

## Abraham—Genesis 16-17

### Hagar & Ishmael; The Sign of the Covenant

#### I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

- 16:4...** HER MISTRESS WAS DESPISED IN HER EYES—Evidently the relationship between Sarai and Hagar changed drastically when Hagar bore a child. Hagar began to think of herself as better than Sarai because she had blessed Abram with a child. It is quite similar to the relationship between Hannah and Peninnah (1 Sam 1:6).
- 16:5...** MY WRONG BE UPON THEE—“Scholars render this variously; but Leupold seems to have given the true meaning as, ‘The wrong done me is your fault.’ Therefore, we must view this as an inaccurate and unreasonable allegation on Sarai’s part, growing out of her anger and wounded pride. She herself had suggested the arrangement!” [Coffman].
- 16:7...** SHUR—“An enclosure; a wall, a part, probably, of the Arabian desert, on the north-eastern border of Egypt, giving its name to a wilderness extending from Egypt toward Philistia ([Gen 16:7](#); [Gen 20:1](#); [Gen 25:18](#); [Exo 15:22](#)). The name was probably given to it from the wall (or shur) which the Egyptians built to defend their frontier on the north-east from the desert tribes. This wall or line of fortifications extended from Pelusium to Heliopolis” [*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*].
- 16:11...** ISHMAEL—“**Ishmaelites, The...** Descended from Abraham’s son, Ishmael ([Gen 16:15](#); [Gen 16:16](#); [1Ch 1:28](#)); Divided into twelve tribes ([Gen 25:16](#)); Heads of tribes ([Gen 25:13-15](#); [1Ch 1:29-31](#)); CALLED, Hagarites ([1Ch 5:10](#)); Hagarenes ([Psa 83:6](#)); Arabians ([Isa 13:20](#)); Original possessions of [Gen 25:18](#); Governed by kings ([Jer 25:24](#)); Dwelt in tents ([Isa 13:20](#)); Rich in cattle ([1Ch 5:21](#)); Wore ornaments of gold ([Jdg 8:24](#)); Were the merchants of the east ([Gen 37:25](#); [Eze 27:20](#); [Eze 27:21](#)); Traveled in large companies or caravans ([Gen 37:25](#); [Job 6:19](#)); Waylaid and plundered travelers ([Jer 3:2](#)); Often confederate against Israel ([Psa 83:6](#)); OVERCOME BY, Gideon ([Jdg 8:10-24](#)); Reubenites and Gadites ([1Ch 5:10](#); [1Ch 5:18-20](#)); Uzziah ([2Ch 26:7](#)); Sent presents to Solomon ([1Ki 10:15](#); [2Ch 9:14](#)); Sent flocks to Jehoshaphat ([2Ch 17:11](#)); PREDICTIONS RESPECTING, To be numerous ([Gen 16:10](#); [Gen 17:20](#)); To be wild and savage ([Gen 16:12](#)); To be warlike and predatory ([Gen 16:12](#)); To be divided into twelve tribes ([Gen 17:20](#)); To continue independent ([Gen 16:12](#)); To be a great nation ([Gen 21:13](#); [Gen 21:18](#)); To be judged with the nations ([Jer 25:23-25](#)); Their glory, etc., to be diminished ([Isa 21:13-17](#)); Their submission to Christ ([Psa 72:10](#); [Psa 72:15](#));” [*R.A. Torrey’s New Topical Textbook*].
- 16:16...** ABRAM WAS FOURSCORE AND SIX YEARS OLD—Genesis 12:4 informs us that Abram was 75 when he left Haran. Now he is 86. There is a 13-year gap between this ending of chapter 16 and the beginning of the next chapter (17:1).
- 17:5...** THY NAME SHALL BE ABRAHAM—“The name meaning ‘father of many nations’ reflected Abraham’s new relationship to God as well as his new identity based on God’s promise of seed (cf., Rom 4:12)” [*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 38].
- Circumcision...** “Circumcision was peculiarly, though not exclusively, a Jewish rite. It was enjoined upon Abraham, the father of the nation, by God, at the institution and as the token of the covenant, which assured to him and his descendants, the promise of the **Messiah**. Genesis 17. It was, thus, made a necessary condition of Jewish nationality. Every male child was to be circumcised when eight days old, [Lev 12:3](#), on pain of death. The

biblical notice of the rite describes it as distinctively Jewish; so that, in the New Testament, 'the circumcision,' and 'the uncircumcision,' are frequently used as synonyms for the Jews and the Gentiles. The rite has been found to prevail extensively in both ancient and modern times. Though Mohammed did not enjoin circumcision in the Koran, he was circumcised himself, according to the custom of his country; and circumcision is now as common among the Mohammedans as among the Jews" [*Smith's Bible Dictionary*].

**II. Chronology.**

BIBLE PERIOD: **Patriarchy.**

**III. Summary.**

Chapter 16 tells of the birth of Ishmael to Abram from his union with Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. This was Sarai's idea and she seems to have felt the need to hurry things along a bit regarding the promised seed. This plan of Sarai's was NOT the plan of God and, as is usually the case, whenever God's people get away from His plan there comes trouble as a consequence. There began to be great tension between the handmaid and her mistress. Hagar began to look with contempt upon Sarai because of her barren womb. Sarai appeals to her husband and he passes it off to her to do what she will with Hagar. Sarai mistreated her and Hagar tried to run away. The angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness and told her to return to Sarai, giving her a promise related to Ishmael. Abram was 86 when Hagar bore him his son, Ishmael. In chapter 17, we have the change in Abram's name to Abraham and circumcision is given as a seal of the covenant between Abraham and his seed and the Lord. Sarai's name is also changed to Sarah. Furthermore, God assured Abraham that Sarah would bear a child and his name would be Isaac. Abraham was 99 when he was circumcised; his son, Ishmael, was 13; and all the men of his house were circumcised that same day.

**IV. Outline.**

1. Sarai gives her handmaid to Abram and tension in the family is the result (Gen 16:1-5).
2. Hagar runs away into the wilderness (16:6).
3. The angel of the Lord finds Hagar and sends her back to Sarai (16:7-14).
4. Ishmael is born; Abram was 86 years old (16:15-16).
5. Thirteen years later the Lord appeared to Abram, renews the covenant, and changes Abram's name to Abraham (17:1-9).
6. Circumcision is required of Abraham and his seed (17:10-14).
7. The Lord promises that Sarai will bear a son, and changes her name (17:15-17).
8. Abraham makes an appeal for Ishmael and the Lord blesses him (17:18-20).
9. The Lord names Abraham's son (17:19, 21).
10. Abraham and all males in his household are circumcised (17:22-27).

**V. Questions.**

**True or False**

01. \_\_\_\_\_ Ishmael was circumcised on the eighth day.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham was promised to become the father of many nations.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham laughed when he heard that Sarah was to bear him a son.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ Hagar was told to return and submit to Sarah.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ Hagar despised Sarai.

**Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)**

06. \_\_\_\_\_ Hagar was of which nationality: (a) Canaanite; (b) Egyptian; (c) Moabite.

07. \_\_\_\_\_ The angel of the Lord told Hagar that her son, Ishmael, would be: (a) a hairy man; (b) a hunter; (c) a wild man.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ Circumcision is spoken of by the Lord as being a: (a) token; (b) blessing; (c) punishment.
09. \_\_\_\_\_ The Lord told Abraham that Ishmael would beget how many princes: (a) nine; (b) seven; (c) twelve.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ There were this many years difference in the ages of Abraham and Ishmael when they were circumcised: (a) forty; (b) eighty-six; (c) seventy.

**Fill in the Blanks**

11. “But my \_\_\_\_\_ will I establish with \_\_\_\_\_, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”
12. “And I will make thee \_\_\_\_\_, and I will make \_\_\_\_\_ of thee, and \_\_\_\_\_ shall come out of thee.”
13. Speaking of Hagar, it is said that, “...when Sarai dealt \_\_\_\_\_ with her, she \_\_\_\_\_ from her face.”
14. “And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God \_\_\_\_\_.”
15. “And he that is \_\_\_\_\_ old shall be circumcised among you...”

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week’s handout*

**ANSWERS to Lesson 02-123...** [01—True, Gen 13:18; 02—True, Gen 13:10; 03—True, Gen 14:9; 04—True, Gen 14:21; 05—False, Gen 14:1; 06—c, Gen 13:2; 07—a, Gen 13:12; 08—b, Gen 13:13; 09—c, Gen 14:10; 10—b, Gen 14:18; 11—tithes, Gen 14:20; 12—318, Gen 14:14; 13—priest, most, God, Gen 14:18; 14—strife, brethren, Gen 13:8; 15—dust, earth, dust, earth, Gen 13:16.]

**VI. Lessons & Applications.**

1. **...I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her...** (Gen 16:2). Sometimes the worst kind of advice given to us comes from those we love. It was true in the case of Job (Job 2:9). This was a tragic mistake for Sarai to feel she had to intervene on behalf of God so that the promise He had made might be kept. We must be exceedingly careful about receiving advice. Anytime following advice of loved ones takes us away from God’s will, we will surely regret what we did, just as Sarai soon did!
2. **...her mistress was despised in her eyes** (Gen 16:4). God’s plan of one man and one woman for life is the BEST way; and it is the only way for marriage to work.
3. **...And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face** (Gen 16:6). Surely the present conflict between Israel and the Arabs had its beginning here.
4. **And he will be a wild man;...** (Gen 16:12). Of this statement Coffman writes: “Only God could have uttered a prophecy so circumstantially fulfilled over such a long period of time. ... And thus it came to pass that the child of Abram and Sarai’s unbelief became the progenitor of the Arabs, Israel’s bitterest foes throughout history, and, as Unger noted, ‘And from this line also came Muhammad and Islam, one of the most demonic of religions and a foe of Christianity.’”
5. **And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!** (Gen 17:18). The tender appeal of Abraham on behalf of Ishmael shows his love for him. Let us

learn here that whatever our care or concern might be that we can present it to the Lord through prayer. As parents, we ought always to pray to God for our children.

**VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.**

Y H N B G T R F V C D E W S X Z A Q W S  
 S S R X D C V F R T G B N H Y E U J M K  
 N T A G B V M U L T I P L Y E S W Q A T  
 E Z X R S W E D C V F R T G B T N H Y W  
 X N H Y A U J M K I O L P O I A U Y T E  
 T R E D C H V F R T G B N H Y B U J M L  
 Y N H Y T S H A L L B E A R G L B V F V  
 E F R E D C X S W Q A Z X S C I V F R E  
 A T G B N H Y U J M K Y T O R S E D C P  
 R C D E W S X S C D N E R N F H V B G R  
 T Y H N J U I R E O C D E Q I S A A C I  
 A Z X S W E D C I E V F R T L B G T Y N  
 C O V E N A N T N H D Y U U R F V C D C  
 X S W E D C A V F R T G F B G T Y H N E  
 B G T R F N V C D E W T X S W E D C V S  
 B G T Y T Y H N J E I S H M A E L E D C  
 X S W A E D C V F U R R F V B G T Y H N  
 N H E R F V C D R E D C X S W Q A Z X S  
 E R E D C V F F V F S E T T I M E T G B  
 G B G T R F V C D E W S X Q A Z C D R L

*[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]*

**Gen 17:19-21...** <sup>19</sup>And God said, **Sarah** thy wife **shall bear** thee a **son** indeed; and thou shalt call his name **Isaac**: and I will establish my **covenant** with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his **seed** after him. <sup>20</sup>And as for **Ishmael**, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him **fruitful**, and will **multiply** him exceedingly; **twelve princes** shall he beget, and I will make him a **great nation**.  
<sup>21</sup>But my covenant will I **establish** with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this **set time** in the **next year**.