

# Genesis 16-18

January 9, 2011

## **16:1-6: What takes place in chapter 16 in verses 1 to 6?**

- Sarah requests that she and Abraham use their servant Hagar as a surrogate to have a baby for Sarah. Abraham agrees. Sarah then becomes angry and jealous and insists that Hagar be sent away. Abraham concedes and the pregnant Hagar leaves the family.

## **How does this surrogate arrangement affect the relationship between Sarah and Hagar?**

- Hagar despises Sarah once she became pregnant (16:4-5).

## **Why do you think that Hagar despised Sarah?**

- See what you get. Maybe it was because Hagar detested having her womb used for another woman's baby; she felt that this was abusive. Maybe she resented Sarah knowing that the baby she carried would not be hers but would belong to Sarah. Maybe, since she had been with Abraham and was now carrying his baby, she resented the life that Sarah had and that she never would have.

## **Do you think that men or women have the biggest problem with jealousy? Explain your answer.**

- See what you get. Men tend to compete, fight, and get over things. Women tend to be *far* more competitive and jealous of each other. They tend to hold grudges and be less forgiving.

## **At this point in the story, how much information did Abraham have about becoming a great nation?**

- In 12:1-3 he is told that HE would become a great nation; it does not say that Sarah would be the mother of that nation. In 13:17 Abraham is told that HIS descendants would be innumerable. In 15:4 Abraham was told that HE would be the father of his heir. At this point in the story Abraham had not been promised that Sarah would be the mother of his heir.

## **How long has it been from the time God promised to make Abraham a great nation until the time when Abraham gets Hagar pregnant?**

- 10 years (16:3 and 12:1-4). Abraham was 75 when he left Ur and traveled to Palestine.

## **What do we learn from this?**

- God is clearly NOT in a hurry. Since God is eternal, He dwells outside of time, so time has no meaning to Him (2 Peter 3:8). TIMING, though, is *very* important to God. See Galatians 4:4. We want "instant" everything; God is more concerned with developing our character than He is with our comfort.

## **16:7-16: What takes place in verses 7 to 16?**

- God meets Hagar and tells her to return to Abraham's family and to submit to Sarah's authority. God tells Hagar that her son would be named Ishmael and that he would become a great nation. Abraham is 86 years old when Ishmael is born. Abraham gets Hagar pregnant 10 years after God's promise to make him a nation.

## **Hagar is told to return and to submit to Sarah's authority. What do people today think about "submitting" and being under someone's authority and what does the Bible teach about it?**

- Today most people resent submission. They think that it means to be less of a person than the one who is over you. God's Word "elevates" the concept of submission to authority.

- The New Testament makes a big deal of Jesus being in complete submission to the Father (**John 4:34 & 5:19**) even though He was co-equal with Him. The Bible clearly teaches that children are to submit to their parents (**Colossians 3:20**); that wives are to submit to their husbands (**Ephesians 5:22-24**); that workers are to submit to their bosses (**Ephesians 6:5-8**); that citizens are to submit to the government (**Romans 13:1-7**); and that Christians are to submit to their pastors (**Hebrews 13:17**). (*Note to the leader: you will not have time to look up all of these previously listed verses, but do mention them as you give this answer.*) **Romans 13:2** says, “whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.” **Isaiah 55:8-9** says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

**16:12: What does verse 12 say about Ishmael and his descendants? Is this relevant today?**

- His descendants, the Arabs and now the Muslims, would be against everyone and everyone would be against them. The Middle East crisis and terrorism are both a result of Abraham having Ishmael with Hagar. The Arabs say that the land of Canaan is theirs because of their father Abraham; the Jews claim it to be theirs because of *their* father Abraham.

**16:13: What name did Hagar give to God? And why is that important for us today?**

- She called Him: “the God who sees”. We never have to wonder if God knows where we are or what we are going through. He *always* sees. He *always* knows.

**17:1-8: Who can tell us what takes place in verses 1 to 8?**

- Have someone tell the story.

**17:9-14 & 23-27: Who can tell us what takes place in verses 9 to 14 and in verses 23 to 27?**

- The visible symbol of the covenant between God and Abraham was to be circumcision. Every male 8 days old and older would be circumcised. Abraham was 99 when circumcised; Ishmael was 13.

**17:15-22: What new discoveries do we make in verses 15 to 22?**

- God tells Abraham that Sarah; his 88 or 89 years old wife would have a son. Abraham laughs at the thought. God says that the boy’s name would be Isaac, which means “He laughs”. Whenever we assume that God is incapable of doing something, God laughs. God would bless Ishmael (the Arabs), but His covenant would be with Isaac (the Jews). God then informs Abraham that Isaac would be born a year from this time.

**Have you noticed that God’s revelation of His will to Abraham was progressive? How so?**

- In **12:1-3** God said: “I will make you a great nation.” - 75 years old.
- In **14:14-16** God said: “I will give you all of the land as far as you can see. Your descendants will be too many to number.” – Age not mentioned.
- In **15:1-6** God said: “Your reward will be great. You will physically “father” a son (heir).” – Age not mentioned.
- In **16:1-3 & 16** God said: Abraham gets Hagar pregnant when he’s 85 years old. Ishmael is born when he’s 86.
- In **17:15-17 & 21** God said: Sarah will bear a son to you a year from now. She would be 90; he would be 100.

### What might we learn from this principle of God revealing His will to us one piece at a time?

- We want God to reveal our entire stories so that we know what will happen. God instead reveals His will to us one bit of information at a time. It is our responsibility to do what He shows us to do. We “walk” in the “light” that God gives us and then He reveals more “light”. Abraham tried to fulfill God’s will for him (to father a nation) in the flesh (by his own plans and means...Ishmael). His disobedience created a mess that we still live with today. God doesn’t need our help; He just wants our obedience and our trust.

### 18:1-15: Who can tell us what happens in verses 1 to 15?

- Have someone tell the story. Notice that Sarah laughed (12) like Abraham had done (17:17). She then lied about laughing (18:15). Isn’t it amazing how we think that we can say or do something and God not know it?

Notice the question in verse 14; “Is anything too difficult for the Lord?”

- Of course nothing is!

### 18:16-33: Who can tell us what takes place in verses 16 to 33?

- Three “men” come to Abraham’s tent. One is “THE angle of the Lord” a preincarnate appearance of Christ. When He speaks, God speaks (18:17,20,26,etc.). The other two “men” were angels (19:1); they leave and go down to Sodom (18:22).

**God promises not to destroy the city if there are 10 righteous men there. There weren’t and He did.**

**What does that tell us about influence and about Lot’s influence?**

- See what you get. It is far easier to pull someone down than it is to “lift” someone up. Bad influence seems to be more contagious than good influence (1 Corinthians 15:33). Lot had been in Sodom for more than 13 years. He only leaves Sodom with his wife and daughters (their husbands wouldn’t leave). His wife disobeys, “looks back”, and becomes salt. His daughters will get Lot drunk and bear his children. He should never have been there; he tried to change them (2 Peter 2:7-8), but they instead changed him and his family.

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