Genesis

## **When We Can’t Wait (16:1-16)**

*From a study of Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis, Paul Kretzmann’s Popular Commentary of the Bible, and the Lutheran Study Bible.*

## **Hagar the Horrible? (16:1-16)**

* Sarai is exhausted
  + Abram had the promise from the Lord God…
  + She had 85-year-old Abram to convey that message.
    - Does not doubt the promise…
    - But doubts the persons whom God wants
    - The longer the promise was delayed, the heavier the cross they had to bear
* What do we do when we can’t wait on God anymore?
  + Take things into our own hands.
  + …she nevertheless relinquishes the glory of motherhood in the utmost humility and is content if her maid Hagar becomes pregnant by Abraham. Therefore she holds fast to her faith and hope in the mercy of God. In the utmost humility she bears the disgrace of barrenness and willingly concedes this honor to her maid.[[1]](#footnote-1)
    - Consider what other wives would have done in a similar situation.
      * Job 2:9
    - Here, Sarai concedes the glory of fertility to her maid.
      * 1 Peter 3:6
  + Abram too…
    - Over all those years, he could have taken another wife or concubine…
    - But chose only Sarai for his wife…
      * Yet listened and complied with her request.
* Who is responsible here?
  + Note that Sarai declares it is the Lord who has prevented her from having a child
    - Not Satan
    - AND she does not blame God, yet humbly acknowledges the hand she has been dealt.
* This is not a precedent!
  + Does not make the act right
  + A gift of a wife from his wife
    - Not a one-night stand
  + So savage and corrupt is human nature. Marriage is necessary as a remedy for lust, and through marriage God permits sexual intercourse. Not only does He cover the sin from which we are unable to abstain, but He also blesses the union of the male and the female. And yet the whole world shuns this legitimate, divinely instituted union and prefers to indulge in promiscuous relations, which are harmful in more than one way. Property is squandered, bodies are damaged by serious diseases, God is provoked to inflict horrible punishments, and, worst of all, states and households are destroyed. Why do we not avoid these great evils? Why do we not prefer to seek the blessing of God through a legitimate union? Obviously because our nature is corrupted by sin, rebellious, and intolerant of laws, and does not want to be tamed or restrained.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* A child is conceived!
  + And surprise!
  + Problems start.
    - Not with Abram or Sarai
    - Hagar over Sarai
      * “I’m better and more blessed than you!”
      * Warnings of how to use blessings from God with humility.
        + John 13:18
        + The monks, who had no knowledge of God or of people, withdrew into the deserts and there lived for themselves. But this is by no means Christian. You should remain in the world and among people; and you should endure the annoyances of the world and of Satan, and not be overcome by the flesh. For to overcome the malice of human beings is the mark not only of a man but of a Christian.[[3]](#footnote-3)
    - How could/should Haggar have responded?
* Sarai cannot take it anymore
  + In this historical account the Holy Spirit depicts the source of all the dangers that arise not only in the household but also in the state and in the church. In the state you will find it to be true that for the most part those least capable of conducting the affairs of state administer them. Likewise those who are not the church arrogate to themselves the government of the church.[[4]](#footnote-4)
  + If Hagar was now Abram’s additional “wife,” they needed to act like ‘one flesh.’
    - The Lord’s judgment was on Abram for how Hagar treated Sarai.
* Happy wife = Happy life
  + Neither are happy
  + Abram’s response?
    - “You deal with it!”
    - Stuck between a rock and a hard place
      * A woman now bears his seed (Not necessarily THE Seed)
        + (But they don’t know that)
      * And the woman whom he loves and has cared for through thick and thin.
  + In a similar situation I would have concurred in it. “My dear lady,” I would have said, “you are barren. God has deprived you of the fruit of the womb and has given it to this woman. Therefore show some forbearance.” But Abraham does not do this. He prefers his barren and aged lady to the pregnant mother.[[5]](#footnote-5)
  + A tale of two churches
    - But this passage also contains a theological meaning, with which the allegory Paul employs in Gal. 4:29–30 is almost in agreement. For just as Hagar, whose status was that of a purchased maid or a slave, was puffed up by the gift of God and wanted to lord it over Sarah and to make Sarah subject to Hagar, so the false church condemns, despises, and afflicts the true church and arrogates to itself alone the title “the people of God.” This dispute continually troubles the household of the church. Those who are not the church want to be the church. On the other hand, those who are the true church are harassed and suppressed by the false church.[[6]](#footnote-6)
    - Remember, there is something going on within Abram’s household, to be the heir of his inheritance.
      * 15:2
      * Hagar more than likely has been overtaken by this greed.
  + With whom does Abram’s love reside?
    - Lust for Hagar who gives him what he wanted?
    - Love for his God and wife and be patient?
      * 1 Peter 3:7
      * “You deal with her.”
        + Hagar IS Sarai’s servant.
* Sarai deals with Hagar
  + Is “harshly” too harsh?
    - Hebrew verb means “to humble, vex, afflict”
    - I believe a good translation would be “Sarai reminded Hagar of her position”
  + And what do we like to do when we don’t get our way?
    - Run away!
      * One of two reasons:
        + Avoid harsh treatments (emotionally/physically), or
        + “I’m taking my toys and going home!”?

How can we/people respond when the Law hits us?

Repent and comply, or

Run away declaring “you can’t use my gifts!”?

* + - * Thus today Germany has so far not cried, not wept, and not grieved over the awful sins we are committing. But now that punishments are coming, we are beginning to moan and wail, although this should have been done long ago. For when the punishments are being inflicted, we cry out and wail in vain. But those who wail before punishment comes—by their sighs the Lord is moved, and He mitigates the punishments, as is promised in Ezek. 9:4–6, where God, who is about to inflict punishments on the priests and the people, commands that those who are sobbing because of idolatry be picked out and saved, lest they perish together with the ungodly.[[7]](#footnote-7)
* The Law is not done with Hagar just yet.
  + Hagar is making her way back to Egypt.
  + Does Hagar see that she has done anything wrong?
    - Did not listen to Sarai.
    - How about an angel of the LORD?
      * Pre-incarnate Christ?
      * The Law declared from the angel frightens Hagar to recognize the truth of her actions.
        + Acts 9:6
    - Repentance brings blessings
      * Through this child, there will be many descendants
        + But there is a difference

Galatians 4:21-31

Distinction between the Jews/Christians and Muslims

Muslims claim the proper line is with them through Hagar’s descendants…

Therefore, they are blinded with the same sin of their mother.

* + - * But one should hold fast to the comfort given here and think: “Behold, I am a manservant, a maidservant, one who is stricken with poverty and overburdened with work, etc. So be it! But let this be my comfort, that my God regards all alike—kings and servants, rich and poor, sinners and those who are righteous.” He is the God of all, and He wants us all to rely on His mercy and favor. The difference there is among people in this life does not make different persons before God. God hears all alike—you in your menial state and another in his free state.[[8]](#footnote-8)
      * Ishmael
        + Means “God hears”

“A cause of haughtiness of the Muslims”

* + - * + A wild man

Although Hagar repents, will her descendants?

* Beer-lahai-roi
  + “Well of the Living One who sees me”

1. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.1-2&off=4994&ctx=%E2%80%94of+being+a+mother%2c+~she+nevertheless+rel), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.4&off=1709), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.4&off=10631&ctx=p+with+ingratitude.%0a~The+monks%2c+who+had+n), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.5&off=1907&ctx=ng+dealt+with+here.+~In+this+historical+a), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.6&off=656&ctx=nd+completely+fair.+~In+a+similar+situati), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 54–55. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.6&off=1850), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 55–56. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.6&off=12769&ctx=too%2c+weep+in+vain.%E2%80%9D%0a~Thus+today+Germany+h), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 15-20*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw03?ref=Bible.Ge16.11&off=2176&ctx=tuation+by+sinning.%0a~But+one+should+hold+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)