

GENESIS 16

The Child of the Flesh

¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife,ⁱ did not bare him any children. But she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

² Then Sarai said to Abram, "Now look. Since Yahweh has kept me from having children, go into my maid. It may be that I may obtain children by her."ⁱⁱ

So Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³ And Sarai, Abram's wife,ⁱⁱⁱ took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. This happened after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan.

⁴ When he went into Hagar, she conceived. When she saw that she had conceived, she treated her mistress with contempt.

⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be on you! I have given my maid into your bosom. But when she saw that she had conceived, she despised me. May Yahweh judge between me and you."

⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, "Look! Your maid is in your hand. Do to her as it pleases you."

So, when Sarai dealt harshly with her, Hagar ran away from her. ⁷ And the Angel^{iv} of Yahweh found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain on the way to Shur.^v

⁸ Then he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid.^{vi} From where did you come?^{vii} Where will you go?"

And she said, "I am running away from the face of my mistress, Sarai."

⁹ Then the Angel of Yahweh^{viii} said to her, "Go back to your mistress. Place yourself under her authority."

¹⁰ The Angel of Yahweh said to her, "I will greatly multiply your seed so that it will not be numbered for multitude."

¹¹ Again, the Angel of Yahweh said to her, "Look! You are pregnant and will give birth to a son. You will call his name Ishmael,^{ix} because Yahweh has heard your affliction. ¹² He will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him. He will dwell in the presence of all his family."

¹³ Then she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "You, El, see me."^x She said, "I have also seen the One who sees me!"

¹⁴ They named the well Be'er Lahai Roi^{xi} after this. See! It is between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ Then Hagar gave birth to Abram's son. Abram called his son's name, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to his son Ishmael.

ⁱ The Hebrew is אִשָּׁרָי. This is an **Aleph-Shin-Tav**. The **Aleph-Shin-Tav** is the first (**Aleph**) love (*Shin*=flames) of the marriage (**Tav** = covenant). This is why Strong's defines the word as woman or wife. The deeper meaning is that Sarai was the mother of God's covenant nation of Israel. God uses and blesses these women.

ⁱⁱ Surrogacy was a common practice in the ancient Near East. The wife would arrange to have one of the servants give birth to children in order to produce an heir for her husband. The handmaid remained a slave, but the child was the legal heir of the husband and wife.

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- iii The Hebrew is אִשָּׁה. This is an **Aleph-Shin-Tav**. The **Aleph-Shin-Tav** is the first (**Aleph**) love (*Shin*=flames) of the marriage (**Tav** = covenant). This is why Strong's defines the word as woman or wife. The deeper meaning is that Sarai was the mother of God's covenant nation of Israel. God uses and blesses these women.
 - iv The word "Angel" must be capitalized because of the subject "I" in verse 10. Only God can cause a person to multiply into a great nation.
 - v Hagar is an Egyptian. Shur is on the way back to Egypt.
 - vi Remember! Hagar is in a covenant relationship with Yahweh.
 - vii The Hebrew is אִשָּׁה (Bet-**Aleph-Tav**). This word brings us into a deeper covenant relationship with the **Aleph-Tav**. Scripture points us to her covenant relationship with Abraham. See the article "The **Aleph-Tav**."
 - viii The phrase "Angel of Yahweh" is frequently identified with Yahweh Himself: Gen 16:13; 22:11-2; 31:11, 13; 48:16; Judges 6:11, 16, 22; 13:22-23; Zechariah 3:1-2.
 - ix "God will hear."
 - x The Hebrew is אֵל רֹאֶה ("El Roi"). The form אֵל רֹאֶה (*ro'î*) with this vowel pointing and suffix only appears here in Gen 16:13. Normally, when Hebrew attaches the first common singular suffix *-î*, it has a possessive idea (אֵלַי "my lord," אֵלֵךְ "my father"). But here it attaches to a rare nominal form of רָאָה ("to see"). The sense is not "my God of seeing," but rather "God who sees me," with the suffix understood objectively.
 - xi "Well of the Living One who sees me."