

Walk Through the Bible

GENESIS 16-17

OVERVIEW

In Genesis chapter 16 we find that Abram and Sarai are still childless. Sarai becomes tired of waiting and gives her Egyptian servant, Hagar to Abram, in order to obtain a child. In a moment of faithlessness, Abram agrees, and Hagar quickly becomes pregnant. Sarai deals so harshly with Hagar that the servant girl runs into the wilderness alone, fearful for her life. The angel of the Lord finds Hagar and asks her a question about her destination, gives her a command to return to Sarai, and offers her a promise about her son, Ishmael.

Genesis 17 picks up 13 years after the birth of Ishmael. God appears to Abram and gives him a new name, Abraham. God then confirms the covenant promises and gives a command for Abraham to follow. He is to circumcise every male in his household as a sign of the covenant. God also declares that Abraham's wife Sarai, is to be renamed Sarah, and she will bear a son within the year. This long-awaited son, Isaac, would be the one through whom God would keep all of His promises to Abraham.



DISCUSSION

- Abram and Sarai came up with "*plan B*" because they lost faith in the promise God had given them (**Genesis 16:1-2**). Why is there often a delay between the giving of God's promise and the fulfillment of that promise?
- After being harshly mistreated by Sarai, Hagar ran away; however, the Angel of the Lord finds her and shows her that she is deeply loved by God. What can we know about God's love as shown in the life of Hagar (**Genesis 16:7-13**)?
- What are the four major elements found in the covenant that God made with Abraham (**Genesis 17:4-17**)?
- The covenant that God made with Abraham is a chiasm, a literary device that helps give understanding. What is the overall message being conveyed in this covenant?
- Abraham longed for Ishmael to have some part of the covenant blessing (**Genesis 17:18-19**). Why was that impossible?