

International Bible Lesson Commentary ***Genesis 21:13-14, 17-21; 26:2-5, 12-13***

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, October 20, 2013
L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, October 20, 2013**, is from **Genesis 21:13-14, 17-21; 26:2-5, 12-13**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the *International Bible Lesson Commentary* website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught and in *The Oklahoman* newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Genesis 21:13-14

(Genesis 21:13) “As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.”

Abraham had to send Ishmael away at least temporarily. When Abraham died at the age of 175, both Ishmael and Isaac attended his burial (Genesis 25:9). Because Ishmael was Abraham’s son, God promised to make a great nation of him also (some of Ishmael’s descendants are listed in Genesis 25). Though the way of salvation in Jesus the Messiah would be traced through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God blessed Ishmael with knowledge of the true God and numerous descendants because of Abraham. Ishmael could choose to pass on the knowledge of the true God to his children (Abraham had Ishmael circumcised in obedience to God, and presumably Abraham taught Ishmael about the true God: see Genesis 17:23) .

(Genesis 21:14) So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

Though Abraham loved Ishmael, Abraham rose early in the morning to obey God (God had told him to do what Sarah wanted). Later, Abraham would rise early in the morning to take Isaac to Mount Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice in obedience to God (see Genesis 22). Abraham probably gave Hagar more than bread and water (the Bible does not say); the Bible says Abraham gave her the necessities of life (bread and water) when he sent her away. Abraham loved Ishmael, so this was not easy for him to do, and he only did so after receiving permission from God and only after receiving the promise of

God's blessing upon and protection of his son. When we remember that Ishmael and Isaac both attended Abraham's burial, we can believe that Abraham gave up and received back both of his sons, but in different ways.

Genesis 21:17-21

(Genesis 21:17) And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

God did not abandon Hagar and Ishmael. The "angel of God" was probably "the Son of God" before He came to earth in human flesh. He spoke to Hagar from heaven and gave her words of comfort. She should not be afraid, because He heard the voice of the boy. Abraham had taught them about the true God and God was true to them. They could remember this intervention of God in their behalf, and they could tell their descendants about the faithfulness of the true God to those who trust Him.

(Genesis 21:18) Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

God told Hagar not to abandon Ishmael. God reaffirmed to her the promise He had given to Abraham (which Abraham had probably told her about when he sent her away). After He spoke words of comfort to her, God told Hagar to comfort her son. Later, when Abraham took Isaac to the top of Mount Moriah, he would not need to sacrifice Isaac. God restored Ishmael to his mother (Hagar) and father (Abraham), and God restored Isaac to his father (Abraham) and mother (Sarah). God spoke the same promise to Hagar that He spoke to Abraham, and God fulfilled His promise (which we can see fulfilled even today in the Middle East). God keeps His promises and His word is true.

(Genesis 21:19) Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

God opened Hagar's eyes so she could see a well of water, perhaps a well that God himself (the angel of the Lord) had miraculously dug for her and the boy at that time, or perhaps a well God had others dig previously so it would be ready for them. She filled her bag with water and gave her son water to drink. What Abraham had done for them had come to an end. From that day forth, they knew they could trust God to care for them. She followed the guidance of God and partook of God's provisions. God met Hagar's and Ishmael's needs from that day forward.

(Genesis 21:20) God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.

We cannot emphasize enough that God was with Ishmael, and Ishmael knew the true God. Ishmael was responsible to teach the truth about God and to his children. The Bible lists his descendants in Genesis 25:12-18 (12 princes of 12 tribes were born to

him). Whereas Isaac would be a farmer and shepherd to meet his needs, Ishmael would be a hunter.

(Genesis 21:21) He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Paran included the Sinai Peninsula, an area that Moses would later cross when God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Hagar, who was Egyptian, found a wife for Ishmael from nearby Egypt. The marriage would have been arranged by Hagar as was the custom of the day, since she was the only parent active in his upbringing from that point forward.

Genesis 26:2-5

(Genesis 26:2) The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you.

Whereas Ishmael and Hagar lived near Egypt, God wanted Isaac to avoid Egypt (even though Egypt would later become a place of refuge in time of famine for Jacob and his family). God led Abraham to the land of promise that He gave to him and his descendants; so, God wanted Isaac, the son of the promise, to live where He showed him in the land of promise.

(Genesis 26:3) Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham.

An alien does not live in his true homeland, but somewhere else. The land would eventually become the possession and true homeland of the Israelites after the time of Moses (when Joshua led the Israelites to take possession of it); however, it would not be a true homeland for Isaac during his lifetime. He would live in the land believing the promise of God that the land would belong to and be possessed by his descendants. As an alien in the land, Isaac would enjoy the presence and blessing of God, which would be more than sufficient for him and his family and their needs.

(Genesis 26:4) I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring all these lands; and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring,

God gave to Isaac the same promise He gave to Abraham. No doubt Abraham made certain that Isaac knew about God's promise to them. No doubt Abraham told Isaac about the ceremony that God had told him to prepare when God had made to His contract or covenant with him. Throughout history, the descendants of Abraham and Isaac have blessed the nations of the earth in almost every field of endeavor, including science, medicine, and national leadership in many places. Eventually, one of their offspring, Jesus the Messiah, would bless all the nations of the earth and give eternal life to all who would believe in Him, both Jews and Gentiles.

(Genesis 26:5) because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

Abraham’s faith led him to obey God immediately (or as soon as he possibly could “early in the morning”). God counted Abraham’s faith as righteousness, because Abraham believed God and acted on his belief by doing exactly what God told him as soon as he could. God specifically said to Isaac that He was blessing Isaac, not because of what Isaac had done, but because Abraham “obeyed my voice and my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Not only did Abraham obey God’s laws, he also did whatever God told him to do. God expected Isaac to do likewise and teach his family to do likewise. Abraham was to be his example, as he is for all who live by faith.

Genesis 26:12-13

(Genesis 26:12) Isaac sowed seed in that land, and in the same year reaped a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him,

Even as Ishmael met his needs as a hunter, Isaac met his needs as a farmer (and perhaps a shepherd) in a settled location. The reason Isaac reaped a hundredfold was because “the Lord blessed him;” however, Abimelech and those Isaac lived near made him move and quarreled with him over water rights; so, Isaac indeed lived as an alien in the land. God blessed Isaac even though he was as alien in the land, and those who lived in the land saw the blessing and power of the true God in the many good things God did for Isaac. They saw good reasons to trust in the true God as they saw God at work in Isaac’s life.

(Genesis 26:13) and the man became rich; he prospered more and more until he became very wealthy.

Isaac worked as a farmer, but God gave him the growth to become very wealthy. Eventually, because Abimelech saw how God blessed Isaac, Abimelech made peace with Isaac even though he hated Isaac (see Genesis 26:26-33). Hagar had found water for Ishmael in Beer-Sheba (Genesis 21:14-19) and so did Isaac later (Genesis 26:32-33).

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. In what way or ways did God keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah?
2. In what way or ways did God keep His promise to Abraham and Hagar?
3. Do you think Abraham taught Hagar and Ishmael about the true God? Give a reason for your answer.
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?

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?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*. — ©
Copyright 2013 by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. Permission Granted for Not for Profit Use.