

Abraham and Hagar

Genesis 16:1-16

- I. THE PROPOSING OF THE SCHEME (Genesis 16:1-3)
 - A. The Opening of the Scene (Genesis 16:1)
 1. Sarai bare Abram no children (Genesis 16:1)
 2. Sarai's handmaid (Hagar) (Genesis 16:1)
 - a. Hagar's name (Genesis 16:1, 6)
 - (1) *"To flee"*
 - (2) *"To press into service"*
 - (3) The definition of her name is interesting considering what will happen here in chapter 16.
 - b. The origin of Hagar
 - (1) It is very likely that Hagar came from Egypt and was a part of the gifts given to Abram by the hand of Pharaoh when Pharaoh entreated Abram for Sarai (Genesis 12:16, 20).
 - (2) She likely came up out of Egypt as a servant with Abram and Sarai when they left for Bethel (Genesis 13:1-2).
 - B. The Author of the Scheme (Genesis 16:2)
 1. Sarai – her statement (Genesis 16:2)
 - a. Sarai's complaint – "The Lord hath restrained me from bearing"
 - b. Sarai's plan
 - (1) Go in unto my maid (Hagar)
 - (2) It may be that I may obtain children by her.
 2. Sarai's success (Genesis 16:2) – Abram hearkened to her voice.
 - a. This evil scheme was proposed by Abram's wife, Sarai. No one else could have made such a proposal and have succeeded in getting Abram to listen, or consider, or consent in doing such a thing (Judges 16:6-20; Job 2:7-10).
 - b. Thus, with Sarai's proposal, the temptation to do this wicked deed was set in motion (Genesis 3:1-6, 12, 17).
 - C. The Accommodations for the Scheme (Genesis 16:2)
 1. The ease of doing the wrong
 - a. There was a *"handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar"* (Genesis 16:1).

- b. The ease of sin
 - (1) Hagar was the easy option – “instead of trusting God, let’s just circumvent God’s plan” (Genesis 16:1-2). Note: This is a great example where the well-intended Christian tries to “help God out”.
 - (2) Sin will more times than not be the easy road or easy plan in life (Psalm 84:10; Hebrews 11:25; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 4:12-16).
- 2. The argument for the scheme (Genesis 16:2)
 - a. The circumstances –
 - (1) Sarai had not been able to give Abram children... God wanted them to have children... Therefore, let’s help God accomplish His task.
 - (a) Note: It is hard to find a temptation more appealing than one that pampers the fleshly appetite and appears to obtain the goals of faith as this one did.
 - (b) Many churches have resorted to flesh-appealing promotional schemes, combining flesh-appealing activities with spiritual goals. Churches have gotten results too by these methods, however, they have been Ishmaels instead of Isaacs, and few churches are able to discern the difference.
 - (2) “*It may be that I may obtain **children** by her.*” – This argument is the old argument that the end justifies the means. Though this a popular argument, it is devilish one. The end does not justify the means. If you must sin to reach your objective, it is not a holy objective. You should never have to do evil to bring about good!
 - (a) The initial intent was to give Abram what God had already promised.
 - (b) Note: Notice the plural in Sarai’s statement, the intent long-term was for children.
 - b. The approval –
 - (1) Popular approval – This arrangement would have been commonplace and encouraged among the people of that day. If Haggar is given as a wife to Abram by Sarai, society will not criticize.
 - (2) Sarai’s approval – She is the one that submitted the idea, certainly it’s okay with her.
 - (a) Note: There are times that your spouse will come up with ideas that may not be God given ideas, it is up to you as an individual Christian to make sure that these are God given and not carnally or devilishly given/driven ideas.
 - (b) Examples from scripture – Eve (Genesis 3:1-6); Job (Job 2:7-10); Nabal (1 Samuel 25:2-12, 13, 14-19, 23-28, 32-34, 36-37)

- (3) God's unapproval –
 - (a) God's plan –
 - i. A child from his own bowels (Genesis 15:2-6)
 - ii. To give Abram's seed the land (Genesis 15:18)
 - (b) God's future intent –
 - i. A child from Sarah (Genesis 17:15-18)
 - ii. The inheritance to go to Isaac (Genesis 17:19-22)

II. THE PROBLEMS FROM THE SCHEME (Genesis 16:4-6)

A. The Immediate Problems (Genesis 16:4-6)

- 1. The wickedness occurred
 - a. Though the immoral scheme of Abram having a child by Hagar was cleverly made to appear to be that which would solve some major problems, all it did was create more problems.
 - b. If Sarai thought having a child by Hagar would help remove the despising of society on her she was sadly mistaken. In trying to solve one problem, Sarai only created more problems, because she tried to solve her problems the wrong way.
 - c. Many people seek worldly honour by doing evil. They compromise their standards and conform to the ways of the world in hopes of gaining acceptance or prestige. Rarely do these attempts turn out well. Sooner or later these attempts fail, for sin always has a way of leading to dishonour for the sinner (Romans 6:21-23; James 1:13-15).
- 2. The division produced
 - a. The division between Sarai and Hagar (Genesis 16:4-5)
 - b. The denouncement of Abram (Genesis 16:5)
 - (1) Sarai blamed Abram for this trouble.
 - (2) Rarely those who encourage you in your wrongdoing will take the blame when things go awry.
 - c. The departure of Hagar (Genesis 16:6)
 - (1) Hagar would flee from the face of Sarai because of Sarai's treatment of her (Genesis 16:6).
 - (2) Her flight (Genesis 16:6-8)
 - (a) Like many people, Hagar fled when harsh treatment and hard times came.
 - (b) This fleeing did nothing to solve the problem and complicated the situation.

- B. The Long-Term Problems (Genesis 16:4; 21:9-14)
 - 1. The divisive actions (Genesis 16:4-5)
 - 2. The division
 - a. Between the boys (Genesis 21:8-11)
 - b. Between their offspring (Genesis 16:11-12)
 - (1) History notes how the Arab (the offspring of Ishmael) has been violent toward their own people as well as against those around them.
 - (2) Even currently when one examines the Middle East it is noted the violence that is associated with this race.

III. THE POLICING OF THE SCHEME (Genesis 16:7-14)

- A. The Interrogation and Instruction by God (Genesis 16:7-9)
 - 1. The capture for the questioning (Genesis 16:7)
 - a. The Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the way to Shur.
 - b. This would place her on the road to Egypt (Genesis 16:7-8).
 - (1) Many times, people will default to what they know when situations get tough and stressful.
 - (2) Yet, the Lord would not have his followers to be people of “flight” (1 Corinthians 16:13)
 - (a) The example of Joshua (Joshua 1:7)
 - (b) The example of the children of Israel (Joshua 23:1-8)
 - (c) The admonition of the child of God with the armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-20).
 - 2. The contacting for the questioning – “*Hagar, Sarai’s maid*” (Genesis 16:8)
 - a. Hagar had to reckon with God about her situation.
 - b. God was going to ask Hagar some tough questions.
 - 3. The encountering for the questioning (Genesis 16:8)
 - a. The Lord asked her about her conduct and her conclusion.
 - (1) *Whence camest thou?*
 - (2) *Whither wilt thou go?*
 - b. Her conduct –
 - (1) Hagar needed to realize that her conduct was wrong. She was to not leave Sarai as she belonged there. While things between Sarai and her had been strained, it was where she belonged.
 - (2) The carnally minded Christian many times will get frustrated with how things have been at the “Father’s house” and may want to “strike out on his or her own,” however, seldom does the situation turn out the way he/she planned (Luke 15:11-24).

- (3) The sinner must look at his/her past and recognize it has been exceeding sinful (1 Corinthians 6:11).
 - c. Her conclusion –
 - (1) Hagar left Sarai either not knowing where she was going or with the thought that she would go back to what she knew.
 - (2) In this case she was headed back to Egypt. Note: Remember the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the way to Shur. This placed her on the road to Egypt.
 - (a) Like many, Hagar fled when harsh treatment and hard times came.
 - (b) This fleeing did nothing to solve the problem and complicated the situation.
 - (c) In type, today many lost don't think about their eternal destiny. They live only for the world. Salvation gives man an eternal perspective.
 - (d) Even in the story of the prodigal son, the son did not think about "the tomorrow" as he lived up the "here and now" he only thought about what would bring him pleasure.
Unfortunately, more often than not the man or woman of the world does not consider what will happen in the hereafter until it's too late (Luke 12:20; Luke 16:22-31).
4. The disclosing after the questioning (Genesis 16:8)
 - a. The questioning worked with Hagar.
 - b. Hagar confessed what she had done and begins to see what she's done is wrong.
 - (1) Confessing that she had fled from Sarai.
 - (2) Confessing the whole rotten situation.
 - (a) The lost should always acknowledge their sinfulness if they are going to be saved. Easy believe-ism is not the plan of salvation given by God.
 - (b) It is also important to note that for the Christian we should always be willing to acknowledge our own sins before God if we ever hope to have a right walk with Him (1 John 1:8-10).
5. The instructing after the questioning (Genesis 16:9)
 - a. *"Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands"* (Genesis 16:9).
 - b. The Lord sends Hagar back to Sarai to face her.
 - (1) Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon (Philemon 1:10-16)
 - (2) Just like in the life of Onesimus, Hagar's returning and submitting involved humbling herself and acknowledging her wrong. It involved humility, service, and suffering (2 Chronicles 34:27; Romans 12:10).
 - (3) In the matter of salvation, repentance and submission also involve humility, service, and can bring much suffering—but it is worth it.

- (4) Many of an age-old issue is that no one is willing to humble themselves to one another, a leader, or to God (Psalm 78:8; Acts 7:5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

B. The Illuminating of Hagar (Genesis 16:10-12)

1. God informs Hagar of some truths that will happen with Ishmael.
2. God gives Hagar a threefold prophecy concerning Ishmael.
 - a. The multiplication of seed – *“I will multiply thy seed exceedingly”* (Genesis 16:10)
 - (1) God’s promise to Abram of Ishmael’s seed (Genesis 17:10; Genesis 21:13, 16, 18; Genesis 25:12-18)
 - (2) This would have meant much to Hagar—children were considered a great honour in this day.
 - b. The insight of a coming son – *“shalt bear a son”* (Genesis 16:11)
 - (1) *“Thou art with child”*
 - (2) *“and shalt bear a son”*
 - (3) *“and shalt call his name Ishmael”* – Ishmael (meaning: “God hears”)
 - c. The character of this son – *“He will be a wild man”* (Genesis 16:12)
 - (1) *“He will be a wild man”*
 - (2) *“his hand will be against every man”* (cp. Genesis 27:40)
 - (3) *“and every man’s hand against him”*
 - (4) *“and he will dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”* (Genesis 25:18; cp. 1 Samuel 15:7)

C. The Insight of Hagar (Genesis 16:13-14)

1. The naming of the Lord by Hagar – *“Thou God seest me”* (Genesis 16:13).
2. The naming of the well – *“Beer-lahai-roi”* – meaning: *“the well of him that seeth me”* (Genesis 16:14). Note: Isaac would dwell here (Genesis 24:62; Genesis 25:11).

IV. THE OFFSPRING OF THE SCHEME (Genesis 16:15-16)

A. The Birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16:15)

1. Hagar bare Abram a son
2. Abram called his name Ishmael – When did Abram find out the name for his son?
 - a. Either the Lord appeared to Abram, giving him the name, or
 - b. Hagar had informed Abram of her encounter in the wilderness with the Lord.

B. The Age of Abram (Genesis 16:16)

1. When Ishmael was born
2. He was eighty-six years old