

GENESIS 16

Hagar and the Birth of Ishmael

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KEYWORD

REVERANCE

God (Plural)
God (Singular)
LORD
GOD
Lord
lord
El Olam
Bara
Asah
Beth
Numbers

Elohim (The Trinity)
El
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)
Jehovah & or Yahweh
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai
Man the Master
Everlasting God
God creating from nothing
God making or assembling from existent materials
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

Keywords

“create” (bara), “make” (asah), and “form” (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 – All the three are used.

Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need

PRAYER

Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

Jesus let thy Holly spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!

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REVIEW

Hagar one of Sarai's Egyptian maid-servants whom the king of Egypt bestowed upon Abram in chapter 12:16 is the person mostly concerned in the story of this chapter 15.

We have about four things in this chapter concerning Hagar:

1. Her marriage to Abram her master (v. 1-3).
2. Her misbehaviour towards Sarai her mistress (v. 4-6).
3. Her discourse with an angel that met her in her flight (v. 7-14).
4. Her delivery of a son (v. 15, 16).

Now you need to understand that for very many years, Abram resisted following the normal practices of his day. Abram and Sarai were wealthy. They had many servants. Abram could have taken many wives if he so desired.

But instead he chose to wait for God to fulfil the promise of children through his barren wife Sarai.

Right now Abram is in his mid-80s, Sarai has become tired of waiting and as such she activates plan B which is giving her Egyptian servant Hagar to Abram, in order to finally obtain a child.

Apparently, if a wife was unable to bear children, it was considered appropriate for her to give a servant to her husband, as another wife, with the understanding that any children born to that servant would rightfully become the children of the original wife.

➤ Of course Abram agreed to Sarai's plan B and Hagar quickly became pregnant.

Hagar now elevated from slave to wife begins to treat her mistress Sarai with contempt. Perhaps Hagar resented the idea that her child would belong to Sarai.

Sarai's feelings about her plan changed and she makes it clear to Abram that she holds him responsible for this conflict! And, she demands that he make clear that Sarai remains in authority over Hagar.

Again, Abram agrees. With that approval, Sarai deals harshly with Hagar, so harshly that Hagar runs off into the wilderness alone, maybe fearful for her life.

Jesus finds Hagar resting at a spring along a road leading back to her homeland of Egypt. First, the angel of the Lord tells Hagar to return and submit to Sarai. Then He reveals that she will bear a son, Ishmael, and that his offspring will become so numerous as to be uncountable.

However, he will be a "wild donkey" of a man and his life—and the lives of his descendants—will be marked by conflict with everyone. Hagar returns to Abram and Sarai, and Ishmael is born.

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GEN 16: 1

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children;

(Abraham was 85 years old and Sarah was 75 years old.)

and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

(The name Hagar signifies a stranger or sojourner, and it is likely she got this name in the family of Abram, as the word is pure Hebrew.

Remember when Abraham went down into Egypt because of the famine in the land? One of the things that they picked up in Egypt was a handmaiden for Sarah, Hagar, the Egyptian.)

GEN 16: 2

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing;

(Sarai understood that God was sovereign over the womb. *You need to understand that there was a lot of pain in these words.*

- The pain of hope deferred making the heart sick (Proverbs 13:12).
- The pain of prayers not yet answered.
- The pain of arms that had never yet held her own child.
- The pain of public shame.
- The pain of blaming God for one's problems; unbelief is a sin, but it is also a sickness that carries a lot of pain)

I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her.

(Back then slaves were absolute property of the mistress including the fruits of her labour & all her children. It was on this ground that Sarai gave her slave to Abram.

So basically Sarah is suggesting the use of Hagar as a means by which they could help God perform His promise.

Perhaps she thought along the lines of an old (unbiblical) proverb, **"God helps those who help themselves."**

Sarah is literally saying,

- "Look Abraham, let's give up, it's not going to happen." Let's help God, you know, He needs our help now."
 - Have you ever been told that God needs your help?
-

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- God's program is going to die if you don't help Him.
- If you want to see His work continued next week, you'd better respond today and call this number. God needs your help.
- That's just nonsense and for sure God doesn't need our help to accomplish his purposes

So now Abram & Sarai find themselves in the position of seeking natural means to accomplish the purposes of God. That is always a big mistake and most times we end up making a total mess out of everything.)

And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

(It was bad for Abram to heed the voice of Sarai on this matter.

- Abram was responsible for his sin of heeding the unwise, unbelief-based advice of his wife.
 - Abram should have said something like this: "Sarai, bless your heart – but *you're* my wife and we're in this together. Difficult as it is, let's believe God all over again for a miracle. I don't want to sin against God and our marriage with this Egyptian servant girl."
 - One of the Jewish traditions say that before Abram and Sarai came to live in the Promised Land, they regarded their childlessness as punishment for not living in the land.
 - But now they were in the land for ten years, and they still had no children.
 - Sarai probably felt it was time to do something)
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GEN 16: 3-4

And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

(It's now a full decade since the initial promise and Sarai is still barren. By Abram and Sarai's way of thinking, it is time for them to help God's plan along. They want for themselves what God wants for them; they just don't want to wait for Him to give it to them in the traditional way.

This practise is also common with the barren Hindoo women consenting to their husbands marrying a second wife for the sake of children.)

And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived;

(Abram certainly acted according to his own power and wisdom when he agreed to inseminate Hagar and did not trust in God's ability to provide an heir through Sarai.

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But this wasn't a matter of romance. In fact according to some of the customs of the day, Hagar would actually sit on the lap of Sarai as Abram inseminated her, to show that the child would legally belong to Sarai, as Hagar was merely a substitute for Sarai.

- i. We understand this from the similar occasion of using a servant as a surrogate mother in the case of Rachel's giving of Bilhah to Jacob when Rachel was barren.

In that context, Genesis 30:3 reads: *So she said,*

"Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her."

- ii. The phrase "bear a child on my knees" refers to the ancient practice of surrogate-adoption. Some believe that the phrase refers only to a symbolic placement of the child on the knees of one who adopts it.

Others believe that it refers to the surrogate sitting on the lap of the adoptive mother during both insemination and birth.

For example, referring to Genesis 30:3, the Twentieth Century Bible Commentary says:

"These words are probably intended literally, and not merely as figurative adoption.")

and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

(From Sarai's perspective, a terrible thing happened – Abram succeeded in making Hagar pregnant. This proved beyond all doubt the failure to provide a son to Abram was the fault of Sarai, not her husband.

In a culture that so highly valued childbearing, mothering the child of a wealthy and influential man like Abram gave a servant girl like Hagar greater status, and made her appear more blessed than Sarai.

- i. This is a good reminder that *results* are not enough to justify what we do before God. It's not right to say, "Well, they got a baby out of it. It must have been God's will." The flesh profits nothing (John 6:63), but it can *produce* something. Doing things in the flesh may get results, and we may be sorry we got them.

- ii. Whatever a man or woman attempts to do without God will be a miserable failure – or an even more miserable success.

As such Hagar immediately began to think of herself as better as and greater than Sarai. Basically a bad situation became worse.)

GEN 16: 5-6

And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee:

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(Sarai blamed the whole situation on Abram, and for good cause. He should have acted as the spiritual leader and told his wife that God was able to perform what He promised, and they didn't need to try to perform God's promise by disobeying Him and relying on man's strength and wisdom.

But for a moment also let's try to get into Abram's situation:

Remember God had not told Abram *how* he was to have an heir; the promise simply stated in Genesis 15:4: *He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*

Back in the day having a Concubine was perfectly lawful; therefore he could, with equal justice and innocence.

And it is very likely that Abram thought that the intended promise would come by *wife or concubine*, as both were lawful.

Anyways for Abram to remove all suspicions, he delivers up Hagar into Sarah's hand, who was certainly under his protection as his concubine or secondary wife; to prevent her jealousy and uneasiness.)

I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes;

(Hagar's contempt for Sarai started the problem. She couldn't resist displaying an inappropriate haughtiness, thinking her pregnancy somehow showed her to be better than Sarai.)

the LORD judge between me and thee.

(It's interesting to note that Sarai invokes the Lord's name in her angry plea to Abram.

Sarai certainly seems to be holding over his head that he "embraced" this woman, even though it was at her urging.

In addition, Sarai was likely stung with grief and jealousy that another woman had so easily become the bearer of Abram's child, something she had always hoped to be.

Even worse, this woman had become smug and contemptuous of her.)

But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.

(Abram seemed to make a bad situation worse by turning the situation over to Sarai and not taking care of the child he was father to. Yet in this, he also put his relationship with Sarai first, and that was good.

i. These terribly complicated and difficult family situations often arise out of our disobedience. All things considered, it is much easier to live life trusting in and obedient unto the LORD. God wants to spare us from these complications and difficulties.)

And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

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(The word “dealt hardly” here means she afflicted her; this term basically implies stripes and hard usage, more of to bring down the body and humble the mind.

So now you have Sarai’s cruelty colliding with Hagar’s pride, and all Hagar could think to do was to run.

Even with nowhere to go, **she fled from her presence** – probably headed back to Egypt, her original home.)

GEN 16: 7

And the angel of the LORD

(This is the first time the angel of the LORD is mentioned in the Old Testament. We will find the angel of the LORD appearing many times in the Old Testament.

The angel of the LORD here is none other than Jesus Christ because the person mentioned here was greater than any created being and I say this because of the following reasons: -

- From his promising to *perform* what God alone could *do*, and *foretelling* what God alone could *know*, *ie*;
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- **Genesis 16:10:** *I will multiply thy seed exceedingly*
 - **Genesis 16:11:** *Thou art with child, and shalt bear a son*
 - **Genesis 16:12:** *He will be a wild man*
-

All this shows a *prescience* which is proper to God alone.

2. Hagar considers the person who spoke to her as *God*, calls him אֱלֹהִים *El*, and addresses him in the way of *worship*, which, had he been a created angel, he would have refused as seen in **Genesis 19:10 & Genesis 22:9**.

3. Moses, when relating to this transaction, calls this angel expressly JEHOVAH; for he says, she called *shem Yehovah*, the NAME of the LORD that spake to her as seen in **Genesis 16:13**. Now this is a name never given to any created being.

4. This person, who is here called *malach Yehovah*, the Angel of the Lord, is the same who is called in

- **Genesis 48:16** *hammalach haggoel*, the *redeeming Angel* or the *Angel the Redeemer*
 - **Isaiah 63:9** *Malach panaiv*, the Angel of God's presence, ; and
 - **Malachi 3:1** *malach habberith*, the Angel of the Covenant,
 - **Isaiah 9:6** *the Angel of the Great Counsel or Design*, viz., of redeeming man, and filling the earth with righteousness.
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5. These things cannot be spoken of any *human* or *created* being, for the *knowledge and works* attributed to this person are such as belong to God.

6. This person couldn't have been God the Father because *no man hath at any time seen his shape*, nor has he ever limited himself to any definable *personal* appearance.)

found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness,

(Hagar was on her way back to Egypt and she had stopped at this spring of water. Perhaps she was afraid to go further and leave this supply of water.)

by the fountain in the way to Shur.

(This was the road from Hebron to Egypt, it is probable she was now returning to Egypt)

GEN 16: 8-10

And He said,

(Seemingly, **the Angel of the LORD** was a physical presence who spoke with Hagar as one person speaks to another.

We don't have the sense that this was a mere spiritual impression or a voice in the wind.

There was a person physically present with Hagar, and that person was **Jesus Christ**.

- i. Later in the text, it shows that Hagar understood that this physically-present Person was *God Himself*. When God Himself is physically present, we understand that it is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.
- ii. We understand this because of God the Father it says: *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him* (John 1:18), and no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1 Timothy 6:16).

Therefore, if God physically appeared and spoke as one Person to another in the Old Testament, we understand this as an appearance of the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

- The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Abraham (Genesis 22).
 - The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Moses (Exodus 3).
 - The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Balaam (Numbers 22).
 - The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Israel collectively (Judges 2).
 - The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Gideon (Judges 6).
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- The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Samson's parents (Judges 13).
- The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to David (2 Samuel 24).
- The **Angel of the LORD** would later appear to Elijah (1 Kings 19).
- iii. *This is the first appearance of the Angel of the LORD in the Bible.*
- iv. He didn't first appear to Noah or Enoch or Abram.
- v. **Jesus first appeared to a single mother-to-be who had a pride problem and was mistreated by the woman who put her into the whole mess.**
- vi. All this makes us amazed at God's love for the unlikely, and we should never forget that He often delights in doing this.)

Hagar, Sarai's maid,

(This mode of address is used to show her that she was *known*, and to remind her that she was the *property of another*.

- But also as a check to her pride, though she was Abram's wife Jesus calls her *Sarai's maid*, to humble her.
- Though civility teaches us to call others by their highest titles, yet humility and wisdom teach us to call ourselves by the lowest.
- Also as a rebuke to her running, Sarai's maid ought to be in Sarai's tent, and not wandering in the wilderness by a fountain of water.)

whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? (Not that Jesus doesn't know but he asks questions to draw out a confessions) And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

(Hagar answered honestly and she acknowledged her fault in fleeing from her mistress)

And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

(Jesus told her to *repent*. If she changed her direction, there was an inherent promise – *obey Me and I will protect you*. Jesus didn't exactly tell Hagar to go back to an abusive household; He simply made an implied promise of protection.)

And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly,

(God not only implied a promise of protection, He also gave a clear promise of staggering blessing. The unborn son of Hagar would be the father of uncountable descendants.

- i. As the promise was fulfilled, Ishmael became the ancestor of the Arab people, just as his later half-brother Isaac would become the ancestor of the Jewish people.
-

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ii. This makes the conflict between Arab and Jew even more tragic: *they are brothers* and share a common father in Abraham.

iii. The Turks at this day descend from Ishmael and they are a great people.)

that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

GEN 16: 11

And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael;

(Ishmael was given a great promise, not only in the number of his descendants, but also in that he was the first one in the Bible given his name before he was born.

God had a plan for this boy and his descendants.

God doesn't give a name if He doesn't have a plan.

i. Many Christians today think they know God's plan for the **descendants of Ishmael**, the Arabic people: God wants to wipe them out because of their hatred of Jews and their persecution of Christians. This reaction is not rooted in the Bible, especially in this passage of Genesis 16. Consider:

· Jesus could have allowed Hagar and her unborn child to die in the wilderness – He didn't allow it. Jesus specifically intervened so that wouldn't happen.

· Jesus could have allowed Hagar to live, but to disappear from the life and household of Abraham and Sarah, but He didn't allow that.

· One may argue that Ishmael's conception was because of sin and unbelief; but Jesus could have erased him from the story, and Jesus *chose not to*. This part of the story is Jesus's doing, not man's doing.

· Jesus *specifically commanded Hagar to go back, to stay in the story*. We can know that *Jesus's story for the Arabic people is not finished*.

iii. We should also remember that angelic visitations, Jesus visitations, continue to this day among the descendants of Ishmael.

iv. The Angel of the LORD was not done visiting Ishmael.)

because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

(The name Ishmael means *God will hear*. We may take this as a prompting to pray for revival and spiritual awakening among the Arab peoples, because when they cry out to Jesus, *God will hear*.)

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GEN 16: 12

And he will be a wild man;

(The root of this word does not appear in the Hebrew Bible, it is probably found in the Arabic to mean to *run away*, to *run wild*; and hence the *wild ass*, from its *fleetness* and its *untamable* nature.

The best description that can be given of the *Ishmaelites* is about the wild ass found in **Job 39:5-8** which reads:

"Who hath sent out the wild ass (פרא *pere*) free? or who hath loosed the bands (ערוך *arod*) of the brayer? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing."

Nothing can be more descriptive of the *wandering, lawless, freebooting* life of the Arabs than this.

- God himself has *sent them out free* - he has *loosed* them from all political restraint.
- *The wilderness is their habitation*; and in the *land* where no other human beings could live, they *have their dwellings*.
- *They scorn the city*, and therefore have no *fixed* habitations; for their *multitude*, they are not afraid;
- When they make depredations on cities and towns, they run into the desert with so much spoil that all pursuit is eluded.

It is farther said, *His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.* -

- Many nations among the Abyssinians, Persians, Egyptians, and Turks, have endeavoured to subjugate the wandering or wild Arabs; but, though they have had temporary triumphs, they have been ultimately unsuccessful.
- The country which these free descendants of Ishmael may be properly said to possess, stretches from Aleppo to the Arabian Sea, and from Egypt to the Persian Gulf; a tract of land not less than 1800 miles in length, by 900 in breadth; see **Genesis 17:20.**)

his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him;

(The life of Hagar's son would not be easy, but God would still look over him and sustain him.

- i. Remember that the ill effect of this – **a wild man, his hand shall be against every man, every man's hand against him** – has been mostly seen in violence and murder among Arabs themselves.
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- ii. They kill each other even more than they kill Jews and Christians. For their own sake, even more than ours, we pray: *God, bring salvation to the Arab people.*)

and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

GEN 16: 13

And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me; for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?

(Hagar knew this was no mere angel who appeared to her. The Angel of the LORD was also **the-God-Who-Sees**, the same One watching over Hagar and the yet-to-be-born Ishmael.

- i. After meeting with *El Roi (You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees)*, Hagar knew that if God could be with her in the wilderness, He would be with her in having to submit to Sarai also. It's as if Hagar said to God,

"You have looked upon me, and now I can look upon You.")

GEN 16: 14

Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;

(Beer means "well" and so it is named the well of the God who sees.

It appears, from **Genesis 16:7**, that Hagar had sat down by a fountain or well of water in the wilderness of Shur, at which the Angel of the Lord found her; and, to commemorate the wonderful discovery which God had made of himself, she called the name of the well

"A well to the Living One who seeth me."

Two things seem implied here:

1. A dedication of the well to Him who had appeared to her; and,
2. Faith in the promise: for he who is the Living One, existing in all generations, must have it ever in his power to accomplish promises which are to be fulfilled through the whole lapse of time)

behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. (Abram's son Isaac later settled there for a time in **Genesis 25:11**)

GEN 16: 15

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And Hagar bare Abram a son; and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

(Apparently, Hagar did return with a submitted heart. She told the whole story to Abram and Sarai, and Abram named the child **Ishmael**, just as instructed by Jesus.

i. Hagar might have said when she returned, "I fled from you all because I was so miserable and thought I could not continue here. But the LORD met me and told me He would see me through. He told me to come back and submit to you, so that is why I'm here."

ii. Hagar thought her circumstances needed transformation; in fact, *she* needed transformation. "If we seek to change our circumstances, we will jump from the frying pan into the fire. We must be triumphant exactly where we are. It is not a change of climate we need, but a change of heart. The flesh wants to run away, but God wants to demonstrate His power exactly where we have known our greatest chagrin". (Barnhouse)

iii. Christians today have an even more clear and wonderful promise of this than Hagar ever had. We have the promise of Jesus: *Behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age* (Matthew 28:20).

- If you have to submit in difficult circumstances, *God sees*.
- If you ache under the pain of ministry, *God sees*.
- If you just feel like running, *God sees*.
- God has met you, sent Jesus near, and gives you new hope.

Whatever Sarai might be thinking at this moment, her relationship with Hagar will never become warm.

In fact, in chapter 21, we will see Sarai demanding that Abram cast Hagar and her son out of the family in Genesis 21:9-10)

GEN 16: 16

And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

(Genesis 16 ends by reporting Abram's age at the time Ishmael was born. God had promised to make of Abram a great nation and to give to him the land of Canaan.

The initial promises had been given when Abram was already seventy-five years old in Genesis 12:4.

So, at 86 years old, Abram obtained a son, but not the son of promise. In fact, Abram will wait another 13 years before God would reveal the details of His plan for the next stage of his life.

We now know that Ishmael's descendants became the Arabic peoples.

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This culture will become numerous and powerful, but are also renowned for conflict, especially against the Jewish people.

Just as Hagar obeyed Jesus so and is those who obey divine precepts for they shall have the comfort of divine promises.)

We will start from Chapter 17 next week ...

IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW

- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
 - But right now I repent of my sins
 - I make you my Lord
 - I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
 - I need you, Jesus
 - Be my savior
 - So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God
-

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

