Isaac's Birth and Early Years

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Willard Lyons teaches on the life of Abraham.

Let's get into Genesis 21. Not very much time has passed now because you realize it's been, what, right at nine months, no doubt, from the announcement of the coming birth by Sarah to Abraham of Isaac and to this present time we look at tonight.
So, you know, we've been looking at a lot and all those things to place there. But so time lapse has not occurred very much. And so, we come to chapter 21 and verses 1 and 2.
Scripture says, And the Lord visited Sarah as he said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him.
Interesting statement here. The Lord visited Sarah. The word visited, this is the first occurrence in Scripture of that word visited in the original.
[1:16] It's used in this special sense, according to Vine's dictionary. It's used in this special sense of to intervene on behalf of. So as to demonstrate the divine intervention in the normal course of events.

To bring about or fulfill the divine intent. And often this intervention is by miraculous means. So pick up on the idea here, if you will.
Intervention that comes and is demonstrated through the normal course of events. Now, what's the normal course of events here? You recognize both Sarah and Abraham were past the normal age, well past the normal age of having children.
And so that's the intervention that we see God doing here. So, that's what the phrase, the Lord visited Sarah as he had said. So, it magnifies the power of God, his work of bringing all of this together.
As well as fulfilling the promise that he made to Abraham and, of course, to Sarah as well. Now, she's at the age of 90.
[2:31] And God gave her the power and the ability to conceive and bear this child and give birth to her son. Now, verses 3-5. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now, again, Abraham a hundred years old now when Isaac is born.
And Abraham acknowledged what had taken place with God by naming him Isaac. God said that he should do that. He was to do that. So, Abraham goes back and just does what God told him to do in obedience to what that instruction was.
But it also did something here. By Abraham being obedient here, calling his son Isaac, It serves as a token, or if you will, a memorial to the faithfulness of God to Abraham and to Sarah.
Likewise, the dedication and circumcision of Isaac spoke of a seal of the covenant that God made. First with Abraham.
[3:47] But now it serves as a seal of the covenant to Isaac. Because remember, all along when God promised the birth of a son to Abraham through Sarah, He said, this is the son, this is the child through whom I will continue the covenant.

All right? Nobody else. Now, you remember the mess with Hagar and Ishmael, which we'll see again here in a minute. So, when he circumcises Ishmael, that serves as that token, that seal of the covenant, if you will, between God and now Isaac, as it should be.
Now, verses 6 and 7. Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should have given children suck,

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for I have borne him a son in his old age?
Now, you can kind of see and hear the joy here in Sarah speaking. Remember, she laughed earlier. She laughed nine months ago. But it wasn't a laugh of joy.
It was a laugh of skepticism. It was a laugh, really a laugh of unbelief at the promises of God. Now, God did a work.
[5:14] He rebuked her because of that, remember, and did a work to bring her to the point where she could really exercise true faith in God and true faith in God's ability to do anything that was necessary to accomplish his purposes.

And so, that's what he did. We saw that in chapter 18. So, now, Isaac is born. And Sarah finds a new reason to laugh.
But this time, it's a laughter of joy. A laughter that's come through faith because the birth that God said would take place has been accomplished as he said it would.
So, she was laughing, if you will, the same way Abraham laughed back nine months ago when God announced that she would have a baby. Remember his laughter?
You know, one of amazement. And she has that same type of laughter now. Now, so, she expresses that by saying, God hath made me to laugh.
[6:18] Literally, God hath prepared laughter or joy for me. Now, so, who would have ever said to Abraham that Sarah should give children succul?

Who would have ever guessed? Who would have ever said that I'll have a child? Now, verse 8. Now, at three years old is when Isaac was weaned.
And it's important for us to see. We'll see that in a minute. Now, Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. So, this great feast was a family celebration, if you will.
A family meal. Every time you turn around, they're eating together. Amen? Yeah. So, great time of family celebration here at the weaning of the child.
The child was dressed in a celebratory robe, if you will, regalia. brought before the family members and the friends that were bidden to the feast.
[7:29] All right? Now, that symbolic robe, if you will, that that child is wearing is a symbol of the birthright of that child.

Here, the family then recognizes that here Isaac, this three-year-old boy, is the one that has the rightful birthright to the family.
All right? Now, great time of celebration. But recognize something here. Where is Hagar and Ishmael in all of this?
They're there. They're there. All right? Now, when we begin to look at this, consider the reality now that Ishmael now is probably right at 17 years old.
All right? Because we see the breakdown, and that's why the three-year weaning of Isaac is important. We come up with 17 years of age for Ishmael at this point.
[8:39] He has been a vital part of Abraham's family and life for 17 years. Even though he is the son of the handmaiden of his wife, he's still a son.

He's the seed of Abraham. So, there's been interaction. There's been a close, no doubt, relationship from what we see here with father and son.
Now, all of a sudden, a baby's born. Not from his mother, Hagar, but from Abraham's wife, Sarah. Now, I don't know, we don't have any indication whether or not Hagar and Ishmael knew of the promise that God made to Sarah and Abraham about Isaac.
Don't know that. But no doubt, no doubt, it was quite evident as time went along in that nine months that she was pregnant.
[9:50] She's going to have a child. No sonogram at that time, amen. They didn't know, you know, Ishmael and Hagar probably didn't know what it's going to be.

Unless, maybe, Abraham had said something to Isaac about you're going to have a brother. All right? So now, all of a sudden, with that idea in mind, here comes this big celebration at the initiation, if you will, of Isaac into the family heirship.
Is that a word, heirship? I don't mean Star Trek heirship. I mean being heir. All right? So, look at verse number nine.
So, what happens here at the celebration of Isaac's third birth and his consequent introduction? What happens there fostered what follows here now. Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

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[11:10] So, here, Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac. Ishmael is now 17 years old and Isaac is three years old or thereabouts.

All right? And they're having some kind of interaction here, some kind of maybe rough house playing or whatever. But it's not a friendly type of thing.
The word mocking in the original is defined as to laugh, to mock, to play, to jest, to make sport, to toy with, to make a toy of.
Or to make sport of something. All right?
The friendship between Ishmael and Isaac is not good. Remember the time when God once again stated that Sarah was going to have a child.
[12:30] You'll name him Isaac. And that's the one the covenant will continue through. Abraham said, God, would that Ishmael would live before you.

God said, no. Isaac's the one the covenant is going to continue through. But as for Ishmael. I will bless him. He will be fruitful.
He'll multiply. He'll become nations. All right? Now, undoubtedly, Abraham shared that at some point with Ishmael.
He knows he's got some type of blessing from the God of Abraham upon him. And he's had that now for 17 years.
All right? But now here comes this new kid. So what's going to happen? What's going to happen with this relationship about the promise of God about him?
[13:38] About Ishmael? All right? What's going to happen here? Now, so when he plays with him, he mocks Isaac.

Being the big half-brother. He mocks him. You know. As if probably saying in his own mind, you think you're something.
I've been here 17 years. Guess who's the favorite? That kind of thing. All right? Now, we see in verse number 10.
The anger of Sarah over this. I got an idea that Sarah's anger would not have been as harsh had it not been for the attitude of Ishmael toward Isaac.
And who knows? Good possibility that Ishmael's mom, Hagar, kind of fostered the thing too. So what happens?
[14:47] Look at verse number 10. Wherefore, she said unto Abraham, that's Sarah, saying to Abraham, cast out this bondwoman and her son.

For the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. So that gives you an idea of the tenor of what's going on here.
He'll not be heir with my son. He's your son, but he's not going to be heir with my son. Get rid of him. Now, take note as well here.
Cast out this bondwoman. Didn't you say woman? Cast out this slave. That's what it is. Cast out this slave and her son.
Get her out of the family area. Get her away from here. All right? Because the son of this slave shall not be heir with my son. The word bondwoman, maidservant, if you will, refers to that original condition, remember, that Hagar found herself in and was in.
[15:57] She was the handmaiden, if you will, of Sarah. Remember whose fault all this was to begin with? She couldn't have children.

Sarah couldn't. Abraham, why don't you go in on to my handmaiden as custom would determine would be good. She can have a son by you. That would be the heir. Okay. Now, she says, that kid's not going to be heir with my kid.
All right? So, she calls her that slave, which she originally was. That peace in the family could only be restored if Hagar and Ishmael are no longer there.
All right? That's the only way that could happen. Now, do you remember? Do you remember what Abraham did the first time when Sarah complained to him about how Hagar's treating her since Hagar's pregnant, going to have a kid?
She doesn't like the way she's treating her. Remember what Abraham said? She's your handmaiden. You deal with her as you want to. And so, she did. All right?
[17:17] But here, notice what happens. In verse 11 and 12. The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

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He's pulling his hair out, in other words. And God said unto Abraham. I wonder if he was bald. You think Abraham was bald? Like this guy.
Pulling his hair out. Yeah. Yeah. So, he's got a real problem here. Now, notice. God takes some initiative here.
God said unto Abraham. Let not this be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of the bondwoman.
And all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice. For in Isaac shall thy seed be called.
So, God instructs him. Being so irritated and upset with all this turmoil going on.
[18:19] God speaks to him. Instructs him. Do as Sarah, your wife, suggested to do. All right? God's purpose and design is in Isaac.

Always has been. All the attention now has to be placed on him. He has been born. So, it's got to be placed on him up through the time he becomes a young adult.
All right? Now, you realize. We see it so much in Scripture. There are times. When following the will of God can be really hard.
It can create some difficulties. Anybody found that in your life? Yeah. Yeah. It can be difficult. It can be hard. Especially in the matter of personal relationships.
All right? Like we have here. When we're walking with God, following him, with a desire to fulfill his direction and will for our lives.
[19:24] Then all those things have to take a back seat. To desiring to satisfy the will of God for our lives.

And being obedient to him. And praying, asking God to give you direction on how to deal with all that other stuff. Now, so in Abraham's case here, the separation of Hagar, in particular Ishmael, is a very necessary thing.
For the covenant purpose to be developed and come to pass. Now, Abraham had received that high calling from God.
And through that various experiences. He's 100 years old now. Been following God for a while. He's learned so much about who God is.
How God operates. What God is to him in his life. So now, he's able to fall back on that. And recognize all of that.
[20:34] And be able to follow and do what God says. In spite of the fact. That he loved and loves his son Ishmael.

Alright. Now, 1 John chapter 5. Verses 2 through 5. Gives us some good instruction here. You know, God brings Abraham, if you will, in all of this.
To a new level of faith and trust in Jehovah. And following him. I'm going to read this out of the Amplified. By this we come to know. That is to recognize and understand.
That we love the children of God. When we love God and obey his commandments. That is when we keep his ordinances. And are mindful of his precepts and his teaching.
For the true love of God is this. That we do his commandments. That is keep his ordinances. And are mindful of his precepts and teachings.
[21:34] And these orders of his are not. I like this word he uses here. Irksome. Yeah. They're not irksome. That's burdensome, oppressive, or grievous.

For whatever is born of God. Is victorious over the world. That is. And that this is the victory that conquers the world. Even our faith.
Who is it that is victorious over. That is. Who is it that conquers the world. But he that believes that Jesus is the son of God. That is the one that would adhere to.
Trust sin. Relies on the fact of. Yeah. Yeah. That's who we are. Now. Mark 9.
14. When he came to his disciples. He saw a great multitude about them. And the scribes questioning them. And straightway. All the people when they beheld him.
[22:33] Were greatly amazed. And running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes. What question you with them? And one of the multitude answered and said.

Master. I have brought unto thee my son. Which hath a dumb or a mute spirit. Wheresoever he taketh him. He teareth him.
And he foameth. And gnasheth with his teeth. And pineth away. And I spake to thy disciples. That they should cast him out. And they could not. He answered him.

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And saith. O faithless generation. How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? To bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him.
And when he saw him. Straightway the spirit tear him. And he fell on the ground. And wallowed foaming. And he asked his father. How long is it ago.
[23:29] Since this came unto him. And he said. Of a child. And oft times. It hath cast him into the fire. And into the waters. To destroy him. But if thou canst do anything.

Have compassion on us. And help us. Jesus said unto him. If thou canst believe. All things are possible to him.
That believeth. Straightway the father. Of the child. Cried out. Now notice. Cried out loudly. And said with tears.
Lord. I believe. Help thou. My unbelief. Believe. That's always been. A strange statement. To me here.
Until I really considered it. You know. If you can believe. Then he can be healed. Lord. I believe. Shattered it loud. I believe.
[24:26] Help thou. My unbelief. Now. Somebody tell me. What he's saying there. What's he saying there. I understand. And I see. And I recognize. Who you are.

If you will. And that you can do this. I know that. I believe that. But he's still. Weak.
I mean. If he's just now. If. If by chance. This may be the time. When he comes to saving faith. He's very weak. Whatever the case may be. All of us.
Recognize. I think if we don't admit this. We're wrong. But all of us. At some time. At some point. And maybe even from time to time. Recognize.
The very thing that happens here. We know we trust God. We know that we're saved. We know. There's no question. That when we die. He's going to take us home. To be with him.
[25:23] Or we'll be caught up. In the rapture with him. But. I still find areas. In my life. Where I seem to find myself.

Leaning upon. My own strength. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Whatever the case may be.
Lord. Help me to learn. More and more. To be able to trust you. In everything. Lord. I need you.
To develop in me. Further. A trust. And faith. In your ability. To do. Whatever you want to do. In my life.
So that I can keep my hands off of it. Amen. That's a good way of putting it. Yeah. Lord. Teach me to do that. Teach me to do that. Aren't you glad.
[26:27] God is patient. With his people. And that. He can take a prayer. Like that. And. Be kind. And gentle. To us. And let us. Experience.

Him. Through that process. Amen. And that's the way we do it. As long as. We're being sure. That we're watching for God. To see what he's doing.
And how he's doing it. So we can truly experience that work. In our lives. Amen. All right. Let's pray together. Father again.
Thank you for your loving kindness. And your goodness and grace today. And. Again. Thank you for the precious time. You always allow us to have together. To study your word.
No matter who it is. That's leading the study. It's always a great time. To be together. To do that. So Father. Thank you for that. Thank you for our study. And. The life of Abraham.
[27:22] And the tremendous principles. That you show us through that. Those principles. That we can apply. To our own life. And living. And so now. Father. As we. Leave this place.

In anticipation. Of what comes next. I pray. Father. That you will. Enable us. To make the application of that. But most of all. To learn more and more. Of what it is. To trust you.
In following what you show us. That you want out of our lives. No matter what the consequences. May bring to us. That we'll trust you in it.
And follow you in it. And know that you will. Make it good. And we thank you. And praise you for it now. In Jesus name. We ask it all. Amen. Amen. To learn more.
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