

Timing: *Seeking God's Counsel*



Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

For everything there is a season,
a right time for every intention under heaven —
2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
5 a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to discard,
7 a time to tear and a time to sew,
a time to keep silent and a time to speak,
8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.



I believe this scripture is a necessary word from God that we need to allow to penetrate our hearts and minds. As I awoke on Saturday morning, I began going about my time of devotional study in Genesis 16. I did not make it past the first seven verses when the Holy Spirit highlighted Sarai's lack of faith and the result, Ishamel (meaning: whom God hears). I am sure most, if not all, of us have heard the story of Avram and Sarai's promise from God that the couple, advanced in years, would bear a child.

Side Note: Looking back through Genesis, people were living between 700-900 years of age before God put a limitation of 120 years due to their lack of obedience and their wickedness. ([Gen. 6:2-4](#))

We too create Ishmaels when we make decisions out of timing and without seeking God's counsel. We must learn to wait on the Lord and sync up with His will for our lives. Of course, this is borne out of our intimate relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit. Let's look at some history for a moment to better understand the details that surrounded this misstep.

The Promise

Genesis

15:3-5

You haven't given me a child," Avram continued, "so someone born in my house will be my heir." 4 But the word of Adonai came to him: "This man will not be your heir. No, your heir will be a child from your own body." 5 Then he



brought him outside and said, “Look up at the sky, and count the stars — if you can count them! Your descendants will be that many!”

17:15-22

15 God said to Avraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are not to call her Sarai [mockery]; her name is to be Sarah [princess]. 16 I will bless her; moreover, I will give you a son by her. Truly I will bless her: she will be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” 17 At this Avraham fell on his face and laughed — he thought to himself, “Will a child be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah give birth at ninety?” 18 Avraham said to God, “If only Yishma‘el could live in your presence!” 19 God answered, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you are to call him Yitz’chak [laughter]. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. 20 But as for Yishma‘el, I have heard you. I have blessed him. I will make him fruitful and give him many descendants. He will father twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 But I will establish my covenant with Yitz’chak, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year.” 22 With that, God finished speaking with Avraham and went up from him.

Hagar

Etymology of the name Hagar

Although Hagar is an Egyptian, her name appears to be **Semitic**. If indeed so, it would come from the verb הָגַר (*hgr*), which is not used in the Bible and its meaning is subsequently unknown. NOBSE Study Bible Name List and HAW Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament insist that the verb means to flee. BDB Theological Dictionary refers to the **Arabic** equivalent, meaning forsake or retire. An Arabic noun derived of this root serves as the name for Mohammed's famous flight, the Hegira. Another name derived of this same root is the tribal name of the Hagarites (Psalm 83:7, 1 Chronicles 27:31).

A curious detail is that the reticent root הָגַר (*hgr*) looks like a construct of the definite article הַ (*ha*), and a trace of the verb גָּרַר (*garar*), meaning to drag out or away.

Another word of note is the Greek verb ἀγγαρεύω (*aggareuo*), meaning to press into service or requisite. It comes from a **Persian** word ἀγγαρός (*aggeros*), meaning mounted



messenger (a royal courier who could requisite or press into service whatever he needed to deliver his message faster), which in turn is thought to be the source of the familiar noun αγγελος (*aggelos*), meaning messenger or angel.

Hagar meaning

The name Hagar could mean **Flight** thanks to a very rare Semitic verb, **The Sojourner/ The Dragged Away One** thanks to more common ones, or either **Pressed Into Service** or **Messenger** thanks to a Greco-Persian group of termsⁱ.

Sarai

For a meaning of the name Sarai, NOBSE Study Bible Name List groups it without further comment with Sarah and seems to translate both names with **Princess**. Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names discusses the name Sarai under the article on Sarah, but translates Sarai with **My Princess**. BDB Theological Dictionary doesn't translate but does connect Sarai and Sarah to the noun שרה meaning princessⁱⁱ.

Sarai was transformed from “mockery” to “princess”. God tells us that we are His beloved and chosen children whom He will never leave nor forsake; therefore, we should be operating from a place of faith, hope and love. (1 John 4:10, John 3:16) We have gone from orphans to sons (and daughters).

We must remember some of Sarah's history as well. She was a beautiful woman who was desired by Pharaoh (Egypt) and Abimelech (Philistine), rulers of their land. Sarah had a call on her life destined for greatness to birth a kingly leader **but** in God's way and timing! We cannot abort our destiny by allowing our fleshly desires to cause us to make decisions rooted in our carnal nature. The Angel of the Lord spoke to both, Pharaoh and Abimelech, to return Sarah to Avraham. The kings gave Avraham flocks, land and male/female servants on account of their sinful act. Although, Sarah knew being with the kings was not right, she was obedient to the voice of her husband.



Remember; he was the one hearing from God and should have been leading accordingly. I believe this is worthy of more study...

Let's read the story of Sarai in Genesis 16:1-6 (CJB)

Now Sarai Avram's wife had not borne him a child. But she had an Egyptian slave-girl named Hagar; 2 **so Sarai said to Avram**, "Here now, Adonai has kept me from having children; so go in and sleep with my slave-girl. Maybe I'll be able to have children through her." **Avram listened to what Sarai said.**

3 It was after Avram had lived ten years in the land of Kena'an that Sarai Avram's wife took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to Avram her husband to be his wife. 4 Avram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she conceived. But when she became aware that she was pregnant, she looked on her mistress with contempt. 5 **Sarai said to Avram**, "**This outrage being done to me is your fault!** True, I gave my slave-girl to you to sleep with; but when she saw that she was pregnant, she began holding me in contempt. May Adonai decide who is right — I or you!" 6 However, **Avram answered Sarai**, "**Look, she's your slave-girl. Deal with her as you think fit.**" Then Sarai treated her so harshly that she ran away from her.

Doesn't this story sound familiar from Genesis 3:4-14? CJB

4 **The serpent said to the woman**, "It is not true that you will surely die; 5 because God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her; and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loincloths.

8 They heard the voice of Adonai, God, walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, so the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Adonai, God, among the trees in the garden. 9 **Adonai, God, called to the man**, "Where are you?" 10 **He answered**, "I heard your voice in the garden,



and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.” 11 **He said**, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I ordered you not to eat?” 12 **The man replied**, “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” 13 **Adonai, God, said to the woman**, “What is this you have done?” **The woman answered**, “The serpent tricked me, so I ate.”

Matthews Commentary of Genesis 16:1-6

Hagar is the person mostly concerned in the story of this chapter, an obscure Egyptian woman, whose name and story we never should have heard of if Providence had not brought her into the family of Abram. Probably she was one of those maid-servants whom the king of Egypt, among other gifts, bestowed upon Abram

16:1-3 Sarai, no longer expecting to have children herself, proposed to Abram to take another wife, whose children she might; her slave, whose children would be her property. This was done without asking counsel of the Lord. Unbelief worked, God's almighty power was forgotten. It was a bad example, and a source of manifold uneasiness. In every relation and situation in life there is some cross for us to bear: much of the exercise of faith consists in patiently submitting, in waiting the Lord's time, and using only those means which he appoints for the removal of the cross. Foul temptations may have very fair pretenses, and be colored with that which is very plausible. Fleshly wisdom puts us out of God's way. This would not be the case, if we would ask counsel of God by his word and by prayer, before we attempt that which is doubtful.

16:4-6 Abram's unhappy marriage to Hagar very soon made a great deal of mischief. We may thank ourselves for the guilt and grief that follow us, when we go out of the way of our duty. See it in this case, Passionate people often quarrel with others, for things of which they themselves must bear the blame. Sarai had given her maid to Abram, yet she cries out, My wrong be upon thee. That is never said wisely, which pride and anger put into our mouths. Those are not always in the right, who are most loud and forward in appealing to God: such rash and bold imprecations commonly speak guilt and a bad cause. Hagar forgot



that she herself had first given the provocation, by despising her mistress. Those that suffer for their faults, ought to bear it patiently, 1Pe 2:20.iii

Their faith was “tried” because of the “delay” of the promise. Sarai must have been awfully anxious to suggest that Avram take her servant as a wife. This is a perfect example of how wrong decisions are made when made out of an unsettled spirit. I believe they began to look more to the promise than they did to God of the promise in this particular situation. For instance: if you believe God promised you a mate, job, baby, financial breakthrough, or healing and you have not seen that come to pass, you may be focusing more on the “promise (fill in the blank)” than on the God who gave you the promise. If married, you may be focusing on the character flaws of your spouse rather than the God who told you He was working in your favor to bring about the change. Stop! Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the “timing” and continue to seek “God’s counsel”. Many times, from my own experience, God desires intimacy with us in a way that initiates a needed change in our character. I am still learning to “trust” God when I “feel” like a change is needed. I have been in situations where I tried my best to remove myself and open a “new” door for my life. I did not like the “discomfort” of “remaining” in the fire because I focused on “self”. What that means is that I was willing to move on without allowing God to refine my character for the next level. This is not wise and requires God’s counsel and His appointed timing. You may be wondering how you will “know”; and I have to answer that the Holy Spirit will be your Guide. Allow the [peace](#) of God that surpasses all human reasoning to be your compass. [\(Col. 3:15-17\)](#)



As women, we need to take a prayerful look at the pattern that has passed on from Eve to Sarai and women in general. As men, they are to be the carriers of God's word to the woman, which is why they are the "head" of the household. God spoke to both Adam and Avraham and they communicated the message. I believe this was the error made by Adam and Avram. They knew what God said and hearkened to the voice of their wife instead of seeking God's counsel. This should prove a lesson for men and women, husbands and wives and potentials. Women, please do not misunderstand me in what I am conveying here. I believe we have wisdom and keen discernment in many cases, but I also believe God created the man to be the head of the household and that we (women) are helpmeets and partners. I am single and I continue to believe God's order for the home. Read [1 Peter 3](#) for more study on this subject. There is responsibility for both, husbands and wives.

Challenge



What is the common thread(s) you see in the story of the Fall and Avram and Sarai?

Do you see any patterns in your life that relate to the above?

How can you allow God, through Holy Spirit, to bring about a change in your character?

What area(s) do you struggle with that cause you to create Ishmaels?

How can you better seek God's counsel and trust His timing to fulfill your promise(s)?



Remember: Without faith, it is impossible to please God... (Heb. 11:6) and the **Blood of Jesus** makes it possible for our sin to be removed from us as far as the East is from the West! (Ps. 103:12)

Click to listen [*“More than Enough”*](#)

Construct a Prayer Based on Your Learning?





Transforming you into His Image

Faithful (1 Cor. 1:9-10) God is trustworthy: it was he who called you into fellowship with his Son, Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord.¹⁰ Nevertheless, brothers, I call on you in the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to agree, all of you, in what you say, and not to let yourselves remain split into factions but be restored to having a common mind and a common purpose.

Shalom (John 14:27) ²⁷ “What I am leaving with you is shalom — I am giving you my shalom. I don’t give the way the world gives. Don’t let yourselves be upset or frightened.

Sacrifice (Titus) 2:14 Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Truth John 14:6 Yeshua said, “I AM the Way — and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me. John 8:32 ³² you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Compassion (Matthew 9:36)-Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Love (John 15:13) - Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Servant (Matthew 20:28) - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Forgiveness (John 8:4-11)- “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?” ⁶ They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷ They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!”⁸ Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust. ⁹ When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰ Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” ¹¹ “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more

Gentle & Humble (Matthew 11:28-30)-²⁸ “Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.[a] ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Patient (2 Peter 3:9)-The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some people think of slowness; on the contrary, he is patient with you; for it is not his purpose that anyone should be destroyed, but that everyone should turn from his sins



ⁱ “Hagar,” <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Hagar.html#.WIEOClWnGM8> (accessed January 6, 2018).

ⁱⁱ “Hagar,” <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Hagar.html#.WIEOClWnGM8> (accessed January 6, 2018).

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“Matthew Henry's Commentary,”
Biblehub.com, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhc/genesis/16.htm> (accessed January 6, 2018).