



Genesis – 16:1-16:16
A Lesson in Patience
(Lesson #25)

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Event	Abraham's Age	Genesis
Abram leaves Haran and enters Canaan	75	12:4-5
Abram fathers Ishmael by Hagar	86	16:16
Abraham fathers Isaac by Sarah	100	21:5
Abraham's wife Sarah dies	137	23:1
Abraham's son Isaac marries Rebekah	140	25:19-20
Abraham dies	175	25:7

As we enter our text today, we have a very good understanding of the timeframe. At this point in the story Abram is 85 or 86 years old. His wife Sarai, although younger than him is no spring chicken either, she is 75-76 years old.

16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. 4 ¶ And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. 5 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!" 6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

16:1-2 - So we can imagine that Sarai is fully aware of the promises that God made and reiterated to Abram related to both land and descendants.

We are probably correct in imagining that she is fully aware that God was clear that this promised child would descendant from Abram's body (last week), thus ruling out how Abram had imagined that the promise would be fulfilled (Eliezer of Damascus).

Watching the years pass, the wrinkles in Abram's brow deepen, like Abram, she probably has a moment where she feels like **God needs help doing this**. We should not be too hard on Sarai, after all the odds are stacked against God fulfilling this promise through her, and time is slipping away.

Let's be honest, she is **outside of her prime** and she has not been able to have a baby. Since it has not happened yet, the odds are rapidly increasing that it will never happen. After all, she is (gulp) **75!**

She's is also barren, but she does have a female servant, an Egyptian, named Hagar. They likely picked up Hagar while they were in Egypt when they were there for that short time following their entry into the Promised Land.

We can imagine that Hagar is a young woman and likely very fertile! Sarai begins to think, maybe that is the answer, maybe Abram can go into Hagar and thus **fulfill God's promise**.

By the way this is very distasteful to you and I and. I suspect it might have been to Sarai too. But put yourself in her shoes for a moment.

- 1) She is trying to **fulfill God's promises**, likely sees that she is the reason it is not happening, and they are both running out of time.
- 2) This was the **custom in Abraham's day**.

Chuck Missler: *"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. But God often repudiates social customs. God's people are expected to hold themselves to a higher standard."*

With this plan in her noggin, **she goes to her husband Abram.**

She lays out her plan, she makes **her proposal** and **presents it to Abram:** *"Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her."*

Up until now, the **Lord has prevented me for bearing a child.** Maybe the reason is that is **not God's plan.**

Maybe His plan is for you to have a descendant through Hagar.

After all, I am old, I am barren, she is likely young and very fertile.

We do not know how long Abram considered this plan, if he spoke with God about this plan, if he mediated on this plan and all the possible outcomes and consequences of this plan.

We do not know what went through **Abram's mind** upon hearing the plan.

But, we do know what **ultimately happened:** **Vs 2b - And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.**

This too should sound very familiar:

"And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you ..." (Ge 3:17a ESV)

Adam listened to the voice of his wife over the voice of God and horrible consequences followed. **Abram**, is going to listen to the **voice of his wife** over the **voice of God** and **horrible consequences** are going to follow.

APPLICATION: We too can let the **world's methods** and the **world's answers** become our methods and our answers! We should not be surprised when bad consequences follow.

"I I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Ro 12:1-2 ESV)

Vs – 3 - After 10 years in the land, again, depending on how long it took to come down from Haran, Abram is **85 or 86 years old.**

At 75 - Sarai, took Harag her Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram **"as a wife."**

I must be honest, having read this story **many times**, I am not sure those three English words have ever caught my attention like they did the **morning of December 23.**

It is one Hebrew word, it is the word **אִשָּׁה** (**ishshah**), it can mean **wife or woman**. The fact that it is used at all, seems to itself imply wife.

I looked at other translations: KJV – “to be his wife”, NKJV – “to be his wife”, HCSB – “as a wife for him”, Message – “as a wife”, Geneva – “for his wife”, ASV – “to be his wife”, NIV “to be his wife”, NRSV – “as a wife”, RSV – “as a wife”.

So, she gave **Hagar to Abram**, according to the text “**as a wife.**” I cannot help but wonder if they thought **through all the implications of this decision.**

APPLICATION: Decisions, especially **big decisions** should require us to **really think, consider, seek Godly council**, and **pray**. Most of the times, we cannot unwind these big decisions. This is definitely the case for Abram and Sarai.

Another point to consider, this bad plan came from a person who was also following Yahweh and who loved Abram. We must never forget this point.

How did this happen, why did this happen, it is likely because of the ten years, more directly it is likely a lack of faith. After all, it has been so long.

APPLICATION: You and I too must learn to wait on the LORD!

“but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” (Isa 40:31 ESV)

Learning to wait on the LORD! It is a discipline, that brings with it great reward. Wait I say on the Lord!

Waiting is often the place of blessing, but we **do not like waiting**. I suspect neither did Abram and Sarai.

Monogamous marriage and God’s design. We can imagine that Abram knew that God’s design was one man and one woman. We can imagine, at least to some degree he understood:

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Ge 2:24 ESV)

APPLICATION: God’s will for our life will never involve us sinning against God.

Vs 4a - He went into Hagar and she **became pregnant**. She is now with child, she is now impregnated with a child from Abram.

Yep, this **cannot be unwound**, this **cannot be undone**, you will not get a **redo** or a **mulligan**.

They got what they hoped for, they got what they wished for, they got what they planned for.

One wonders if they prayed for this. None the less, what Sarai and Abram were **hoping for**, has **happened**.

Vs 4b - Once, Hagar saw that she was **truly on equal footing** with Sarai and maybe even a leg up.

She saw that **she was pregnant**, she saw that she had **conceived** and she (Hagar) has a **change in attitude** as it relates to Sarai! Hagar, was Abram’s wife too and she was pregnant with child.

Hagar is the pregnant wife and Sarai is the barren wife. Hagar then despised Sarai! She began to look upon Sarai her mistress, the ESV says “**with contempt.**”

The Hebrew word is **קָלַל** (**qalal**), it means to **despise** or **look upon disrespectfully**.

Unintended consequences! When we take matters into our own hands, we often encounter **unintended consequences**.

APPLICATION: This is how sin works. Sin in this life has **unintended consequences**. When we sew to our sin nature, we will reap the consequences! The home, that was at **peace** is now filled with **strife**.

There is an old saying about reaping **and sowing** that I believe applies here:

- 1) You reap based on what you sow
- 2) You reap sometime after you sow
- 3) You normally reap more than you sow

Vs 5 - Sarai, lays the blame for this entire event at the doorstep of **Abram**. May the wrong that I am enduring boomerang upon you! She makes it sound like this was **Abram's doing**, when it was **actually hers**.

I gave Hagar **"to your embrace"**, I gave my servant into **your bosom**, I gave my servant **as your wife**, now that she has conceived, **she hates me and treats me with disrespect**.

May Yahweh Himself, judge between me and you.

I understand her frustration, I guess I would only say, **it might have been a good idea to invoke Yahweh's name via prayer** before you ever launched out with this plan.

APPLICATION: This is a good lesson for us. Unless the house is on fire, pray first! If the house is on fire, pray while you are pulling out the fire hose, but **PRAY!**

But here we are, this is the **second war to enter Abram's life** and this one is **from within his own house**. We have a three-way conflict, that is all due to sin!

I thought about proverbs like:

"It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife." (Pr 21:9 ESV)

"It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman." (Pr 21:19 ESV)

In this case all of the quarrels were brought into the home because of sin!

Vs 6 - Abraham deferred.

She is your servant, do with her as you please. She may be Abram's wife, but she is still Sarai's servant.

Then we read: **Sarai, dealt harshly** with her. The Hebrew word ענה ('**anah**), means to **afflict** or to **humble**.

It is the **exact same word** that God used (in Gen 15:13) to describe what the **Egyptians would one day do to the Hebrews**. There is **some sad irony here**, the pre-Jewish woman is **afflicting the Egyptian woman**.

So we don't know exactly how or in what ways, but we do know that Sarai, **dealt harshly with Hagar**, and she likely may have been his wife, but she has been **"reinstated" as Sarai's servant!**

Then in the back half of Vs 6, it was severe enough that it caused a **pregnant slave**, who was in the employ of a very wealthy man, who by the way was also the father of the child she was carrying, **to flee** from them.

7 The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." 9 The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." 10 ¶ The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." 11 And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. 12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen." 13 So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me." 14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

Vs 7 - Then the **angel of the LORD** found her.

This **Hebrew phrase** “angel of the LORD”, will be used in **52 verses**. **This is the first!**

Is this a **miscellaneous angel of Yahweh**, is this **Gabriel or Michael** (and the angel is simply not named) or is this a **Christophany**?

All of the theologians that I read behind believe this is a **Christophany** and I would agree.

This angel as you will see, **speaks for God**, and **provides predictive prophecy under the heading of “I will ...”**

Notice Next: The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water, in the wilderness. **OK, pop quiz!** Who was looking for whom? Who found whom?

APPLICATION: *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”* (Lu 19:10 ESV)

This is true for you and I as well! I would submit to you that **God was pursuing you long before you started pursuing God**. So, it was with Hagar!

So God, through the **angel of the LORD**, is pursuing this Egyptian woman.

Now, what we do not know is the back story. Had she already become a follower of Yahweh, while serving Sarai. **We do not know. My guess is not yet!**

We can imagine this is likely very dangerous, and a single woman on the run is in a vulnerable position, and a fleeing pregnant woman is in an extremely vulnerable position.

But the **Angel of the LORD finds her** here in the wilderness, at **“the spring”** on the **way to Shur**.

Shur is south of the Negev, on the way to Egypt. The word (Shur) means **wall**, and some believe this was a fortress on the edge of the Egyptian boundary.

She is likely headed to the only place, the only thing she knows, she is likely headed back to Egypt.

Vs 8 - Then the **angel of the LORD** speaks to Hagar, again, **most believe this is a Christophany**.

APPLICATION: It is in our despair, where God can and will often **speak into our lives**. It is in our confusion and fleeing, that God can step into our lives and bring both clarity and hope!

You and I **do not need, nor should we expect** and angel visitations, we have the full Council of God, we should be listening to it and seeking to obey it!

Now, I want you to pay close attention to what God says to this Egyptian woman. It is **merciful** and filled with **grace!**

The angel asks two questions:

- 1) Where have you come from?
- 2) Where are you going?

Of course, the angel of the LORD knows, he wants to get Hagar talking.

She responds: *"I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai."*

She answers the first question and ignores the second. The angel of the Lord knew this, but now all the cards are on the table.

Vs 9 – The angel of the Lord provides clear instructions. No **discussion**, no **excuses**, no **blame for how you behaved** or how **Saria behaved**. No right or wrong, simply a **few words** which create **two commands** in the Hebrew.

Return, go back... And submit! – Return and instead of being **disrespectful be respectful**. Return and **instead of despising Sarai, show Saria honor! Return and submit!** These are **imperatives**, they are **commands** from the **angel of the LORD** to Hagar!

Vs 10 - Then the angel of the Lord also says to her, **"I will..."** So **two commands** followed by **1 amazing promise!**

Now of course it is possible the angel is speaking for God, but we understand this, only God can take steps like this and **freely exert His will**.

The Amazing Promise: *"I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."*

Abram, has been promised a **multitude of physical descendants that cannot be numbered**, the same promise is now extended to Hagar.

From this seed, will come a multitude that cannot be numbered! This is an **Egyptian woman, a gentile woman** and God is saying, I will multiply your off-spring into a people that cannot be numbered!

APPLICATION: Could there ever be a time when you are being mistreated, and yet, you are right in the middle of the will of God?

Vs 11 - The angel of the Lord **continues to speak**. He tells her she is pregnant. But then he tells her things she could never know and provides further direction.

- 1) You are **pregnant with a son**.
- 2) You shall **call his name Ishmael**.
- 3) You shall do this because Yahweh has listened to you in your affliction!

You shall call his name Ishmael. Which means... **"God hears."** You shall call him **"God hears"**, for God has **heard your affliction!**

APPLICATION: If God heard this Gentile woman's afflictions. He hears ours too! Do we cry out to Him when we are in need?

Vs 12 - Next the angel of the LORD provides three **predictive prophecies**. Have you ever stopped and considered how much of our Bibles are predictive prophecies?

According to *“The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy”* by **J. Barton Payne**, there are **1,239** prophecies in the Old Testament and **578** prophecies in the New Testament for a total of **1,817**. These prophecies are contained in **8,352** of the Bible’s verses. Since there are **31,124** verses in the Bible, the **8,352** verses that contain prophecy constitute **26.8** percent of the Bible’s volume. This percentage is quoted by a number of different websites.

Last week we saw all those amazing prophecies that would be fulfilled in Israel. This week, more **predictive prophecies** that will be **fulfilled in the offspring of Hagar!** Prophecies about Ishmael and about those who will come from him.

First - He shall be a **wild donkey of a man**. He will be a **“wild man”** he will be a **bucking bronco**, he will be a **charging bull**.

Second – He shall be at everyone’s throat and everyone shall be at his throat! **He will be one who attacks others**. They are going to be aggressors. But **others will respond**.

Third - He shall dwell **“over against”** all his kinsmen. This verse seems to be saying he will live **side-by-side** with the sons who will come Isaac, and will be at odds with all of this brothers.

One of the most explosive spots on the world and here it is **predicted in 2000 BC**. The unrest that has existed between Israel and the Arab nations. Here we see the genesis of some of the nations and conflict.

This guy, if we are understanding this verse correctly is going to be at odds with Abram’s physical descendants through Sarai (even though none have been born yet).

Vs 13 - Notice how the writer of Genesis explains this. She calls, the **Name of the LORD**, she calls the Name of Yahweh, who spoke to her: **You are the God who sees!**

Here we find another name for God in Genesis. Here Yahweh is called by Hagar as אֵל (‘el) רֹאֵי (ro’iy). Literally the **God who sees** or the **God who sees me!**

She goes on to say: I have seen, HIM who sees me. She believed she was interacting with **Yahweh!**

We cannot help but wonder if she at this moment, like Abram last week, **believed in God!**

This is a beautiful picture of Christ! One example we are all likely very familiar with:

“Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”” (Joh 1:48 ESV)

Jesus is the one who “see us”!

Vs 14 - So the well is **given a name...** In the Hebrew the name means **“well of the Living One who sees me.”**

Now we are not sure if she named this well, or if it would pick up this name later.

Two things:

- 1) The location is also mentioned two other times in the Bible where it is described as the place where Isaac lived.

“Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb.” (Ge 24:62 ESV)

It seems that Beer-lahai-roi, if not in the Negeb, was certainly close.

“After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.” (Ge 25:11 ESV)

2) As we consider the **larger implications**, beyond simply its geographical location. **Beer-lahai-roi**, reminds us that **God sees our plight**. When we were trapped in sin, unable to help ourselves God sent his Son to die for us!

As His children, God sees our plight. He sees our challenges; He sees those who set themselves against us. He not only sees our condition, but like He did with Hagar, He takes pity on our plight.

This should bring you and I great comfort!

One More Thing: We have often heard **God helps those who help themselves**. We need to be careful how we apply that idea. God did not need **Abram’s help to fulfill His word**. What he desired was Abram’s faith.

I am not saying we should not make good decisions. I am saying we should first ask God for his help and direction. We should learn to seek God and trust God. We should be slow to take off on our own.

15 And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.”

Vs 15 - Obviously, time has passed. Between verses 14 and 15. Hagar does what the angel of the Lord told her to do.

She **goes back** and we should assume she is **submissive to Sarai**. We can imagine that **she treats her with respect** and **she is back under the care of Abram and Sarai**.

And as the **angel of the LORD** told her, she bears Abram a son. Abram, names the son “Ishamel.”

Again, the name itself means: **God hears** or **God will hear**.

We are probably correct to believe that Hagar shared the story about the **Angel of the Lord** with **Abram**, we are probably correct to assume that he chooses to go along with what God said through the angel to Hagar.

At the moment, it would seem that the old adage is coming true: **“all’s well that ends well.”**

But nothing could be further from the truth, this was not God’s plan and not God’s design.

Important truths about sin that we must remember:

- 1) Sin always has **consequences**.
- 2) You can **choose you sin**, but you do not get to **choose the consequences**.
- 3) The pleasures of sin are only for a **season**, but the **consequences can be for a very long time, even our lifetime**, and **beyond**.

Vs 16 - Here we are told plainly that Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.
