

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

When Faith and Reason Collide – Genesis 16

A small problem with the promise ...

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. ²And 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. ³So, 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. ⁴And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived.

Genesis 16:1-4a

Big question:

_____ can God do for you for you in order for you to trust Him and obey Him?

*The temptation to Abram originated in Sarai. Of course, Abram should not have yielded. After the wonders of the night of the stars, the day of the sacrifice and the evening of the covenant, Abram should have been impervious to such a temptation. **No perfect feet walk the path of faith.** We go forward as a baby learns to walk—the right foot tries to take two steps at a time, and down we go.*

No matter how mature a Christian may be, no matter how keen his knowledge of the truth or the depth of his experience with God, he is still prone to hesitate, blunder, fall into mistakes, errors, sins, even to the end of the road. But like other babies, Abram was picked up and he learned to walk more steadily.

Donald Barnhouse, Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (p. 106).

Sarai's struggling faith: "the Lord has prevented me"

Sarai's solution: "Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her"

Note: This choice was acceptable _____, but _____ spiritually.

And what of Abram? Does he bear blame? "And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."

Make no mistake – What Abram did was a colossal _____ and would affect him and his heirs indefinitely.

Some observations on the _____ effects of sin (and _____ is a sin!)

- Where did Hagar originate?

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. (R. Kent Hughes)

- What were some of the consequences of this choice?
- What do you know about Ishmael and his heirs?

The immediate effects of Sarai's offer and Abram's choice:

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.

Genesis 16:4-6

Hagar was grossly _____ by Abram and Sarai and responded at first with _____ at having "succeeded" where Sarai could not, but that attitude grew into _____.

Sarai wanted Abram to "_____ " her, and when he would not, she responded by treating Hagar _____, to the point that she _____.

In this Abram failed at being the _____ again. Instead of _____ and _____ what he had caused to be broken, he (Like Sarai before him) followed _____ rather than _____.

He never once enquired of God what to do!

And remember, like the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, this downward spiral all began when one or both began to _____ to them. (See: Gen. 15:4)

How and why God intervened:

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.

Genesis 16:7-14

God intervened physically by _____ their lives and _____ them back home.

God intervened emotionally by affirming the _____ of both their lives.

God is a God of indescribable _____.

God made a _____ to Abram regarding his offspring – and Ishmael was Abram's offspring. (God doesn't make _____ with us. He makes _____.)

Ishmael (and his heirs) would always be a _____ of the _____ of God's promise and the _____ of faithlessness.

To be continued ...

¹⁵And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

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

Genesis 16:15-16

What are some lessons can we apply from this account?

_____ / _____ are sometimes (often?) the means by which God accomplishes His purposes ___ us and _____ us.

I don't have to _____ to _____ (and _____).

_____ isn't faith if it doesn't mean active _____ (which might mean _____ on God).

When I don't see *how* or know *what* to do, take some _____, _____, _____ the Word, _____ clearly, and then move out as God leads.

Sins can be forgiven and yet the _____ for those sins still _____.

God is _____.

And ...

God has done _____ for us in Christ for us to _____ Him with _____.

Next week: The (Personal) Mark of the Covenant (PG-13).