



Genesis 16:1-16

FAILURE ACCORDING TO GOD

In spite of God's promise and Abram's faith, he still had to wait many years before Isaac would be born. God would demonstrate His omnipotence by waiting until it was humanly impossible for Abram and Sarai to have a child before He would miraculously fulfill His word. In the meantime, Abram and Sarai, realizing the aging of their bodies, began to feel that they must somehow intervene to help God out in the accomplishment of His promise. This is an all-too-common experience for believers. "God helps those who help themselves," as the motto goes. Failing to see God work as soon as we think He should, we begin to feel that He is waiting for us to do "our part" before He will do His. We then devise various plans and programs to get it done, only to find it is all in vain, and in fact we do more harm than good. This was now the unhappy experience of Abram and Sarai.

—Henry M. Morris

- A Introduction to Abram's Life (11:27-32)
 - B Abram's Obedience to God's Word (12:1-9)**
 - C Abram's Lie: Sarai & Pharaoh (12:10-20)
 - D Abram's Rescue of Lot (13:1-14:17)
 - E Melchizedek's Blessing of Abram (14:18-24)
 - F Cutting of the Abrahamic Covenant (15)
 - G Abram's Failure: Hagar & Ishmael (16)**
 - F Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (17)
 - E God's Visit to Abraham (18)
 - D God's Rescue of Lot (19)
 - C Abraham's Lie: Sarah & Abimelech (20)
 - B Abraham's Obedience to God's Word (21:1-22:24)**
- A Epilogue to Abraham's Life (23:1-25:11)

In Genesis 15, Abram is commended for his faith; in Gen. 16, he fails. Abram sits passively in this chapter—listening to Sarai, fathering a child through Hagar, saying little and doing little to resolve the vicious conflict between Sarai and Hagar. Yet even in the failures and weaknesses of Abram and Sarai, God's faithfulness and love remain strong.

THE DESPERATE INITIATIVE OF SARAI (16:1-3)

- Sarai is _____.
- Abram is _____.
- Hagar is _____.

In whatever man does without God, he must fail miserably, or succeed more miserably.

—George MacDonald

Abram's failure in Gen 12 may have contributed to his failure in Gen 16—he may have acquired Hagar in that trip to Egypt (12:16).

—Allen Ross

It was a serious matter for a man to be childless in the ancient world for it left him without an heir. But it was even more calamitous for a woman. To have children was a mark of success as a wife; to have none was ignominious failure. So throughout the ancient East, polygamy was resorted to as a means of preventing childlessness. But wealthier wives preferred the practice of surrogate motherhood.

—Gordon J. Wenham

The waiting time is always the testing time.

—Oswald Chambers

Sarai never speaks to Hagar or says her name. Hagar is a tool to relieve Sarai's embarrassment... That she "took" her and "gave" her to her husband portrays the matriarch as another Eve (3:6).

—Kenneth E. Mathews

THE DEVASTATING IMPACT ON THE FAMILY (16:4-6)

- Hagar is _____.
- Sarai is _____.
- Abram is _____.

Abram fails to lead, Sarai takes the lead, and Hagar is led astray.

THE DIVINE INTERVENTION OF THE LORD (16:7-16)

- God _____ her.
- God _____ to her.
- God _____ her.
- God _____ her.

THE NAMES OF GOD REVEALED IN GENESIS

Elohim. The God of strength (Gen. 1:1).
Yahweh. The God of salvation (Gen. 12:1).
El Elyon. The God of supremacy (Gen. 14:22).
Adonai. The God of sovereignty (Gen. 15:2).
El Roi. The God of sympathy (Gen. 16:13).
El Shaddai. The God of sufficiency (Gen. 17:1).
El Olam. The God of stability (Gen. 21:33).
Yahweh Yireh. The God of sacrifice (Gen. 22:14).

- God _____ her.

Sarai's carefully wrought scheme backfired on her with a speed and a force that resulted in bitter rage.
—George Van Pelt Campbell

Wrong. Heb, *hamas*, “violence, cruelty.” Used in Gen. 6:11, 13.

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. —Victor Hugo (1802-85)

Passionate people often quarrel with others for things of which they themselves must bear the blame... When anger is on the throne, reason goes out the door.
—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

Like Eve, Sarai shifts the blame, and like Adam, Abram shrugs off responsibility. —Bruce K. Waltke

Sarai's treatment of the Egyptian Hagar foreshadows Israel's experience in Egypt. These exact words recur there: Egypt “degraded” them (Ex. 1:12) and they fled (Ex. 14:5)... Moses draws an ironic comparison: here an Egyptian is mistreated by the people of God!
—Richard E. Friedman

Christ is King, Priest, God, Lord, Angel, man, captain (Josh. 5:13-15), stone. He is a Son born, and first made subject to suffering, then returning to heaven, and again coming with glory, and He is preached as having the everlasting kingdom: so I prove from all the Scriptures.
—Justin Martyr (AD 100-165)

The story that accompanies this name [El Roi] is calculated to bring hope to modern day Hagers, wandering alone... In the lonely places, where danger and uncertainty lurk on every side, God's children are never really alone. God overlooks none; He sees them all.
—Jay Adams