

consisted of one letter (*hei*, in yellow). It is clear that **Sarah** is to have the baby of the promise. It would not be Hagar's son. The Lord specifies that it is a **son** by **Sarah** who will be the son of the **covenant**.

(17) Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?" (18) So Abraham said to God, "May Ishmael live under Your special blessing!"

- Now **Abraham** prayed about **Ismael**. He also became a great nation.

(22) When God had finished speaking, he left Abraham. (23) On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him.

- Abraham obeyed immediately. A good lesson in itself.

(24) Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, (25) and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen. (26) Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day, (27) along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

GENESIS CHAPTERS 16 - 17

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Genesis Previously

Mankind Created	Nations Formed	Abram Covenanted
Abram at War, is Honored, Land Boundaries Specified		

These next two chapters demonstrate the contrast between man's wisdom and God's wisdom. We can learn that Faith is living without scheming.

Abram had been living in the land of Canaan for ten years. He was 85 and still he had no heir. It seemed to Abram and Sarai that God's promise of descendants had failed. So they devised a plan to help make God's promise become real.

ABRAM TAKES SARAI'S SERVANT GIRL

(Genesis 16:1) Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. (2) So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. (3) So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

- The Egyptian slave **Hagar** would have been added to the family while they were in Egypt. Genesis 12:16. Hagar came to accept the one true God as she lived with **Abram and Sarai**. She left behind the paganism of Egypt. Notice that **Sarai** does not use **Hagar's** name but refers to her as **"my servant."**
- **Tom Bradford** puts light on the relationships involved. "Now, notice that the scripture does NOT say that

Abraham married Hagar; it says Sarai gave her to him AS, or LIKE, a wife. In other words, she was a substitute, a concubine. She was a babymaking machine. But, there is no marriage involved here, which is not only the ancient Hebrew view, it makes sense within the context of the verses, whereas some translations labeling her as Abraham's wife do not. She REMAINED a handmaiden to Sarai, as Abraham affirms in V6, and in V9 the Angel of the Lord tells her to go back and submit to her mistress, Sarai. If Hagar was a true wife, she would no longer have been under Sarai, she would have become an equal; further, she wouldn't belong to Sarai any longer, she would belong to Abraham."

(4) So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt.

- This **pregnancy** changed **Hagar's** relationship with **Sarai**. She became competitive and boastful. **Bradford** speaks again. "It was the now pregnant Hagar's attempt to behave as an equal that prompted Sarai to literally drive Hagar away something perfectly within Sarai's legal and social jurisdiction to decide. So, in verse 6 when Sarai goes to Abraham, angry as a hornet, and tells him she is NOT happy with this situation, Abraham replies..... "your maid is in your hands, deal with her as you think right." Sarai didn't go to Abraham seeking permission, nor did he at that moment did Avram (Abram) give Hagar to Sarai; Sarai just wanted to gripe; she was informing Abraham what she was about to do. It was her right and personal privilege to send Hagar away with or without Avram's OK."
- **Abram** listened to the voice of his wife **Sarai** rather than seek the voice of the **God** of Heaven. He chose the path of worldly wisdom. This plan was really a failure of faith on **Abram** and **Sarai's** part.

the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. (11) You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

- **Circumcision** was practiced in other nations, so it was not a new idea. **The covenant** was attested by the **circumcision** of all of the **males** including **Abraham** himself.

(12) From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. (13) All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of My everlasting covenant. (14) Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant."

- Every male, whether born in the household or a slave purchased abroad, was **circumcised**. A book by Dr. S.I. McMillen MD and Dr. David Stern MD claims that circumcision took place on the 8th day when the blood clotting factors were the highest. (*None of These Diseases: The Bible's Health Health Secrets for the 21st Century*, Amazon). Moses wouldn't have known, he was simply obeying God.

AN EXPANDED NAME WAS GIVEN TO SARAI

(15) Then God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife--her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. (16) And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants."

- In the graphic, we can see that the name change



offering a **covenant**. **Abram** does have a son now, but the offer is to **greatly increase Abram's** descendants.

AN EXPANDED NAME WAS GIVEN TO ABRAHAM

(3) At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, (4) "This is My covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! (5) What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. (6) I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

- The graphic shows that one letter (*hei*, in yellow) was added to **Abram**. (Read right to left.)
- This is the 5th time God had promised many descendants to **Abraham**. He was to be the **father** of more than one nation. That is what **Abraham** means: father of a multitude. Not only nations, but kings would come from him. THE King of Kings also came from Abraham. Matthew 1:1.



(7) "I will confirm My covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. (8) And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God."

- God wants to be the God of Abraham's **descendants**. God will give the **land** where they are living to Abraham's people.

(9) Then God said to Abraham, "Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. (10) This is

STRIFE AT HOME

(5) Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who's wrong--you or me!" (6) Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

- **Sarai** now blames **Abram** for the plan that was hers in the first place. See verse 2. She was humiliated by **Hagar**. The harmony with her husband was shattered. Vs. 5. **Abram** failed to take leadership and defend **Hagar**. Vs. 6. He was weak. **Hagar** could not stand the treatment and ran away, heading for her people in Egypt. Vs. 7 below, Shur was on the way to Egypt.
- **Dennis Prager** observes: "Amazingly, Sarai became angry at her husband, even though all he had done was heed her wish. Apparently, she regretted her suggestion, and she was now angry at Abram for acting on it." (*The Rational Bible: Genesis* (p. 217). Regnery Faith. Kindle Edition.)

THE LORD MEETS WITH HAGAR

(7) The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. (8) The angel said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai," she replied.

- **Hagar** could flee from **Sarai**, but not from the **Lord**. This is the first appearance of the **angel of the Lord** in Scripture. He is an appearance of God himself. **The Lord** knew her name and questioned her motives. She was reminded that she was a **servant**, not a superior to **Sarai**. **Hagar** is Egyptian, yet the **Lord** appeared to her when He had not appeared to any Hebrew lady.

(9) The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority."

- **Submit.** This would show repentance on her part. **Return** and **submit** is what we all need to do!

ISHMAEL TO FOUND A GREAT NATION

(10) Then he added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count." (11) And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means 'God hears'), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress.

- The baby will be **born** and will be a **son**. The Lord promised descendants too many to **count**. These are the Arabs of today. **Bradford** observes: "What the news tends to do is identify every Muslim (which is a religion) as an Arab (which is a family line), which is completely incorrect." Bradford's point is that Iran and Egypt are not Arab nations, but they are Muslim nations.

(12) This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives."

- The statement refers not only to the **son**, but to his descendants as well. There will be **hostility** ahead for centuries to come. Identifying the present day descendants of Ismael is beyond the scope of this lesson. See *Wikipedia* article on *Ishmaelites*.

(13) Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, "You are the God who sees me." She also said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?" (14) So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means "well of the Living One who sees me"). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

- The writer said it was the **Lord** who spoke to her and **Hagar** understood this, too. She rightly understood that the God of heaven cannot be seen, but this was an exception that impressed **Hagar**. This is the only case of

anyone **naming God!** The special spot was **named** for the event. The "**well of the Living One who sees me.**" **Hagar** now knows that the God of Heaven cares for her even though she is an Egyptian servant girl.



(15) So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. (16) Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.

Well named Beer-lahai-roi

- **Hagar** repeated the encounter with the angel of the Lord because **Abram** knew what to name the child. **Abram naming** the boy verifies that he is **Abram's son**. Abram may believe that **Ishmael** is the son of promise. By **now Abram** is **eighty-six**.

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Next, after 13 years, we read of God's plan for Abram. Nearly all quotations in the chapter are what God said, not Abram.

THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAM

(17:1) When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai--'God Almighty.' Serve Me faithfully and live a blameless life. (2) I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants."

- We aren't told how **the Lord appeared**. Perhaps a dream.
- He calls himself **El-Shaddai, God Almighty**. He can do mighty things. **Abram** had NOT been faithful or blameless over the Hagar incident. Some time has elapsed and God is