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Hagar Is Given To Abraham (Gen. 16:1-3)

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. 3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.

- In Gen. 15 Abram was promised descendants as numerous as the stars. Now we have a dilemma: Sarai is barren. The solution? Hagar.
- Hagar a personal attendant or servant or attendant to Sarai, and Sarai offers Hagar to Abram. Moses calls Hagar a wife, but she was a secondary wife, like a concubine. Many men had concubines for pleasure or other reasons.
- Polygamy was never God's design, which was that a man should leave his parents and be joined to his wife, and two would become one flesh. Polygamy: always a negative thing in the Word, for obvious reasons.
- In the Christian church no polygamist is allowed to become an elder.
- In Abraham's time it was an accepted practice to have children through a concubine in this kind of arrangement. Sarah said, "It may be that I will be built up by this."
- Why did Sarah do this? Perhaps Sarah was worried about her own place in Abraham's life and the possibility of being divorced.

- Moses says Abram heeded the voice of his wife. This may be an echo of the story of Adam listening to his wife. Both Abraham and Sarah were probably motivated by fear.

Hagar Conceives (Gen. 16:4-6)

4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me.” 6 So Abram said to Sarai, “Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please.” And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

- The Bible commonly refers to sexual intercourse by this expression that means something like he went into her tent.
- Fertile Hagar immediately looked down on Sarah. Sarah blames Abraham, but of course it was both their idea. The Hebrew is stronger: Sarah said she gave Hagar into Abraham’s bosom or lap.
- Abraham wasn’t suggesting that Sarah treat Hagar harshly. We don’t know what happened; the Hebrew only says that she was harsh and so Hagar fled.

Found By The Angel Of The LORD (Gen. 16:7-10)

7 Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?” She said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my

mistress Sarai.” 9 The Angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.” 10 Then the Angel of the Lord said to her, “I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.”

- Shur was on the way down to Egypt.
- Now she is met by the Angel of the Lord, using His personal name of YHWH.
- This is the first time we encounter the Angel of the LORD. Again, this is very likely a *theophany*, a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is not an angel, or messenger, although He could have appeared in the form of a man to people.
- The Angel of the LORD says two things:
 - First, He tells her to return to Sarah. He knew that the child would be blessed because he lived in Abraham’s tents.
 - The Angel also says that He will multiply her descendants exceedingly. Unusual because a promise made to a woman that is similar to the promises that some male characters receive. She will also be the first woman in the Bible who receives an annunciation of the birth of a special, prophesied child.

The Announcement of the Birth of Ishmael (Gen. 16:11-14)

11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: “Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction.

12 He shall be a wild man;

His hand shall be against every man,

And every man's hand against him.

And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”

13 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?” 14 Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

- Here is an example of someone named by God, as special people occasionally were. Ishmael means: *God (El) hears*, and God heard Hagar's affliction.
- The unflattering description of what Ishmael will be like.
 - He will be a wild donkey of a man. He would be untamable.
 - He will be a fighter.
 - He will fight against his brothers, or relatives, and also live among them.
- Verse 13 has a powerful recognition of Hagar's faith in Abraham's God. She called Yahweh *El-Roi*, the God who sees.
- She also recognizes that seeing this Angel was somehow the same as seeing God Himself, because she said, “Have I also seen the One who sees me?”
- Perhaps she was expressing surprise that she had seen this Person and still lived.
- The Hebrew name of this well is: *The Well Of The Living One Who Sees Me*.

Ishmael Is Born (Gen. 16:15-16)

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore,

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

- Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born, and he has now been in the land for 11 years already. (He was 75 when he left Canaan.)
- These numbers can carry great significance in the Bible.
 - 10 is often a number of trials and testings. Ten years of barrenness were a test that Abram and Sarai flunked.
 - On the other hand, 11 is often a number of disorder, rebellion, and apostasy. Here in the 11th year of Abram's time in Canaan, disorder and conflict has been birthed into the camp.

What About Ishmael?

- Ishmael is a significant person in world history. Muslims claim that he was a prophet, and an ancestor of Muhammad. Jewish people believe that the final enemies of the Jews at the end of time will be the children of Ishmael, and the children of Edom.
- Is Ishmael the father of the Arabs? Not necessarily.
- God has a tremendous destiny for the people of the Middle East who are not Jewish.

Judgment And Restoration

Some Middle Eastern peoples will be judged for their deeds, but some will receive mercy. They will be allowed to continue in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. 20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. 21 Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. 22 And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

24 In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, 25 whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”
(Isaiah 19:19-25)

Let’s ask God to be merciful to Middle Eastern peoples, and draw them to Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Let’s pray grace and blessing for them.

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