



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 25



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

Gen 16:1 "Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. ³ And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. ⁴ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. ⁵ And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. ⁶ But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. ⁷ And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. ⁹ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. ¹⁰ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. ¹² And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. ¹³ And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? ¹⁴ Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. ¹⁶ And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram." (Genesis 16:1-16)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

At the age of eighty-five, after being in Canaan for ten years, Abram remains childless. Still not knowing that the next generation Abram would beget would be through Sarai, she suggests

that Abram beget children to be reckoned as her own through her handmaid, Hagar. Abram consents to this not uncommon arrangement. Hagar, however, when she had conceived was despised by Sarai. After

telling Abram she did the wrong thing, he told her Hagar was in her possession, and she could do whatever she wished. The circumstances became so difficult, that Hagar ran away. At this point the angel of the Lord found

Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

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her, told her to return to Sarai, what to name the child, and that the Lord had heard her affliction. He also told her that her seed would be multiplied exceedingly. Upon returning to Sarai, Ishmael was soon born. Abram was eighty-six at the time.

This text has proved to be intellectual fodder for those who are fond of criticizing the people God chose. However, God faults neither Hagar nor Abram for this event. Other people God commended who are often criticized and maligned by Christian leaders include Lot, Moses, David, Joseph, Peter, and even Paul.

Throughout the years so I do not remember such loose talk about those depicted as especially chosen by God. However, the practice is quite common today. Moses is frequently set forth as drawing back from God's call, even though Scripture makes clear that he obeyed. David is depicted as a bad father, and neglectful of his family. Abraham is often painted as a person who tried to fulfill the promise of God on his own. The denial of Peter and his rebuke by Paul are accented as though they were daily events. Paul is credited with giving his opinion on this and that, and drawing back from God-sent warnings not to go to Jerusalem. **All of these criticisms may seem quite appropriate to the unlearned, but they are never found in Scripture.** Some

zealous judges have even said that Job's besetting sin was fearing what would come upon him – which is a gross misinterpretation of the text, *"For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me"* (Job 3:25). The thing Job feared was a Divine abandonment, which he thought had happened. Unlike ourselves, there is no record that Job was ever told what really happened – that God had orchestrated the events he experienced in order to confirm that Job was not serving Him because he had received a lot. The cause for Job's trial originated in heaven, not on earth, when Satan made false allegations against Job – just like those who criticism him.

Statements like, *"They were sinners just like us,"* appear on the surface to justify human criticisms of the saints, as compared to Divine criticism. **While that statement is technically correct, it is not how God has represented these men.** They, like all of those listed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, are set forth as people of faith. The fact that Hebrews was written some time after these people lived confirms that the Holy Spirit was very selective and definitive about how these people were to be viewed.

psychology, a body of knowledge originated by men of perverted and corrupt character. This is a *"science falsely so called"* that does not view man as a creation of God, and in the Divine image. As a "science," it has no difficulty accepting the theory of evolution, even though some of its practitioner refuse to accept evolution. As for the science itself, it does not distinguish between the soul and the spirit (1 Thess 5:23; Heb 4:12), does not deal with the effects of a new birth (1 Pet 1:23), and considers domestic and social environments to be the chief contributors to flawed human conduct. Humanity is considered independently of the Creator, and forgiving self displaces the forgiveness of God.

"Self" is the dominant consideration in psychology. That is what is diagnosed and psychoanalyzed. The *"heart,"* as defined in Scripture, is not the focus of attention.

The acceptance of this science as valid has become common in the professed church, even though it is a sister to the theory of evolution. This acceptance, whether consciously or unconsciously, has given the green light to psychoanalyzing key Scriptural persons.

One of the things that is forgotten in these assessments is the lesser revelation that was available to the saints being criticized. Their critics judge them as though they had access to all of the truth that has been made known to men through Christ Jesus. This is a serious failure.

The Reason for This Tendency

In my judgment, the reason for this tendency can be traced back to adopting a favorable view of

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The Approach of These Lessons

In these lessons there will be no attempt to gloss things noted as sin or unbelief. Also, a disciplined effort will be made to consider these people within the light of the amount of

revelation they received. I will also do my best to emphasize what the Spirit accents about these people. I can approach the text in no other way.

Since we are now dealing with a very controversial text, I thought it best to make these preliminary observations. My intention is not to find a weakness in the character of Abram and Sarai. Rather, it is to present them as God

presents them, and as He assesses them in the remainder of Scripture.

“Abram” and “Abraham” are mentioned two hundred and fifty-nine times in Scripture. “Sarai” and “Sarah” are mentioned forty-four times. I do not believe any of these references are in any way represented with a note of Divine disapproval, or moral flaw.

ABRAM’S WIFE BARE HIM NO CHILDREN

Gen 16:1 *“Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.”*

This event takes place approximately ten years after Abram left Haran. We do not know how long it was after his original calling (Gen 12:1-3). To this point, what God has revealed to Abram is as follows.

blessed him (12:3).

- ➡ That God could curse them that cursed him (12:3).
- ➡ That in him all families of the earth would be blessed (12:3).
- ➡ That the land shown to him would be given to his seed (12:7).

numerous as the stars (15:5).

- ➡ That God brought him out of Ur to give him the land of Canaan (15:7).
- ➡ That Abram’s seed would be a stranger in a land that was not theirs, and that they would serve those people and be afflicted by them four hundred years (15:13).
- ➡ That God would judge the nation that afflicted them, and his seed would come out of the land with great substance (15:14).
- ➡ That Abram would go to his fathers in peace, being buried in a good old age (15:15).
- ➡ That his seed would come out of Egypt in the fourth generation (15:16).
- ➡ That the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (15:16).
- ➡ That the land of promise was bounded by the river of Egypt in the south, and the river Euphrates on the north (15:18).
- ➡ The nations that would be displaced were made known (15:21).

That represents the things made known to Abram over a period of ten years. It is all that Abram knew. This must be kept in mind as we consider the text before us. We dare not evaluate Abram as though he had received more than what has been revealed.

- ➡ That God would show him a land (12:1).
- ➡ That God would make of him a great nation (12:2).
- ➡ That God would bless him (12:2)
- ➡ That God would make his name great (12:2).
- ➡ That Abram would himself be a blessing (12:2).
- ➡ That God would bless them that

- ➡ That God would give the land to Abram and to his seed (13:14,17).
- ➡ That God would make his seed as numerous as the dust of the earth (13:16).
- ➡ That God would be his Shield and exceeding great reward (15:1).
- ➡ That Abram’s heir would come from his own bowels, being begotten by himself (15:4).
- ➡ That Abram’s seed would be as

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SARAI BEAR HIM NO CHILDREN

"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children . . ."

Sarai was barren when she married Abram (Gen 11:30). Now, ten years later, that is still her condition – even though God has said specific things about Abram's "seed" no less than no less than eight times (12:7; 13:15,16; 15:3,5,13,18). **The text suggests that attempts were made for Sarai to conceive, but she did not.** She was also at over seventy years old, being ten years younger than Abram (Gen 17:17).

Thus the stage is being set for the Lord to work. It is one in which all human hope will be dissipated. It will become obvious that what eventually takes place with Abram and Sarai was an absolute impossibility from the standpoint of nature, or human ability.

From what follows, we learn that Sarah had also come to this conclusion. Since there had not been further revelation on the subject, we cannot fault Sarai at this point. **God has so arranged things that men cannot think properly beyond revelation** – and Sarai made no attempt to do so.

SHE HAD A HANDMAID

" . . .and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar."

This is the first mention of a "handmaid" in Scripture. After this, there are forty-eight references to this

class of servants (25:12; 29:24,29; 30:4; 33:1,2,6; 35:25; Ex 23:12; Judges 19:19; Ruth 2:13; 3:9; 1 Sam 1:11,16,18; 25:24,25-28,31,41; 28:21-22; 2 Sam 6:20; 14:6-7,12,15-17,19; 20:17; 1 Kgs 1:13,17,20; 2 Kgs 4:2,16; Psa 86:16; 116:16; Prov 30:23; Isa 14:2; Jer 34:11,16; Joel 2:29; Lk 1:38,48; Acts 2:18). **Mary, the mother of Jesus, referred to herself as "the handmaid of the Lord"** (Lk 1:38).

A "handmaid" was a female slave. In this case, it was a woman who attended to the needs of Sarai. The Scriptures do not reveal how this Egyptian woman became Sarai's handmaid. She may very well have been given to her by Pharaoh when they were in Egypt. At any rate, her presence will suggest to Sarai an answer to the dilemma Abram faced.

SARAI OFFERS A SOLUTION

"² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai."

As we enter into this text, keep in mind the limited revelation that had been given to Abram. Also, consider the length of time between the promise of a "seed" and the time of our text – ten years!

THE LORD HAS RESTRAINED ME

"And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing . . ." Other versions read, "prevented me from bearing children," ^{NASB} "kept me from having children" ^{NIV} "has not let me have children," ^{BBE} "shut me up that I should not bear," ^{DARBY} "the Lord has given me no children," ^{LIVING} "has not allowed me to have children," ^{ERV} and "has not seen

fit to let me have a child." MESSAGE

The Holy Spirit makes no editorial remark concerning this statement – such as, she "wist no what to say" (Mk 9:6), "not knowing what she said" (Lk 9:33), or "this spake she not of herself" (John 11:51). Nothing is added to lead us to the conclusion that this was

confirms that conclusion (Gen 17:19-21; Heb 11:11).

Herein is a most marvelous thing. Even though revelation was extremely limited during that time – particularly revelation about God Himself – Sarai related her condition with the Lord of all. **She knew more of the Person of**

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nothing more than a delusion. **I take it, then, that this was a proper assessment, and the rest of Scripture**

God than many of our contemporaries, who would be in sharp disagreement with her. As of the time of this text,

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God had not yet revealed Himself as “Almighty.” The first use of that term is in Genesis 17:1. **Yet, Sarai knew that births were, in fact, supervised by God.** She knew that the normal thing was for women to bear children (Gen 3:16). Therefore, she reasoned that the inability to bear children was owing to God’s own decision.

What Can We Learn from This?

We learn from this that **even minuscule revelation leads to the conclusion that God is Sovereign.** Those who deny the absolute Sovereignty of God have denied the most basic and rudimentary revelation. They have not thought upon what God has said – which is abundantly more than was known during the time of our text. People who argue about what God can and cannot do are in the grip of the wicked one.

I MAY OBTAIN CHILDREN BY HER

“ . . . I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her . . .” Other versions read, “*build a family through her,*” ^{NIV} “*with my slave-girl. Maybe I’ll be able to have children through her,*” ^{CJB} “*it, it may be I may have children of her at least,*” ^{DOUAY} “*it may be that I shall receive a child by her,*” ^{GENEVA} “*perhaps I shall have sons through her,*” ^{NAB} “*her children shall be mine,*” ^{LIVING} and “*if she has a child, it will be mine.*” ^{CEV}

While this would be a pure suggestion during our time, when revelation has reached its apex in Christ, and the purpose of God has been delineated through Scripture, it was a valid way of thinking in those spiritually primitive times.

Sarah is not thinking of merely having a family. There is no record of her being bitterly discontent with her barrenness for ten preceding years. She had certainly not spoken with Abram in the manner she did in this text. There is no other conclusion but that this was an unusual occasion, and not driven by a mere discontent with her barrenness.

She is doubtless thinking of the promise to Abram concerning his seed – which did not exist at this time. Abram had not heard a single word from God that suggested Sarai would be the mother of the promised seed. Ten years had passed during which it appears as though an attempt was made for Sarai to conceive. Being unable to do so, she now sought to see the word fulfilled in, what she saw as, some practical way.

I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, **God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son:** therefore called she his name Dan” (Gen 30:1-6).

ABRAM HEARKENED

“ . . . And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.” Other versions read,

We learn from this that even minuscule revelation leads to the conclusion that God is Sovereign. Those who deny the absolute Sovereignty of God have denied the most basic and rudimentary revelation.

The practice of a wife having children through a handmaid was not uncommon during those spiritually primitive times.

➡ Zilpah, handmaid to Leah, wife of Jacob. **She bore Gad and Asher,** considered sons of Jacob, and progenitors of two of the twelve tribes that comprised the nation of Israel.

➡ Bilhah, handmaid to Rachel, wife of Jacob. **She bore Dan and Naphtali,** considered sons of Jacob, and progenitors of two of the twelve tribes of Israel.

An almost identical circumstance is reported in regards to Jacob. Here is the account. “*And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that*

“*heeded the voice,*” ^{NKJV} “*listened to the voice,*” ^{NASB} and “*agreed to what Sarai said.*” ^{NIV}

For those living under the superior glory of the New Covenant (2 Cor 3:7-10), this would have been inappropriate. However Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob even antedated the Old Covenant, which was a covenant of lesser glory. **This was during the spiritual dark ages.**

There can be no justification of the idea that Abram was driven by lust, as some have alleged. He is set before us as a man of faith, not a man of lust. No one has a right to think of Abram differently.

There is no reason to consider this whole episode as anything but an attempt to see the promise of God fulfilled. Although in the light of greater revelation this would have been seen differently, such light had not been given. Once again, we must reason with the following facts in mind.

➡ God had not yet revealed that the

initial seed would be through Sarai.

- ➔ Ten years after leaving Haran, no birth had occurred.
- ➔ Both Abram and Sarai were growing older.
- ➔ Abram had believed the promise (Gen 15:6).
- ➔ Abram refused to reason as though

the promise was not true.

During a time of decidedly more revelation, and when age and barrenness was also a factor, a handmaid was not recommended to give birth to John the Baptist. The reason – there had been more revelation.

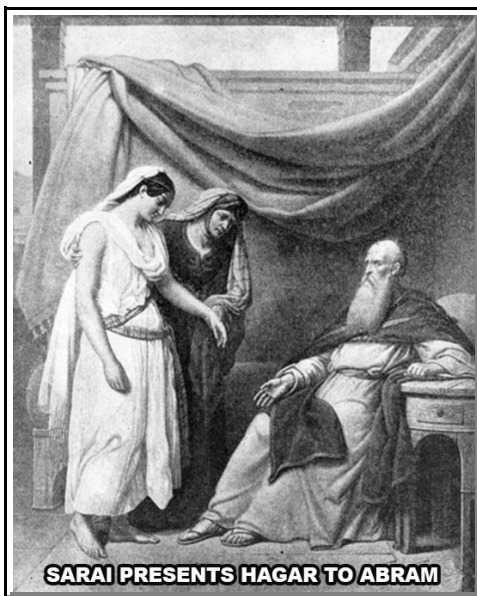
A Point to be Made

Independently of revelation, the

minds of men, who themselves are living by faith, tend in wrong direction. This is **not** because they are particularly drawn to the mundane. Rather, it is owing to the greatness of God Himself, whose thoughts and ways are not harmonious with those who, in their thinking, are limited to the world. **As confirmed in this, and other, texts, only revelation and insight can change the way men think, so that there thoughts are valid and conform to reality.**

HAGAR CONCEIVED

“³ And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after



SARAI PRESENTS HAGAR TO ABRAM

Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. ⁴ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.”

SARAI ABRAM'S WIFE

“And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian . . .”

In order for us to form a proper concept of Abram, the fact that Sarai

was his wife, as compared to “one of his wives,” Sarai is mentioned several times.

- ➔ “Abram's wife was Sarai” (Gen 11:29).
- ➔ “Sarai . . . Abram's wife” (Gen 11:31).
- ➔ “Abram took Sarai his wife” (Gen 12:5).
- ➔ “Sarai his wife” (Gen 12:11).
- ➔ “. . . his wife” (Gen 12:12).
- ➔ “Sarai his wife” (Gen 12:11).
- ➔ “This is his wife” (Gen 12:12).
- ➔ “Sarai Abram's wife” (Gen 12:17).
- ➔ “. . . thy wife” (Gen 12:18).
- ➔ “. . . behold thy wife” (12:19).
- ➔ “. . . his wife” (Gen 12:20).
- ➔ “Abram . . . and his wife” (Gen 13:1).
- ➔ “Sarai Abram's wife” (Gen 16:1).

The Holy Spirit has shaped the manner in which we will consider

Abram. He was a one-woman-man, having only one wife. He had no propensity to immorality, or to having multiple wives as many who followed him did.

This knowledge should keep us from leaping to unwarranted conclusions concerning the incident now being reported, as though Abram was driven by lust.

AFTER ABRAM HAD DWELT TEN YEARS

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

This ten years is to be calculated from the time Abram “dwelt” in Canaan. When he first entered Canaan, he did not dwell there, but moved on to Egypt because of the famine that was in Canaan. It is first said that Abram and his household “dwelt” in Canaan **after** he had returned from Egypt: “Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre” (Gen 13:18). This incident apparently took place ten years after that. The only record of things happening during those ten years included the following.

- ➔ The rescue of Lot and his goods (Gen 14:13-16).
- ➔ Meeting Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-

20).

➔ Abram's refusal to take anything from the king of Sodom (Gen 14:20-24).

➔ The most significant of all – God coming to Abram in a vision (Gen 15:1-21).

But during that ten-year period, and apparently especially after the vision, Abram and Sarah attempted to have a child. If this is not the case, there would have been no reason for Sarai to speak as she did.

GAVE HER TO BE HIS WIFE

" . . . and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived . . . "

Some have objected to this text, saying that it was not lawful for Abram to have Hagar as a wife – even though the Law had not yet been given. The fact that Sarai gave Hagar to Abram *"to be his wife"* confirms that this was not something done to fulfill the lust of the flesh. It was not something unusual for the times, although it was not intended to be a perpetual practice. Further, God will reveal **later** that a child through a handmaid would not fulfill the intended promise. Sarai must be the one who bears the child – **something that was not revealed until a considerable time after this event (at least fourteen years later).**

As was customary in olden times, and even in New Covenant times, **the woman ran the affairs of the household.** Lemuel's mother made this plain when she spoke to her son concerning the *"virtuous woman"* (Prov 31:10-31). The household is referred to as *"her household"* (Prov 31:15,21,27). The same is said of the Shunammite woman, one who was married and bore a son miraculously at the word of Elisha. Scripture refers to *"her household"* (2 Kgs 8:2).

Paul also spoke of the wife in this

manner: *"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house . . . "* (1 Tim 5:14). Other versions read, *"manage the*

not yet been revealed. As a consequence, they could not think correctly about the situation. **Faith subsists on a word from God, and**

There is no revelation pertaining to living in this world that has not been revealed. Even the purpose behind it all has been revealed, as well as the ultimate outcome, and a general idea of what we will be doing in the world to come.

house," NKJV *"keep house,"* NASB *"manage their homes,"* NIV *"rule their household,"* RSV *"controlling their families,"* BBE *"take charge of their homes,"* CJB *"rule the house,"* DARBY *"govern the house,"* GENEVA *"regulate their houses,"* MRD and *"regulate their houses."* WEYMOUTH

Sarah was, then, acting in strict accord with the ordained manner of the home. **Although her judgment was flawed, it was not because she had rebelled against the Lord or here husband Abram.** This will be confirmed later in this text.

I gather that, in the absence of further revelation, this was her attempt to seek a *"godly seed"* (Mal 2:15).

A Lesson to be Learned

There is valuable lesson to be learned here. **Where there is no revelation, people tend to be flawed in their thinking.** Take Sarah as an example, even though she was thinking within the parameter of what God has said, God had not divulged everything to Abram – at least, not yet.

It should not be difficult to see that Abram and Sarai's thoughts were, according to their perception at the time, within the boundaries of what had been revealed. **The caveat was that everything pertaining to the "seed" had**

cannot come into being or be sustained without a word from God. Where God has not spoken, faith is not possible, for it comes *"by hearing"* a word that has its genesis in the Almighty God (Rom 10:17).

Lest anyone think that this excuses people from erroneous thinking today – particularly when it regards doing the will of the Lord – it is good to remember that God has now given us *"all things pertaining to life and godliness"* (2 Pet 1:3). People in Christ have been vouchsafed *"all spiritual blessings"* (Eph 1:3), and informed that *"all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* are hidden in Christ (Col 2:3), in whom they themselves have been placed (1 Cor 1:30). **There is no revelation pertaining to living in this world that has not been revealed.** Even the purpose behind it all has been revealed, as well as the ultimate outcome, and a general idea of what we will be doing in the world to come (Dan 7:18,22,27; Matt 5:5; 2 Tim 2:12). **Everything required to sustain spiritual life has been given, and defined as well** (Eph 1:3; 6:10-18; Tit 2:11-12).

Those who are inclined to criticize those who received far less revelation ought to turn their critical eyes on themselves. They will find, no doubt, that there is a log hanging out of their

eye. Let them work on removing that. Then they will be able to see and assess more clearly.

In the meantime, let a war be declared on religious philosophizing and speculation. They have no place in the blazing glory of the risen Christ (Acts 3:13), and the New Covenant He is administrating (2 Cor 3:7-10). Although it is tragically true, it is a shame that those with a comparatively meager spiritual light – like Abraham and Sarah – clearly had a far greater faith than many who wear the name of Jesus. Such things ought not to be.

SARAI DESPISED BY HAGAR

“ . . . and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.” Other versions read, “began to despise her mistress,” NIV “looked with contempt upon her mistress,” NRSV “no longer had any respect for her,” BBE “looked down on her mistress,” CSB “her mistress was lightly esteemed in her eyes,” DARBY “she began to be disrespectful to Sarai,” NET

Having conceived a child, Hagar came to despise her mistress – the one for whom she worked, and to whom she belonged.

and “she began to treat her mistress, Sarai with contempt.” NLT

Having conceived a child, Hagar came to despise her mistress – the one for whom she worked, and to whom she belonged.

A Type of the Law

In this, Hagar is type of those who are under a system of Law – something of which Hagar is specifically said to be a type in Galatians 4:28-31). It is the nature of those under Law to think of themselves as superior to others because of what they supposedly have. Thus Jesus spoke of a Pharisee that looked down on a publican (Lk 18:11). In his letter to the Romans, Paul indicated there were some Jewish believers who also looked down on

others (Rom 2:1-29).

A Type of the Flesh

Hagar is also a type of the flesh, which moves a person “think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Rom 12:3). This is what the Scriptures refer to as being “high minded” (Rom 11:20), “boasting against the branches” (Rom 11:20), and being “wise in your own conceits” (Rom 12:16). These are people referred to in the Psalms as being “proud” (Psa 137:6). They are classed with those who “glory in appearance” (2 Cor 5:12), and have “confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3). Such are ever with us, but we are to see to it that we are not among their number.

THE REACTION OF SARAI

“⁵ And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.”

I am going to take a charitable view of Sarai, thinking no evil (1 Cor 13:5). This is driven by three considerations.

- ➔ Like Abram, Sarai was not privy to the will of the Lord, how His promise would be fulfilled, or what was really happening at this time.
- ➔ We are not to judge “according to the appearance,” but judge “righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

➔ Because this will ultimately be developed as a revealed type of covenantal considerations (Gal 4:21-31), I see this as a circumstance ordained by the Lord, and particular structured for the end revealed in Galatians. I do not believe types and shadows are by accident.

MY WRONG BE UPON THEE

“And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee . . .” Other versions be, “May the wrong done me be upon you,” NASB “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering,” NIV “May the wrong done to me be upon you,” NRSV “This outrage being done to me is your fault,” CJB “Thou dost unjustly with me,” DOUAY “I’m being treated

unfairly! And it’s your fault,” GWN “I am injured by thee,” SEPTUAGINT “My violence is for thee,” MESSAGE “I am being wronged because of you,” ABP “I am injured by thee,” BRENT “My slave girl now hates me, and I blame you for this,” ERV “It’s all your fault that I’m suffering this abuse,” MESSAGE and “May [the responsibility for] my wrong and deprivation of rights be upon you!” AMPLIFIED

There are at least three possible views of this text.

- ➔ That Sarah was saying she had done the wrong thing. None of the versions reflect such a view, and I do not believe it is proper.

Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

➡ That Sarah was blaming Abram for what happened to her, saying he had treated her unjustly. Several versions present this view (NIV, ^{New International} CJB, ^{Jewish Bible} DOUAY, ^{Douay-Rheims} GWN, ^{God's Word} ABP, ^{Apostolic Bible} BRENT, ^{Brenton's English} ERV, ^{English Revised} MESSAGE, ^{The Message Bible} and AMPLIFIED. ^{Amplified Bible}

➡ That Hagar, in despising Sarai, had, in fact, despised Abram, by whom she had conceived. Versions reflecting this view include ASV, ^{American Standard} NASB, ^{New American Standard} ESV, ^{English Standard Version} and YLT. ^{Young's Literal Translation}

honoring Abram, yet despising Sarai – and she knew it.

I WAS DESPISED IN HER EYES

"I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes..."

Hagar forgot that any benefit she reaped had been because of Sarai. She would have had no opportunity to bear one of Abram's children if it had been for Sarai. Yet, she conducted herself as though this was not the case.

Sarai had made known her intention from the very start: *"it may be*

wrong, and you will have to answer to the LORD for this," ^{CEV} *"I want the LORD to judge which of us is right."* ^{ERV}

Although Sarai appears to be casting the blame for her condition upon Abram, I am inclined to treat her mercifully, seeing that she was operating more or less in the dark. Of itself, this is not enough to justify this sort of approach. However, when we take into account that this was actually the development of a type or shadow of the nature of the Law of Sinai versus the nature of the New Covenant, I see no other alternative. As difficult as it may be to receive, God was in this matter, just as surely as we was in Samson choosing a Philistine woman over an Israelite (Judges 14:2-4).

This is not intended to fully justify what Sarai had set in motion. It rather indicates how impotent human reasoning is when it steps out of the bounds of revelation. Notwithstanding, even in this case, Sarai appeals to the Lord for a settlement of the matter. She does not offer an alternative plan.

Not being able to satisfactorily resolve the matter herself, Sarah calls upon the Lord for a resolution. This bears some similarity to the casting of lots, or the use of the Urim and Thummim under the Law (Ex 28:30; Lev 8:8; Num 27:21; Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65). There is no question that bitterness was in Sarai because of the prideful expressions of her handmaid. Yet, even in that condition she made an appeal to God. I acknowledge that this is not the most admirable situation, but considering the spiritually primitive nature of the times, it is a tolerable circumstance.

Hagar forgot that any benefit she reaped had been because of Sarai. She would have had no opportunity to bear one of Abram's children if it had been for Sarai. Yet, she conducted herself as though this was not the case.

The latter view is the one I see as being proper. Although Sarai was managing the household, and had a right to make this decision, yet as Abram's wife, anyone who despised her also despised Abram.

This principle follows through in Christ Jesus. The person who dishonors the Son dishonors the Father who sent Him (John 5:23; 12:48). The one who rejects those whom Jesus sends, has rejecting Him (Matt 10:14-15; Mk 9:37). The one who treats His people with disdain, has done so to Jesus Himself (Matt 25:45).

Hagar did not have the option of

that I may obtain children by her" (Gen 16:2). This was not a matter of merely sharing her husband with Hagar, not did it result in Abram preferring Hagar. This was nothing more than the eruption of pride.

THE LORD JUDGE BETWEEN ME AND THEE

"... the LORD judge between me and thee." Other versions read, *"May ADONAI decide who is right - I or you!"* ^{CJB} *"May the LORD decide who is right-you or me,"* ^{GWN} *"May the LORD decide between you and me,"* ^{NAB} *"The LORD will show who's wrong -- you or me!,"* ^{NLT} *"May the Lord judge you for doing this to me!,"* ^{LIVING} *"You have done me*

ABRAM'S RESPONSE TO SARAI

" 6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to

her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her

face."

Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

THY MAID IS IN THY HAND

"But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee . . ." Other versions read, *"is in your power,"* ^{NASB} *"is under your authority,"* ^{NET} *"is at your disposal,"* ^{NJB} *"she is your servant,"* ^{NLT} *"You have my permission to punish the girl as you see fit,"* ^{LIVING} *"she is your slave and under your control,"* ^{GNB} and *"Your maid is your business."* ^{MESSAGE} The literal translation of the Hebrew word used here (בִּי דָדָה) is "POSSESSION, IN SUBMISSION, POWER" ^{WTM MORPHOLOGY} **The idea is that Hagar belonged to Sarai, who had the right to manage her as she willed.** This confirms the fact that Sarai, like all godly woman, was in charge of managing the house. Thus Abram refuses to inject himself into the situation, insisting that Sarai can handle the situation herself, doing so rightly.

SARAI DEALT HARDLY WITH HER

" . . . And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face." Other versions read, *"dealt harshly,"* ^{NKJV} *"treated her harshly,"* ^{NASB} *"mistreated,"* ^{NIV} *"was cruel,"* ^{BBE} *"oppressed,"* ^{DARBY} *"afflicted,"* ^{DOUAY} *"roughly,"* ^{GENEVA}

I gather that Sarai did what was necessary to impress upon Hagar that she was a slave, and not a privileged mistress. Again, this must be viewed as being done in a period of darkness.

"abused," ^{NAB} *"ill-treated,"* ^{NIB} *"beat her,"* ^{LIVING} *"maltreated,"* ^{ABP} *"was abusive,"* ^{MESSAGE} *"dealt severely with her, humbling and afflicting her,"* ^{AMPLIFIED} and *"is humiliating her."* ^{INTERLINEAR}

The word translated *"dealt hardly"* has the following lexical meaning: *"AFFLICT."* ^{Fagninus, Mohtanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth. – JOHN GILL}

The extent of this affliction is not spelled out in Scripture. Thus I consider words like the following as suggesting things inappropriate: *"mistreated,"* ^{NIV} *"abused,"* ^{NAB} *"beat her,"* ^{LIVING} and *"maltreated."* ^{ABP} All of these words suggest wrongness in what Sarai did. However, although it is only suggested, the angel who later told Hagar what to do does not state that Hagar was abused, or in some way violated. **She**

was, in fact, an insolent slave who took what should have been viewed by her as a privilege, and made it an occasion for boasting.

It is quite true that under the Law, given about five hundred years later, the Jews were commanded concerning slaves, *"Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor; but shalt fear thy God"* (Lev 25:43). **However, there is no indication that this was Sarai's manner before the pride of Hagar erupted, and she viewed Sarai with contempt.**

I gather that Sarai did what was necessary to impress upon Hagar that she was a slave, and not a privileged mistress. Again, this must be viewed as being done in a period of darkness.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD FOUND HER

"⁷ And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. ⁸ And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. ⁹ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. ¹⁰ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. ¹² And he will be a wild

man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. ¹³ And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? ¹⁴ Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered."

Here is a most arresting passage of Scripture. **This is one of those extensive passages, addressed to a heathen, who was not in any covenant-relationship with God.** There are several people in this category – people outside of any formal identity with God, to whom He

spoke extensively.

- **CAIN.** Genesis 4:6-7,9-15
- **HAGAR.** Genesis 16:8-12; 21:17-19
- **ABIMELECH.** Genesis 20:3-7
- **PHARAOH.** Exodus 4:22-23; 8:20-23; 9:1-5,13-19; 10:1-6; 11:1-8
- **BALAAM.** Numbers 22:9-12,20-35
- **NEBUCHADNEZZAR.** Daniel 2:36-45;
- **CYRUS.** Isaiah 45:1-3; Ezra 1:2-2

Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

All Are Accountable to God

The above incidents confirm that all men are, in fact, accountable to God. Their deeds are not overlooked because they have no direct conscious relation to him. This is confirmed by certain judgments that came upon the heathen.

- ➔ **THE WORLD OF NOAH'S DAY.** Genesis 6-8
- ➔ **THE BUILDERS IN SHINAR.** Genesis 11:1-6
- ➔ **SODOM AND GOMORRAH.** Genesis 19
- ➔ **EGYPT.** Exodus 7-11
- ➔ **NINEVEH.** Jonah 1:1-4; Nahum 3:7; Zephaniah 2:13
- ➔ **AMORITES.** Genesis 15:16
- ➔ **TYRE AND SIDON.** Isaiah 23:1-12
- ➔ **BABYLON.** Isaiah 13:1-22
- ➔ **KING HEROD.** Acts 12:21-23

These dealings with the heathen often took place when they were in some way associated with the people of God.

I say these things because I was taught that God did not judge those who were not formally associated with Him – that His laws pertained only to Israel. It may be that some other poor soul has been taught such things.

This is why it is absurd to counsel a person to "make Jesus your Lord." I realize that it is a statement made without due thought. Nevertheless it leaves people thinking in an untoward manner. All men are responsible to God. All men are evaluated by God. All men are subject to the judgments of God. There is no question about this.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD FOUND HER



"And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur." Other versions read, "came to her," ^{BBE} "having found her," ^{DOUAY} "met Hagar." ^{GNB}

It is not that the angel had been searching for Hagar, or that he stumbled upon her as he was moving about. Angels are "sent" by God on their missions (Num 20:16; 1 Chron 21:15; 32:21; Dan 3:28; 6:22; Lk 1:19,26; Acts 12:11; Rev 1:1).

Because of Hagar's association with Abram, an angel was dispatched to govern the situation and illuminate Hagar concerning certain relevant matters. The outcome of Hagar's involvement will also set the stage for further adversarial dealings with Israel. This will confirm His choice of and preference for Israel, as well as the rejection of other nations.

WHENCE CAMEST THOU, AND WHETHER WILT THOU GO?

"And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?"

The angel does not address Hagar as a free-woman, but as a slave. He is very precise in addressing her: "Hagar, Sarai's maid." The fact that she had ran away did not alter her situation. She was still Sarai's maid, whether she wished to acknowledge it or not. The expression argues for the propriety of what Sarai did in humbling her. She had to be brought to see that she was a

servant, and bearing a child to Abram would not change that situation.

This not to be interpreted as justification for the harsh treatment of people. Rather, it is intended to show that Hagar, in vaunting herself before Sarai, was the greater transgressor. When she hears from heaven, she will not be commended for what she has done. Instead of judging between Sarai and Abram, heaven has judged between Hagar and Sarai, and given the ascendancy to Sarai.

HAGAR REPLIES

"And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai." Other versions read, "My master's wife," ^{BBE} "my owner Sarai," ^{GWN} "my lady," ^{ABP} and "from Sarai." ^{ERV} Most versions read, "my mistress."

The meaning of "mistress" is "OWNER – LADY OWNER." ^{STRONG'S/ McCLINTOK & STRONG'S} The Basic Bible English version is incorrect in rendering the word, "Sarai, my master's wife." Likewise, the ERV completely ignores the Hebrew word for "mistress," referring only to "Sarai."

RETURN AND SUBMIT

⁹ *And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands." Other versions read, "submit to her authority," ^{CJB} "submit to her mistreatment," ^{CSB} "humble thyself under her hand," ^{DOUAY} "place yourself under her authority," ^{GWN} "submit to her harsh treatment," ^{TNK} "act as you should," ^{LIVING} "be her slave," ^{CEV} "Put up with her abuse," ^{MESSAGE} "[humbly] submit to her control." ^{AMPLIFIED}*

I find great difficulty harmonizing the representation of several versions of the angel telling Hagar to submit to abusiveness and maltreatment (Holman Standard Bible, Jewish Bible, and the Message Bible). It seems to me that the persons responsible for those versions allowed their academic views to overshadow the fact that God was dealing with Hagar. The Hebrew word

☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ (u-ethoni) means “HUMBLE YOURSELF.” The point was to submit to the authority of Sarai, not to any maltreatment or abuse that she was supposedly handing out.

For those who may wonder who was in the wrong, here is a word from heaven that points us in the right direction. The angel of the Lord was not sent to Sarai, ordering her to pursue Hagar, apologize, and bring her back.

I WILL MULTIPLY THY SEED EXCEEDINGLY

“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.”

At this time, Hagar was thinking of just surviving. But the angel brings her news that far exceeded surviving in the world. In order to prepare for the position of Israel (Deut 32:8), and the eventual covering of the earth with the knowledge of God (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14), **Hagar’s seed would supply a considerable number of people that would be involved in the future working of the Lord.** Also, Hagar and her son would be shadow of things to come, as is developed in Paul’s letter to the Galatians (Gal 4:21-31).

God was working behind the scenes in this entire incident. That is precisely why we dare not assess it according to appearance, or allow human reasoning to be prominent in our thinking about it.

CALL HIS NAME ISHMAEL

“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael . . .”

Notice the level of knowledge this angel possesses. He knew Hagar’s condition, that she is going to bear a son, and what was the appropriate name for the son.

There are least five men whose

name was dictated from heaven.

- ➡ Ishmael (Gen 16:11).
- ➡ Isaac (Genesis 17:19).
- ➡ Solomon (1 Chron 22:9)
- ➡ John the Baptist (Luke 1:13).
- ➡ Jesus (Matt 1:21; Lk 1:31)

The name “*Ishmael*” means, “*God that hears,*” ^{HITCHCOCK} and “*whom God hears.*” ^{SMITH}

As long as Hagar lived, everytime she heard the name of “*Ishmael*,” she would remember this incident of which we are now reading.

GOD HAS HEARD THY AFFLICTION

“ . . . because the LORD hath heard thy affliction . . .” Other versions read, “*given heed to your affliction,*” ^{NASB} “*heard of your misery,*” ^{NIV} “*the ears of the Lord were open to your sorrow,*” ^{BBE} “*paid attention to your misery,*” ^{CJB} “*listened to your affliction,*” ^{ESV} “*heard your cries of distress,*” ^{GWN} “*hearkened to thy humiliation,*” ^{SEPTUAGINT} “*has heard you, God has answered you,*” ^{NAB} “*heard your painful groans,*” ^{NET} and “*paid heed to your suffering.*” ^{TNK}

This contradicts the representation of several versions that the angel sent Hagar back to be abused.

Affliction has a language of its own, and God is frequently represented as focusing his attention on someone’s affliction.

- ➡ Looked on affliction (Gen 29:32; Ex 4:31; 2 Sam 16:12).
- ➡ Seen affliction (Gen 31:42; Psa 25:18).
- ➡ Consider affliction (Psa 119:153).
- ➡ Behold affliction (Lam 1:9).
- ➡ Regarded affliction (Psa 106:44).
- ➡ Remembering affliction (Psa 132:1).

All of this denoted the Lord giving special heed to the affliction of someone, and preparing to do something about it. God’s attention always precedes His workings.

Afflictions cause expressions to emit from the mouth that are often depicted as being heard by the Lord (Ex 2:23; 3:7; Psa 22:24; 88:9; Jonah 2:2). These are generally set forth as being heard by God.

In the case of Hagar, She must have learned something about the true God while in the household of Abram and Sarai. Perhaps this moved her to call out to the Lord in her affliction, which she would **not** have done had she remained in Egypt.

HE WILL BE A WILD MAN

“And he will be a wild man . . .”

ADAM CLARK ON THIS VERSE

“NOTHING CAN BE MORE DESCRIPTIVE OF THE WANDERING, LAWLESS, FREEBOOTING LIFE OF THE ARABS THAN THIS. FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT THEY HAVE KEPT THEIR INDEPENDENCE, AND GOD PRESERVES THEM AS A LASTING MONUMENT OF HIS PROVIDENTIAL CARE AND AN INCONTESTABLE ARGUMENT OF THE TRUTH OF DIVINE REVELATION. HAD THE BOOKS OF MOSES NO OTHER PROOF OF THEIR DIVINE ORIGIN, THE ACCOUNT OF ISHMAEL AND THE PROPHECY CONCERNING HIS DESCENDANTS DURING A PERIOD OF NEARLY 4,000 YEARS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. TO ATTEMPT TO REFUTE IT WOULD BE A MOST RIDICULOUS PRESUMPTION AND FOLLY.” ADAM CLARKE

The International. Standard Bible Encyclopedia says of this animal, “‘WILD ASS,’ IS DERIVED FROM THE ROOT WHICH MEANS ‘TO RUN,’ SUGGESTIVE OF THE ANIMAL’S SWIFTNESS.”

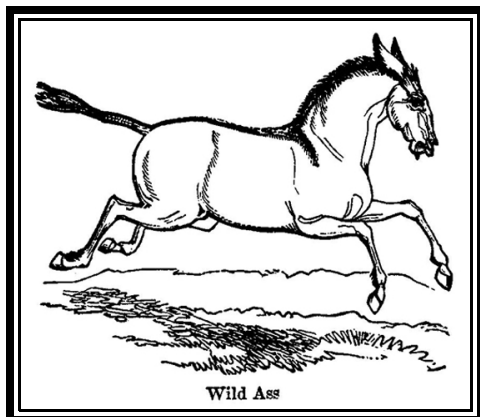
Easton Bible Dictionary provides the following: “THE WILD ASS WAS DISTINGUISHED FOR ITS FLEETNESS AND ITS EXTREME SHYNESS. IN ALLUSION TO HIS MODE OF LIFE, ISHMAEL IS LIKENED TO A WILD ASS (GENESIS 16:12. HERE THE WORD IS SIMPLY RENDERED ‘WILD’ IN THE AUTHORIZED VERSION, BUT IN THE REVISED VERSION, ‘WILD-ASS AMONG MEN’).”

The angel apparently had no concern for the fleshly impact of his words. He is a messenger, and he delivers the message without any tone of regret, sorrow, or sympathy.

A Wild Man

Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

Other versions read, *“as a wild ass among men,”* ^{ASV} *“a wild donkey of a man,”* ^{NASB} *“a wild ass of a man,”* ^{NIV} *“wild as an untamed donkey,”* ^{GWN} *“a rugged man,”* ^{ABP} and *“a bucking bronco of a man, a real fighter.”* ^{MESSAGE}



In the questions God put to Job, He provided a vivid description of “the wild ass.” *“Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing”* (Job 39:5-8).

Jeremiah adds, *“A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her”* (Jer 2:24).

In describing a wayward Israel the Lord said through Hosea, *“For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers”* (Hosea 8:9).

Ishmael would never be subject to the yoke, or never enslaved to another. He would roam about like a restless nomad, living by plundering passers-by, and unable to get along with others.

Students of Ishmael’s descendants

tell us that to this day this text characterizes them. John Gill wrote, “LIVING IN A WILDERNESS, DELIGHTING IN HUNTING AND KILLING WILD BEASTS, AND ROBBING AND PLUNDERING ALL THAT PASS BY; AND SUCH AN ONE ISHMAEL WAS, (SEE GENESIS 21:20,21); AND SUCH THE SARACENS, HIS POSTERITY, WERE, AND SUCH THE WILD ARABS ARE TO THIS DAY, WHO DESCENDED FROM HIM; OR ‘THE WILD ASS OF A MAN’; OR ‘A WILD ASS AMONG MEN’, AS ONKELOS; OR ‘LIKE TO A WILD ASS AMONG MEN’, AS THE TARGUM OF JONATHAN; WILD, FIERCE, UNTAMED, NOT SUBJECT TO A YOKE, AND IMPATIENT OF IT, (SEE JOB 11:12); SUCH WAS ISHMAEL, AND SUCH ARE HIS POSTERITY, WHO NEVER COULD BE SUBDUED OR BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE, NEITHER BY THE ASSYRIANS, NOR MEDES AND PERSIANS, NOR BY THE GREEKS NOR ROMANS, NOR ANY OTHER PEOPLE F1051; AND AT THIS DAY THE ARABS LIVE INDEPENDENT ON THE TURKS, NAY, OBLIGE THE TURKS TO PAY A YEARLY TRIBUTE FOR THE PASSAGE OF THEIR PILGRIMS TO MECCA, AND ALSO TO PAY FOR THEIR CARAVANS THAT PASS THROUGH THEIR COUNTRY, AS TRAVELLERS INTO THOSE PARTS UNANIMOUSLY REPORT; WHEREFORE ABEN EZRA TRANSLATES THE WORD RENDERED ‘WILD’, OR ‘WILD ASS’, BY, ‘FREE’, AND REFERS TO THE PASSAGE IN (JOB 39:5). THESE PEOPLE HAVING BEEN ALWAYS FREE, AND NEVER IN BONDAGE, ALWAYS LIVED AS FREE BOOTERS UPON OTHERS.” ^{JOHN GILL}

Against Every Man

“ . . . his hand will be against every man . . . ” Other versions read, *“He will fight with everyone,”* ^{GWN} *“his hands against all,”* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“He will be hostile to everyone,”* ^{NET} *“He will raise his fist against everyone,”* ^{NLT} *“fighting everyone,”* ^{CEV} *“a real fighter, fighting.”* ^{MESSAGE}

This description is exactly the opposite of those who follow Jesus, who pronounced a blessing that contradicts the character of Ishmael: *“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God”* (Matt 5:9). Those in Christ are admonished, *“Follow peace with all men”* (Heb 12:14). Peter admonished those who love life, *“let him seek peace”* (1 Pet 3:11). The wisdom that comes down from above is *“first pure, then peaceable”* (James 3:17).

This was not true of Ishmael and his descendants.

Every Man’s Hand Against Him

“ . . . and every man’s hand against him . . . ”

Ishmael would provoke all who came in contact with him. There would be no attractiveness in him.

In this regard Ishmael (the son of the bondwoman) typified those who attempt to serve God under a system of Law. Even though they present themselves as representatives of Christ, yet they stir up strife wherever they are found, and others are repulsed by them.

He Will Dwell in the Presence of All His Brethren

“ . . . and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” Other versions read, *“He shall live to the east of his brothers,”* ^{NASB} *“he will live in hostility to all his brothers,”* ^{NIV} *“he will live at odds with all his kin,”* ^{NRSV} *“he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen,”* ^{RSV} *“he will keep his place against all his brethren,”* ^{BBE} *“he will have conflicts with all his relatives,”* ^{GWN} *“In opposition to all his kin shall he encamp,”* ^{NAB} *“he will live away from his brothers,”* ^{NET} *“living his life in defiance of all his kinsmen,”* ^{NJB} *“he shall dwell alongside of all his kinsmen,”* ^{TNK} *“He will move from place to place and camp near his brothers,”* ^{ERV} *“Always stirring up trouble, always at odds with his family,”* ^{MESSAGE} and *“he will live to the east and on the borders of all his kinsmen.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Here again we see the weakness of an emphasis on the supposed original language. In this case there are multiple translators working with the same language, yet arriving at differing conclusions. Ishmael would:

- Dwell in the midst of his brethren.
- Live to the east of his brethren.
- Live in hostility to his brethren.
- Will dwell over against his brethren.
- Have conflicts with all his relatives.
- Will live away from his brothers.
- Live in defiance of his kinsmen.
- Dwell alongside all of his brethren.
- Move from place to place and camp near his brothers.
- Always stirring up trouble and at odds with his family.

➔ Live to the east and on the borders of all his kinsmen.

The fact that Ishmael and his descendants would be contentious trouble-makers has already been established by the angel. They would also tend to be nomadic, with no certain dwelling place. **It seems to me that the meaning here is that, though a wanderer, he would remain close to his brethren (the offspring of Sarah and Keturah), while remaining independent of them.** In this case, *"in the midst"* does not mean in the middle of them, but where he and his progeny could be observed by them, though never fully accepted by them.

SHE CALLED THE NAME OF THE LORD

"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"

As I have already pointed out, no ordinary Egyptian would do this, being fundamentally ignorant of God. However, Hagar was no ordinary Egyptian. She had lived in the house of Abram, *"the friend of God"* (2 Chron 20:7; James 2:23). She had doubtless obtained an acquaintance with God through the lives and tutelage of Abram and Sarai.

She Called the Name of the Lord

Other versions read, *"she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees,"* ^{NKJV} *"She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her. ..."* ^{NIV} *"she named the Lord,"* ^{NRSV} *"Hagar named the LORD,"* ^{GWN} *"To the LORD who spoke to her she gave a name,"* ^{NAB} and *"Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD."* ^{NLT}

People who had an encounter with God often ascribed a name to Him that reflected what occurred during that encounter. **Hagar is the first one of Scriptural record to do so.**

The ascription of a name to God always reflected some personal

experience with Him – which itself is a marvelous thing to consider. There are at least five instances of an individual ascribing a name to God.

- ➔ Hagar named *"Thou God seest me"* (Genesis 16:13)
- ➔ Abraham named *"Jehovahjireh"* (Genesis 22:13-14)

GOD OF BETHEL.....Genesis 31:13 (Revealed name)
Translated "God of Bethel" – a reference to the time Jacob raised up a pillar to God.

JEHOVAH-MACCADESHEM.....Exodus 31:13 (Revealed name)
Translated "The LORD that doth sanctify you" – meaning "The Lord thy sanctifier"

JEHOVAH-ROHI.....Psalm 23:1 (David named)
Translated "The LORD is my Shepherd" – meaning

Most of the names by which the God of heaven is known are revealed ones. There is no consistency in the translation of these names. Sometimes they are transliterated, and sometimes interpreted. All of them show various aspects of the great God of heaven.

- ➔ Moses named *"Jehovahnissi"* (Exodus 17:15)
- ➔ David named *"The Lord is my Shepherd"* (Psalm 23:1)
- ➔ Gideon named *"Jehovahshalom"* (Judges 6:24)

NAMES BY WHICH GOD IS KNOWN

Most of the names by which the God of heaven is known are revealed ones. There is no consistency in the translation of these names. Sometimes they are transliterated, and sometimes interpreted. All of them show various aspects of the great God of heaven. Here is a listing of those names. These are the names by which God was known prior to Christ.

ELOHIM.....Genesis 1:1, Psalm 19:1 (Revealed name)
Translated "God" – meaning "God", a reference to God's power and might.

ADONAI.....Malachi 1:6 (Revealed name)
Translated "Master" – meaning "Lord", a reference to the Lordship of God.

JEHOVAH-YAHWEH.....Genesis 2:4 (Revealed name)
Translated "LORD God" – a reference to God's divine salvation.

"The Lord my shepherd"

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH.....Ezekiel 48:35 (Name of a city)
Translated "The LORD is there" – meaning "The Lord who is present"

JEHOVAH-RAPHA.....Exodus 15:26 (Revealed name)
Translated "the LORD that healeth thee" – meaning "The Lord our healer"

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU.....Jeremiah 23:6 (Revealed name)
Translated "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" – meaning "The Lord our righteousness"

JEHOVAH-JIREH.....Genesis 22:13-14 (Abraham named)
Translated "Jehovahjireh" – meaning "The Lord will provide"

JEHOVAH-NISSI.....Exodus 17:15 (Moses named)
Translated "Jehovahnissi" – meaning "The Lord our banner"

JEHOVAH-SHALOM.....Judges 6:24 (Gideon named)
Translated "Jehovahshalom" – meaning "The Lord is peace"

JEHOVAH-SABBATH.....Isaiah 6:1-3 (Seraphim called)
Translated "Lord of hosts" – meaning "The Lord of

Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

Hosts"

JEHOVAH-GMOLAH.....Jeremiah 51:6 (Revealed name)

Translated "LORD'S vengeance" – meaning "The God of Recompense"

EL-ELYON.....Genesis 14:17-20, Isaiah 14:13-14 (Revealed name)

Translated "Most High God" – meaning "The most high God"

EL-ROI.....Genesis 16:13 (Hagar named)

Translated "Thou God seest me" – meaning "The strong one who sees"

EL-SHADDAI.....Genesis 17:1, Psalm 91:1 (Revealed name)

Translated "Almighty God" – meaning "The God of the mountains or God Almighty"

EL-OLAM.....Isaiah 40:28-31 (revealed name)

Translated "Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth" – meaning "The everlasting God"

NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD SINCE CHRIST

"The Lord thy God" (Matt 4:10).

"The Lord" (Mk 13:20).

"The Lord God Almighty" (Rev 4:8)

"The Lord Almighty" (2 Cor 6:18)

"Lord of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24)

"God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 1:3)

"God and Father of all" (Eph 4:6)

"The Lord Almighty" (2 Cor 6:18)

"Lord God Almighty" (Rev 4:8)

"Our Father" (Matt 6:9; 1 Thess 1:3)

"Heavenly Father" (Matt 6:14)

"Abba Father" (Mk 14:36; Rom 8:15)

"Holy Father" (John 17:11)

"Righteous Father" (John 17:25)

"God our Father" (1 Cor 1:3)

"Father of glory" (Eph 1:17)

"Father of spirits" (Heb 12:9)

"Father of lights" (James 1:17)

"God of the Jews" (Rom 3:29)

"God of patience" (Rom 15:5)

"God of all comfort" (2 Cor 1:3)

"God of love" (2 Cor 13:11)

"God of all grace" (1 Pet 5:10)

"God of the earth" (Rev 11:4)

"God of heaven" (Rev 11:13)

"The Lord God Omnipotent" (Rev 19:6)

For those who wish to spend time on this matter, it will become apparent

that God has become more fully known in Christ Jesus.

Have I Also Looked After Him?

Other versions read, "I have now seen the One who sees me," NIV "Have I remained alive here after seeing Him?" NASB

"Have I not even here in the waste land had a vision of God and am still living?" BBE "Verily here have I seen the hinder parts of him that seeth me," DOUAY

"This is the place where I watched the one who watches over me," GWN and "Or have I here also seen [the future purposes or designs of] Him Who sees me?" AMPLIFIED

Here again, the various versions emit a theological fog to the readers. Some represent "after" as referring to Hagar remaining alive after having conversed with the Lord. NASB Others present the idea that she saw the "hinder parts," DOUAY or after-glow of God. Another states the reference is to the place where she experienced this heavenly confrontation. GWN Still another sees this as an expression of seeing future Divine purposes for her. AMPLIFIED

I see this as an expression of wonderment that in her flight from Sarai, the Lord, so to speak, apprehended her. She was not seeking Him, and yet He found her. She saw the Lord, though she did not seek Him. In this, she was a type of a host of Gentiles that would be found of the Lord, even though they sought not after Him (Isa 65:1; Rom 10:20).

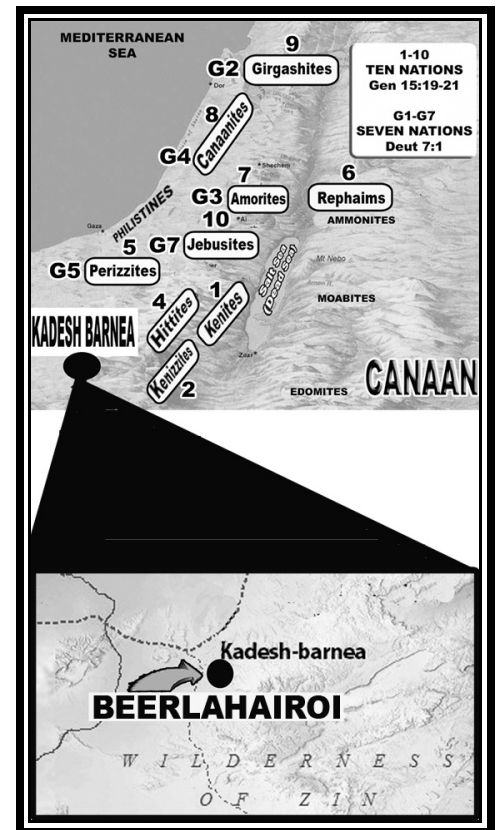
BEERLAHAIROI

"Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered." Other versions read

"Beer Lahai Roi," NKJV "Beer-lahai-roi," NASB "Fountain of Life and Vision," BBE

"Be'er-Lachai-Ro'i [well of the one who lives and sees]," CSB "The well of him that liveth and seeth me," DOUAY "Beer Lahai Roi Well of the Living One Who Watches Over Me," GWN "The well of him whom I have openly seen," SEPTUAGINT

"Beer Lahai Roi; {Beer Lahai Roi means well of the Living One who sees



me," NIB "The well of the Living One, my beholder," YLT "Well of which [Face to Face I Beheld]," ABP "God-Alive-Sees-Me Spring," MESSAGE Beer-lahai-roi [A well to the Living One Who sees me]." AMPLIFIED

This event was an epoch for Hagar. She saw something about God that she had not seen this clearly before. Once again, keep in mind the spiritually primitive nature of the times. Now much of God has been revealed – as compared to the New Covenant times. Even so, it is staggering to consider how proportionately few professing Christians have obtained the kind of knowledge Hagar came to possess.



➔ **GOD IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE.** In Scriptural language, this equates to saying "God IS" (Herb 11:6). He is called "Living God" 28 times (ex: Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26; Psa 42:2; Isa 37:4; Jer

10:10; Dan 6:20; Hos 1:20; Acts 14:15; Rom 9:26; 2 Cor 3:3; 1 Tim 3:15; Hen 3:12 Rev 7:2, etc). This distinguishes Him from all false gods. It means that it is God *“with whom we have to do”* (Heb 4:13). **With many people, perhaps Hagar prior to this incident, “God” is little more than an idea.** However, those who knowingly encountered God, never thought of Him in such a way.

➔ **GOD SEES ALL.** Everything is apparent to God. Nothing escapes His eye (Prov 5:21; 15:3). Thus it is written, *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”* (Heb 4:13). The awareness of this reality alters

how a person lives.

➔ **GOD SEES ME PERSONALLY.** The angel of the Lord had confirmed how much of her was being seen by the lord.

- He called her by name (“Hagar”).
- Spoke of her occupation (“Sarai’s maid”).
- Identified who Sarai was (“Abram’s wife”).
- Told her to return to Sarai, and submit to her.
- Revealed the Lord would multiply her seed “exceedingly.”
- Said she was “with child.”
- Told her what to name the child (“Ishmael”).
- Told her the Lord “had heard” her affliction.”

- Revealed that Ishmael would be a “wild man.”
- Revealed how he would interface with his relatives.

It is difficult to conceive of anything being more personal – and that is the way God is, PERSONAL! No one has ever knowingly confronted God or a messenger of God without taking it personally. That is, exposure to God or one of His heavenly messengers, was never viewed by the person involved as a dissociated spectator. Hagar was not aware of this reality before – particular when she was openly despising Sarai. Now, however, her eyes had been opened to something that was in place all the while. She also found out that she had to do with more than Sarai. She was also accountable to God.

ABRAM WAS EIGHTY-SIX YEARS OLD

“¹⁵ And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son’s name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. ¹⁶ And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.”

We do not know the length of time from the angel’s appearance until the birth of Ishmael. It probably was several months. No details are provided concerning the things taking place

during that time. Matters like how Hagar was received back into the household, how Sarai treated her, etc. are not provided. The record simply moves to the next significant event, which was the birth of Ishmael.

We should be learning from this record how to view our own lives. As with Abram, there are experiences difficult to bear, and others that are

obvious blessings and benefits. Flesh will emphasize the hardships, tending to drag the soul into the pit of despair and moroseness. **However, a person who lives by faith will accent the benefits,** the times understanding was enhanced, and seasons when advantages were ministered to the individual.

ABRAM CALLED HIS SON’S NAME ISHMAEL

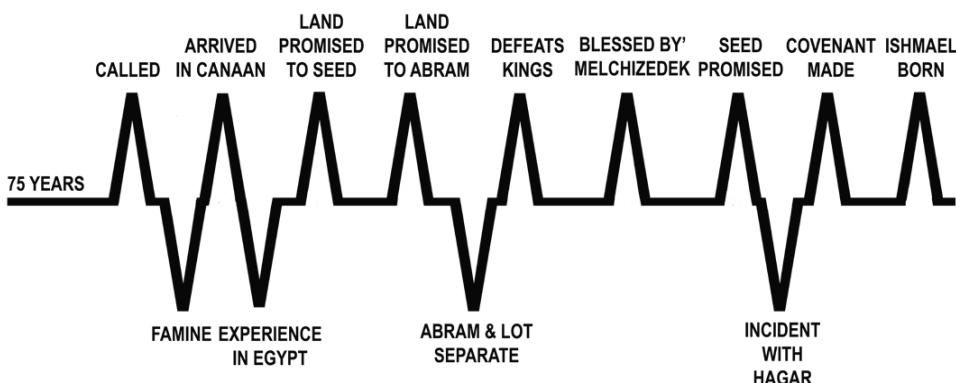
The name to be given to the child was revealed to Hagar (Gen 16:11). However, having been born, Abram officially named the child. In the absence of any further revelation on the matter, this means that Hagar told Abram what the angel had told her.

Some are of the opinion that the Lord revealed the name of the child to Abram (Jarchi). However, I doubt that this is the case.

OTHER REVEALED NAMES

ISAAC: Abraham’s son through Hagar. Revealed to Abraham: *“ . . . thou shall*

WHAT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED?



Seeing she could have no children, and concluding God had restrained her from bearing, Sarai offers a solution to the dilemma – Given O. Blakely

call his name Isaac” (Gen 17:19).

SOLOMON: David’s son through Bathsheba, with the name revealed to David. “ . . . for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. (1 Chr 22:9).

MAHERSHALALHASHBAZ: Isaiah’s son through his wife, who was a prophetess. “Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz” (Isa 8:3).

JEZREEL: Hosea’s son through Gomer. “And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel” (Hosea 1:4).

LORUHAMAH: Hosea’s daughter through Gomer. “And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away” (Hosea 1:6).

LOAMMI: Hosea’s son through Gomer. “Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hosea 1:9).

THE LORD JESUS: Born of Mary, with the name given to Joseph. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). It was also revealed to Mary: “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” (Luke 1:31).

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Zecharias’ son through Elizabeth, with the name being revealed to Zecharias. “But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John” (Luke 1:13).

With the single exception of our Lord Jesus Christ, the record shows revealed names being given to only one person. The only women who received a revelation of their child’s name were Hagar and Mary. The rest were revealed to men.

I conclude from this that it is most reasonable to assume Hagar informed Abram of the direction of the angel who

appeared to her.

ABRAM WAS EIGHT-SIX YEARS OLD

The birth of Ishmael took place eleven years after Abram and company had left Haran (Gen 12:4). At this time, the Lord still had not revealed that the promised seed would be born of Sarai. It was not until a quarter of a century after Abram left Haran that the promised child, Isaac, was born.

Remember, Paul’s inspired commentary on the faith of Abraham throws down to the ground any notion that he wavered with the passing of time. “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Rom 4:18-21).

CONCLUSION

A PICTURE OF PERSEVERANCE

Abram provides a marvelous picture of the perseverance of faith – true faith. Even though the promises given to him were shrouded in mystery, and containing few details concerning the promised child, yet Abram would not let the promise go. He rather held tightly to it. If it was made known to him that he was incorrect in his reasoning, he immediately abandoned that course, and adapted his life to what was revealed. When he first heard of having an heir, he mentioned his steward Eliezer. When it was revealed that he would beget the promised heir, he never again mentioned Eliezer. After

Advancement in understanding is always preceded by a certain steadfastness of faith – a refusal to let go of the promises. Where this perseverance is not found, men are shut up to mystery and a lack of understanding.

he could not beget a child through Sarai, he asked that Ishmael might live as his heir. When it was revealed that Sarai would have a child, he never again thought of Ishmael in that

capacity.

In the process of time, and because he maintained his belief of the promise, even though his understanding was

deficient, God revealed more to him as time progressed. He always believed God, never doubted Him, and always shaped his life by the promises.

This is the manner of the kingdom! Advancement in understanding is always preceded by a certain steadfastness of faith – a refusal to let go of the promises. Where this perseverance is not found, men are shut up to mystery and a lack of understanding.

When apostolic doctrine says, “by grace through faith” (Eph 2:8), it is the kind of faith that Abraham had that is the point. When we are said to inherit

the promise s through faith and patience (Heb 6:12), it is the kind of faith Abraham had that is intended. When we are said to be “justified by faith” (Rom 5:1), the kind of faith Abraham had is in prospect. All of the doctrine about faith, what it attains, and its advantages are referring to the kind of faith Abraham had.

This we read of walking “in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom 4:13). This is precisely why the promise is said to be sure only “to that which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all” (Rom 4:16). Those who are “of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal 3:7). It is

why it is written, “So that which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal 3:9).

The perception of this can have some alarming repercussions. Much of what is called “faith” in our time bears no likeness whatsoever to the faith of Abraham. It balks at obedience, is not consistent, and not attended with advancement and adaptation. What shall we say of such “faith.” It is not faith at all. It is nothing more than an unjustified pretension. It does not save the soul, and it is wrong to suggest that I does. It does not overcome the world – a characteristic that is unqualifiedly assigned to faith (1 John 5:4-5).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/27/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The twenty-sixth lesson will cover verses 1 through verse 27 of chapter Seventeen: “GOD’S FOURTH APPEARANCE TO ABRAM.” This appearance took place when Abram was ninety-nine years old – twenty-four years after he had left Haran. During this occasion, Abram’s name was changed to “Abraham,” and Sarai’s to “Sarah.” The covenant of circumcision was instituted at this time. Abraham, still not knowing that the intended “seed” would be born through Sarah, pleads for Ishmael to be considered. God then, for the first time, reveals that Sarah would bear the promised child. Ishmael was thirteen years old at the time. Following the revelation, all of the males in Abraham’s household were circumcised as God commanded. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.