse and worse until God finally gave their land to the Israelites in the time of Joshua. They had no excuse for not obeying the true God and teaching their children about the true God, because they had the work of God in Isaac as an object lesson for them in addition to Isaac teaching them about the true God as God blessed him.

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