

Genesis Chapter 16

V: 1 Most of the principal players in this saga are named right up front:

1. **Sarai: “Princess.”**
2. **Abram:** (Avram) **“Exalted father.”**
3. **Hagar: “Stranger.”** Came to mean “fugitive” - “ensnaring” - Egyptian maidservant - Genesis Ch.12

- Sarai had borne no children – yet.
- God had made the promise, but now it’s been 10 years, and there’s still 14 yet to go. Abraham will be 100 years old when Isaac is born. Sarah will be 90.
(Gen.17:17)

Genesis 21:5 “Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.”

- There are often gaps of time between the promises of the Lord and their fulfillment, but God is working the whole time.
- Sarai was barren, like most of the women that God used to bring important men into the world, they couldn’t conceive until just the right time.
- God waits until it seems that it is humanly impossible for Sarai to conceive, and then He shows His miraculous power.

2 Corinthians 12:9 “And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

- God has promised children to Abram – so it will happen.

Joshua 21:45 “Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

2 Corinthians 1:20 “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”

- Hagar’s presence is a result of Abram’s trip / slip into Egypt – his last lapse of faith, or his last lapse of trust in God’s word. (Genesis 12:16)

Galatians 6:7 “⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”

- Even though Abram had repented of his sin, and received God's forgiveness, in his sin he had sown some seed which are about to come to fruition.
- He still has God's forgiveness, but the consequences are about to become apparent.

V: 2 Sarai understands that it is God who has restrained her from having children.

- Even though this is an obvious lapse in faith, it could not have been an easy or flippant decision on Sarai's part.
- I wouldn't think that any woman would intentionally send their husband into the arms of another woman – this must have been a total desperation move.
- Custom: surrogate motherhood through servants.
- Sarai suggests what amounts to adultery.
- Socially acceptable / common practice in the world at that time (therein lies the problem.) polygamy / multiple wives and or maintaining "concubines".

Websters

Concubine: 1. a woman who cohabits with a man to whom she is not married, esp. one regarded as socially or sexually subservient; mistress.
2. (among polygamous peoples) a secondary wife, usually of inferior rank.

- Another common practice of the day in a similar situation was for a handmaiden to be given to the husband as we see here, and when she conceived and was ready to bear children the handmaiden would actually sit on the knees of the mistress so that as the handmaiden bore the child, the child was at the same time born between the knees of the mistress – symbolically representing a birth from the mistress herself. (This all seems pretty awkward!)

"And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai." (For good or for bad, depending... context)

- Abram at that moment abdicated spiritual leadership in his home.

1 Peter 3:7 "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them ^(wives) with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

- There have been innumerable times when my wife's counsel has kept me from doing some really dumb things, and she always has lots of good ideas. I'm very grateful for that. But there have also been a scant few times when that shoe has been on the other foot so to speak.

- We are to listen to our wives, and we are to carefully consider the matter – but always against the back drop of God’s word, seeking His will in our lives.

Ephesians 5:15 “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.”

1 Timothy 2:14 “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

- Adam considered what Eve had done, as she offered him the same fruit that she’d just partaken of. He considered it compared to the commandment of God, the Word of God, and he chose to partake – setting aside God’s word in the process.
- Abram is now 85 years old, Sarai is 75 – quite possibly they are thinking they can help God with His plan – which is a generous if misguided perspective.
- As much as Abram goes along with this, **God doesn’t need our help – ever!**
- It appears just as likely that both Abram and Sarai are impatient and want a son on their terms, before it’s too late, and this is the way to make it happen.
- Lack of faith often leads to sin – but it’s through faith and patience that we receive the promises of God.

Hebrews 6:12 “¹²that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Hebrews 10:35-36 “³⁵therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

- Sarai recognized that the Lord restrained her from having children, that should have been it. “Ok, Lord, I guess I’ll just wait on you...”

V: 3 Sarai & Abram proceed with what is now their plan, I say their plan because Abram has sanctioned it.

“and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife...”

- Part of the problem is that Abram already has a wife.
- God’s design for marriage is one man and one woman, a monogamous marriage. Polygamous marriages are recorded, but none are happy polygamous marriages.

Genesis 2:24 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, (singular) and they shall become one flesh.”

“after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.”

- This is a time stamp, it doesn't just denote “happy 10th anniversary in the land.”
- This is the excuse / justification – it's as if to say “God said He would give us children & we've waited ten long years in the land of Canaan.”

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,...”

Isaiah 49:23b “...then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.” (Those that wait on the Lord shall not be ashamed!)

V: 4 Abram goes in to Hagar, Sarai facilitates this sin which is essentially adultery.

- Hagar conceives and begins immediately to despise her mistress.
- We can never build a good or Godly relationship that is based on sin.
- Two people commit adultery, cheat on the respective spouses – dump them and marry each other – apart from repentance they will not live happily ever after. Even with repentance it will be a hard road to travel.
- Don't make the mistake of thinking that because this event is recorded in the Bible that somehow God condones or approves of it – God never approves of sin, He never condones anything that contradicts His word. (Here it is simply recorded.)

Paul tells us:

Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death,...”

- We see here at the very least the death of the relationship between Sarai & Hagar.

Proverbs 30:21-23 “²¹for three things the earth is perturbed, yes, for four it cannot bear up: ²²For a servant when he reigns, a fool when he is filled with food, ²³a hateful woman when she is married, and a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.”

V: 5 Sarai was beautiful, but this verse is proof that “hormonal issues” aren't just a modern phenomena.

- Actually – had Abram done his job as the spiritual leader in their home, he would not be facing this accusation.

- Abram could have shut this whole thing down back in V: 2 and said “No, we’re waiting on the Lord to fulfill His promise.”

1 Kings 2:1-4a “¹Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: ²I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself / show yourself a man. ³And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; ⁴that the Lord may fulfill His word...”

- We’ve seen many **1st’s** thus far in this book of beginnings. And sadly **this is the first case of marital strife** – and it involves three things:

1. **Lack of spiritual leadership in the home.**
2. **Disobedience to God’s Word.**
3. **Another woman in the mix.**

- Then to top it off, Sarai brings God into it – invoking the Lord, if only to support her position.
- At this point God is the only one who sees this situation for what it is.

V: 6 Hagar had no choice in leaving Egypt – she was a slave girl.

- We don’t read about Hagar having much of a choice in the whole surrogate motherhood plan. Even though she did yield to it, went along with it.
- Seemingly she did adopt the bad attitude and despised her mistress.
- Abram gives Sarai carte-blanche to do with Hagar as she pleases – avoiding his own responsibility in the process.
- Abram is correctly preferring his wife over Hagar, but at the same time he now has a responsibility to somehow take care of her.

Proverbs 15:18 “A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.”

- Hagar runs away, she flees from a difficult situation. (Desperate move / harsh penalties if caught.)

V: 7 “*The Angel of the Lord.*” – **1st** mention.

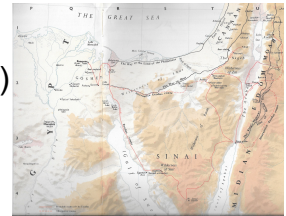
- “*The*” (Vs: “an”) Angel of the Lord is a reference to Jesus, in this case a “**Theophony**” – another pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.
- The Angel of the Lord found her:

Proverbs 15:3 “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”

- This is consistent with our Lord’s character: Jesus is the Good Shepherd – and He looks after the lost sheep.

Isaiah 40:11 “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”

- The Angel of the Lord found Hagar by the spring on the way to Shur.
- The wilderness of Shur is the top or Northern portion of Sinai.
- In verse 13 we see that she is between Kadesh & Bered. ([map](#))
- Hagar is approximately 70 miles / 3 days away from Hebron.
- Possibly near the area of Beersheba / spring / well. Kadesh.
- Bottom line is that she’s headed back to Egypt.



V: 8 The Angel of the Lord calls her by name, He knows who she is, He identifies her as Sarai’s hand maid, and He knows her plight.

Psalms 139:1-3 “¹O Lord, You have searched me and known me. ²You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. ³You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.”

- The Angel of the Lord asks her two questions:
 1. Where have you come from?
 2. Where are you going?
- She answers honestly – fleeing from the presence of my mistress.
- Hagar doesn’t appear to be frightened, seemingly a conversational exchange.

V: 9 The Angel of the Lord says to her “*return to you mistress*” - not to Abram, to Sarai.

- Hagar is hearing the voice of the Lord, and in essence He is saying “repent” – turn around and go the other way.
- Yield / submit.

Titus 2:9 “Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back;”

V: 10 *“The Angel of the Lord said to her, **I will** multiply your descendants exceedingly...”*

- Another confirmation that the “Angel of the Lord” is in fact Jesus.

Jesus is the giver of life...

John 6:33 *“For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

- The promise made to Abram is now extended through Hagar as well, not only will she have a son, but many descendants as well. He is giving her hope.

V: 11-12 Omniscience, prophecy – blessing, comfort.

“You shall call his name Ishmael.” - “God hears.”

- Because God heard her affliction – she was crying out to God.

“He shall be a wild man, His hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.”

- No peace, he will be at enmity with all those around him.

V: 13 Then she called the name of the Lord – *“you are the God who sees.”*

“El-Roi” – *“the God who sees.”*

- Hagar asks: *“Have I also here seen Him who sees me?”*

Proverbs 5:21 *“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths.”*

- Hagar has had a glimpse of God, she knows it – and it’s had a life changing, life altering effect upon her.

V: 14 The location, the well – is commemorated with a new name

“Beer Lahai Roi” – “The well of Him that Lives and sees me.”

V: 15 Hagar was obedient to **“the Angel of the LORD,”** and returned as instructed.

- Just as the Lord said, she bore a son – and named him Ishmael. (“God hears”)

- A reminder to Hagar, and to the others around her, that God heard her plight, comforted her, and provided for her needs.
- Hagar probably returned telling the testimony to Abram & Sarai, possibly encouraging them to have faith in God.

V: 16 Abram is eighty six when Ishmael is born. Sarai is 76 and still waiting.

- 13 years between V: 16 & Genesis Ch. 17:1
- It doesn't appear that God speaks to Abram in that time.

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- Hagar had an encounter with the Angel of the Lord, by a spring of water, she has an encounter with the One who is the Spring of Living Water.
 - And her life gets turned around – literally.
 - Headed back to Egypt – the old life.
 - She gets turned around and headed back in the right direction; to that place of richness and communion with God.
 - When we've had an encounter with the True and the Living God, a personal encounter with Jesus, our lives get turned around as well!

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- Later Paul would use these women to illustrate a point about how just as Sarai & Hagar couldn't live together, couldn't be reconciled. Opposites, bondwoman & free.
 - Neither can the Law & God's grace be fully reconciled except in the person of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 4:21-31 ([Turn to / read](#))