

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1-7



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Abraham's amazing journey of faith began with God's commands: "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). And so, 75-year-old Abraham went, but not empty-handed. He carried with him promises from God that were stamped with a celestial guarantee.

"I will make you into a great nation," God promised (12:2), assuring Abraham, who had no children, as many descendants as stars in the sky (15:5). God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, which means "father of many nations" (17:5). And He promised that Sarah, who "was unable to become pregnant" (11:30), would mother the child from whom Abraham's offspring would come (17:16).

Abraham's journey had now come to a pinnacle moment: Isaac was born just as God said! Hooray! Let's celebrate this miracle child who was born to a couple beyond childbearing age. And in a world of charlatans and con artists who lure us with their false assurances, let's proclaim the veracity and trustworthiness of our God who *keeps His promises!*



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Read Isaac's birth announcement in **Genesis 21:1-7**. Notice how each member of the family had a moment on stage: newborn Isaac, devoted Abraham, and exuberant Sarah. God, however, was (and still is) the star of the show. What does this passage say about Him?

Quotable

*I want to give
you four words
that I hope you
will never, ever
forget: God keeps
His promises!*

— Charles R. Swindoll



ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1-7

We can trace God's trustworthiness from the beginning of Abraham's story to this blessed event. Review the chart below. Look in the "Events" column and imagine a line from "The Covenant" straight to "Isaac Born"—the climactic fulfillment of God's promise.

A PATRIARCH IN PANORAMA—THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Acts 7:2-3
Joshua 24:2
Genesis 11:27-32

Genesis 12-25

Events	Ch.	Age	Covenant	People	Location
The Covenant The Departure The Famine	12	75 (12:4)	Affirmed (12:1-3)	Abram Sarai Lot	Ur Haran Shechem Moreh Bethel Ai Egypt
Return from Egypt Separation from Lot	13		Reaffirmed (13:14-17)	Abram Sarai Lot	Between Bethel & Ai Hebron
War Declared Lot Delivered Reward Refused	14			Various Kings Lot Melchizedek	Siddim Valley Hebron? Sodom Valley of Shaveh
Abrahamic Covenant Reaffirmed	15		Reaffirmed (15:1-21)	Abram God	
Birth of Ishmael	16	86 (16:16)		Abram Sarai Hagar Ishmael	Hebron?
Names Changed Circumcision Instituted Isaac and Ishmael Discussed	17	99 (17:1)	Reaffirmed (17:1-14)	Abraham God	
Promise of a Son Plans for Destruction of Sodom	18			Abraham 3 Men (Angels) Sarah	Hebron (Plains of Mamre)
Sodom Destroyed Lot Spared	19	Abraham 100		2 Angels Lot & Family	Sodom & Gomorrah Mountain Cave
Abimelech	20	Sarah 90		Abraham Sarah Abimelech	Gerar
Isaac Born Ishmael Cast Out Abimelech Reproved	21	(17:17; 21:5)		Abraham Sarah Isaac Hagar Ishmael Abimelech	Hebron Beersheba Paran
Isaac Offered Covenant Reaffirmed	22		Reaffirmed (22:15-18)	Abraham Isaac Angel of the Lord	Moriah
Sarah's Death & Burial	23	Abraham 137 Sarah 127 (23:1)		Sarah Abraham Sons of Heth	Hebron Field of Machpelah
Isaac's Bride	24	"Old and advanced in age" (24:1)		Abraham Eldest Servant	Mesopotamia City of Nahor
Abraham's 2nd Marriage Abraham's Death & Burial	25	175 (25:7)		Abraham Keturah Family Isaac	Cave in Field of Machpelah

Copyright © 1986, 1988, 2012, 2014 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2013, 2014, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1–7

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

How old was Abraham when he first received God's promise of descendants? How old was he when God's promise was fulfilled in Isaac's birth?

As he and Sarah aged and it became seemingly impossible to have children, Abraham proposed to God that the line could pass through his servant, *Eliezer*, or through his son by Hagar, *Ishmael*. How did God reassure Abraham that the line would pass through *Isaac*, his son by Sarah (Genesis 15:4–6; 17:17–22)?



Observation: God Finally Fulfills His Promise

Observation answers the question: What does it say? As we observe the text, we look for words, names, places, events, repetitions, comparisons, and contrasts. Record here the names that appear at the beginning of Genesis 21:1, 3, and 6.

Chuck Swindoll created an outline of the passage based on these names and the action each person took. Let's use our "observation" spade to dig into each section!

The Lord Provides—Genesis 21:1–2

What repetitive phrases in Genesis 21:1–2 emphasize God's reliability to keep His promises?



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2013, 2014, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S16
3

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1–7

Abraham and Sarah initially limited their view to what was humanly possible. Two tottering old fogies having a baby? What a ridiculous notion! Abraham and Sarah both laughed at the spectacle (Genesis 17:17; 18:12). What was at the root of their laughter, according to Genesis 17:17 and 18:13–15?

God's response opened Abraham and Sarah's eyes to a universe of possibilities: "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (18:14). God does whatever He wills . . . at His appointed time.



Correlation: God's Appointed Time

According to Ecclesiastes 3:1–2, God sovereignly sets the clock for human events.

For everything there is a season,
a time for every activity under the heaven.
A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to plant and a time to harvest.

The author of Ecclesiastes used a literary device known as "merismus"—extremes that emphasize everything in between. From life to death, from planting to harvesting, *all events of life* exist on God's timetable. What does this truth say about the events in our lives that we consider "unexpected" or "impossible"?

Although we long to view life in eternity's light, we "cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end" (3:11). We can't always make sense of things . . . but we can trust in the One who can. Chuck Swindoll comments:

The universe has a flow. It has a rhythmic regularity to it that is beyond our control. And wise is the one who lives with an understanding that God is the one who calls the cadence. God is at work. [Knowing] this will save you hours and hours of doubt.



ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1–7

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Abraham Obeys—Genesis 21:3–5

What two actions does Abraham perform, and what is the significance of these actions (Genesis 21:3–4)?

What is the significance of the name, Isaac (17:19)? You can find the meaning of Isaac's name in the notes of your study Bible.

Just as God turned an aging, infertile, childless couple into parents, so He turned Abraham and Sarah's skepticism into joy. Look who's laughing now—and for an entirely different reason than before!

Sarah Rejoices—Genesis 21:6–7

What was Sarah's response to the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:6–7)?

What new perspective toward God transformed Sarah's laughter and restored her joy?



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2013, 2014, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S16
5

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1-7

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



Interpretation: What We Must Remember about God's Promises

Let's interpret the birth of Isaac with regard to the fulfillment of God's promises.

Isaac was born 25 years after Abraham received the promise of descendants (Genesis 12:7). What does this delay teach us about God's timing?

What does the birth of Isaac teach us about God when we fear that He has forgotten His promise?

The promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah in their old age was *personal*. It was a promise intended for them alone, so we shouldn't claim it as a promise meant for us. Though we cannot claim God's personal promises, we can claim His *universal* promises. What do the promises in the following verses mean to you?

John 6:37-40

Romans 10:13



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2013, 2014, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S16
6

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1-7

The birth of Isaac signaled a new phase in Abraham's journey. God had blessed His friend with great wealth and fame. He had planted Abraham's roots in the land He promised. And now God completed His covenant by giving Abraham a son through whom his family tree would grow. How far Abraham and Sarah had come!



Application: The Next Time We Have to Wait

We celebrate the birth of Sarah's baby with praise to God for His faithfulness. Chuck offers four lessons from this scene that we can pack in our bags for our personal journey of faith.

Remember, God is never accidentally late. Are you waiting for the fulfillment of a promise? Are you hanging on for dear life, only to have the fingers of your faith pried open by skepticism or doubt? What can you do to hang on to God's trustworthiness while you wait?

Forget about your own schedule and plans. Your plans and God's timetable don't always mesh. God does not live by your appointment book. What daily habits can help you release your plans and make room for God's ways?

Ask the Lord for strength and wisdom. Strength, to keep going when you're weary of waiting. Wisdom, to avoid rash decisions when you feel impatient. Write down your prayer here, right now!



ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1–7

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

Finally, forgive yourself for being shortsighted. Like Abraham and Sarah, you laughed when you should have believed. You saw nothing but impossibilities when you should have opened your eyes to God's possibilities. It's okay! God forgives. Express your thanks for God's grace and desire to live in His forgiving love.

Yes, Abraham and Sarah had traveled far on their journey of faith. And yet, obstacles loomed ahead—such as a threat to younger Isaac from elder Ishmael; a challenge to Abraham's claim to the land from Abimelech; and the problem of finding a wife for Isaac! Many miles stretch ahead for this nomad's amazing journey of faith. Ready to move into the next phase? Pause for a final prayer to wrap up this study, and then, let's go!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I am shortsighted, I admit. Help me glimpse the vastness of Your universe, the wideness of Your will. Help me see that my timetable is really Your timetable. And when I try to wrestle control from You, give me rest. Gently remind me to trust You and wait patiently. Help me relax in Your promises! Amen.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2013, 2014, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S16
8

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

It's a Boy!

Genesis 21:1-7

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

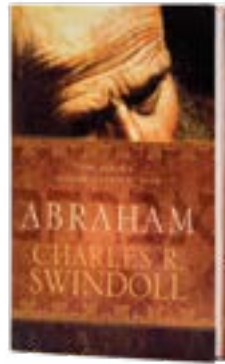
STUDY



Tools for Digging Deeper



**Abraham: One Nomad's
Amazing Journey of Faith**
by Charles R. Swindoll
Classic CD series



**Abraham: One Nomad's
Amazing Journey of Faith**
by Charles R. Swindoll
Hardcover book



**Faith for the Journey:
Daily Meditations on
Courageous Trust in God**
by Charles R. Swindoll
LeatherLike book

For these and related resources, visit www.insightworld.org/store
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2017–2018 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Searching the Scriptures Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2013, 2014, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide.
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application