**Genesis 21:18-21**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/gen/gen-21/genesis-2118-21/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/gen/gen-21/genesis-2118-21/)

*God assures Hagar that Ishmael will live and make a great nation. Miraculously, God leads them to a well to drink. Ishmael grows up, becomes an archer, and marries an Egyptian woman.*

The angel of God tells Hagar to “*Arise*.” This is not the end for her or her son. She is commanded to *lift up the lad*, Ishmael, and *hold him by the hand*. God has plans for Ishmael, plans similar to His plans for Abraham and Isaac, that He *will make a great nation of*Ishmael’s descendants. The declaration that Ishmael will be the originator of a great nation is repeated again ([Genesis 21:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+21.13&t=NASB95), [16:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+16.10-12&t=NASB95)). As the creator of everyone and everything, God loves and is concerned about all mankind, not just Israel.

*God opens*Hagar’s *eyes and she saw a well of water.* God somehow intervened and caused Hagar to find a *water well.* Perhaps it had been there all the time and she had not seen it because of her own exhaustion and the probable death of her son. Perhaps He put it there for her. The discovery of the well prevents Ishmael and Hagar from dying of thirst. Wells in a semi-desert country are priceless possessions. Ishmael received two blessings from God, a destiny and a drink.

We are then told that *God was with the lad, and he grew.* God protected Ishmael throughout his growth into manhood. Ishmael continued to live*in the wilderness,*specifically *the wilderness of Paran*. *Paran* is the main desert in the eastern Sinai Peninsula. It stretches as far south as the Red Sea and as far north as Kadesh or even Beersheba*. Ishmael*grew up to become *an archer.*Archery was a necessary skill for surviving in such an environment, for both hunting and battle. The descendants of Ishmael were known as expert marksmen ([Isaiah 21:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+21.17&t=NASB95); [Genesis 25:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+25.13&t=NASB95)).

When the time came, Hagar *took a wife* for her son from*the land of Egypt*. Hagar was also a native Egyptian ([Genesis 16:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+16.1&t=NASB95)). It was customary in those days for the father to secure a wife for his son, but Hagar was forced to assume this responsibility since Abraham had sent them away. Ishmael was the rejected son, the son of a slave woman, and married to an Egyptian. But he was looked after by God.  
  
**Biblical Text:**  
**18 “Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” 19 Then 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. 20 God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. 21 He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.**