

**DEPARTURES!  
A NECESSARY GRACE OF GOD!  
GENESIS CHAPTER 21:8-21**

2-2 The Patriarchs: Abraham and Isaac

Date: c.2100-1950 BC

2-2



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**ILLUSTRATION**

Pixar know how to affect our emotions. In the film “Toy Story 3” Andy’s last play with his toys before he departs for university never gets easier to watch, no matter how many times you see it! In the scene Andy is passing on his beloved toys to a young girl, and the final play scene is a real tear jerker! “Toy Story 3”, powerfully hits home in a way that is remarkably beautiful for an animated feature. Some departures are never easy!

**DEPARTING AND PROMISES! V8-14**

This section of Ch21:8-21 is all about departures!

So much sin in our lives causes human conflict, sinful conflict between humans, and Abraham and Sarah are no different to many families! ***We rejoin the story here in Ch21:8-21 and around 3 years have passed since the birth of Isaac (Ch21:1-7)***, Abraham is just over 100 years old, Sarah is in her nineties, Isaac is between 2-3 years old (***1<sup>st</sup> Samuel Ch1:23 – weaning***), we don't know how old Hagar is and Ishmael her and Abraham's son (who is not mentioned by name in these verses) is around the age of 16 (***Gen Ch17:25!***)

And there is a party, a celebration, a gathering of friends, family are all there, as Isaac has reached a significant milestone in his development, he will no longer be fed his mother's milk, as he has been weaned! And at some point at this “great feast” (v8) whether through Abraham making a speech of some kind, or somebody making reference to Isaac being Abraham's sole heir, Ishmael, the son he bore through the Egyptian slave woman, “laughs” and this laugh is not a “joining in the mood of the festivities”, but a “mocking laugh”, a laugh that is intended to persecute Isaac!

***According to Kent Hughes*** in his commentary on the Book of Genesis, he believes that ***“Here the 'mocking' rightly catches the malicious sense of the laughter because Paul in Galatians Ch4:29 says Ishmael 'persecuted' Isaac. Understandably, the young Ishmael felt jealousy at being displaced. Envy always magnifies the importance of the other and belittles our own”*** (Cited in Kent Hughes Commentary on Genesis, page 294).

Sarah sees this act of mocking through Ishmael's laughter and despite being a Christian role model for women (***1<sup>st</sup> Peter Ch3:6***), acts in a sinful deplorable manner, taking matters into her own hands, by retaliating because of the laughter and by demanding that both Hagar and her son, Ishmael depart! And the sense from the text is “immediately” look at verse 14! ***This is not Sarah's finest moment!***

***It is worth noting that in these 14 verses:***

1. God is mentioned 6 times (12, 17x3, 19, 20)!
2. Abraham's name is mentioned 6 times (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14)!
3. Sarah's name is mentioned twice (9, 12)!
4. Isaac's name is mentioned 3 times (8, 10, 12)!
5. Hagar's name is mentioned 4 times (9, 14, 17x2)!
6. ***Ishmael's name on the other hand, is not used by Moses in his recording of the story, although he is referred to 23 times in 14 verses!***

Abraham, saddened by Sarah's reaction and demands, hears from the Lord, in what must have been immediately after the party (v12+13)! ***There are three times in Abraham's life that the Bible says he arose early in the morning—and he knew on all three of those days that what he had to do would not be pleasant.***

The first is **Genesis Ch19:27** where Moses tells us that Abraham “went early in the morning” to a special location where he would survey the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The second is **Genesis Ch21:14** where Abraham “*rose early in the morning*” and with great sadness led Hagar and Ishmael out of his house to appease Sarah.

The third is **Genesis Ch22:3** when Abraham “*rose early in the morning*” to take Isaac to Mount Moriah with the intention of sacrificing him to God.

Abraham, no doubt, arose early to some beautiful mornings and pleasant activities. But his only early mornings specifically mentioned in the Bible are the three above. How brutal they must have been! How tempting it must have been for him to keep rolling over and sleeping just a little longer. But instead of hiding under the covers, he rose up early and met the challenges of the day, why? ***Because of what the Lord had promised!***

#### **DEPARTING AND PRAYERS! V15-16**

Hagar is only given a little amount of water, no people to help her! Now a single parent with a 16 year old, and no-one else to help, or is there?

***Remember Hagar's encounter with God before? Ch16:7-16?*** In that account Hagar had run off from Sarah, into the desert and God heard her cry and met with her! In that conversation God promised her that “***I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude***” (Ch16:10). But look where she now finds herself, back in the desert, crying her eyes out, with no hope, waiting and watching for her 16 year old son to die!

#### ***But God intervened!***

He speaks to Hagar and reveals how He responded because of the boy's (Ishmael's) voice! Yes, even teenage boys will cry out to God! And God will respond to their cries (v17x2)!

#### **DEPARTING AND PROVISION! V17-21**

Kent Hughes captures the scene well, when he says “Hagar and Ishmael's bleak departure the next morning with only Abraham bidding farewell – and then their apparent tragic end in the wilds of the desert as Ishmael lay dying a bowshot away from his distraught mother – was a prelude to divine grace. Ishmael, like Isaac after him, was saved by a sudden voice from heaven (Ch22:11). God promised an awesome posterity to the boy: 'A great nation' (18) would come through him. God informed Hagar of a well of water, a well of salvation, close by. And God declared himself to be 'with the boy' (v20)” (Cited in Kent Hughes Commentary on Genesis, page 295).

***This is an account of the necessary grace, through human misery and sin!***

#### **APPLICATION!**

1. God intervenes in our mess and clears it up!
2. Isaac is now free to pursue the promise of the Land!
3. Isaac is now free to pursue his call to a special relationship with God!
4. God's protecting hand is upon Ishmael and Hagar!