

### The Hagar Solution: The Perils of Trying to Help God Genesis 16.1-16

God has promised Abram he will father an heir, who will become a great nation. Sarai his wife is barren, and at 75 years-old, well past child-bearing age. Enter Hagar, her Egyptian maid. It seemed like a good idea, but God doesn't need our help to fulfill His promises!

#### Family Chaos: The 'Hagar Solution' Goes Bad (1-6)

*Sarai suggests Abram father an heir through Hagar; Abram listens to her...and it turns into a disaster.*

#### God's Grace: Descendants too many to count! (7-16)

*God finds fleeing Hagar, promises her descendants too many to count, and Hagar recognizes God's grace.*

#### Lessons for Today

- Attempting to help God out always leads to disaster.
- God seeks out the sinful and the rejected. Lk19.10; Jn.4;8.1-11
- Patience on the 'journey of faith' avoids problems.

---

**Don't worry. Don't get too impatient.  
GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING.**

---

**JUST TRUST HIM!**

1. In Genesis 16.1-6 there are no 'good guys'! Verse 1 introduces the three primary characters; let's track the unfolding narrative. In v.2, who does Sarai blame for her barrenness? How does she propose getting an heir for her husband? [This was common in the culture of the day, but see Gen.2.24 for God's will.] What is Abram's response? [Where have we seen this before? See 3.17.] Weak faith results in moral compromise and passive complicity! These dysfunctional 'ingredients' cause a noxious 'stew' in the family: Hagar's pregnancy leads to bitterness and jealousy, and abuse follows. Perhaps to save her life, Hagar flees – the family is in tatters, and Abram is no closer to having an heir! Compare this social breakdown to the experience many face today: What is *the* solution to the family crisis in America today?
2. Often overlooked in this story is Hagar. Consider her situation: Acquired as a slave while Abram was in Egypt, she would have been taken from her family. Abram and Sarai declare their faith in Yahweh, then discount it by having Hagar (probably against her wishes) become his second wife. Then, when she should be joyful at the prospect of giving birth, she is abused by Sarai and flees for her life! Abram and Sarai are the main characters in this story, but imagine you are Hagar: How would you feel? You are aware of God, but wonder if He is aware of you! *Have you ever felt this way? Have you known someone who did?* How does the response of God to Hagar make you feel?
3. God's encounter with Hagar in vv7-16 is remarkable. First off, who finds who? (When we're in a crisis, *who* helps us?) Notice that Abram and Sarai never call Hagar by name, but God does! What did God tell Hagar to do? Obeying this command would have required faith in God! God made her a promise (10); what other promise does this resemble? Reflect on Hagar's words in vv13-14 ("You are the God who sees;" Beer-lahai-roi = *well of the living one who sees me*): How would you describe her heart toward God?

