

# Genesis 21:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

## Analysis

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**And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking....** This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?

2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

## Interlinear Text

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|        |            |         |          |          |              |           |
|--------|------------|---------|----------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| אָשָׁר | הַמִּצְרִי | יְהֹוָה | וַיַּרְא | שָׁךְ    | הַ           | וְיֵתְרָה |
| saw    | And Sarah  | H853    | the son  | of Hagar | the Egyptian | H834      |
| H7200  | H8283      |         | H1121    | H1904    | H4713        |           |

  

|                    |              |           |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| וְיֵלֶד            | לְאַבְרָהָם  | מִצְחָקָה |
| which she had born | unto Abraham | mocking   |
| H3205              | H85          | H6711     |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 16:15** (Parallel theme): And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

**Galatians 4:29** (Parallel theme): But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

**Genesis 16:1** (References Egypt): Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

**Galatians 4:22** (References Abraham): For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

**Psalms 42:10** (Parallel theme): As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

**Psalms 22:6** (Parallel theme): But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

**Proverbs 20:11** (Parallel theme): Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

**Lamentations 1:7** (Parallel theme): Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.

**2 Chronicles 30:10** (Parallel theme): So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.

**2 Chronicles 36:16** (Parallel theme): But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.