

Genesis 16: The God Who Sees

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The only character that comes out looking good in this chapter is **God**.

The incident with Hagar is an example of what happens when we don't **wait** for God.

Sarai properly attributes her barrenness to **Yahweh**.

After ten years and repeated promises, Sarai offers a modest proposal: **marry Hagar**.

After all, the promise was not specific to **Sarai**.

Abram is a bit too eager to go along, and does not **seek God** before agreeing.

After Hagar conceives, she begins to act disrespectfully toward Sarai. To make matters worse, Hagar's conception proves that Sarai was the one unable to have children.

This incident is another disastrous application of **utilitarian** thinking: taking a modest shortcut in order to help God achieve the desired ends.

The marriage to Hagar was precipitated by **discontentment** on Abram's part, not **unfaithfulness** on God's part.

Abram's marriage to Hagar is the first mention of **polygamy** among God's people. This was not part of the creation design.

Hagar was probably a gift from **Pharaoh**. She was probably on the way "home" to **Egypt** when she fled from Sarai.

When God speaks to Hagar in the wilderness, He addresses her by **name** and **title**.

Hagar acknowledges her **rebellion** by referring to Sarai as her **mistress**.

God commands Hagar to **return** and **submit**.

God promises Hagar a **multitude**. This is a partial fulfillment of the promise to **Abram**.

Hagar's name means **flight**. God named Hagar's son. *Ishmael* means **God will hear**.

God prophesies that Ishmael's life will be full of **strife**.

Hagar responds to God's visit by:

1. Going back to Sarai
2. naming God
3. naming the well

Part of the lesson in this chapter is that nothing we do (humanly speaking) can either **hasten** or **delay** the timing of God's promises.

Abram and Sarai have waited ten years, but the promised son is still **15** years away. (Gen 21:5)

The fancy Latin expression that means living before the face of God: **coram Deo**.

Timeline: Chapter 16 cover a period of about one year.