

Joy, Sorrow & Testimony

I. Slide1 Intro:

- A. Listen for God revealing Himself as *the Everlasting God* (see 21:33).
- B. The **suspense** maintained since ch.12 is finally over...Isaac is born.

II. Slide2 ISAAC, FAMILY JOYS (1-7)

- A. (5) Why their ages so many times? What's God showing us? (supernatural birth)
- B. (6,9) Note the difference in *laughter*...[18:12, 21:6 & 21:9].
 - 1. **Laughing at** what God promised (18:12 *skeptical*).
 - 2. **Laughing over** someone (6 *open & sincere*).
 - 3. **Laughing at** someone (9 *mocking*).
- C. Isaac brought Abraham & Sarah **great joy** (laughter) to this old couple.
- D. Slide3a What did God just communicate about **Himself** in these vs?
 - 1. In vs.1? God **does** what He says. God fulfills His **promises**.
 - 2. Slide3b In vs.2? God is **on-time**. (though 25 yrs later) *Oh God's precision*.
 - a) *God makes everything beautiful in its time*. Eccl.3:11
 - 3. Slide3c In vs.5,7? God can do the **impossible**.
- E. Meditate on God's timing right now in your life. Do you trust He is on time?
- F. Do you trust He will make *everything beautiful in its time*?

III. Slide4a ISHMAEL, FAMILY SORROWS (8-21)

- A. *Abraham reaped the sad consequence of forgiven sin*. Warren Wiersbe
 - 1. Ishmael is prob 17 at this time. [16:16 says Abraham was **86** when had him (had Isaac @ 100, so **14 yrs**) +3 Isaac weaned].
- B. (10) Sarah spoke more truly than she knew (**an inspired demand**). Gal.4:29 quotes this.

1. **But** God's spirit towards *the outcast* was much different from hers.
- C. Sarah wants Ishmael and his mother to be exiled from the clan **so that** Isaac's inheritance is not threatened.
- D. (11) Abraham is troubled by Sarah's demand **that** Hagar and Ishmael be driven away, which means he still recognized Ishmael as his legal son.
1. Some ancient Near Eastern law codes (such as Hammurabi's Code) presume inheritance rights on behalf of a son accepted by the father. **However**, the *ancient laws of Lipit-Ishtar* contain a clause to the effect that *if a slave woman and her children are granted freedom by the male owner who fathered those children, the children forfeit their share in his estate*. This seems to be Sarah's intent in having Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away - **to forfeit Ishmael's rights**.
- E. **Slide4b** (12) **Do as she tells you** - God tells him, *go ahead I have his inheritance covered*.
1. Last time he told Hagar **go back home** (14-17 yrs).
 2. Ishmael was blessed **for Abraham's sake** (God's promise to him). **To make him a great nation**.
 3. Also Paul in Gal.4:21-31 draws this whole distinction of **Isaac & Ishmael** as Law/grace, flesh/spirit. **But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman**. Gal.4:30
- F. **Slide4c** (14) Abraham's obedience is even seen in *the meager provisions* he send them off with. Trusting God with the fate of them both. [thanks wealthy dad...for the little boda-bag of water & the 1 loaf of Webers Bread, as we head into the dusty dry desert]
1. Yet God didn't work until even that was gone...
- G. **Slide4d** (15) **When the water in the skin was gone** - God loves to get us to *the end of ourselves*.
1. We are perpetually learning it's a **constant surrender**.
 2. We are perpetually learning how to **walk by faith not by sight**.
 3. We usually won't **see the well** until our **Nalgene bottle** or **Camelback bladder** runs dry.

4. Often at the last moment, at my wits end...God shows up with His answer.
5. Slide4e Ps.73:26 **My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. He is the Everlasting God.**
6. Ps.90:2 **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**
 - a) The result 19a, *Then God opened her eyes & she saw a well of water.*
 - b) Wow, man's plight & God's grace!

H. (17) **Who's voice/cry did God hear?** The boys, not hers. **God heard** (Ishmael means).

I. **What troubles you, Hagar?** - The question may be a bit of a **rebuke**, since God previously told Hagar that her son would *become a great nation* (16:10-12).

1. Unlike Isaac, **Ishmael** is not promised *territory*, **but a multitude of descendants.**

J. Angel spoke (**called from heaven**).

1. Note both boys are saved by the Angel calling from heaven (22:11)

K. (20) **Became an expert with the bow** - the OT preserves a tradition that the descendants of Ishmael were *expert marksmen*.

1. Isa 21:17 **And the remainder of the archers of the mighty men of the sons of Kedar will be few, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has spoken.** (Kedar, son of Ishmael).

L. Slide5a **What does God communicate about Himself in these vs?**

1. **In vs.12,13?** God guides.
2. **Slide5b In vs.19?** God provides.

M. **What do you need to get to the end of...**so God can work?

N. **Meditate on My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** [my portion = my share/my allotment]

IV. Slide6a **ABRAHAM, FAMILY TESTIMONY (22-34)**

- A. (22) **God is with you in all that you do** - that's a pretty good *testimony* (even though last time they met Abraham & Sarah lied to his face).
1. Abraham's *unsaved neighbors* could see that **he was a man whom God had blessed**.
 2. **Abraham didn't try to lie** his way out of this problem. **He told the truth & trusted** God to work. (my *Life Insurance form* today about skydiving)
- B. (25-31) **The possession of water** is an important thing in the Middle East. And people fought over them.
1. **Beersheba** - well of seven, well of oath.
 2. We also need to *be careful in our relationships* around those who are *outside the faith*.
 - a) **Slide6b** Col.4:5 NLT *Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.*
 - b) 1 Thes.4:10-12 ESV *But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, 11 and to aspire to **live quietly**, and to **mind your own affairs**, and to **work with your hands**, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may **walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.***
- C. **Slide7** (33) **Planted a tamarisk tree** - a practice consistent with earlier commemorations of divine communication.
- D. **Slide8** (33) **The Everlasting God** - The Hebrew phrase used here is *el olam*.
- E. **If this is God's self-disclosure**. That He's the God who: *lasts forever, is The Eternal One, is never-ending, perpetual, undying, abiding, enduring, infinite, boundless, timeless God.*
- F. God seems to balance out our life's *joys, sorrows, problems, and blessings*.
1. We must learn to accept what God gives us **& walk by faith**.
- G. **How's your Testimony to unbelievers at home, in your neighborhood, at school, at work?**
- H. **When you hear Everlasting God what does that mean for you today?**