

## EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

### Message #49

### Genesis 21:12-21

The verb “drive out” means that Sarah wanted Hagar and Ishmael driven away and expelled from the area (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 181). This is depressing and it all resulted because sinful choices Sarah and Abraham made some seventeen years earlier (Genesis 16:13) and result to Abraham was he was very distressed (21:11), at a real emotional low.

### **GOD GIVES COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIS PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARE DISCOURAGED BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN LAPSES THROUGH HIS WORD AND WORK.**

Those who are in a covenantal relationship with God will find comfort and encouragement through God’s Word and work , because God still blesses His people after their failures.

#### **INDIVIDUAL ENCOURAGEMENT #1-** God encourages Abraham. 21:12-13

God told Abraham to do what Sarah requested and not be “distressed”. There is a godly sorrow over sin, but **God does not want that sorrow causing His people to stay in total depression and despair forever. There comes a point when you need to get over past failures.**

#### **Encouragement Way #1** - God informs Abraham of His will for Isaac. 21:12b

Abraham could find comfort in the fact that God still intended to bless him and fulfill all of His promises to him. This is encouraging because God will still bless and use those who failed.

#### **Encouragement Way #2** - God informs Abraham of His will for Ishmael. 21:13

God promised that He would make a nation out of Ishmael because of the fact that he was the seed of Abraham . This promise, although new to Abraham, was not new to Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 16:8-12).

Notice carefully what God is doing to bring encouragement to Abraham - He is reminding him of what He promised , He is reminding him of His word. **The thing that will always bring God’s people out of depression is God’s Word** as the Psalmist said - “Thy testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors” (Psalm 119:24).

#### **INDIVIDUAL ENCOURAGEMENT #2** - God encourages Hagar. 21:14-21

##### **Part #1** - The depressing circumstances of Hagar. 21:14-16

**(Depressing Circumstance #1)** - Hagar was forced to leave her home. 21:14

All Hagar gets for her years of faithful service is some bread and a skin of water . The Hebrew root word “skin” indicates the water was stagnant and warm (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 290).

**(Depressing Circumstance #2)** - Hagar was forced to watch her son die. 21:15-16

Beersheba (21:14) is a desert-hot place and once one becomes dehydrated in this type of environment strength is gone and one becomes very weak. Ishmael is about 17 years old when this happens - he was circumcised when he was 13 (17 :25) and Abraham was circumcised at age 99 (17:24). He was 100 when Isaac was born (21 :5), making Ishmael 14. If we assume the weaning feast for Isaac was around age 3 (Genesis 21 :8), we may assume that Ishmael is about 17. Here is a 17 year old boy whose father doesn't want him and he is in a desert dying of thirst.

Dr. Allen Ross captures all of this when he writes: "God desires to be the God of the outcast, the rejected, the abused, the dying. The plight of Hagar should draw sympathy from the reader, for she was an unfortunate woman caught in the web of Abraham and Sarah and their faltering efforts to achieve their destiny, and she was the abused and rejected woman who, with the birth of Isaac, was suddenly very much in the way. The deliverance of Hagar and Ishmael should evoke hope in the reader, for God did not let them die in the wilderness but gave them a new life and great future" (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 381).

## **Part #2** - The wonderful encouragement of God. 21:17-21

**(Encouragement Action #1)** - God informed Hagar He heard and understood. 21:17

The "angel of God" is none other than a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity. The Hebrew verb "heard" means to hear in the sense of understanding, attending to and answering or meeting the need (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 836). His gentle rebuke "What's the matter with you, Hagar" was designed to remind her that 16 years earlier, He had provided water for her (Genesis 16:6-7), and He would provide again. When you are low it is easy to forget that it is God who has promised to always care for His people.

**(Encouragement Action #2)** - God informed Hagar He would preserve and *prosper* Ishmael. 21:18

No matter how dismal things were for Hagar, she could always count on the fact that God would fulfill His word and the Arabs exist today because God is a God who keeps His promises.

**(Encouragement Action #3)** - God physically provided for Hagar and Ishmael. 21:19

If God had not opened her eyes to the water, both Hagar and Ishmael would have died . Just as God physically did this for Hagar, so, as Dr. C. I. Scofield said, "the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of believing sinners and directs them to the water of life" (C. I. Scofield, *New Scofield Reference Bible*, Footnote #3, p. 31).

**(Encouragement Action #4)** - God personally cared for Hagar and Ishmael. 21:20-21

**Care Way #1** - God was with Ishmael. 21:20a

God was with one Abraham and Sarah abandoned .

**Care Way #2** - God developed Ishmael. 21:20b

God saw to it that Ishmael grew, not stagnant or stunted.

**Care Way #3** - God gave Ishmael a home. 21:20c

Ishmael felt at home in the wilderness because God permitted him to think this way. Paran (v. 21) is the wilderness area located just north of the Sinai Peninsula, which today is part of it. It is not a coincidence that Arabs today feel at home in wilderness type areas.

**Care Way #4** - God gave Ishmael a skill. 21:20d

The term “archer” indicates Ishmael was specifically skilled as a hunter and warrior.

**Care Way #5** - God permitted Ishmael a wife. 21:21

Although Ishmael was not the seed of promise, God gave him many blessings.

What today’s Arabs need to realize every blessing Hagar and Ishmael ever received was due to the fact that they were connected to Abraham .

**No matter how depressing your circumstances may presently be you can always find encouragement by drawing close to God and His Word. God is a God who cares for you.**

**Jesus said “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink” (John 7:37). “And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Revelation 22:17).**