

ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD – ABRAHAM HAD FAITH (review) Genesis 11:29 & 12:4 & 15:5-6

11:29 Abraham's wife was named Sarah. 30 But Sarah was childless – she could not have children. 12:4 Abraham was 75 years old (and Sarah was 65) when he went to Canaan. 15:5 God took Abraham outside (at night) – and God said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars – if you can count them! Your descendants will be as many as the stars.”

6 Abraham believed God. So God decided: Abraham's faith is goodness – God looked at Abraham's faith, and God gave Abraham goodness.

This is Option #2:

Abraham believed God – God made Abraham good – and Abraham will live forever.

BUT ABRAHAM DIDN'T WAIT FOR GOD'S PROMISE – HE & SARAH MADE THEIR OWN PLAN

Genesis 16:1-4

16:3 Abraham lived in Canaan for ten years, 16:1 but Sarah still had no children. But Sarah had a female slave – the slave's name was Hagar. 2 So Sarah said to Abraham, “God does not give me children. Maybe I can make a family through my slave – my slave will have children for me.”

Abraham listened to what Sarah said – he did what Sarah said. 3 Sarah gave her female slave Hagar to her husband. Hagar became Abraham's (second) wife. 4 Abraham slept with Hagar – and Hagar became pregnant.

(In old Middle Eastern culture, having no children was a very big problem – if the family had no children, the family had no heir. But the family must have an heir. So, sometimes, a female slave became a second wife. The slave wife had a lower position than the first wife. This was an old Middle Eastern custom.

Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, John H. Walton & Craig S. Keener, Zondervan, pp 44-45)

BAD RESULTS FROM ABRAHAM & SARAH'S PLAN

Genesis 16:4-16

4 Then Hagar knew that she was pregnant. So Hagar looked down on her master Sarah. 5 And Sarah said to Abraham, “It is your fault! I am very unhappy – and you are responsible. I put my female slave in **your** arms. And now she looks down on me – she looks down on me because she is pregnant.”

6 But Abraham said, “Look! **Your** female slave is in **your** hands. So do what you want with **your** slave.” Then Sarah treated Hagar very badly.

So Hagar ran away from Sarah. 7 Hagar ran into the desert – and Hagar stopped by a spring. The Angel of God found Hagar by the spring. 8 And the Angel of God said, “Hagar, female slave of

Sarah: Where did you come from? And where are you going?” Hagar answered, “I am running away from my master Sarah.”

9The Angel of God told Hagar, “Go back to your master. Obey your master.” 10Then the angel said, “I will give you many, many descendants – no one will be able to count your descendants.

11The Angel of God also said, “You are pregnant – and you will have a son. You must name him Ishmael (‘God hears’) – because God hears your sadness and pain.”

13And Hagar named God: ‘God sees me.’

15So Hagar’s baby was born – she had Abraham’s son. And Abraham named the baby Ishmael. 16Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

WILL GOD GIVE UP ON ABRAHAM?

Genesis 17:1-2

1When Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to Abraham. God said, “I am Most-Powerful-God. Live for me – and always do what is right. 2And I will make my promise to you (again).

CONTENT QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were Abraham and Sarah's 2 big problems? (Genesis 11:30 & 12:4)
- But what did God promise Abraham? (Genesis 15:5)
 - And what did Abraham do? (verse 6)
 - So what did God do for Abraham? (verse 6)
- But after 10 years, what was Abraham's situation? (Genesis 16:1 & 3)

Is 10 years a long time to wait?

Is it difficult to wait a long time but still believe God's promises?

How long should we wait for God's promises to come true?

- What was the name of Sarah's female slave? (verse 1)
- What plan did Sarah have? (verse 2)

How do you think Sarah felt about God's promise?

- What did Abraham think about Sarah's plan? (verse 2)

How do you think Abraham felt about God's promise?

- What did Sarah do? (verse 3)

What was the custom in Sarah's culture?

Did Sarah follow her culture? Or did Sarah wait for God's promise?

Is that a good idea?

- Then what did Abraham do? (verses 2-4)

Did Abraham follow Sarah's plan? Or did Abraham wait for God's promise?

Is that a good idea?

- What happened to Hagar? (verse 4)
- What happened to the relationships between Abraham, Sarah and Hagar? (verses 4-6)

After she became pregnant, how did Hagar think about her master Sarah? (verse 4)

Was Hagar right to look down on her master Sarah?

How did Sarah feel about her husband Abraham? (verse 5)

Was Sarah fair or unfair?

What did Abraham say to Sarah? (verse 6)

Was Abraham in a difficult situation with two wives?

Was it good for Abraham to say this? What do you think?

How did Sarah treat Hagar? (verse 6)

Did Hagar think that God would help her? What do you think?

(In verse 6) did Hagar think: God sees my trouble?

So what did Hagar do? (verse 6)

Do you think that Abraham was a good leader in this situation?

Was Abraham's family happier before this plan or happier after this plan?

Is it better to follow our own plans? Or is it better to obey God?

- Did God care about Hagar? (verses 7-11)

What did God do? (verses 7-9)

What did God promise Hagar? (verse 10-11)

- What was the name of Hagar's son? (verse 11)

What does Ishmael mean? (verse 11)

- What did Hagar name God? (verse 13)

Why did Hagar name God: 'God sees me'?

Sometimes we have great trouble and sadness – and we cry in our hearts.

But how do we feel when we know that God hears us?

Sometimes we feel alone – we feel that no one sees our troubles.

How do we feel when we know that God sees us?

How did Hagar's thinking about God change during this story?

What did she learn about God?

Does God only care about important people?
Or does God also care about little people? – about slaves?

- Did God give up on Abraham? (Genesis 17:1-2)

Did God say to Abraham:

You did not wait for my promise to come true – so I will take away your goodness?

Abraham and Sarah made a big mistake:

But did God still love them?

Does God still love his children when they make big mistakes?

13*When we are not faithful, God is still faithful – sometimes we do not believe and obey God, but God is still good to us – because God is God – God is love. 12***But if we say: ‘God, I reject you’ – then God will reject us.**

2 Timothy 2:12-13

25*Jesus said, 28***I give eternal life to people who believe in me – and they will never be destroyed. No one can take them out of my hand – 29***or out of God my Father’s hand.*

John 10:25-29

Did Abraham and Sarah reject God? Or did they just not follow God’s promise?

Next story we will read about what God did for Abraham and Sarah.