

What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM

“God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

SESSION #4: Genesis 16:1-16

TEXT:

v. 1 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar;

v. 2 so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her.” Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

v. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.

v. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

v. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

v. 6 “Your servant is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

v. 7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.

v. 8 And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?” “I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

v. 9 Then the angel of the Lord told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.”

v.10 The angel added, “I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count.”

v.11 The angel of the Lord also said to her: “You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery.

v.12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."

v.13 She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."

v.14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

v.15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.

v.16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

INTRODUCTION:**The Devil's Beatitudes**

If the devil were to write his beatitudes, they would probably go something like this:

1. Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend an hour once a week with their fellow Christians—they are my best workers.
2. Blessed are those Christians who wait to be asked and expect to be thanked—I can use them.
3. Blessed are the touchy who stop going to church—they are my missionaries.
4. Blessed are the trouble makers—they shall be called my children.
5. Blessed are the complainers—I'm all ears to them.
6. Blessed are those who are bored with the minister's mannerisms and mistakes—for they get nothing out of his sermons.
7. Blessed is the church member who expects to be invited to his own church—for he is a part of the problem instead of the solution.
8. Blessed are those who gossip—for they shall cause strife and divisions that please me.
9. Blessed are those who are easily offended—for they will soon get angry and quit.
10. Blessed are those who do not give their offering to carry on God's work—for they are my helpers.
11. Blessed is he who professes to love God but hates his brother and sister—for he shall be with me forever.
12. Blessed are you who, when you read this thinks it is about other people and not yourself—I've got you too!

(Received via email from Floyd Edwards, April 16, 2006)

Stallone: "The Church Is the Gym of the Soul"

2006 was a year of surprises for Sylvester Stallone. First, he surprised the entertainment world by resurrecting his iconic movie hero, Rocky Balboa, for one last film. Then, while promoting the film, Stallone shocked Christian fans with the revelation that his faith in Jesus Christ had not only impacted the writing of the first Rocky film, but also that his decision to create the final movie was inspired by his renewed affiliation with Christianity.

Stallone discussed both surprises in an interview with Citizenlink.com. "I was raised in a Catholic home, a Christian home," he said. "And I went to Catholic schools and I was taught the faith and went as far as I could with it. Until one day, I got out into the so-called real world, and I was presented with temptation. I kinda, like, lost my way and made a lot of bad choices."

But, Stallone added, those bad choices ultimately left him unsatisfied, especially his decision to place fame and career ahead of his family. As a result, Stallone was increasingly pulled back into his Christian heritage. "The more I go to church," he said, "and the more I turn myself over to the process of believing in Jesus and listening to his Word and having him guide my hand, I feel as though the pressure is off me now."

As part of this transformation, Stallone realized another poor choice that had guided his previous life: self-reliance. "You need to have the expertise and the guidance of someone else," he said. "You cannot train yourself. I feel the same way about Christianity and about what the church is: The church is the gym of the soul."

Stuart Shepard, "The Gym of the Soul," Citizenlink.com (11-15-06); submitted by David Slagle, Atlanta, Georgia

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Forty Year Reunion

Most of us are still around,
though a few have gone to Heaven,
but here we are after forty years,
the class of '57.

It's great to get together
'cause it's sure been quite a spell.
We can talk and reminisce
and wish each other well.

Some will get reflective,
in a sentimental mood.
Others will joke or laugh or boast,
or hog down all the food.

Some have been on a diet,
lookin' mighty trim and thin,
and others go around blue-faced
just tryin' to hold it in.

Some of us still slave
through an economic wreck,
while others live the good life
on a retirement check.

Some will tell their stories
of victories won in life.
Some likely will get scolded
by a most embarrassed wife.

We've all seen lots of changes
since graduation day.
We're all a little wiser,
and some are turnin' gray.

Our girls who used to jump and shout
and lead the crowds in cheers
now are bakin' cookies
and spankin' grandkids rears.

And our high school football players,
 once young and strong of heart,
 don't even walk when golfin'.
 They're ridin' in a cart.

The terrors of the parkin' lot,
 who spun out with speed and power,
 now drive around in pickup trucks
 at thirty miles per hour.

The shoe is on the other foot.
 our lovely high school queens
 are fussin' at their daughters
 for wearin' such tight jeans.

But, I salute you, fellow classmates
 of fifty-seven, T.H.S.
 I wish you every happiness,
 every great success.

May future years be kind to you.
 May you have a lighter load.
 May we meet again together
 ten years down the road.

But one thing's kinda botherin' me.
 I'd ask you, were I bolder.
 Why is it that I haven't changed,
 when you're all so dang much older?
 pp. 39-40

River Gorge Is Beautiful, but Deadly

In the vicinity of Richmond, Vermont, you'll find the Huntington River Gorge. It's a beautiful spot—but it's also quite deadly. In the last 40 years, 20 persons (mostly young adults in their 20s and 30s) have lost their lives in the gorge. Those injured while swimming have numbered in the hundreds.

On the surface, the water looks calm and placid, but beneath this attractive scene are strong currents that run swiftly over treacherous waterfalls and whirlpools. Public safety officials have designated the gorge “the singlemost deadly place in the state.” Warning signs have been posted by a concerned individual on a side of the gorge, reading: “When the water is high due to rain or snowmelt, especially powerful currents can easily sweep you over the falls and trap you underneath the water.”

A debate rages as to what to do with this dangerous place. Some argue for more public information that can properly educate people of its risks. Others are pushing to ban anyone and everyone from visitation. All the while, swimmers continue to be attracted to the scene. One college student attending the University of Vermont—just 14 miles away from the gorge—said she had heard about the beauty of the location and had the desire to see it herself. She commented that people know about the dangers and try their best to be careful.

“We just go swimming in the shallow part,” she said. “You can't change the water, and you can't stop people from going in.”

*Katie Zezima, “An Enticing Gorge Poses a Deadly Problem,”
The New York Times (7-16-06); submitted by Ted De Hass, Bedford, Iowa*

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(The Invisible War: What Every Believer Needs to Know About Satan, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare by Chip Ingram) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Chip Ingram, 2006.

How? The key came through a phone conversation Phil remembered having with his son six months earlier when we were in east Asia. We were hours ahead of U.S. time zones, and the Olympics were being taped and rebroadcast back home. Phil's son was less than attentive to his father's phone call, explaining that the U.S. basketball team was on TV and losing by ten points. Phil encouraged him by assuring him the United States would win. What his son didn't know was that the game was already over, and we knew the final score.

"No, Dad, you don't understand," Phil's son told him. "We're losing and it doesn't look good at all." Phil nevertheless guaranteed that despite how things looked, our basketball team would win. "You can relax; this is going to come out just fine."

Maybe it sounds strange, but God used that random conversation to restore my perspective. Phil and I had battled through some of the most severe opposition we had ever faced, and in the midst of it, I had forgotten one of the most important aspects of spiritual warfare: we do not fight *for* victory but *from* victory. Just as Phil knew the final outcome of the basketball game while his son agonized over it, we know the final outcome of our battles in spite of their fierceness. Somehow, in the wee hours of the morning as I was fighting doubts and condemnation, I lost sight of the airtight reality that the victory has already been won by Jesus. Spiritual warfare is never an attempt to gain the victory. It is standing firm in what we already possess.

pp. 60-61

We have followed Abram from the Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Canaan. And we have also witnessed his departure from the will of God in the land of Egypt, and his separation from Lot.

It was a joy in our last study to see God enter into an unconditional covenant relationship with Abram, to fulfill the promises which He had made to him.

Whereas:

Genesis 15 is the great chapter of **FAITH**,

Genesis 16 is a chapter of **UNBELIEF**.

Whereas in:

Genesis 15 we hit a real **HIGH POINT**,

Genesis 16 we hit a real **LOW POINT**.

Whereas:

Genesis 15 Abram is **LISTENING TO GOD**,

Genesis 16 Abram is **LISTENING TO HIS WIFE**.

The emphasis of:

Genesis 15 is a walk by means of the **SPIRIT** in obedience to the will and the word of God and

Genesis 16 is a walk in the **FLESH** endeavoring to perform for God.

The whole **STRUGGLE** of Genesis 16 is:

MAN ENDEAVORING TO HELP GOD FULFILL HIS PROMISES WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO HIM.

Many times this kind of struggle is an **EXCUSE** for:

SUBMISSION and

OBEDIENCE.

The lack of quiet contentment and peace and a willingness to wait upon God is due to the **LACK OF SUBMISSION.**

We have watched Abram tested at every point. He was first tested in his faith to leave his home and his kindred. After he arrives in Canaan, he is tested with regard to the fact there are Canaanites living in the land and there was a famine.

It was the stress of these circumstances that precipitated his action in going into Egypt. He is then tested in regard to his nephew Lot and to avoid strife he allows Lot to choose.

Shortly thereafter Lot is captured by a powerful warrior but Abram, trusting in God, is able to rescue and deliver him.

He then is tested as the king of Sodom offers him material things because of the victory.

Now he is tested here in Genesis 16 by a suggestion by his wife.

The **QUESTION** that comes before us is:

WOULD ABRAM TAKE MATTERS OUT OF THE HANDS OF GOD AND ACT IN THE ENERGY OF THE FLESH TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S PROMISE OF A SON?

It seems to be a general principle in the ways of God with his own children. To first bless and enrich their lives and then to test the one receiving the blessings.

ELISHA had a deep desire for Elijah's mantle and his wish was granted and the next thing we read of him is that he is facing the Jordan. The mantle had to be used at once.

SOLOMON prayed for wisdom and his prayer was heard and once his gift was called into exercise with the case of the two mothers each claiming the living child was hers.

Thus it was too with the **LORD JESUS**. No sooner had the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, than immediately the Spirit drives Him into the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil.

It would have been thought that after the experience recorded in Genesis 15, Abram would have now been able to continue along the pathway of God's will without any hesitation or mistake or trouble. But we know from our own personal experience we are prone to blunder and fall unto error and sin all through our earthly life no matter how far advanced or mature we are in our Christian experience.

THERE IS NO EXPERIENCE THAT IS GOING TO MAKE YOU A SPIRITUAL GIANT!

Barnhouse says:

Abram was justified by faith, but this did not keep him from trying to do something in his own strength. God is seeking to bring us to realize our utter nothingness, in order that we may utterly depend upon Him. Abram believed God, but he was looking to himself and Sarai to fulfill the promise. He would turn and look to Hagar. He had to learn to look to God.
p. 122

Candlish says:

It seems strange and sad, that immediately after that remarkable scene in which the warrant of Abram's faith, and the sufficiency of it, are so expressly recorded,—in which we find the patriarch so unreservedly reposing in simple and honourable reliance on the divine word, and the Lord, on the other hand, condescending to give to him so explicit an assurance of his acceptance, and such sure and infallible tokens for good,—the very first circumstance related of him should be his falling into sin,—and that the sin of unbelief. But obnoxious as it may be to the cavils of the unreflecting and the ill-disposed,—and abused, as perhaps it has been, by not a few of the unlearned and unstable who wrest this, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction,—the narrative is full of profit. In its origin, nature, and results, this sin of Abram may read us many salutary lessons.
p. 252

Gangel & Bramer says:

“God never made a promise that was too good to be true.”

D. L. Moody

p. 146

Gangel & Bramer also say:

MAIN IDEA: *God sometimes seems to be slow in fulfilling his promises. This causes us to implement our own plans, which inevitably leads to trouble. In these chapters Abram feels threatened and also fears for his loved ones. Most believers go through experiences like these at one time or another.*

p. 148

Hughes says:

We would reasonably think that the two preceding faith-events in Abram's life, through which he was promised both a land and a people, would have steeled him against the slightest distrust in God. Remember that Abram's experience had been crowned by God's unilateral, unconditional ratification of his promise when he appeared to Abram in a flaming theophany and passed between the sundered pieces of animals—indicating that if he did not keep his word, he would become as those animals. Imagine the elevation that then coursed through Abram's soul. His faith naturally soared off the charts. Surely this would render him impervious to distrust—we think. Now he would never fail to trust God—we think. Perpetual obedience would characterize Abram—we think.

How wrong we are! Genesis 16's story of Abram and two women, Sarai and Hagar, showcases falling faith and distrust and shocking expedencies. p. 237

Hughes also says:

Aging Sarai was a magnificent woman who had been exemplary — and would be so again as a woman who did not give way to fear (cf. 1 Peter 3:6). But at this time she had been in Canaan for ten years and was seventy-five years old (cf. 12:4, 5 and 17:17). Her barrenness was deemed a tragedy in ancient culture, where it was a mark of success to have many children and a sad failure to have none. From Sarai's perspective, the flower was fading, and time was running out. Anguished humiliation throbbed within her. Significantly, she knew that God had promised Abram that a son coming from his own body would be his heir (cf. 15:4), but it had not yet been explicitly revealed to her that she would be the mother. That would happen when her name would be changed to Sarah (cf. 17:15, 16). At present she was still Sarai, who only knew the former. pp. 237–38

Kidner says:

This chapter marks another stage in eliminating every means but miracle towards the promised birth. It is ironical that after the heights attained in the last two chapters, Abram should capitulate to domestic pressure, pliant under his wife's planning and scolding, and quick to wash his hands of the outcome. Meanwhile the Lord, 'with whom is no variableness', watches over the disregarded person and pattern, and 'works His sovereign will'.
p. 126

McGee says:

As we come to this chapter, I must confess that I almost wish it were not in the Bible. After Abram rose to the heights in chapter 15, you would say that he certainly is treading on high places—but he is not perfect. In chapter 16 we see the lapse of this man's faith relative to Sarai and Hagar, the Egyptian maid. We have here the unbelief of both Sarai and Abram, and the birth of Ishmael. This is certainly a letdown after the wonder of the previous chapter.
p. 70

Phillips says:

It is not unusual for God to be silent. Indeed, He has been silent far more than He has spoken. His silences are as eloquent as His sayings. He usually does what He did here with Abram. He gave him a revelation of His mind and will concerning a son and heir, then He waited for faith to operate. Unfortunately with Abram, as so often with us, instead of faith triumphing, the flesh triumphed instead.
p. 137

Thomas says:

IT might have been thought that after the experience recorded in chapter [15]. Abraham would have been enabled to continue along the pathway of God's will without hesitation, mistake, or trouble. But we know by our own experience the proneness of the believer to blunder and fall into error and sin all through his earthly pilgrimage, no matter how far advanced his course or mature his experience. In the story of Hagar we come upon the record of another shadow which fell on Abraham's life. He is brought face to face with a specious temptation, and for lack of spiritual perception he falls into the snare, which leads to serious and very far-reaching consequences.

p. 147

Waltke says:

The opening scene of Act 2 is a forceful assertion that the covenanted Abraham and Sarah must act only out of radical faith in obedience to divine direction. The frame of the scene, marked by the words "Abram," "Hagar," and the verb "to bear," portrays the consequences of their faithless engineering: . . .

p. 248

Waltke also says:

The descriptions used for Sarah and Hagar in this scene identify the divine intentions for their relationship. With reference to Abraham, Sarah is named "wife of Abraham" (16:1, 3), and "mistress" with reference to Hagar (16:4, 8, 9), while Hagar is called "maidservant" (16:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8). Sarah's title "wife" suggests that the Lord's promise to make Abraham into a great nation from an offspring out of his own loins, not from an adopted son, also applies to Sarah with whom he is reckoned as one flesh (2:24). Prior to this scene, Sarah and Abraham apparently assumed this to be the case, and the narrator confirms this assumption in Genesis 17.

The title "mistress" for Sarah and "maidservant" for Hagar, in the mouths of all the characters, including God, also confirms that Hagar is in the wrong when she tries to transgress social boundaries by elevating herself above Sarah

p. 249

Waltke says further:

In addition, both Act 1, after Abraham has gone to Canaan, and Act 2 begin with the patriarch taking his own initiative to fulfill the promise. When a famine strikes the Promised Land, Abraham leaves it without divine authorization; when God delays giving him the promise seed, Abraham listens to Sarah's scheme, again without divine consultation. No good comes of either initiative.

Abraham and Sarah also bear similarity to Adam and Eve. Both Adam and Abraham act upon suggestions from their wives that are not prompted by faith (3:17; 16:2). Consequently, they bring conflict into their homes.

p. 251

Wenham says:

This tale of family strife falls into three scenes, Sarai's scheme of surrogate motherhood (vv 2–6). Hagar's encounter with the angel (vv 7–14), and the birth of Ishmael (v 15). The account of these events is preceded by an introduction (v 1) and followed by an epilogue (v 16).

p. 3

Wiersbe says:

. . . I thought of the statement [that] Vance Havner often made: "The detour is always worse than the main road."

Genesis 16 records a painful detour that Abraham and Sarah made in their pilgrim walk, a detour that brought conflict not only into their home but also into the world. What today's journalists call "the Arab-Israeli conflict" began right here.

p. 83

Wiersbe also says:

It's a good lesson for God's people about walking by faith and waiting for God to fulfill His promises in His way and in His time. As you study the stages in the experience of Abraham and Sarah, you will see how dangerous it is to depend on your own wisdom.

p. 83

One of the commentators titled Genesis 16:

Beware of Detours!
(source unknown)

Another commentator titled the chapter:

The First Arab
(source unknown)

v. 1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar;

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

Sarai, Abram's wife, hadn't yet produced a child. She had an Egyptian maid named Hagar.

The NET Bible translates verse 1:

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not given birth to any children, but she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This cycle of narratives presents the struggle Abram the patriarch underwent while he was waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled. At times he stumbled, but eventually his faith was proved.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles Genesis 16:

The lack of faith and the birth of Ishmael

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further:

As Abram's faith was developed and tested, delay was seen in the fulfilling of God's promise. In moments of weakness there are suggestions of alternative plans—plans not characterized by faith. Human efforts to assist in the fulfilling of divine promises complicated the matter. Later Israel too would learn that when she tried to do things without God, those things would get complicated.

(Lost Women of the Bible: Finding Strength & Significance Through Their Stories by Carolyn Custis James) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan. Copyright – Carolyn Custis James, 2005.

Most biblical scholars believe Hagar entered the Genesis narrative anonymously several chapters earlier when Pharaoh was enriching Abraham for the privilege of marrying his “sister” Sarah. Pharaoh treated Abraham well for Sarah’s sake, giving him “sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, menservants and *maidservants*, and camels” (Genesis 12:16, emphasis added). Hagar may well have been an item on the inventory of property that changes hands between Pharaoh and Abraham. What a horror to wake up one morning to the news that you’re heading for the auction block, that before the day is out you’ll be wrenched from the people you know and love, degraded by being lined up with cattle and other livestock, and placed in the hands of a stranger.

p. 87

In verse 1 we recognize the frustration of both Abram and Sarai in that they have the promise of God for a seed and they have waited for ten years and there still is no seed in sight.

They both are getting older and because Sarai has not bore any children and since she has not been specifically mentioned as the instrument through whom God will give His promised seed, she begins to think about how God’s will can be accomplished.

You can just feel the process of her thinking:

1. How are You going to give us a seed?
2. How are we going to get a seed?
3. How am I going to get this promise fulfilled?

It was the custom of those days and prescribed by law that the wife could use her handmaid to raise up seed to her husband in the fulfillment of the contract of marriage.

We note that just as Abram had a servant by the name of **ELIEZER**, so Sarai had a maid who has the name of **HAGAR**. It is interesting to note she is an Egyptian handmaid. She came back with Abram and Sarai from the land of Egypt when they were down there during the famine.

A KEY PRINCIPLE:

It is one thing to commit our way unto the Lord and it is another to trust also in Him and wait until He brings it to pass.

It would have been real nice if we could have added the word **“YET”** to the end of that first sentence:

“NOW SARAI, ABRAM’S WIFE, HAD BORNE HIM NO CHILDREN [YET].”

Hebrews 6:12

that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Genesis 30:1-2

When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!” Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

McGee says:

Abram got two things down in the land of Egypt which really caused him trouble: one was wealth, and the other was this little Egyptian maid.
p. 70

Radmacher & Allen say:

In the OT world, infertility caused great distress (25:21). At that time, the woman was always blamed. When a woman was not able to conceive a child, her husband might divorce her. Sarai's desperate ploy to have a child through **Hagar** was fully in accord with the practices of those days.
pp. 32–33

Waltke says:

Abram's wife. This designation of Sarah emphasizes her rightful standing. The promised son should come from her.

Egyptian. Hagar was possibly among the maidservants Abraham acquired under Pharaoh's patronage. (12:16).

maidservant. A maidservant is a personal servant owned by a rich woman, not a slave girl answerable to the master. Hagar's relationship to Sarah resembles Eliezer's to Abraham (see 15:2); she is answerable to Sarah. The angel of the Lord will reassert this identification (16:8).¹¹⁰

110. A. Jespen, "Ama^h und Schiphcha^h," *VT* 8 (1958): 293–97.
p. 251

Wenham says:

Since Hagar is described as an Egyptian, it seems more likely that Sarai acquired her in Egypt (cf. 12:16) than that she brought her from Mesopotamia in her dowry.
p. 6

(God's Best Secrets: Daily Devotional Meditations by Andrew Murray) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – unknown, 1977.

The Spirit of Divine Love can have no place or possibility of birth in any fallen creature till it wills and chooses to be dead to all self, in a patient, meek, humble, resignation to the good power and mercy of God. And when your own impatience or pride attacks you, stand turned to this humble resignation and leave and give up yourself to be helped by the mercy of God. The greater the perplexity of your distress is, the nearer you are to the greatest and best relief, provided you have but patience to expect it all from God.
(August 22)

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Yes, it seemed nothing but an accident, but how divinely was it overruled! Ruth had gone forth with her mother's blessing, under the care of her mother's God, to humble but honourable toil, and the providence of God was guiding her every step. Little did she know that amid the sheaves she would find a husband, that he should make her the joint owner of all those broad acres, and that she a poor foreigner should become one of the progenitors of the great Messiah. God is very good to those who trust in Him, and often surprises them with unlooked for blessings. Little do we know what may happen to us to-morrow, but this sweet fact may cheer us, that no good thing shall be withheld.

p. 599

v. 2 so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her.” Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

Sarai said to Abram, “God has not seen fit to let me have a child. Sleep with my maid. Maybe I can get a family from her.” Abram agreed to do what Sarai said.

The NET Bible translates verse 2:

So Sarai said to Abram, “Since the Lord has prevented me from having children, have sexual relations with my servant. Perhaps I can have a family by her.” Abram did what Sarai told him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Sarai was barren so by all human calculations the heir of the promise could not come through her at all. This set in motion some dubious activities by Abram and Sarai. **Abram** learned, however, that God’s promise was not to be fulfilled in this way.

In the legal custom of that day a barren woman could give her maid to **her husband** as a **wife**, and the child born of that union was regarded as the first wife’s child. If the husband said to the slave-wife’s son, “You are my son,” then he was the adopted son and heir. So Sarai’s suggestion was unobjectionable according to the customs of that time. But God often repudiates social customs.

Though Sarai's motive was good and genuine and involved self-sacrifice, the proposal was wrong in itself:

It was **WRONG AGAINST GOD** whose word had been given and his time should have been waited.

It was **WRONG AGAINST ABRAM** leading him out of the pathway of patient waiting for God's will.

It was **WRONG AGAINST HAGAR** and did not recognize her individuality and rights in the matter.

It was **WRONG AGAINST SARAI** herself robbing her of a high privilege as well as leading to disobedience.

A promise made to Abram was also a promise to Sarai because they were **ONE FLESH.**

Although Abram was justified by faith, this did not keep him from trying to do something in his own strength. Abram believed God but he was looking to himself and Sarai to fulfill the promise. Instead of turning to look to Hagar he had to learn to look to God.

Because it had not been revealed that she was to be the mother Sarai, in her impatience, was just trying to help God to do something by human means. She still had not comprehended that her own bareness could be used by God to put her in a place of dependence upon the Lord that fruit might be born through her.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

A man's worst foes may be in his own household.

There are **TWO VERY REAL DANGERS** to progress in the Christian life:

1. **PRESUMPTION** in the sense that God is working in a very specific way and is using human means to the accomplishment of his purpose.
2. **DISTRUST** or **UNBELIEF** in that which God has promised.

Both of these must be rejected if a man is going to walk by faith.

Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

The apostle Paul, in arguing that the law and personal performance have nothing to do with the spiritual life and a walk by faith, uses this particular verse as a divine commentary to show the fact that human effort must be put completely out of the picture. And that God is interested in a divine relationship through grace and grace alone.

All human means must be rejected in the realization of God's will and purpose in our lives.

The problem is that we start thinking that God will appreciate our help.

You can certainly see that Sarai had the highest of motives when she points up the fact that it is the Lord who has prevented her from bearing children and so Sarai has not been specifically mentioned in the promises to this point about Abram having many descendants.

The natural thought process is to anticipate what God might want to have done and the obvious thing to Sarai, from a human point of view, is to have Abram go into her maid. It is in the hope of this action that she could obtain children through her.

God wants to do it His way! We see this in the lives of other patriarchs.

Just like Adam listened to Eve, so Abram listens to the voice of Sarai.

There are **THREE THINGS** that converge here upon Abram to get his attention:

1. Sarai is barren,
2. Hagar is at hand, and
3. Sarai is urging him on in what is about to be done.

You will also notice that they did not go to pray about this one.

There are **TWO THINGS** here in verse 2 that are really important for us to consider:

1. They did not call on the Lord about this issue and
2. Sarai says **“PERHAPS I CAN BUILD A FAMILY THROUGH HER”**—they are not focused on the glory of God.

“ABRAM AGREED TO WHAT SARAI SAID”—In a similar way that Adam did to Eve.

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Anderson says:

As Genesis 16:2 says, Sarai told Abram, “Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children.” (How about that? She had to blame somebody . . . why not God?) Sarai admitted that God had the power to keep her barren. It’s too bad that she didn’t possess the same faith in His ability to give her a child! It’s a shame that she hadn’t comprehended the fact that her infertility could be used by the Lord to put her in a place of dependence on Him so that fruit could be born in her life.

p. 93

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

To deal with her barrenness, Sarai’s plan of offering her maid to Abram to bear him an heir was apparently acceptable within the social custom of the day. Sarai’s plan, however, was one more example of the futility of human efforts to achieve God’s blessing. Although successful, Sarai’s plan does not meet with divine approval . . .

p. 25

Barnhouse says:

The dear old woman wanted so much to see the promise accomplished, but the proposal was wrong in every way. W. H. Griffith Thomas has pointed out that this action “was wrong against God, whose word had been given and whose time should have been waited. It was wrong against Abraham, leading him out of the pathway of patient waiting for God’s will. It was wrong against Hagar, and did not recognize her individuality and rights in the matter. It was wrong against Sarai herself, robbing her of a high privilege as well as leading to disobedience.” And I may add that it was wrong against the child who was born of this union, for he became a “wild-ass man.” God said that Ishmael could never be the heir.

p. 123

Boice says:

One thing that happens when we stop trusting God—no matter how reasonable our lack of trust seems—is that we then tend to blame God (and other people as well) for our difficulties. We see this in Sarai’s situation. The narrative begins by noting that when she approached Abram with her suggestion, she blamed God for the fact that she had no children: “The LORD has kept me from having children” (v. 2). As a statement of fact, this was true; but we detect more than this in the words. We detect a belligerent note, as if she were saying, “I know we should trust God for a solution, but God has made things too difficult for us to do that.

p. 570

Boice says further:

This always happens when we stop trusting God. We do wrong. We say God caused it to occur. Then, when our plans go sour, we blame either God or others for the outcome. The difficulty is not with God. The sin is in ourselves. The fault is in our own bad choices.

p. 570

Bush says:

Seeing at her time of life but little hope of seed in the ordinary way, she seems deliberately to have concluded, that if the promise were to be fulfilled it must be in the person of another. Accordingly, as unbelief is very prolific of schemes, she here proposes a measure evidently fraught with the most pernicious consequences. It implied a culpable distrust of God who had promised, and went to introduce a foreign, perhaps an idolatrous mother into the family of Abraham.

p. 255

Candlish says:

It originated in the suggestion of his faithful wife, and had, for its single object, the fulfillment of the divine promise, whose accomplishment otherwise seemed to be growing every day more manifestly and hopelessly impossible (ver. 1, 2).
p. 254

Hartley says:

In presenting the subject to Abram, Sarai revealed the depth of her distress by casting blame for her barrenness on Yahweh. The ancients believed that God's blessing in bestowing fertility was necessary for conception to take place. In asking Abram to take this course Sarai was in effect telling him that he needed to act since God had not acted.
p. 164

Hartley says further:

She formulated her plan by using wording similar to that of Abram when he asked her to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister (12:11–13). She subtly pressured Abram to repay her something for having followed his plan to her own dishonor . . .
pp. 164–65

Henry says:

I. The maker of this match was Sarai herself. It is the policy of Satan to tempt us by our nearest and dearest relations. It would have been much more for Sarai's interest if Abram had kept to the rule of God's law instead of being guided by her foolish projects.
p. 32

Hughes says:

There is also an ironic reversal here. Down in Egypt, trustless Abram had given Sarai over to the Egyptian Pharaoh. Now in Canaan untrusting Sarai gave Abram over to her Egyptian servant. Abram's fiasco in Egypt was costly indeed.

p. 239

Lange says:

. . . Abram, according to ch. [15], had fixed his eye upon his *head servant*, Eliezer of Damascus, so now, Sarai fixes her eye upon her *head maiden*,* Hagar, the Egyptian.

* [Here, of course, her slave, bond-woman.—A. G.]

p. 415

Radmacher & Allen say:

Sarai knew that conception was from the Lord (4:1); her words, **the LORD** has restrained me, expressed her grief. Earlier her husband had complained to the Lord that he was childless (15:2).

p. 33

Radmacher & Allen say further:

. . . In the culture of the ancient Near East this would have been expected. Abram's peers would not have regarded it as immoral. **obtain children by her:** Hagar would become a surrogate mother for Sarai. At the time of birth, the mother would undress herself and stay near the birth mother. As the child was born it might be placed on the wife's body, a ritual indicating that it was born on behalf of the woman who was unable to have children herself.

p. 33

Thomas says:

Nevertheless, though Sarah's motive was good, genuine, and involved self-sacrifice, the proposal was wrong in itself, and, at the same time, wrong in its method of obtaining the end sought. It was wrong against God, Whose word had been given and Whose time should have been waited. It was wrong against Abraham, leading him out of the pathway of patient waiting for God's will. It was wrong against Hagar, and did not recognize her individuality and rights in the matter. It was wrong against Sarah herself, robbing her of a high privilege as well as leading to disobedience.

p. 147

Waltke says:

The Lord has kept me . . . perhaps I. Sarah was about sixty-five years old when Abraham left his father and homeland. Still childless a decade later, and perhaps already in menopause, Sarah draws the conclusion that the offspring the Lord has promised Abraham will not come from her body. She recognizes the Lord as Creator of life; however, she does not interpret her infertility in terms of God's promise.¹¹¹ Her complaint condemns her for seizing the initiative from his hands. Without a word from God to authorize her scheme, she is guilty of synergism. Her plan to deal with the problem compares with Abraham's in 12:11-13 . . .

¹¹¹Roop, *Genesis*, 118.

p. 251

Waltke says further:

agreed to what Sarai said. The Hebrew here occurs only in Gen. 3:17. Like Adam, Abraham agrees in his wife's faithless suggestion. Abraham's careless passivity sharply contrasts with his valiant actions on behalf of Lot (Gen. 14; 19).

p. 252

**(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.**

Is it possible that the king had mounted his housetop for retirement and devotion? If so, what a caution is given us to count no place, however secret, a sanctuary from sin! While our hearts are so like a tinder-box, and sparks so plentiful, we had need use all diligence in all places to prevent a blaze. Satan can climb housetops, and enter closets, and even if we could shut out that foul fiend, our own corruptions are enough to work our ruin unless grace prevent. Reader, beware of evening temptations. Be not secure. The sun is down but sin is up. We need a watchman for the night as well as a guardian for the day. O blessed Spirit, keep us from all evil this night. Amen.

p. 35

Very earnestly, therefore, should we avoid temptation, seeking to walk so guardedly in the path of obedience, that we may never tempt the devil to tempt us. We are not to enter the thicket in search of the lion. Dearly might we pay for such presumption. This lion may cross our path or leap upon us from the thicket, but we have nothing to do with hunting him. He that meeteth with him, even though he winneth the day, will find it a stern struggle. Let the Christian pray that he may be spared of the encounter. Our Saviour, who had experience of what temptation meant, thus earnestly admonished His disciples—“Pray that ye enter not into temptation.”

p. 81

**(The Expositor's Bible: The Book of Psalms-Volume I- Psalms I-XXXVIII by
A. Maclaren, D.D.) New York, N.Y.: A.C. Armstrong and Son.
Copyright – 1899.**

Hands, lifted empty to heaven in longing trust, will never drop empty back and hang listless, without a blessing in their grasp.

p. 319

v. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her Egyptian maid Hagar and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. Abram had been living ten years in Canaan when this took place.

The NET Bible translates verse 3:

So after Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years, Sarai, Abram's wife, gave Hagar, her Egyptian servant, to her husband to be his wife.

It had been **TEN YEARS** since they had come into the land and still there was **NO SEED**.

HAGAR IS A CHILD OF HAM, one of the sons of Noah, upon whom God had placed a **CURSE**. This is overlooked in the plan of Abram and Sarai to raise up a seed for Abram.

Although this was the common custom of the day, this was not God's plan for Abram and Sarai.

The Lord has obviously permitted it because of the lessons that are going to be learned out of this situation.

Abram and Sarai both adhered to their own discernment in acting in accordance with the practice of the time in which they lived. Beware of discerning according to your own discernment how God must do some things. Because it means that you dictate to God. That word of God must be fulfilled.

I can not allow that I have been diluted therefore there is only one thing left to do. That is leaning to your own understanding instead of trusting in the Lord with all your heart. Never say God must do this thing. He must not.

God will fulfill his own word, you have no business to dictate to Him. You have to remain true to God and when His Word is fulfilled, you will know He has fulfilled it, because it is a supernatural fulfillment.

Always beware of being more eager to do God's will than God is for you to do it. Remarkable thing about the life of our Lord was, not that he was eager to do God's will, but that he was obedient to do it. He never put his fingers across the threads of his Father's providential order for him and gave a tug saying, "now I will help you" and pull the thing right out of his father's wisdom to arrange all for him. We rush in and say, "I see what God wants and I will do it." And we wound our own souls and injure others lives.

How much we limit God with this kind of thinking.

Abram is **85 YEARS OLD** when takes Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant to be his wife.

Proverbs 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.

Isaiah 55:8-11

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 28:16

So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

Barnhouse says:

The fact that Sarai had brought an Egyptian maid from Pharaoh’s court shows the danger of sojourning in the world. When one leaves the world, something of it comes with him, and it must ultimately be disavowed and cast out.

It is highly significant that Hagar was an Egyptian, for that means she was a child of Ham, upon whom God pronounced the curse through Noah. Here Satan is seeking to put a counterfeit heir in the place of the promise.
p. 124

Henry says:

Abram's compliance with Sarai's proposal, we have reason to think, was from an earnest desire of the promised seed, on whom the covenant should be entailed. God had told him that his heir should be a son of his body, but had not yet told him that it should be a son by Sarai; therefore he thought, "Why not by Hagar, since Sarai herself proposed it?" Fleshly wisdom, as it anticipates God's time of mercy, so it puts us out of God's way. This would be happily prevented if we would ask counsel of God by the word and by prayer, before we attempt that which is important and suspicious.

p. 32

Keil & Delitzsch say:

The resolution seemed a judicious one, and according to the customs of the East, there would be nothing wrong in carrying it out. Hence Abraham consented without opposition, because, as Malachi (ii. 15) says, he sought the seed promised by God. But they were both of them soon to learn, that their thoughts were the thoughts of man and not of God, and that their wishes and actions were not in accordance with the divine promise. Sarai, the originator of the plan, was the first to experience its evil consequences. When the maid was with child by Abram, "*her mistress became little in her eyes.*" When Sarai complained to Abram of the contempt she received from her maid (saying, "*My wrong,*" the wrong done to me, "*come upon thee,*" cf. Jer. li. 35; Gen xxvii. 13), and called upon Jehovah to judge between her and her husband,¹ Abram gave her full power to act as mistress towards her maid, without raising the slave who was made a concubine above her position. Thus, instead of securing the fulfilment of their wishes, Sarai and Abram had reaped nothing but grief and vexation, and apparently had lost the maid through their self-concerted scheme. But the faithful covenant God turned the whole into a blessing.

p. 219

MacArthur say:

After ten childless years (cf. 12:4), Sarai resorted to the custom of the day by which a barren wife could get a child through one of her own maidservants (v. 2, “I shall obtain children by her”). Abram, ignoring divine reaction and assurance in response to his earlier attempt to appoint an heir (cf. 15:2–5), sinfully yielded to Sarai’s insistence, and Ishmael was born (v. 15).

p. 36

McGee says:

This little Egyptian maid becomes a concubine, and this is not according to God’s will. God is not going to accept the offspring at all—He didn’t; He wouldn’t. Why? Because it was *wrong*. Don’t say that God approved this. All you can say is that this is in the record because it is an historical fact.

p. 70

Radmacher & Allen:

Sarai and Abram enlisted Hagar’s aid only after **ten years** of waiting for God’s promise to be fulfilled. At this point, Abram would have been eighty-five years old and Sarai seventy-five (12:4; 17:17).

p. 33

Waltke says:

Sarai . . . took . . . gave . . . to her husband. This is the same progression of verbs at the Fall in 3:6. Hagar is treated as property with no personal rights.

p. 252

Wenham says:

“Ten years after Abram had settled in Canaan.” This comment may be double-edged. It obviously explains Sarai’s concern to do something about their childlessness, but it may also hint that the promise of the land is proving valid. The passing years should strengthen faith as the fulfillment of the promises is seen, but they also test it because that fulfillment is only partial.

p. 8

**(God Is Closer Than You Think by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 2005.**

When Jesus says your name twice, watch out! Often he calls someone’s name when he is especially trying to get their attention:

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.
But I have prayed for you. . . .”

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

We sometimes do the same thing. The single most repeated line from an old television show called *The Brady Bunch* featured a frustrated sister, named Jan, who was always complaining about her sibling: “Marsha, Marsha, Marsha. . . .”

“Martha, Martha, Martha. . . .”

I imagine that Jesus says her name with some affection, but goes on to diagnose her condition with surgical precision. What keeps someone from his presence is not just busyness—not just having a lot of things to do. It’s distraction.

p. 57

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms) Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. Copyright – Chad Helms, 2006.

They ran after these things at the expense of innocence and virtue. They became agitated, tortured even, in grasping at the vain, chimerical illusion of happiness, and they ended up losing both their tranquility and peace of mind. They were all unhappy because they wanted too much and because they did not know how to put up with anything or wait for anything.
p. 144

HAGAR is mentioned **43 TIMES** in these sixteen verses.

THE LORD is mentioned **16 TIMES**.

SARAI is mentioned **26 TIMES**.

ABRAM is mentioned **18 TIMES**.

ISHMAEL is mentioned **3 TIMES**.

v. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

He slept with Hagar and she got pregnant. When Hagar learned she was pregnant, she looked down on her mistress.

The NET Bible translates verse 4:

He had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. Once Hagar realized she was pregnant, she despised Sarai.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Sarai's plan, with Abram's approval, turned sour, however, after the Egyptian slave girl, **Hagar**, became **pregnant**. Hagar **began to despise** Sarai. Both women may have wondered what would become of Abram's seed. Would Hagar have it?

Following the advice of his wife Sarai and with no word from the Lord to verify his action, he moves out of the will of God and went in to Hagar. The record tells us:

"SHE CONCEIVED."

I think it is good for us to remember that this action precedes the giving of the law in the book of Exodus, and also the teachings of the Scriptures and the Lord Jesus on the subject of marriage.

Abram and Sarai are following the customs of the day and the patterns acceptable in the society in which they are living in the action that has taken place. This is not something which is out of character or abnormal for them.

“And when Hagar saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.”

Here we see how **WOUNDED PRIDE LEADS TO HATRED.**

Hagar realizes that she is a woman fulfilling the functions of womanhood while Sarai is remaining barren. This reaction is quite natural for human nature is like that. Sarai should have foreseen this. And so should we realize that the results of sin are inevitable. The fruit of the wind is the whirlwind. And whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap.

In Galatians 5:19-21 we have a **LISTING OF THE WORKS OF THE FLESH.** Eight out of fifteen of these works of the flesh have to do with personal relationships.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, **ENMITIES, STRIFE, JEALOUSY, OUTBURSTS OF ANGER, DISPUTES, DISSENSIONS, FACTIONS, ENVYING,** drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1. “enmities,”
2. “strife,”
3. “jealousy,”
4. “outbursts of anger,”
5. “disputes,”
6. “dissensions,”
7. “factions,” and
8. “envying”

Henry says:

The immediate bad consequences of Abram's unhappy marriage to Hagar. A great deal of mischief it made quickly. When we do not well both sin and trouble lie at the door. See it in this story.

p. 32

Hughes says:

Their lives were in a free fall, and the bottom was coming up fast! "Do not be deceived," says the Scripture. "God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:7, 8). They will reap the whirlwind.

p. 239

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

This usage seems to have prevailed in patriarchal times; and Hagar, Sarai's slave, of whom she had the entire right of disposing, was given by her mistress' spontaneous offer, to be the secondary wife of Abram, in the hope of obtaining the long-looked-for heir. It was a wrong step—indicating a want of simple reliance on God—and Sarai was the first to reap the bitter fruits of her device.

p. 27

**(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.**

Christians can never sin cheaply; they pay a heavy price for iniquity. Transgression destroys peace of mind, obscures fellowship with Jesus, hinders prayer, brings darkness over the soul; therefore be not the serf and bondman of sin. There is yet a higher argument: each time you "serve sin," you have "Crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Can you bear that thought?

p. 303

(Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2002.

When we try to live our lives in our own strength, we ultimately fail. And we don't fail, we fall very short of God's purposes for us. When we operate in the flesh, three things are always true: (1) we will always lack the power of the Spirit, and we'll suffer from fatigue; (2) we will always lack the vision of the Spirit so we'll suffer from frustration; and (3) we will always lack the sustaining ministry of the Spirit so we'll suffer from failure.

Do these consequences sound familiar? You will always suffer these results when you tackle life in your own strength.

p. 378

Psalm 27:13-14 would have been two good verses for Abram and Sarai to have considered before they got into this:

Psalm 27:13-14

I am still confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Genesis 4:6-7

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

v. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

Sarai told Abram, “It’s all your fault that I’m suffering this abuse. I put my maid in bed with you and the minute she knows she’s pregnant, she treats me like I’m nothing. May God decide which of us is right.”

The NET Bible translates verse 5:

Then Sarai said to Abram, “You have brought this wrong on me! I allowed my servant to have sexual relations with you, but when she realized that she was pregnant, she despised me. May the Lord judge between you and me!”

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Because of the conflict between the women, **Sarai** blamed **Abram** for the problem. He told her to handle it in **whatever** way she wished. Sarai then **mistreated . . . Hagar** so that **she fled** (16:6).

Now Abram, who like Adam followed the wrong advice of his wife . . . was caught weakly in the middle.

Sarai completely forgets she’s the one who recommended the action which has taken place and now wants the wrong that has been done to her to be placed upon Abram.

It is the first reaction of the flesh to **PUT THE BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE:**

ADAM placed the blame back on **GOD**,

EVE placed it on the **SERPENT**, and

SARAI seeks to place it on **ABRAM**.

God places the responsibility for actions like this upon the flesh or the old nature.

Mark 7:20-23

And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Proverbs 21:9

Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

Abram realizes he has a real problem on his hands with two fussing women.

Sarai is saying, “my wrong belongs to you as well.”

How true this is to human nature. We take one false step unsanctioned by God and when we begin to discover our mistake we give way to outbursts of wounded pride.

Instead of chiding ourselves we turn upon others whom we may have instigated to take the wrong course. We bitterly reproach them for wrongs of which they at most were only instruments while we were the final cause.

You can see the deadly process as:

WOUNDED PRIDE CAUSES JEALOUSY and

JEALOUSY LEADS TO CRUELTY.

Sarai has been hurt. “I gave my maid into your arms. You held her in the place of your bosom that belongs to me. And when she saw that she had conceived she changed her attitude toward me. I then became despised in her sight.”

Hagar looks on the conception as a promotion from servanthood. She is too cool to cook anymore since she has conceived by Abram. Every time Sarai asks her to do something Hagar treats it as a put down. After all, isn't she going to be a mother of Abram's child.

I can just hear her say:

“We better get out the maternity clothes honey because I'm beginning to show! I'm going to be the mama of your husband's child.”

Hughes says:

Sarai became volcanic. The shaking ground erupted in anguished jealousy and bloodcurdling blame. “And Sarai said to Abram, ‘May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!’”(v. 5). Logically Sarai was wrong to place all the blame on Abram. After all, it was her idea. But actually she was right. He was the patriarch. He was the head of the house. God had spoken to him, not to her. He should never have allowed the situation. Abram was truly responsible for the “wrong” (Hebrew, “violence”) she was suffering. Her soul felt as if she were a victim of homicide (cf. 49:5). Such misery! “Abram,” she cried, “may the LORD judge between you and me!” She appealed to the highest Judge, who sees everything in secret. And God was watching, as we shall see.

Here is where Abram should have been the man. He should have taken his Sarai aside and assured her of his love and that she was first. He should have accepted the full blame and responsibility. He should have dealt kindly and firmly with Hagar. Tellingly, he, like Sarai, never refers to Hagar by name in the account but only by label (“your servant,” v. 6).⁷ It is so much easier when you depersonalize those you abuse.

Abram should have sought God’s wisdom in repentant prayer. Instead, he capitulated again to Mesopotamian social convention. “Behold, your servant is in your power,” Abram said.

p. 240

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . Bursts of temper, or blows, as the original may bear, took place till at length Hagar, perceiving the hopelessness of maintaining the unequal strife, resolved to escape from what had become to her in reality, as well as in name, a house of bondage.

p. 27

McGee says:

Don't pass this verse by. Don't assume that God approved of this. God says that it is wrong, and now Sarai sees that she has done wrong. "My wrong be upon thee"—she is *wrong*, my friend. God will not accept this, and it is going to be real heartbreak to old Abram. But, you see, Abram and Sarai are not really trusting God as they should.

p. 70

Radmacher & Allen say:

The LORD judge: This is as close as we come to the use of cursing among God's people in the Bible; such words arose out of Sarai's utter desperation.

p. 33

Stigers says:

No express commentary on the essentially impractical and amoral character of the arrangement is given. The obvious evils which resulted are the best commentary: the fracturing of otherwise proper interpersonal relationships between Sarai and Hagar with the accompanying damage to Sarai's dignity and the production of contempt for Sarai from Hagar. Hagar is "used," but Sarai is not truly benefited.

pp. 160–61

1 Samuel 1:6-8

And because the Lord had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

Proverbs 30:21-23

“Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: a servant who becomes king, a fool who is full of food, an unloved woman who is married, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms) Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. Copyright – Chad Helms, 2006.

What he asks is a will that is not shared between himself and any other thing. It is a will malleable in his hands, that desires and rejects nothing, that wants unreservedly whatever he wants and that never wants under any pretext anything that God does not want.

p. 181

This is the **SECOND TIME** that Sarai brings the Lord into the passage:

1. verse 2—she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children.”
2. verse 5—“MAY THE LORD JUDGE BETWEEN YOU AND ME.”

v. 6 “Your servant is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

“You decide,” said Abram. “Your maid is your business.” Sarai was abusive to Hagar and Hagar ran away.

The NET Bible translates verse 6:

Abram said to Sarai, “Since your servant is under your authority, do to her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai treated Hagar harshly, so she ran away from Sarai.

I guess Abram knows better than to try and referee between two fussing women. So he delegated the responsibility for Hagar to Sarai to:

“DO WITH HER WHATEVER YOU THINK BEST.”

The record tells us that Sarai treated Hagar very harshly and Hagar was no longer able to put up with it so she fled from her presence.

Because of Sarai’s jealousy, she treats her pregnant servant in a very cruel manner. It is so cruel that Hagar flees from her presence.

When circumstances become hard we often times try to run away. For Hagar this seems to be the only alternative at this time.

Hartley says:

“Mistreat” (*innah*) is for harsh, cruel treatment; this word describes the terrible conditions of slavery that the Israelites suffered in Egypt . . .
p. 166

Lange says:

Abram adheres firmly to the original standpoint. He regards Hagar still as the servant, and the one who fulfils the part of Sarai, and so far justifies himself against Sarai. But the justification is turned now into the severe censure and affliction of Hagar, and this is the result of the wrong position into which he has allowed himself to be drawn.—**Sarai dealt hardly with her.**
p. 416

Parker says:

Sarai was so cruel that Hagar fled away from her. Sarai imagined that Hagar despised her. It was all fancy. How fancy tortures us! It turns the green branches of spring into serpents; it curdles and rots the milk of human kindness; it turns the child's sweet laugh into a mocking noise; it finds hell everywhere! Beware of thine imaginings, my friend, my brother, my sister—beware! One wrong turn, and there is nothing for thee but cloud and storm, and weary aching of heart.
p. 214

Waltke says:

mistreated . . . This is the same Hebrew verb as in 15:13 for the Egyptian mistreatment of the Israelites (cf. Ex. 1:12). Sarah's reaction is too severe. Victimized by barrenness and Hagar, Sarah now becomes the victimizer. Neither Sarah nor Hagar acquit themselves well here: the mistress is harsh and overbearing; the maidservant is unrepentant and insubordinate.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹See A. Brenner, "Female Social Behaviour: Two Descriptive Patterns within the 'Birth of the Hero' Paradigm," *VT* 36 (1986): 257-73, esp. 261.
p. 253

(Facing Your Giants by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: W Publishing. Copyright
– Max Lucado, 2006.

God occupies the only seat on the supreme court of heaven. He wears the robe and refuses to share the gavel. For this reason Paul wrote, “Don’t insist on getting even; that’s not for you to do. ‘I’ll do the judging’, says God. I’ll take care of it” (Rom. 12:19 MSG).

Revenge removes God from the equation. Vigilantes displace and replace God. “I’m not sure you can handle this one, Lord. You may punish too little or too slowly. I’ll take this matter into my hands, thank you.”

Is this what you want to say? Jesus didn’t. No one had a clearer sense of right and wrong than the perfect Son of God. Yet, “when he suffered, he didn’t make any threats but left everything to the one who judges fairly” (1 Pet. 2:23 GOD’S WORD).

Only God assesses accurate judgments. We impose punishments too slight or severe. God dispenses perfect justice. Vengeance is his job. Leave your enemies in God’s hands. You’re not endorsing their misbehavior when you do. You can hate what someone did without letting hatred consume you. Forgiveness is not excusing.
p. 49

Dealing with Difficult People

Don’t say, “That person bothers me.” Think: “*That person sanctifies me.*”

–Josemaria Escrava, founder of Opus Dei

*Josemaria Escrava, The Way (New York: Image/Doubleday, 2006), p. 174;
submitted by Kevin Miller, vice president, Christianity Today International*

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**(The Gospel for Real Life: Turn to the Liberating Power of the Cross . . .
Every Day by Jerry Bridges) Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
Copyright – Jerry Bridges, 2002.**

We evangelical believers generally abstain from the grosser sins of society; in fact, we tend to sit in judgment of those who practice such things. But beneath the surface of our own lives we tolerate all kinds of “refined” sins such as selfishness, covetousness, pride, resentment, envy, jealousy, self-righteousness, and a critical spirit toward others.
pp. 25-26

The word here translated “MISTREATED” probably refers to both PHYSICAL and VERBAL ABUSE.

v. 7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

An angel of God found her beside a spring in the desert; it was the spring on the road to Shur.

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

The Lord's angel found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert—the spring that is along the road to Shur.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The story has both a dark side (Sarai mistreated her maidservant) and a bright side (**the Angel of the LORD** communicated with **Hagar in the desert**). There is no problem seeing what went wrong in the dark side of the story. When the way of faith (which involves patient waiting) was abandoned and the way of human calculation was taken, Abram was caught up in a chain of causes and effects that would trouble him for years to come. (Ishmael became the ancestor of the Arabs, who are still hostile to the Jews.)

The Angel of the Lord **found** the maidservant in the desert at **a spring . . . beside the road to Shur** (cf. 25:18) on the way to her homeland, Egypt. This is the first reference in the Old Testament to “the Angel of the LORD” (lit., “the Angel of Yahweh”). This Angel is identified with Yahweh in 16:13, as well as in [several other passages]. And yet the Angel is distinct from Yahweh . . . Thus “the Angel of the LORD” may refer to a theophany of the preincarnate Christ . . .

Hagar was heading back toward Egypt in the hopes that she could find some refuge from Sarai's cruelty.

How interesting that the angel of the Lord should meet her by a spring of water in the wilderness. It was so in the New Testament in **John 4** that Christ met the **WOMAN AT THE WELL**.

How often times when we run away from our circumstances do we find ourselves found by God when we stop by the fountain of His Word to be refreshed.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

The location shifts to the wilderness, to the "spring that is beside the road to Shur." Hagar was returning to Egypt . . .
p. 25

Keil & Delitzsch say:

Hagar no doubt intended to escape to Egypt by a road used from time immemorial, that ran from Hebron past Beersheba, "*by the way of Shur.*"
p. 219

MacArthur says:

The Angel of the Lord, who does not appear after the birth of Christ, is often identified as the preincarnate Christ.
p. 36

MacArthur says further:

Shur. This location was south of Palestine and east of Egypt, which meant that Hagar attempted to return home to Egypt.
pp. 36–37

McGee says:

I am inclined to believe that the Angel of the Lord is none other than the preincarnate Christ. This is characteristic of Him: He is always out looking for the lost. Hagar had traveled quite a distance from home.
p. 71

Radmacher & Allen say:

the Angel of the LORD: This wonderful phrase is used to speak of God as He relates Himself directly to His people.
p. 33

Thomas says:

What a picture of real life is found in this chapter! Man is seen blundering, sinning, and suffering, and then God intervenes with His overruling providence, wisdom, and grace.
p. 148

v. 8 And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?” “I’m running away from my mistress Sarai.” she answered.

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

He said, “Hagar, maid of Sarai, what are you doing here?” She said, “I’m running away from Sarai my mistress.”

The NET Bible translates verse 8:

He said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?” She replied, “I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

After asking **Hagar** two questions (**Where have you come from, and where are you going?**) God gave her two sure words: one was hortatory—return **and submit** (Gen. 16:9), and the other was promissory—she would give birth to a boy (vv. 10-12). She called God **the One who sees me** (v. 13), and to commemorate the event she named the well at that (unknown) location **Beer Lahai Roi** (“well of the living One who sees me” . . .

There are **TWO QUESTIONS** that the angel of the Lord asks of Hagar:

1. **“WHERE HAVE YOU COME FROM?”**
2. **“WHERE ARE YOU GOING?”**

It is very interesting that throughout this whole experience we have no word of acceptance from Jehovah with regard to the action taken by Sarai and Abram at this time.

HAGAR'S ANSWER is:

"I AM RUNNING AWAY FROM MY MISTRESS SARAI."

Radmacher & Allen say:

. . . The Lord asks these questions not from a lack of knowledge but to give Hagar an opportunity to express herself.
p. 33

v. 9 Then the angel of the Lord told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

The angel of God said, “Go back to your mistress. Put up with her abuse.”

The NET Bible translates verse 9:

Then the Lord’s angel said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her authority.

I am sure Hagar thought that this was an unfair command made without an awareness of the true condition under which she is serving.

It’s like saying:

“Lord, do you know what I’m going through?”

The flesh always wants to run away and the Spirit says return and submit.

If we seek to change our circumstances we will jump from the frying pan into the fire. We must be triumphant exactly where we are. It is not a change of climate we need but a change of heart. God wants to demonstrate His power exactly where we have known our greatest grief and disappointment. Many time life’s disappointments are His appointments. It may be humiliating to be forced to return to the place of our failure but that is where His power will enable us to triumph.

How often times we miss the will of God because we assume that contrary circumstances obviously reveal a change in God's will for our lives. How much we need to recognize that circumstances are designed by a loving Father to the great accomplishment of His ultimate purpose in forming Jesus Christ within us. And this formation takes place in the midst of adversity and suffering on many occasions.

That which is not cured must be endured.

Obviously the Lord sees it as part of the process which is useful in mellowing and strengthening our character.

The day would come when God would open that door and send Hagar out of that house. Until that moment would come, after thirteen years had rolled away, she must return to the place which she had left, bearing her burden and fulfilling her duty as best she might.

"Return and submit," we are all prone to act as Hagar did if our lot is hard and our cross is heavy we start off in a fit of impatience and wounded and pride we shirk the discipline and we evade the yoke. We make our own way out of the difficulty.

Ah! We shall never get right thus. Never! We must retrace our steps. We must meekly bend our necks under the yoke. We must accept the lot which God has ordained for us even though it be the result and cruelty of the sin of others. We shall conquer by yielding. We shall escape by returning. We shall become free by offering ourselves to be bound. "Return and submit." By and by when the lesson is learned the prison door will open of its own accord.

Barnhouse says:

If we seek to change our circumstances, we will jump from the frying pan into the fire. We must be triumphant exactly where we are. It is not a change of climate we need, but a change of heart. The flesh wants to run away, But God wants to demonstrate His power exactly where we have known our greatest chagrin. Life's disappointments are frequently His appointments.

When we come to the end of ourselves, we can begin with God. It may be humiliating to be forced to return to the place of failure, but that is where His power will enable us to triumph.

p. 127

Parker says:

The angel of the Lord sent Hagar back again, knowing that “what cannot be cured must be endured.” Besides, submission itself, though so hard, may be so accepted as to become useful in the mellowing and strengthening of character. The angel did not say, “Fight it out and let the strong one win.” He advised *submission*, and this is the first instance in which such advice is given in the Scriptures. It is a great Christian law, we know, but it is early to find it in Genesis!

p. 214

(The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God's Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives by Brennan Manning) San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Brennan Manning, 2002.

There's no gentle road to tenderness, as this passage suggests. Tenderness is learned in the testing place, where the man who dares to wrestle with the Absolute limps, and then wins a blessing. Pain is the crucible in which one is made tender.

p. 126

v.10 The angel added, “I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

He continued, “I’m going to give you a big family, children past counting.

The NET Bible translates verse 10:

I will greatly multiply your descendants,” the Lord’s angel added, “so that they will be too numerous to count.”

With the command to return and submit goes the promise of a great multitude of descendants similar to those of Abram in the sense that they will be too many to count.

v.11 The angel of the Lord also said to her: “You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 11:

From this pregnancy, you’ll get a son: Name him Ishmael; for God heard you, God answered you.

The NET Bible translates verse 11:

Then the Lord’s angel said to her, “You are now pregnant and are about to give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard your painful groans.

The name **ISHMAEL MEANS “GOD SHALL HEAR.”**

Every time Hagar would hear this name she would know also that God hears. And especially are His ears open to the cries of His afflicted ones.

In Exodus it is told that the cries of the children of Israel in bondage ascended unto the ears of the Lord.

James 5:4

Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

Genesis 18:20-21

Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.”

Gangel & Bramer say:

How happy Abraham must have been at the return of Hagar from the desert. Her testimony must have reminded him of his own experiences with God's promise. Surely it was plain to Abraham that Sarai's slave girl had met God in a personal way, and the pregnancy must have taken on new meaning until the birth.

p. 150

MacArthur says:

With her son's name meaning "God hears," Hagar the servant could never forget how God had heard her cry of affliction.

p. 37

v.12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."

Peterson paraphrases verse 12:

He'll be a bucking bronco of a man, a real fighter, fighting and being fought, Always stirring up trouble, always at odds with his family."

The NET Bible translates verse 12:

He will be a wild donkey of a man. He will be hostile to everyone, and everyone will be hostile to him. He will live away from his brothers."

The father of the faithful has begotten a wild ass of a man instead of a child of grace. This is God's judgment on the fruit of self-effort—The harvest of the flesh.

It should not be forgotten that Ishmael is the father of the nomadic people of the desert and that today the Arabs, as followers of Mohammed, are the great opponents of Israel, standing across the land and barring the way of the rightful seed the possession of the inheritance which is theirs by promise.

Keil & Delitzsch say:

“He will be a wild ass of a man.” The figure of a . . . *onager*, that wild and untameable animal, roaming at its will in the desert, of which so highly poetic a description is given in Job xxxix. 5–8, depicts most aptly “the Bedounin’s boundless love of freedom as he rides about in the desert, spear in hand, upon his camel or his horse, hardy, frugal, reveling in the varied beauty of nature, and despising town life in every form;” and the words, *his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him,*” describe most truly the incessant state of feud, in which the Ishmaelites live with one another or with their neighbours. *“He will dwell before the face of all his brethren.”* . . . denotes, it is true, to the east of (cf. chap. xxv. 18), and this meaning is to be retained here; but the geographical notice of the dwelling-place of the Ishmaelites hardly exhausts the force of the expression, which also indicated that Ishmael would maintain an independent standing before (in the presence of) all the descendants of Abraham. History has confirmed this promise.

p. 220

Lange says:

The limitation of the promise is connected with the promise itself. Hagar must be cured of the proud delusion, that she is destined to become the mother of the believing people of Abram, and that therefore the hope of Abram depends upon her personal self-destination; a supposition which doubtless had taken firm possession of her mind, through the presupposition of Sarai herself.

p. 417

MacArthur says:

The untameable desert onager (wild donkey) best described the fiercely aggressive and independent nature Ishmael would exhibit, along with his Arabic descendants.

p. 37

Radmacher & Allen say:

This is something of a mixed blessing as is Isaac's to Esau (27:39, 40). **Wild man** suggests that Ishmael and his descendants would be unsettled, ever on the move. **His hand . . . against** suggests that his descendants would often be at war. Still this people would endure. They would **dwell in the presence of all his brethren**. This has indeed been the case, for Ishmael's descendants are the Arab peoples who populate most of the Middle East today. Very few of the peoples of the OT world have survived to our own day. For example, all ten nations of 15:19–21 have ceased to exist. But two peoples survive: Israel, the Jewish people, descended from Isaac; and the Arabs, descended from Ishmael . . .

p. 33

There are **FOUR THINGS** that are said about Ishmael here in verse 12 and these are the **CHARACTERISTICS** of the Arabs of our day:

1. **"HE WILL BE A WILD DONKEY OF A MAN,"**
2. **"HIS HAND WILL BE AGAINST EVERYONE,"**
3. **"EVERYONE'S HAND [WILL BE] AGAINST HIM,"** and
4. **"HE WILL LIVE IN HOSTILITY TOWARD ALL HIS BROTHERS."**

(Unveiling Islam: An Insider's Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs by Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel. Copyright – Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, 2002.

Consequently, the Qur'an has much to say about who Allah does *not* love:

For Allah loves not transgressors. (2:190)

For [Allah] loves not any ungrateful sinner. (2:276)

For Allah loves not those who do wrong. (3:57)

For Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious. (4:36)³

3. For further discussion, see Tom Terry, "Does God Love Me?" at aboutisa.com; accessed 26 November 2001.

p. 34

Allah's heart is set against the infidel (kafir). He has no love for the unbeliever, nor is it the task of the Muslim to "evangelize" the unbelieving world. Allah is to be worshiped, period. Any who will not do so must be defeated, silenced, or expelled. The theme is conquest, not conversion, of the unbelieving world. Allah has called the Muslim to make the name of Allah alone to be worshiped.

p. 118

On that basis, and in compliance with Allah's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah, "and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together," and "fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah."

p. 183

(Unveiling Islam: An Insider's Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs by Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner) Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel. Copyright – Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, 2002.

Then Timothy was shocked when John visited him in Egypt. Timothy later recounted, “I became jealous of John’s intimacy with God and increased my recitations of the Qur’an.”

After incredible soul searching, God manifested Himself to Timothy:

One night Christ appeared to me in a dream and said with a tender sweet voice, “I love you!” I saw how obstinately I had resisted Him all these years and said to Him in tears, “I love You, too! I know You! You are eternal for ever and ever.” I woke up with tears all over my face filled with abundant joy, believing that Christ Himself touched both my mind and my heart, and I yielded. I was filled with great passion for Christ, jumping up and down, singing praises to His name and talking to Him day and night. I would not even sleep without God’s inerrant Word, the Bible, next to my chest.⁵

5. Timothy Abraham, “In the Valley of Tears,” at www.answering-islam.org; accessed 26 November 2001.

p. 37

v.13 She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me.” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 13:

She answered God by name, praying to the God who spoke to her, “You’re the God who sees me! Yes! He saw me; and then I saw him!”

The NET Bible translates verse 13:

So Hagar named the Lord who spoke to her, “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “Here I have seen one who sees me!”

With the comfort of His promises she is prepared to return and submit even if it is going to involve thirteen long years. She can be comforted in the fact that Jehovah God is One who hears Ishmael. And He is One who sees, Who looks upon the plight of those who are mistreated in their service.

MacArthur says:

Recognizing the angel of God and ascribing this new name to Him arose from Hagar’s astonishment at having been the object of God’s gracious attention. The theophany and revelation led her to call Him also “The One Who Lives and Sees Me” (v. 14).

p. 37

v.14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

Peterson paraphrases verse 14:

That's how that desert spring got named "God-Alive-Sees-Me Spring."
That spring is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

The NET Bible translates verse 14:

That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi. (It is located between Kadesh and Bered.)

Thou are a God of all-seeing from Whom all-seeing eye the helpless and forsaken is not hidden even in the farthest corner of the desert.

v.15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.

Peterson paraphrases verse 15:

Hagar gave Abram a son. Abram named him Ishmael.

The NET Bible translates verse 15:

So Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, whom Abram named Ishmael.

Hagar returned and submitted to the authority of Sarai and also told Abram what the Lord had said to her about the naming of the boy.

v.16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Peterson paraphrases verse 16:

Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave him his son, Ishmael.

The NET Bible translates verse 16:

(Now Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael.)

I find myself saying the exact words that were recorded at the end of David and Bathsheba's fiasco in 2 Samuel 11. That last phrase reads:

2 Samuel 11:27

. . . But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

The same holds true here in this situation.

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

The lesson was clear for Sarai, Abram, Hagar, Israel, and for Christians: God's servants are to trust His Word and to wait for its fulfillment, enduring patiently till the end. It becomes increasingly clear in Genesis that any person or any nation that owes its existence to divine election should live by faith. Human efforts will not help. But the good news for God's people is that the living God sees and hears.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Satan rushes men and God leads them.

LESSON #2: The Lord is always on time for the fulfillment of what He has promised.

LESSON #3: It is one thing to commit our way unto the Lord and it is quite another to continue to trust Him in the delays and wait for Him to bring it to pass.

LESSON #4: The old nature within us has a desire to help God to keep His promises.

LESSON #5: The natural thing is not the supernatural thing to do in this circumstance.

LESSON #6: How much we need to seek God's guidance and direction before we make decisions that affect our future walk with God.

LESSON #7: We must learn how to not lean on our own understanding and to recognize that many times our thoughts are not His thoughts and our ways are not His ways.

LESSON #8: Disruptions in personal relationships often accompany works of the flesh.

LESSON #9: Many times the flesh wants to run away when it is the Spirit's desire that we return and submit to the authority.

LESSON #10: The consequences of operating in the flesh can affect generations which follow us as well as ourselves. This is seen in the birth of the Arab nation.

Hughes says:

Christian, are you contemplating an expediency to obtain what you imagine to be God's will in your most treasured relationship—in a friendship—in a professional pursuit—in your career—in your education—in your ministry? If so, take a deep breath.

Stand back.

Take some time.

Read God's Word.

Think.

Pray.

And obey the revealed will of God.

p. 244

Lange says:

. . . Sinful helping of ourselves.—Man must not only leave the end to God, but also the means . . .

p. 419

Waltke says:

God seeks out the sinful and rejected. God's concern for and revelation to the defiant Egyptian woman Hagar anticipates the way Jesus deals with the sinful Samaritan woman (John 4). Both are sinful women, not of Abraham's family. Nevertheless, the Lord reaches out to both with great compassion. Hagar is the only woman in the ancient Near Eastern literature called by name by a deity, and she is the only person in the Old Testament who confers a name upon God. That name, "The One Who Sees Me" and "The One I See," epitomizes their special relationship.

p. 256

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Having made Jesus his all, he shall find all in Jesus. His soul shall be as a watered garden, and as a well of water whose waters fail not.
p. 705

(The Vanishing Power of Death: Conquering Your Greatest Fear by Erwin W. Lutzer) Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers. Copyright – Erwin W. Lutzer, 2004.

Many years ago an invalid named Charlotte Elliott wrote a poem. Her brother, a pastor, said, “My sister has had a greater impact by writing this one single poem than all of my messages combined.” This poem, called “Just as I Am,”³ was put to music and is one of my favorite hymns. Perhaps you will recognize yourself in the third stanza.

*Just as I am, though tossed about,
With many a conflict, many a doubt;
Fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

The fifth verse describes the wonderful, complete work of sacrifice accomplished by the Lamb.

*Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I Come!*

3. Charlotte Elliott, “Just As I Am.” In public domain.
p. 83

George Sweeting, former Moody Bible Institute president, has said, “The road marked *tomorrow* leads to the town called *never*.” Tomorrow is not God’s time; it is Satan’s time. No one ever drifts to God; no one ever drifts to heaven. For the person who chooses to delay, there will never be enough evidence to believe. Sometimes those who intend to repent at 12:00 midnight die at 11:00 P. M.
p. 145

(The Expositor's Bible: The Book of Psalms-Volume I- Psalms I-XXXVIII by A. Maclaren, D.D.) New York, N.Y.: A.C. Armstrong and Son. Copyright – 1899.

The exhortation to “serve Jehovah with fear and rejoice with trembling” points to obedience founded on awe of God’s majesty,—the fear which love does not cast out, but perfect; and to the gladness which blends with reverence, but is not darkened by it. To love and cleave to God, to feel the silent awe of His greatness and holiness giving dignity and solemnity to our gladness, and from this inmost heaven of contemplation to come down to a life of practical obedience—this is God’s command and man’s blessedness.
p. 20

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

What then? We are not alarmed because Satan hindereth us, for it is a proof that we are on the Lord’s side, and are doing the Lord’s work, and in His strength we shall win the victory, and triumph over our adversary.
p. 441

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. . . use of five disciplines that were an integral part of what Jesus practiced during His earthly walk:

SOLITUDE — *Spending time alone with God*

PRAYER — *Speaking with God*

STORING UP GOD’S WORD — *Preparing for the challenges that were yet to come*

FAITH IN UNCONDITIONAL LOVE — *Proceeding with confidence grounded in trust*

INVOLVEMENT IN ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS — *Sharing His vulnerability*

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