

OT-OV

Lesson 36

1. Last week I finished the Doctrine of Melchizedec and Genesis chapter fifteen. When time expired we were about to study Genesis chapter sixteen.

Gen 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar;

Gen 16:2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

Gen 16:3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.

Gen 16:4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

Gen 16:5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

Gen 16:6 "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

Gen 16:7 The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.

Gen 16:8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

Gen 16:9 Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her."

Gen 16:10 The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count."

Gen 16:11 The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery.

Gen 16:12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."

Gen 16:13 She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."

Gen 16:14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

Gen 16:15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.

Gen 16:16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Now let's take a look at each verse individually:

Gen 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar;

1. Verse one: Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children.

1.1 A promise made to Abram was also a promise to Sarai, for a man's wife is one with him in the sight of God. Sarai was to Abram as Eve was to Adam, and as the true Church is to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.2 The lesson that God is about to teach concerning Sarai, we are directly told in the New Testament, it is an allegory concerning our faith (Gal 4:24).

Gal 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar.

1.3 Abram was justified by faith, but this did not keep him from trying to do something in his own strength. Abram and Sarai had their own plan.

Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Jam 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Gen 16:2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

1.3.1 The plans of man are often abrogated by God. In this way God very often seeks to bring us to realize our utter nothingness, in order that we may totally depend upon Him.

1.4 Abram believed God, but he was looking to himself and Sarai to fulfill the promise. He would turn and look to Hagar. He had to learn to look to God.

2. Verse 2: The Lord hath restrained me from bearing

2.1 Sarai saw the result of the Lord's restraint, but she did not know the reason. Her motives were probably good, for she knew the promise to Abram and was impatient for its fulfillment. It had not yet been revealed that she was to be the mother.

2.2 Perhaps she should have assumed she would be the mother but then again maybe she wasn't ready for the Doctrine of The Right Man/Right Woman and the teaching that she and Abram were one both in time and eternity.

2.3 In her impatience, she was trying to help God do something by human means. Sounds a lot like Eve doesn't it.

2.4 She did not comprehend that barrenness in the Christian is used by God to lay us low that we may bring forth fruit, even as Christ said in Joh 15:1-5.

Joh 15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

Joh 15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

Joh 15:3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Joh 15:4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Joh 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

2.5 The first temptation in barrenness is that we must do something about it in our human strength. Col. Thieme has on more than one occasion taught that barrenness is a sign to a couple that God was not ready yet for them to bear children.

2.6 In Sarai's case human viewpoint takes over. In the phrase "go into my maid" she wanted God's will to be accomplished but proposed "the wrong way."

2.7 Griffith Thomas has written of this action: "It was wrong against God, whose word had been given and whose time should have been waited. It was a wrong against Abraham, leading him out of the pathway of patient waiting for God's will. It was wrong against Hagar, and did not recognize her individuality and rights in the matter. It was wrong against Sarai herself, robbing her of a high privilege as well as leading to disobedience."

2.8 And if I might add, it was wrong for posterity; for Ishmael, who was born of this union, became a "wild-ass of a man" and a source of horrific future problems which still plague the world - nothing is more vicious than a family dispute.

2.9 The phrase "I may obtain ... by her" is born of disobedience. The flesh can never please God. It must have been galling to Sarai to know that she was barren.

2.10 Now Sarai succumbs to the great temptation to follow the ancient custom according to which the child of a slave was counted the child of the mistress.

2.11 Since God tells us in Galatians that Hagar represents the law and Sarai grace, this story illustrates the false idea that grace can obtain something by legalistic means.

2.12 The human heart hates pure grace, and man yearns to do something for God. Law seeks to obtain by doing, grace accepts all freely.

2.13 The temptation to Abram originated in Sarai. Of course, Abram, like Adam should not have yielded. After the wonders of the night of the stars, the day of the sacrifice and the evening of the covenant, Abram should have been impervious to such a temptation.

2.14 No perfect feet walk the path of faith. We go forward as a baby learns to walk the right foot tries to take two steps at a time, and down we go.

2.15 No matter how mature a Christian may be, no matter how keen his knowledge of the truth or the depth of his experience with God, he is still prone to hesitate, blunder, fall into mistakes, errors and sin even to the end of life's journey.

2.16 But like other babies Abram was picked up and he learned to walk more steadily. As the essayist has written sometimes we even have to be carried.

"One night a man had a dream; he dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

'Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, You'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that at the worst times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. How could you leave me when I needed you the most?' The Lord replied 'My precious, precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of suffering and when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.'"

Gen 16:3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.

3. Verse 3: The Lord hath restrained me from bearing ... Hagar ... the Egyptian.

3.1 The devil is always present in a temptation. We know from Jam1:13 that God never tempts a man to sin. The evil in temptation comes from the enemy.

Jam 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

3.2 The fact that Sarai had brought an Egyptian maid from Pharaoh's court shows the danger of sojourning in the world. When one experiences the world, something of it comes with him, and the world must be disavowed.

3.3 It is significant that Hagar was an Egyptian, for that means she was a child of Ham, upon whom God pronounced the curse through Noah. Here Satan is seeking to put a counterfeit heir in the place of the promised line. The consequences of any sin flares out as a chain reaction.

3.4 Now for the phrase "After ... ten years in the land."

3.4.1 Even after years of walking with God from the city of Ur to Canaan, and another ten years in the land, yet Abram was just as prone to sin as before.

3.4.2 Abram had experienced many victories with the Lord. In fact he had just enjoyed the exhilaration of a military victory over a far superior foe resulting in the rescue of his nephew Lot. He was now vulnerable; often mountain top experiences are followed by valleys of testing.

3.4.3 Basking in victory often results in our taking our eyes off of Christ, and when we do we fail miserably ... "let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" says 1Co 10:12.

1Co 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

1Co 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

3.4.4 Three things combined to lead Abram away from the promise: (1) Sarai was barren; (2) Hagar was at hand; and (3) Sarah urged him on. Abram was a man with earth's passions. It would take more than ten years in the land to stop him.

Gen 16:4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

4. Verse 4: She conceived.

4.1 Abram was not only excited by Hagar but he could cloak his excitement in human good. The "promise of fruitfulness" provided cover for his error.

4.2 Often Christians reach for production without proper motivation.

4.2.1 Sin is very often rationalized in the weirdest of ways.

4.3 Unfortunately much Christian work is done in this way, and while there is conception in Abram's case, the child of the law will never replace the child of faith and grace. Grace and law, like oil and water do not mix, law and faith are mutually exclusive says Paul in his letter to the Galatians. Both are necessary but each in its own time; each has a purpose.

Hagar and Sarah

Gal 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?

Gal 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman (Hagar) and the other by the free woman (Sarah).

Gal 4:23 His (Abram) son Ishmael) by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son (Isaac) by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

Gal 4:24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.

Gal 4:25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.

Gal 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

Gal 4:27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

Gal 4:28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Gal 4:29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

Gal 4:30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."

Gal 4:31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

4.4 Now for the phrase "Her mistress was despised in her eyes."

4.4.1 We are told that "Pride goes before destruction" (Pro 16:18). In the community of tents, it would have been difficult for Abram to have gone into Hagar in secret, all Abram's world knew that he had gone in with Hagar.

4.4.2 As soon as she knew that she was with child, her spirits soared within her, Hagar however despised her mistress and Sarai despised her slave. Hagar had done what Sarai had been unable to do.

4.4.3 Hagar had given birth to a baby boy while Sarai remained barren. And Abram's entire entourage knew of the sorry situation.

4.4.4 The reaction, though wrong, was natural. Sarai should have foreseen this. And so should we realize that the results of sin are inevitable. The fruit of the wind is the whirlwind.

Gen 16:5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

5. Verse 5: My wrong be upon thee.

5.1 The first result of the sin was pride, the second was jealousy that turned Sarai into a harridan, an old nag. Sarai represents grace, and she had expected to be "built up" by Hagar, representing the law.

5.2 But all she got was the humiliation that came from exalting a bonds slave. Unreasonably, she turned against Abram. Her words may be interpreted, "My wrong belongs to thee as well," or, "May the wrong that has come to me be put on thine account."

5.3 It is the first reaction of the flesh to put the blame elsewhere, at least partly. Adam placed the blame back on God; Eve placed it on the serpent.

5.4 Sarah seeks to place it on Abram. God places it upon our own old nature. (Mar 7:20-23)

Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Gen 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Mar 7:20 He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'

Mar 7:21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

Mar 7:22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

Mar 7:23 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Gen 16:6 "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

End Lesson