**Genesis 21:14-21 14So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting *it* on her shoulder, he gave *it* and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16Then she went and sat down across from *him* at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, “Let me not see the death of the boy.” So she sat opposite *him,* and lifted her voice and wept. 17And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, “What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation.” 19Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.**

Last week, we spent time with Nimrod and the people that would eventually become the Babylonians and the Assyrians. We looked at the sin of pride and the way that the people started to elevate and praise themselves and their own work over the work and blessings of God. Now, we’ve come forward in time to the time of Abraham. God made a promise to Abraham and Sarah. Sarah got in a hurry, decided that she’d help God out. She suggested to Abraham that he father a child through her handmaid Hagar. Abraham thought this was a good idea…. And just like that, the die was cast. We’ve been dealing with this sin since that time. To this day, descendants of Ishmael – commonly believed to be the Arab nations – comprise the great majority of the nations of Islam. Islam didn’t arise until around the 7th century AD – conflict between the Jews, Christians, and Muslims rages even today.

In order to understand Hagar and Ishmael being sent out, we must read Genesis 21:9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. He was mocking Isaac. Ishmael was treating Sarah’s son with derision… disrespect. Ishmael would have been around 17 years old at this time. He was 14 when Isaac was born and this is taking place after Isaac is weaned, commonly about 3 years old in that time. A 17 year old is mistreating a 3 year old, mocking him. We needn’t feel sorry for Hagar. We needn’t let our hearts bleed for Ishmael. Too often, we allow someone to claim victimhood because we only know a small part of the story. Hagar was blessed to have a home, good things, plenty to eat. Ishmael was blessed to be treated as special by Abraham, but they squandered their blessings. As my grandmother used to say, they forgot their raisin’! She’d often say, “They forgot where they come from and that messed up where they was a’ goin’.” We must never forget where we come from by the Grace of almighty God… or we might just find we’ll mess up what God has planned for our lives.

This situation, when Sarah demanded that Ishmael and Hagar be sent out of the camp, grieved Abraham’s heart. He loved Ishmael. God told Abraham, “don’t let it be so – hearken… listen to Sarah.” Sarah was angry about the way Isaac was being treated, but don’t let it be lost that God uses this time to remind Abraham of who the seed is! It’s Isaac. God uses all things to work for His plan to be accomplished. Spats, arguments, disagreements, and grievous situations. Always look for God’s plan in the problems, look for God’s hand in the havoc, look for God’s love in the loss. He is always, always, always working to prosper us and not harm us.

Verse 14 says **14So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting *it* on her shoulder, he gave *it* and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.**We see this time and again. Abraham rises early in the morning and gets about what God tells him to do. The area of the wilderness of Beersheba lays on the edge of the Negev desert. Our scripture says that he rose early in the morning, while it was cool… gave bread and a waterskin (that was about a gallon of water) to Hagar. Don’t let it be missed that a 17 year old man made his mama carry the water and bread. Can you feel entitlement there? I get the sense of a spoiled child, uncaring for his 3 year old brother… and his mama. And Abraham sent them away! Just as God told him to do.

Verse 15 - **15And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.**How long did they walk? I don’t know. The Bible doesn’t say. They wandered until the water ran out. And Hagar placed Ishmael under a shrub.

Verse 16 - **16Then she went and sat down across from *him* at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, “Let me not see the death of the boy.” So she sat opposite *him,* and lifted her voice and wept.** God had promised Hagar back in Genesis 16:10 that He would multiply her descendants. She knew, if she believed what an angel had told her, that she wasn’t about to die. God keeps His promises. The Greek word for wept is bakah (bawkaw) which means bemoan… feel sorry for self.

Verse 17 **17And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, “What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.** God hears – who? It says that God hears the voice of Ishmael. Hagar is the one crying, but God hears Ishmael! God promised Abraham that He would make Ishmael a great nation as well. God hears Ishmael and asks Hagar – what ails you Hagar? I believe that this indicates that Hagar was not praying to the God of all promises to deliver her, bring her water, help her! She was wailing over what has not yet happened – Ishmael dying. She’d given up. But God heard Ishmael and asked Hagar – what is it that ails you? In other words, tell Me what you and the lad need Hagar. Don’t just bellyache. Ask! Call on Me and I will answer.

Verse 18 **18Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation.”** Lift up the lad and hold him. It seems that Ishmael is in bad shape, this suggests that he is unable to stand on his own. Yet, we know that God heard the lad! God hears the heart. I can’t help but think that while Hagar was crying, Ishmael was calling out in his heart and God heard! Isaiah 65:24 says “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. This is a comfort to me when someone is deep in sickness that God can hear them even when they cannot speak.

Verse 19 - 21 **19Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.** God delivered them. He provides water in the desert. Roadways in the wilderness. Bread in a barren land. It says He blessed Ishmael… just as He promised Abraham He would.

God provides for us when we find ourselves in lonely and desolate places. We may not even know what to pray, but God knows our needs and He hears our hearts. We must boldly seek Him and not turn our eyes from the hard situations. Hagar walked a bowshot away so she would not see Ishmael die. God says – Hang in there and wait for My miracles, believe in My deliverance. I know your needs even before you do.

In spite of the way Ishmael and Hagar acted, God kept His promises. There’s more than one story told of people who had to lose it all to turn and see the Lord Who holds it All. Let’s remember that it is God who provides it all and, when we reject Him, we destine ourselves to die of thirst in a wilderness created by our pride.