

Genesis chapter 16

Sarai, Hagar and Ishmael

Read Genesis 16:1-6

Notice the two cycles of Sarai's suffering, Sarai blaming, Sarai seeking a solution, Abram passively agreeing, and the result. Sarai attempts a human solution to her problem, which only creates complication without relief.

Gen. 16:1-3

Why did Abram decide to have relations with Hagar?

In Genesis 15:4, what promise does God make? How would a child from Hagar satisfy that promise?

Why do you think God does not tell us the plan for our lives in advance? Look up: Psalm 27:13-14

Genesis 16:4-6

What was the immediate result of Abram's actions?

How can impatience with God's timetable and way of working lead us to disobedience?

Look up: Proverbs 19:21

Read Genesis 16:7-14

The name Ishmael means "God hears."

The Lord "gave heed" to Hagar's affliction.

What does Hagar learn about the Lord through this traumatic experience?

What does it tell us about God that he visited Hagar, the Egyptian maid, in the desert to comfort her? (Psalm 40:1)

Read Genesis 16:15-16

Based on Genesis 16:15, Hagar reported her experience with the Lord to Abram, and he was obedient to name her son "Ishmael." What do you think he learned from Hagar about God?

God heard Hagar's affliction in the desert. Do you think he was also aware of Sarai's? Look up: Psalm 5:3

Question: "Who is the angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament?

Answer: The precise identity of "the angel of the Lord" is not given in the Bible. There are Old and New Testament references to "angels of the Lord," "*an* angel of the Lord," and "*the* angel of the Lord."

It seems when the definite article "the" is used, it is specifying a unique being, separate from the other angels. The angel of the Lord speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and exercises the responsibilities of God (Genesis 16:7-12; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8).

In several of these appearances, those who saw the angel of the Lord feared for their lives because they had "seen the Lord." Therefore, in at least some instances, the angel of the Lord is a theophany, an appearance of God in physical form.

The case for the angel being Jesus (“Christophany”):

When God is present in all His glory, man may not see him and live. In the angel of the Lord, God appeared as a man, and humans could speak to him without dying. The appearances of the angel of the Lord cease after the incarnation of Christ. Angels are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, but “*the* angel of the Lord” is never mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus declared Himself to be existent “before Abraham” (John 8:58)

The case against the angel being Jesus:

There are other instances of God speaking to a man without the man dying. In the very next chapter of Genesis, God (not “the angel of the Lord”) speaks to Abraham.

Before Jesus emptied himself and took the appearance of a man at his birth, he was “in very nature God.” Philippians 2:6-8 Thus, just as those who saw God in the fullness of his glory could not withstand it, so they would react to seeing Jesus.

“Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One.” Deut 6:4. The word “one” here means united, whole. John 1:1-6: Jesus was the author of the creation of the world. “He was with God and he was God” In short, he could not be an “angel” or “messenger” of the Lord, because he was the Lord, Yahweh, who although triune in nature was still united before Jesus emptied himself and came to earth as a man.

Consider the Bereans - Look up: Acts 17:10-12

“In Essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity.” - Augustine

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;
And run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.