

"EYE SEE YOU" GENESIS 16:1-16

Our Christian lives are marked by periods of enabling faith demonstrated in remarkable faithfulness punctuated by periods of debilitating doubt demonstrated in equally remarkable unfaithfulness. Abram, later named Abraham, typifies that fact as do other biblical characters. He believed God when God told him to leave Ur for an unseen land (Ge 12:1, 4). Then in the face of famine, he doubted God and hightailed it from that very land for Egypt—where ironically, he probably acquired Hagar to be Sarai's maidservant. Later, he believed God when God told him his descendants would be as numerous as the stars (15:4-6). Then in the face of Sarai's barrenness, he doubted God and slept with Hagar to placate his wife.

Likewise, Elijah taunted 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah on Mount Carmel (1Ki 18:16-29). Then, terrified by Jezebel's threat, he ran in desperation, fearing for his life (19:1-9).

When Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). Not long afterward, a servant girl identified him as one of Jesus' disciples and he denied it three times—the last time calling down curses on himself and saying, "I don't know this man you're talking about" (Mk 14:71).

Life has its ups and downs; the same may be said about the spiritual life. And when we're down

Just as Lot was an obstacle to the land, Ishmael was an obstacle to the family.

— John H. Walton

spiritually, God is there to lift us up and set us back on track as he was for Abraham, Elijah, and Peter.

This Week's Core Competency

Faithfulness – I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

God promised to make Abram into a great nation in Genesis 12:3. And God remained faithful to keep his promise. Twenty-five years later Isaac was born (Ge 12:4; 17:17; 21:1-7).

Now twenty-five years is a long time—especially if it's time spent waiting for the birth of a child and the clock starts ticking when the father to be is seventy-five and the mother to be is sixty-five. During those years, God remained faithful to his promise and to Abram even when Abram was unfaithful. Presumably, when the promise was given, Abram assumed, and rightly so, that he and Sarai would have a son. But as the years ticked by, Abram entertained the possibility that his heir might be an adopted, rather than biological, son. But God assured the wavering patriarch, "a son coming from your own body will be your heir" (15:4).

But because Sarai "had borne him no children" (16:1) and was by then nearing seventy-five, she surmised that while Abram might be the father, she would most certainly not be the mother, and so she persuaded her husband to "build a family through her" (16:2), namely Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant. But that didn't turn out so well. Ishmael was not the promised son.

Thirteen years later, when Abram was ninety-nine, the LORD again confirmed his promise to him and told him, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.

cont. pg. 2

I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her" (17:16). Abraham's response was priceless. "Abraham fell face down; he laughed and said to himself, 'Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?' (v. 17). Despite Abraham's unbelief and previous unfaithfulness, God remained faithful, and the patriarchal couple ultimately learned that *nothing is too hard for the LORD* (18:13). The Bible says, "Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised," and following Isaac's birth, "Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.' And she added, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age'" (21:1, 6-7).

day **1** ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Genesis 16:1-16

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

6 "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

7 The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

9 Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."

11 The angel of the LORD also said to her:

"You are now pregnant

and you will give birth to a son.

You shall name him Ishmael,

for the LORD has heard of your misery.

12 He will be a wild donkey of a man;

his hand will be against everyone

and everyone's hand against him,

and he will live in hostility

toward all his brothers."

13 She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." 14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 1.
- * Circle "Egyptian slave" in vv. 1, 3.
- * Bracket what Sarai said to Abram in v. 2.
- * Underline "ten years" in v. 3.
- * Circle "despise" in vv. 4, 5.

- * Bracket "angel of the LORD" in v. 7.
- * Circle "Shur" in v. 7.
- * Circle "descendants" in v. 10.
- * Underline "wild donkey of a man" in v. 12.
- * Highlight v. 13.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Describe how the *contrast* in verse 1 points to the problem and anticipates the solution around which the plot of the story unfolds.
2. The *cultural* setting explains the rationale behind Sarai's instructions to Abram (v. 2). How so?
3. The storyteller emphasizes that Hagar is Egyptian. Describe the *irony* in that fact (cf., Ge 12:10-20).
4. They had been waiting for ten years, and barren Sarai was seventy-five when she gave Hagar to Abram. What else could they do?
5. Why couldn't Sarai and Hagar *just get along* once Hagar knew she was pregnant?
6. See any *similarities* between events in this story and the story of the fall?
7. *Contrast* Hagar's resolution of her problem with Sarai with the angel's resolution.
8. How could the angel make the promise he did in verse 10?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the significance of the name Hagar gave to the LORD and the name of the well nearby.

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The story of Hagar, told in Genesis 16, belongs to the larger story of Abram and the promise God made to him. The story opens (vv. 1-2a) with an introduction of the major characters—Abram, Sarai, and Hagar—as well as the problem around which the plot will unfold. The other major character, the angel of the LORD, is introduced in scene two. A decade earlier God promised to make Abram into a great nation, but Sarai had borne him no children and by this time, had likely entered menopause. This would explain why she proposed building a family through her maidservant. One commentator writes: "The more clearly God's promises were spelt out to Abram, the more clearly Sarai saw herself as the failure. Though she continued to preside over the household, which may by this time have included some of the concubines and their sons (Gn. 25:1-6), and though she was the legal wife, she felt keenly the humiliation of her barrenness. Each passing year diminished her hopes of becoming a mother and of giving to Abram the son of the promise. She saw no answer to her prayers and may easily have come to the conclusion that she had for some reason forfeited the Lord's favour. If so, she was wrong. The very reverse was true, but reason, in conflict with faith, for the time being won the day" (Joyce G. Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50*, 57). The physical setting of the story moves from the household to the desert in verse 7 and returns to the household in verse 15, demarking the two scenes (vv. 2b-6 and vv. 7-14) in the story.

The cultural setting of the story is especially important because it explains why Sarai would elect Hagar to be her surrogate. Another commentator explains: "The practice of surrogate motherhood for an infertile wife through her maidservant seemed to be an acceptable social practice, as can be judged from Gen. 30:1-3, the Code of Hammurabi (ca. 1700 B.C.), a Nuzi text (ca. 1500 B.C.), an Old Assyrian marriage contract (nineteenth century B.C.) and a Neo-Assyrian text. According to the Old Assyrian marriage contract, after the chief wife procured an infant for her husband, she could sell the surrogate mother whenever she pleased . . . According to the Code of Hammurabi, the despised mistress in this situation could not sell her maidservant, but she could mark her with a slave mark and count her among the slaves. The Law of

Ur-Nammu prescribed that an insolent concubine have 'her mouth scoured with one quart of salt'" (Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 252-53). While offering Hagar to Abram may have seemed reasonable to Sarai, it was frowned upon by the biblical author.

In scene one (vv. 2b-6), Abram agrees to Sarai's plan, and her plan succeeds. Hagar does conceive. Faith, however, would have taken things in a different direction. The story is told in such a way as to suggest that the success of Sarai's scheme will be short lived. Sarai's action mirrors the action of Eve in the garden. Sarai takes the initiative (16:3b) as Eve does (3:6a), and Abram's reaction mirrors the reaction of Adam. Abram is passive (v. 2b, 6), as Adam is (3:6b). The sequence of events is similar in both stories: the woman takes something and gives it to her husband, who accepts it. The significance of the similarity is hard to miss: "Even in so important a matter it's a case of 'As you say, dear', and once again the result is disruption of relationships . . . What Sarai had not bargained for was the emotional upheaval which the new situation would involve" (Baldwin 58). The storyteller makes it clear; as far as he is concerned, both narratives are accounts of a fall. When it comes to resolving the conflict between his wife and her maidservant, Abram will have none of it. "Do whatever you think best," he tells Sarai, and shrugs off his wife's problem. She then responds by making life miserable for Hagar, so miserable that she bolts for Egypt.

In scene two (vv. 7-14), Hagar agrees to the angel's plan, and his plan succeeds. On her way to Egypt, Hagar stops near a spring before she gets to Shur. There the angel of the Lord finds and questions her. Ironically, just as the LORD God finds Adam and Eve after the fall and questions them (3:9), so the angel finds Hagar after she flees and questions her. He calls her by name and inquires as to where she has come from and where she is going. "I am running away from my mistress Sarai," she answers, which is when the angel tells her to return to Sarai and submit to her. Moreover, speaking for the LORD, he promises to bless her with innumerable descendants and instructs her to name her unborn son Ishmael, which means "God hears." Her son is to have a name that commemorates her having a helper in God, who hears her distress cries. At this she identifies the

LORD as "the God who sees me" and declares, "I have now seen the One who sees me," which explains the name of the well, "Beer Lahai Roi," meaning, "Well of the living one who cares for me."

The story closes with a birth announcement (vv. 15-16). A son is born to Abram and Hagar when Abram is eighty-six. And Abram names him Ishmael, as the angel directed. This story like all biblical stories is two stories in one. The *upper* story is about the Lord's faithfulness to his promise to Abram to make him "the father of

many nations" (17:5) and bless the whole world through him. And while Ishmael is not the son God promised to Abram and Sarai, despite their lapse of faith, he confirms that the covenant is still in effect. He will surely give Abram a son by her (17:16). The *lower* story is about what happens when faithfulness is replaced by unfaithfulness and its preference for doing what is conventional or reasonable to achieve God's blessing as well as God's faithfulness and care for those who have no reason to expect it.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

God proved himself faithful when Abram and Sarai proved unfaithful—trying to obtain an heir through the social customs of the day—by providing for Hagar in her affliction and promising her descendants through Ishmael.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the message of Romans 1:1-7 and your response to it.

Identify a promise God has made that you are counting on him to keep.

Describe a time in which your confidence in him to keep that promise waned.

What is your personal takeaway from the message of this passage?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

vv. 1, 3 **Egyptian slave** Cf., Ge 12:10-20. The storyteller emphasizes that Hagar was an Egyptian. "The second reference to Hagar as 'the Egyptian' is strikingly different from the first. The adjective does not modify 'the maiden' as in verse 1 ('Egyptian maid') but stands alone as a substantive along with 'maid' in apposition to the personal name Hagar ('Hagar, the Egyptian, her maid'). In verse 3, then, 'the Egyptian' serves as a conspicuous reminder of Hagar's identity in verse 1, 'an Egyptian maid' (John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 153). "A maidservant is a personal servant owned by a rich woman, not a slave girl answerable to the master" (Waltke, 251).

v. 2 **kept . . . children** "The idea that it is God who gives or denies conception is commonplace in the OT (25:21; 30:2; Lev 20:20, 21; Deut 28:11; Ps 113:9). It was a serious matter for a man to be childless in the ancient world, for it left him without an heir. But it was even more calamitous for a woman: to have a great brood of children was the mark of success as a wife; to have none was ignominious failure. Throughout the ancient East polygamy was resorted to as a means of obviating childlessness. But wealthier wives preferred the practice of surrogate motherhood, whereby they allowed their husbands to 'go in to' their maid, as euphemism for sexual intercourse (cf. 6:4; 30:3; 38:8, 9; 39:14). The mistress could then feel that her maid's child was her own and exert some control over it in a way that she could not if her husband simply took a second wife" (Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 2, *Genesis 16-50*, 7).

v. 3 **ten years** "Sarah was about sixty-five years old when Abraham left his father and homeland. Still childless a decade later, and perhaps already in menopause, Sarah draws the conclusion that the offspring the Lord has promised Abraham will not come from her body. She recognizes the Lord as Creator of life; however, she does not interpret her infertility in terms of God's promise" (Waltke, 251).

vv. 4, 5 **despise** The Hebrew here is translated "curses" in 12:3. "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" (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 319). "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. Sarai's accusation against Abram is that, apparently in his delight at becoming a father, he has neglected the necessary steps that would keep Hagar remembering her appropriate place within the household" (John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary: Genesis*, 447).

v. 7 **angel of the LORD** "Since the angel of the LORD speaks for God in the first person (v. 10) and Hagar is said to name 'the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me"' (v. 13), the angel appears to be both distinguished from the Lord (in that he is called 'messenger'—the Hebrew for 'angel' means 'messenger') and identified with him. Similar distinction and identification can be found in 19:1,21; 31:11, 13; Ex 3:2, 4; Jdg 2:1-5; 6:11-12, 14; 13:3, 6, 8-11, 13, 15-17, 20-23; Zec 3:1-6; 12:8. Traditional Christian interpretation has held that this 'angel' was a preincarnate manifestation of Christ as God's Messenger-Servant. It may be, however, that, as the Lord's personal messenger who represented him and bore his credentials, the angel could speak on behalf of (and so be identified with) the One who sent him (see especially 19:21; cf. 18:2, 22; 19:2). Whether this 'angel' was the second person of the Trinity remains therefore uncertain" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ge16:7).

v. 7 **Shur** "Hagar was making for her native Egypt (the wilderness of Shur was on its north-east frontier) and had possibly travelled some days to have reached the vicinity of Kadesh (14). But her lot was cast with Abram now, and God's exacting goodness held her to it (9, 15)" (Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC, 137-38).

v. 10 **descendants** "God's command to Hagar to submit is graciously accompanied by a promise. The promise is reaffirmed in Gen. 17:20 and fulfilled in 25:13-16" (Waltke, 254).

v. 12 **wild donkey** "The 'wild ass' (*Equus hemionus hemippus*) lives in the desert, looks more like a horse than a donkey, and is used in the OT as a figure of an individualistic lifestyle untrammelled by social convention (Jer 2:24; Hos 8:9). 'He will be against everyone.' 'Ishmael's love of freedom will bring him into mutual conflict in his dealings with all other men' (Gispen, 2:128). 'He shall dwell apart from his brothers' describes the Bedouin living on the fringes of a more permanent settlement. 'Apart from,' 'opposite' suggests the haughty, defiant attitude of Ishmael toward those caught up in a more conventional way of life (cf. 25:18)" (Wenham, 11).

v. 13 **who sees me** "As the angel disappears, Hagar realizes to whom she has been talking and therefore gives the LORD a new name, 'El-Roi,' 'God who sees me'; for even in the wilderness he sought her and cared for her. And the well too commemorates that divine concern: *Beer-lahay-roi* means 'Well of the living one who cares for me.' In her moment of greatest distress, Hagar has discovered God's concern for her" (Wenham, 12).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Happy Mother's Day! Well, it's on Sunday but go ahead and starting celebrating, moms deserve it! Being a mom is the greatest job on earth. I really believe that! But there are days I wish I could change my name and not answer to "Mom!" Motherhood is also the hardest job on earth! As a young mom, I sat in a Bible study where I really heard and understood the story of Hagar. It literally changed my whole understanding of God. Our loving God saw all the hard things that had happened in my past. He is watching as I struggle through hard things today. I cannot escape His attentive gaze. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 139, we cannot flee from His presence. He is always near, always watching. I find myself asking Him how in the world He can be true to His promise to work this thing out for good? (Romans 8:28) Rest in the truth today that He sees you. He sees your child. Our Sovereign God, who set the world in motion, allows hard things to trickle through His loving hands because He has a plan for you and these little ones He has placed in your care. He sees even though you can't. Trust Him today to be a strong tower.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Genesis 16:1-15

1. What did Sarah want Abraham to do?
2. How did her request show a lack of trust in God?
3. What happened to Hagar?

What Do You Think

1. Sometimes people get impatient waiting on God to answer a prayer or fulfill a promise. Has that ever happened to you?
2. What do you think Hagar learned about God?

What R U Going To Do

Write your mom (or another woman who is important to you) a letter or draw a picture telling her all ways she blesses you and how thankful you are for her!

Core Comp

Faithfulness - I am loyal to God and others, so they know they can count on me.

Memory Verse

Genesis 16:13a - *She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me."*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



8001 Anderson Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76120
1-866-PANTEGO
Fax 817-275-6403
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you Belong, Become, and go Beyond as follower of Jesus Christ through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.