

Genesis 21: 8 - 21

*The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. 9 But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, 10 and she said to Abraham, 'Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.'*

*11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. 12 But God said to him, 'Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. 13 I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring.'*

*14 Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.*

*15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down about a bow-shot away, for she thought, 'I cannot watch the boy die.' And as she sat there, she began to sob.*

*17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.'*

*19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.*

*20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.*

1. David's talk spoke of God as a Master Weaver, weaving our lives into a great tapestry. How helpful do you find this image?
2. Why does Sarah regard Hagar and Ishmael as loose ends to be cut off?
3. Have you ever felt unwanted, and as if people wanted to get rid of you? What gave you strength to cope with that?
4. How did Hagar feel when the skin of water ran dry?
5. God heard Ishmael's cry and intervened. We might say that God hears the cry of all children who are neglected or abused, but what benefits can come from making such a claim?
6. Hagar looks up and sees a well of water in the desert. She can be refreshed through this simple but vital gift, and lead her son into a new life. What acts like a well of water for you when you feel spiritually dry?
7. God gives a great promise about Ishmael's future. Which promises of God keep you going strong?