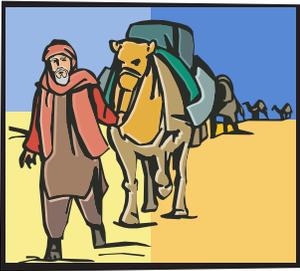




Abram, Hagar & Ishmael

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Genesis 15 - 16



In Genesis chapter 11, we meet a man named Abram. From this point in the Bible on, the Bible talks specifically about Abram and his offspring, because God was going to do something AMAZING through Abram's family line.

Day #1: The Call, The Promise

Louis Pasteur was a scientist who lived in France in the 1800s. He was the first person to discover that most diseases were caused by germs - one of the most important breakthroughs in medical history. He was also the first to develop immunizations to prevent diseases. It has been said of him, "Pasteur was a scientific genius whose discoveries have most likely extended all of our lives through disease prevention." Imagine how Louis' parents and grandparents felt. Could they ever imagine that through them, the whole world would be blessed? This week we will learn about a man through whom we have all been blessed even more.

God chose Abram. God gave Abram a command and a promise.

† *The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family. Go to the land I will show you.*

*"I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great. You will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you. I will put a curse on anyone who calls down a curse on you. **All nations on earth will be blessed because of you.**" - Genesis 12:1-3*

Abram was not raised in a family that followed God. Abram's father worshipped false gods (Joshua 24:2). Yet, when God called out to Abram, he obeyed.

So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him. - Genesis 12:4a

Abram's obedience was proof that he trusted God. Even though God did not yet reveal where He would send Abram, Abram packed up his family and his belongings and left his home. The Bible says that by faith, Abram left without knowing where he was going (Hebrews 11:8).

* Reread and underline the last promise which starts "All nations..." Are you part of a nation? Of course you are! This promise is about all of us. Through Abram, God would do something incredible that would bless us all. It is even bigger than the cure to a disease! It is the cure for eternal punishment, and the way to **eternal life**.

Day #2: Waiting

The first promise that God made to Abram was that God would make him into a great nation. This meant a group of people that was large in number, and very important. God was promising that Abram and his wife would have many children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and so on. This was an amazing promise because Abram and his wife, Sarai, were never able to have any children. And by this time, they were very old. They were way past the age at which people could have children. When God made His promise, Abram was 75 years old and Sarai was 65 years old. But Abram believed God. He and Sarai had gone to the land where God led them. It was called the land of Canaan.

So Abram and Sarai waited for a child. They waited...

and waited...

and waited...

and waited.

God came to Abram again. Abram was sad that he still did not have a child. He asked God if one of his servants would have to be like a son to him. God told Abram that he would have a son that would come from his own body.

† *The Lord took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky. Count the stars, if you can." Then he said to him, "That is how many children you will have." Abram believed the Lord. The Lord accepted Abram because he believed. So **his faith made him right with the Lord.** - Genesis 15:5*

* Have you ever forgotten a promise that you made to someone? Has anyone ever made a promise to you, and then forgot about it? People might forget a promise, but God NEVER does! (Number 23:19) Do not grow tired of waiting for God. He does everything in His perfect timing. He uses every moment of our waiting for our good (Romans 5:3-4). Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you to be patient (Galatians 5:22-23).

Day #3: Choice to Sin

Ten years passed since God first made His amazing promise to Abram. Abram and Sarai were still waiting for a child. Ten years is a very long time to wait.

Sarai knew she was WAY too old to have a baby. She went to Abram and told him that he should marry her servant girl, Hagar, so that Hagar could give him a child. In their day and in their culture, men often married more than one wife. However, it was NOT God's perfect standard. In the beginning, God created one man and one woman. God's perfect plan was that one man and one woman

Day #3 continued:

would marry and become united as one (Genesis 2:24). But Abram made a tragic decision.



Abram agreed to what Sarai had said. - Genesis 16:2b

(This sounds very much like Adam going along with Eve, and eating the forbidden fruit.)

Abram married Hagar. He stopped waiting for God to do something miraculous. He truly believed that God would give him many descendants who would become a great nation, but then **he tried to do the work himself**. He used "common sense." He did not do things God's way. He did what everyone around him was doing. He didn't ask God if marrying Hagar was the right thing to do. Abram sinned by doing things his own way and we will see that this sin caused trouble for everyone.



List some things that those around you do that you know is not God's way of doing things. (Some examples might be: teasing others, taking what they want, trying to be first.) Remember that God's way is not the world's way. If you are ever in doubt, ask God for wisdom!

If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault. - James 1:5

Day #4: God Who Sees Me

After Abram married Hagar, she became pregnant. Hagar was still Hagar's servant, but Hagar started to think that she was better than Sarai because she was going to have Abram's baby. Sarai was very upset by Hagar's attitude, so she started to treat Hagar badly. Finally, Hagar ran into the desert to get away from Sarai. But no one can run away from God.

In His kindness, God went after Hagar. An angel of the Lord came to Hagar in the desert and asked her where she was going.



"I'm running away from my owner Sarai," she answered.

Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to the woman who owns you. Obey her." - Genesis 16:8b-9

The angel told her that she was going to have a son and she should name him Ishmael, which means, "God will hear," because God heard her suffering. The angel told her she would have so many descendants that no one could count them. He also said that Ishmael would be strong and wild, with many enemies.

Names were very important to the Lord. The Bible tells us many names for God. That day, Hagar gave the Lord another name. She called Him, "**You are the God who sees me.**" Hagar obeyed the Lord, and returned to Abram and Sarai's home.

Hagar was going to have a baby, but this was NOT the baby through whom God would bless the world. Even before Ishmael was born, we can see that trouble was

Day #4 continued:

on the horizon.



Take a "dry erase" marker, and write on your bedroom mirror or bathroom mirror. Write the words, "God sees me." Each time you see this, remember that God is always with you. He sees you everywhere you go. There is nowhere you can go where God can not see you.

You know when I sit down or stand up. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. - Psalm 139:2a, 3 NLT

(Note to parent: Any grease pencil, such as eyeliner or lip liner, will also write on mirror.)

Day #5: Fruitful

When you are outside, find an ant on the sidewalk or driveway, and watch it work. Often ants carry very heavy loads, even 10 -20 times their own body weight. But for a human, the ant's load would take almost no effort to pick up. A human is immeasurably stronger and smarter than an ant. What if an ant offered to **help** a human pick up a pencil or use a calculator? Of course, that is ridiculous, but it is very similar to Sarai and Abram's actions.

Sarai probably thought that she was **helping God** by giving Hagar to Abram to marry. But God did not need anyone's help! He is all-powerful and He is in control of all things. God was waiting for just the right time to bring just the right child into the world.

More than anything in the world, Abram wanted God's promises to come true. He knew that the promise started with a child. The Bible calls having children "being fruitful." Abram wanted to bear fruit in order to accomplish God's plan. But Abram made a big mistake when he tried to bear fruit on his own, **without God**.



The Bible talks about another kind of fruit. It is spiritual fruit. As believers, we must have this fruit in our lives.



But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. - Galatians 5:22-23a

More spiritual fruit is justice, righteousness, and truth (Isaiah 5:7, Ephesians 5:8). This is a tall order. But, just like Abram, we make a terrible mistake if we try to bear spiritual fruit **without God**. Listen to the words Jesus spoke to His disciples:

"You can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to Me. I am the vine. You are the branches. If anyone remains joined to Me, and I to him, he will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without Me." - John 15:4b-5

Remained joined to Jesus. Trust Him, read His Word, pray all the time. Rely on Him to produce spiritual fruit in your life.