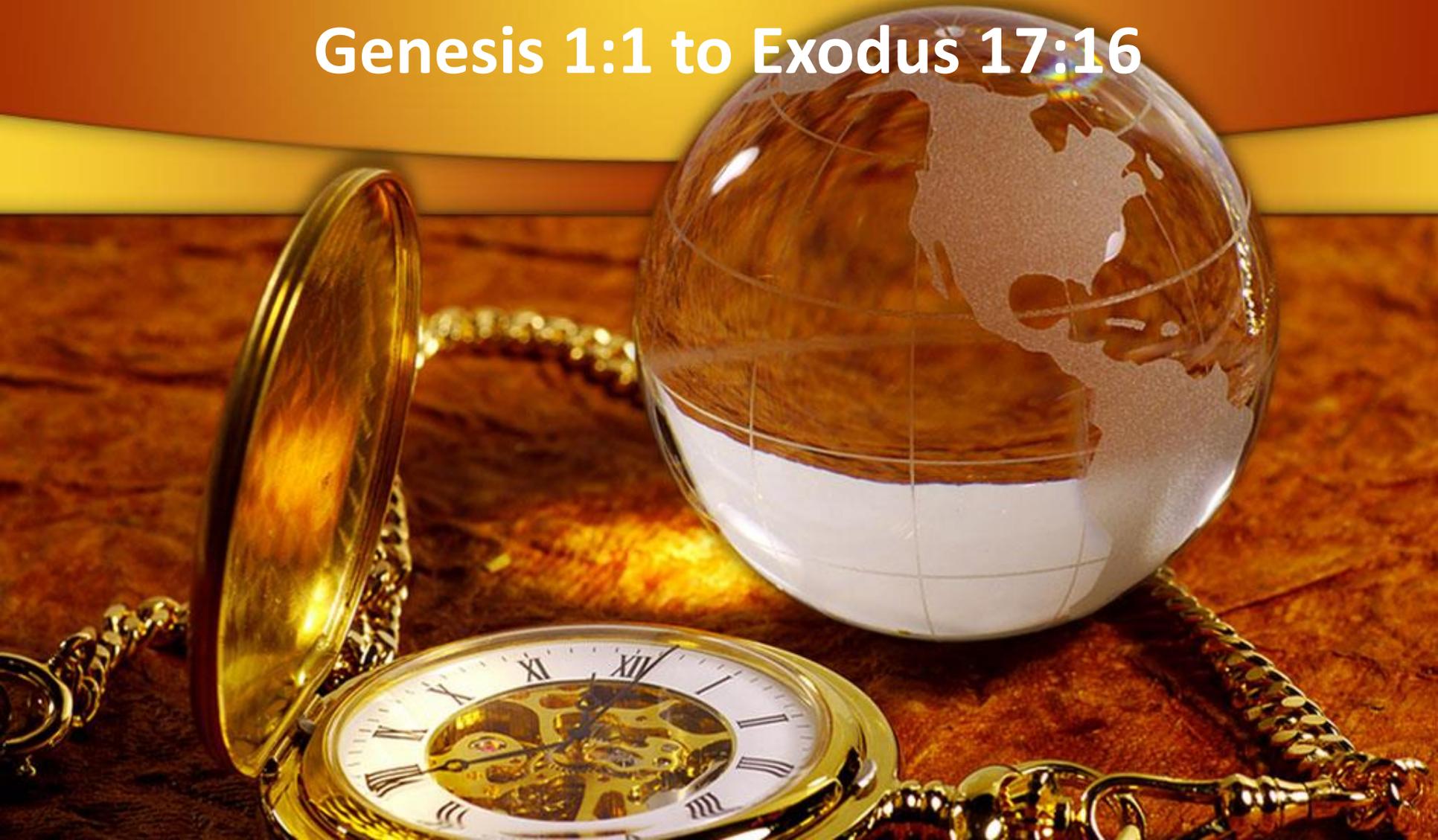
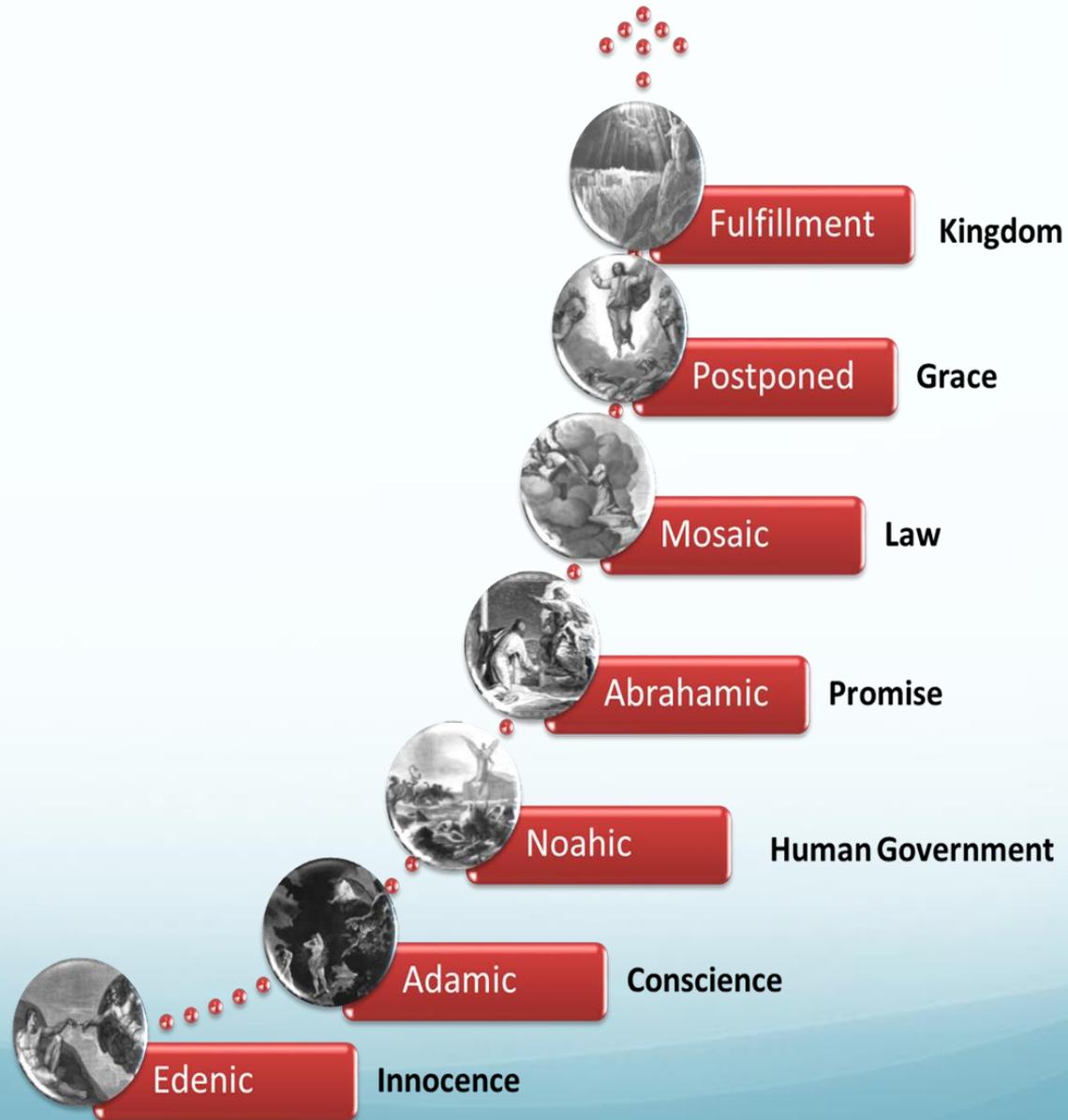


From God's Creation to God's Nation

Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 17:16



Review of Covenants in the Bible & Dispensations



Quick Review of Ch. 15

- 15:1-3 Abrams faulty assumption: Eliezer will become the heir.... “the seed”
- 15:4-21 God’s assurance/correction of Abram’s assumption: 1. heir will be from his loins (vv. 4-5); 2. Abram believed the promise (v. 6); 3. Vision at dusk & YHWH explains future enslavement of his descendants & then freed wealthy & Ab. Covenant ratified with YHWH alone passing between the dead animals (ANE ceremony).....thus a unilateral covenant (vv. 7-17); 4. the real estate & borders of the Promised Land shown by YHWH to Abram (border of Egypt to the Euphrates River)

Chapter 16 Audio



Genesis 16 Outline

- The Compromise by Abram (16:1–16)
- **A. The rationale for his compromise (16:1–3)**
 - 1. *The problem (16:1)*
 - 2. *The plan (16:1–3)*
- **B. The results of his compromise (16:4–16)**
 - 1. *Hagar's marriage to Abram (16:4)*
 - 2. *Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6)*
 - 3. *Hagar's meeting with the Lord (16:7–14)*
 - a. The Lord advises her (16:7–9)
 - b. The Lord assures her (16:10–14)
- 4. *Hagar's mothering of Ishmael (16:15–16)*
 - H. L. Willmington, *The Outline Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 16:1016.

Abrahamic Covenant (12–17)

- Abrahamic promises (12)
- Abraham's sanctification (13–14)
- Abrahamic Covenant (Formal ratification of it, or as Constable says “formalizing the promises and making a covenant” (15)
- Ishmael's line (16)
- Circumcision (17)
 - Taken from Andy Woods power point on Genesis (edited/added to by RR)

Abrahamic Covenant

ABRAHAMIC
Genesis
15

LAND

SEED

BLESSING

LAND
Deuteronomy
29-30

DAVIDIC
2 Samuel
7:12-16

NEW
Jeremiah
31:31-34



Unconditional covenant with a conditional blessing (Deut. 28; Lev. 26)

Introductory Comments on *Chapter 16*

- Chapter 16 has several allusions/similarities to Gen. 3:6
- Apparently **apathy** was a male “trait” carried on by Abram
- YHWH assigned male headship was not heeded then
- As male headship is usually not heeded now (modern day believers)
- Theme of faith & obedience here in ch. 16
- Subverting YHWH’s will in favor of “human will”
- Reliance of “human wisdom” vs “Godly wisdom”
- Apparently the verse/prevalent thinking that’s not in the bible
- “God helps those who help themselves” is not new thinking

The Compromise by Abram (16:1–16)

The rationale for his compromise (16:1–3)

- *The problem (16:1) (Read v.1)*
- Sarai's barrenness
- By this time, Abram was eighty-five years old, and Sarai seventy-five (note Genesis 16:16)
- *Sarai was still barren in spite of God's promise of a son to Abram back in Genesis 15*
- God made clear Abram would be the father
- God never actually stated Sarai was going to be the mother

The problem (16:1) (Cont.)

- For about 10 years (see ch. 11:30-16:3) Abram & Sarai have been childless
- Genesis 16 is the first in a series of stories that portray the tension over the delay of the promise
- with very little information and with very little time left, Abram and Sarai longed for the fulfillment of the promise
- Certainly we see here a consistent truth throughout scripture:
- human assistance to the fulfillment of the divine promises only complicated the matter

The problem (16:1) (Cont.)

- Similar motif here as in Ch. 12
- In Gen. 12 YHWH called Abram to go to the Land of Promise
- But there was a severe famine (curse motif)
- Now, with YHWH's specific promise of an heir of his own
- Now in Gen. 16 a barren wife (again curse motif?....incompatible with blessing)
- Just as the famine provided a test for Abram's faith in the promise, so did this barrenness of his wife

The problem (16:1) (Cont.)

- Interesting points made in Ross' commentary
- It is interesting to observe that Abram's failure in Genesis 12 may have contributed to his failure in Genesis 16—he may have acquired Hagar in that trip to Egypt
- The barrenness motif is important in the stories of the patriarchs: Sarai, Rebekah, and Rachel all were barren until God opened their wombs and enabled them to bear important sons. The motif stresses the sovereignty of God in bringing into the world famous ancestors. (See also the birth of Samuel.)
 - Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 319.

The plan (16:1–3)

- This story is intended to replicate Eve's attempt to find wisdom apart from God (3:6)
- Eve desired the fruit she believed would make her wise, so she took the fruit, gave it to her husband, and he ate
- Similarly, Sarai desires a son from whom she hopes "her house will be built." So she takes Hagar and gives her to her husband, Abram
- Hagar: means "to be a fugitive," "to flee," "flight"
- So even though she was an Egyptian, her name was Hebrew.....likely given to her by Abram or Sarai because of their Egyptian experience

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- V.2 “Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her”
- Sounds bizarre to modern American thinking
- But, this was a well accustomed ANE practice
- Fruchtenbaum: “This offer was in keeping with the *Nuzi Tablets and with the Code of Hammurabi in that if a wife proved to be barren, she was obligated to provide to her husband a handmaid through whom he could have children so that his seed does not die out*”
- Therefore, what Sarai proposed was in keeping with the laws of that day (Worldly ones of course, contrary to YHWH’s commands in this area)

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Walton further explains the “normalcy” of this practice
- “It seems an unusual course of action to us since it follows an option that our society does not consider appropriate. But in the context of the ancient world, this was not only appropriate but at times contractually dictated..... John H. Walton, Genesis, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 445446.
- The Nuzi Tablets from the 2nd Millennium B.C. stipulate it as follows
- If Gilimninu bears children, Shennima shall not take another wife. But if Gilimninu fails to bear children, Gilimninu shall get for Shennima a woman from the Lullu country (a slave girl) as concubine. In that case, Gilimninu herself shall have authority over the offspring

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Similar contingency mirrored in **Assyrian** marriage contracts
- Begs the question: Why conform to “worldly customs”, when **God’s instructions were clear**
- Laqipum took (in marriage) Hatala, the daughter of Enishru. In the country Laqipum shall not take (in marriage) another (woman), (but) in the city (of Ashshur) he may take (in marriage) a priestess. If within two years she has not procured offspring for him, only she may buy a maid-servant and even later on, after she procures somehow an infant for him, she may sell her wherever she pleases
- This practice extended throughout the preexilic period, so it would have been familiar to the Israelite audience

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Derek Kidner in the *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary: Genesis*, says this:
- “Custom sanctioned this way of obtaining children (although the present story and chapter 30 are proof of its unwisdom), and the fact that such sons were to count in Jacob’s family as full members and heads of tribes must be borne in mind. Abram could reason that the promise of 15:4 could be fulfilled in this way, and the fact that ten years had now passed in Canaan (3) must have added to the pressure on him to act”

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Hamilton on Sarai's thinking
- It would appear that Sarai's options are limited. Either she may choose to remain barren for the remainder of her life, or until Yahweh changes her circumstances. Or, assuming that her condition is a permanent one, she may present Hagar to Abram who will bear children on her behalf. It is difficult to determine whether this is an obligation or a privilege for Sarai
- Good observation by Walton
- The inference that follows inversely from Psalm 113 is that the inability to bear children was seen as a punishment from God. That the privilege of bearing was in the hands of God is clear in Sarai's statement that the Lord had kept her from having children (Gen. 16:2)
- Sarai, like many recorded in the Bible (Job's friends; Jesus' disciples asking if blindness was because of parents or his sins), believed in "retribution theology"which is an incorrect view of the nature of God

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- John H. Sailhamer's comments in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* is very good also:
- “Sarai's plan is an attempt to achieve the promised blessing by leaving God out of the picture. The author's disapproval of Sarai's plan is suggested by casting the plan along lines similar to Eve's plan in Genesis 3. Sarai's plan, like Eve's, is an attempt to achieve God's blessing on her own, without God's help”
- “Hence the story follows along the same line of meaning of the narratives that precede it. It demonstrates the futility of human effort and its ultimate failure to fulfill the divine promise. Sarai's plan, though successful, does not meet with divine approval (17:15–19). The same focus on the failure of human plans and schemes is found in earlier narratives (11:1–9; 12:10–20; 13:1–12; 14:21–24).”

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Fruchtenbaum's apt comments:
- “However, for Sarai it was a lapse of faith; although God had not specifically said that she was going to be the mother, it should have been an assumed fact since she was Abram's only wife”
- Abram's response to the offer is the “bigger” problem, since male family headship was established by YHWH in the Garden
- The verse concludes with Abram's acceptance: *And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai; for Abram, this was another lapse of faith (in addition to his flight to Egypt during the famine). Abram hearkened, he “obeyed” the voice of Sarai as over against obeying the voice of God. The same wording was used in Genesis 3:17, when Adam “obeyed” his wife, and both of these ended up with negative consequences*

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Interesting Biblical fact noted by Fruchtenbaum:
- Hagar thus became the concubine of Abram. Outside the Book of Genesis, seven men were reported to have had concubines, and this included both those who were classed as spiritual and non-spiritual: Caleb (I Chron. 2:46, 2:48); Gideon (Judg. 8:31); the unnamed Levite (Judg. 19–20); Saul (II Sam. 3:7, 21:11); David (II Sam. 5:13, 15:16, 16:21–22, 19:5, 20:3; I Chron. 3:9); Solomon (I Kings 11:3); and Rehoboam (II Chron. 11:21)
- Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariels Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 287.

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Waltke also makes a good observation/analysis of Abram's decision to accept Sarai's offer:
- “agreed to what Sarai said. The Hebrew here occurs only in Gen. 3:17. Like Adam, Abraham agrees to his wife's faithless suggestion. Abraham's careless passivity sharply contrasts with his valiant actions on behalf of Lot (Gen. 14; 19)”
- Great words from Hamilton:
- “The account provides another illustration of how a child of God, with his or her back to the wall, feels pressed to take the initiative in order to bring God's promises to pass. Sarai must through some means, any means, have progeny. This story also reflects the replacing of marriage's primary purpose of companionship (Gen. 2:18) by that of reproduction, with all the resulting negative effects
- Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 117, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 446.

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Morris has great comments on Abram's lapse of faith
- He had still not fully learned that we must "through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12). Scripture enjoins us: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:35, 36)
- Abram, like Adam & the majority of men following, committed the "sin of apathy"not being willing to lead & to be consistent in leadership

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- 16:3, “After Abram had lived 10 years in the Land of Canaan, Abram’s wife Sarai too Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife”
- The timing was: *after Abram had dwelled ten years in the land of Canaan. Ten years have passed between Genesis 12 and 16, and because of that wait of ten years, there has been this lapse of faith*
- That means that *Abram at this point was eighty-five years old and Sarai was seventy-five years old*
- Then came the marriage: *gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife. What took place here was a legal marriage. She was not his concubine for sexual pleasure; this was a legal marriage for producing children. In the Book of Genesis, a woman could be both a wife and a concubine*

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Here Hagar is called a wife, and in Genesis 25:6 she is called a concubine. Keturah is called a wife in Genesis 25:1, and then a concubine in Genesis 25:6 and I Chronicles 1:32. Bilhah is called a wife in Genesis 30:4 and 37:2 and a concubine in Genesis 35:22.
- Waltke shows the folly through an analysis linguistically
- ***Sarai ... took [lqh] ... gave [ntn] ... to her husband. This is the same progression of verbs at the Fall in 3:6. Hagar is treated as property with no personal rights.***
- his wife. The repetition of this designation (16:1) punctuates the foolishness of Sarah's scheme

The plan (16:1–3) (Cont.)

- Very good point made by Morris:
- However worthy and unselfish may have been the motives of Abram and Sarai, and perhaps even of Hagar, in carrying out this plan, it was bound to create problems. God's creative purpose included only monogamous marriage, and anything else was bound to generate problems. There are many instances recorded of polygamous marriages in the Bible, which God allowed because of mitigating circumstances at the time (e.g., Jacob, Moses, David), but none of a *happy polygamous marriage*
- So it is clear that polygamy in any form is NEVER prescribed in scripture.....it is solely man's invention

Some Conclusions of 16:1-3

- Unger: Sarai & Abram (since he agreed) show a false theology of “helping God out” to accomplish His sovereign will
- The exposition of two contrasting theologies (Grace/Faith vs. Merit/Law/Self-righteousness)
- Galatians 4:21-31
- Sarai’s offspring (Isaac) is representative of Grace/Faith/child of the promise of God
- Hagar’s offspring (Ishmael) is representative of Merit/Law/Self-righteousness)

The results of his compromise (16:4–16)

Hagar's marriage to Abram (16:4)

- Verse 4: He went in to Hagar, and she conceived;
- Hagar, ironically, has no problem at all in becoming pregnant
- V.4 (cont.) and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight
- In biblical days, few women were more despised than barren women were.
- The verb translated “despised” (*wattēqal*) is critical to the account. It is the same verb used in the first recording of the promises to Abram—“the one who treats you lightly [*< qālal*] I must curse” (12:3)

Hagar's marriage to Abram (16:4) (Cont.)

- 2 slight variants of the interpretation here:
- Fruchtenbaum: “The Hebrew word for “despise” is *qalal*, the same word used for “curse” in Genesis 12:3. *Therefore, Hagar displayed the common attitude toward barren women in that day, and she ended up cursing, by lightly esteeming, her mistress”*
- Ross: “It is too strong to say that Hagar cursed Sarai or treated her with contempt. She may have looked on her mistress insolently. The word probably describes an unavoidable response to the situation, a response developing from the maternal pride of Hagar in her new status. In using this strong word to describe her attitude, the narrative is underscoring how much of a problem it was now going to be to fulfill the blessing”

Hagar's marriage to Abram (16:4) (Cont.)

- Walton: “Sarai’s fear additionally doubled her sensitivity. Hagar’s spite and feeling of superiority came from her confidence that a deity had blessed her and that Abram was now dependent on her since she carried the heir to the family in her womb. No wonder she considered herself to have attained privileged status”

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6)

- Time for the oft repeated “blame game”
- V. 5 “and Sarai said to Abram, ‘may the wrong done me be upon you’
- Unger: “Sarai blamed him, although it had been her idea”
- Sound familiar?
- Go to Gen. 3:8-13
- Deflecting responsibility seemed to be quite “natural” to Adam/Eve & Abram/Sarai
- How we doing in this area?.....not too good, huh?

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- V. 5 (cont.) “I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight”
- Uh, what did Sarai expect? Sarai, & certainly Abram, knew the promise of the Lord & surely could see the difference between YHWH's commands vs the world system they opted for here
- V. 5 (cont.) “May the Lord judge between you & me”
- Is Sarai confessing of a bad choice made & making a “heartfelt” admission?
- Waltke: “Sarah appeals to a still higher court (see 31:53; Ex. 5:21; 1 Sam. 24:12, 15) and confesses her faith in God. If Abraham will not offer the legal protection to which she is entitled, Sarah hopes confidently that the Lord will”

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- Verse 6: “But Abram said to Sarai, ‘behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.’ So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.”
- So, naturally Sarai would exercise her anger & jealousy on Hagar by employing the “worldly” rules of the day:
- Fruchtenbaum: “Hagar is still officially, legally, and technically Sarai’s possession. Returning Hagar to slave status was in keeping with the laws of that day”
- So instead of YHWH’s treatment of people, Sarai to serve her purpose choses the “law of the land”

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- Here's a well known “worldly rule” concerning this:
- The *Code of Hammurabi* reads: *(A Babylonian code)*
- If she gave a female slave to her husband, and she has then born [sic] children; if that female slave has claimed equality with her mistress because she had born [sic] children, her mistress may not sell her, she may put her among the slaves
- When Abram puts the matter in Sarai's hands to show Hagar her place, the results are again predictably disastrous. In a reaction that was counterproductive to the desire to vouchsafe an heir, Sarai's mistreatment of the girl drives her to desertion

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- So again the apathetic leadership by Abram, he defers Hagar's responsibility to Sarai
- Walton gives great insight here:
- This situation now represents triple jeopardy. (1) The covenant promises are in jeopardy because of the absence of the true heir. (2) An attempt at resolution of the initial jeopardy creates the second jeopardy of a son who will be a competing heir. (3) The makeshift heir is now in jeopardy of being lost to Abram and Sarai before he is even born
- Only this last is known to Abram; the other two stand as jeopardy only from the perspective of the informed reader (us, and readers of Moses' writings of Pentateuch)

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- Hamilton in the NICOT commentary has excellent comments:
- If Hagar shows some pride, and if Sarai shows a false blame, Abram demonstrates a false neutrality
- Abram's judgment on the matter is, at best, lame and passive
- With his permission she began to treat Hagar harshly. The verb “treat harshly” or “afflict,” *‘innâ*, was used in 15:13 in the prediction of Israel's enslavement in Egypt. *Trible says, “It characterizes, for example, the sufferings of the entire Hebrew population in Egypt, the land of their bondage*

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- Ironically, here it depicts the torture of a lone Egyptian woman in Canaan, the land of her bondage to the Hebrews” (“Hagar,” p. 13). Undoubtedly, Sarai was attempting to maintain her status by treating Hagar as a slave, trying to remind the Egyptian girl that she was Hagar’s mistress
- It is important to note that, when Abram said, “Your maid is in your hand,” he was returning Hagar to her status as Sarai’s servant. She was not to be on a par with Sarai

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- Ross gives excellent analysis
- The point of this turn of events is that God was not permitting this “solution” to be the way the promise should be fulfilled. Throughout the patriarchal stories God regularly repudiated social custom for his miraculous provision. In this case, once Hagar fled to the wilderness the question surfaced again regarding what was to become of Abram’s seed
- There is little difficulty in seeing what went wrong. Once the way of faith was abandoned and the way of human calculation was engaged, the family was caught up in a continuing chain of cause and effect that troubled them for ages.

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarai (16:5–6) (Cont.)

- Ross again with superb analysis of the text
- Once patient waiting was abandoned for human calculations, then natural impulses and right conduct became entangled. The participants had no control once this process was set in motion, for it led to conflict. Unfortunately, the history of Israel and of the church shows that those who are called of God repeatedly follow the forbidden calculation of a Sarai and experience the conflict of a Hagar. Rather, as the subsequent narratives will show, Abram and Sarai should have waited patiently on the Lord
- Amen!

Bibliography

- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*. San Antonio, Tex.: Ariel Ministries, 2009. Print.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. Print.
- Kidner, Derek, and Derek Kidner. *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Genesis*. London, Downer's Grove, ILL: Intervarsity, 1967. Print.
- Morris, Henry M. *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976. Print.
- Ross, Allen P. *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998. Print.
- Walvoord, John F. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1983. Print.