



... and they shall be one flesh ...

² And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? ³ And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. ⁴ And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. ⁵ And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (Gen 15:2-5)

¹ Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. ² And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. ³ 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. (Gen 16:1-3)

It was never in the Mind of God that any man, or any woman, should have more than one spouse; however, God is patient and long-suffering in teaching man His perfect way. As a matter of pragmatic rule, Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife for almost no reason; but divorce, like polygamy, was never acceptable to God. ***Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? ⁸ He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*** (Matt 19:4-9)

One other evidence of the veracity of Holy Scripture is God hides nothing nor does He protect the name of any man – even the called out, and elect, of God. God shows the dirty laundry of His people for a cause – He desires that we see, as if looking in a mirror, our own image and shortcomings in the lives of men and women of the Bible. In seeing their gross sins, and weaknesses, we are able to know that the forgiveness of God is as broad as the ocean and as deep as the Sea. David committed adultery which led to murder; yet, he found renewed favor in the eyes of the Lord when he repented in sackcloth and ashes. This means that you and I, regardless the severity of our sins, can find lasting forgiveness in the eyes of the Lord. We are redeemed, justified and regenerated by the sacrifice made on our behalf by the Lord Jesus Christ if we respond to His Ancient, foreordained Call (and His Love).

I take some umbrage at this sordid little event in Abram's and Sarai's life. They

acted independent of the will of God. You might say that they acted on their own FREE WILL which is never free but, if it is our will and not God's, we share that will with the devil. God created ONE man and ONE woman for the union of marriage – PERIOD! God has promised Abram that he would be the father of many nations. *Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.* (Gen 13:14-16)

Abram is growing old – very old – along with Sarai. It does not seem possible the two can have offspring if they delay any longer. Sarai seems beyond child-bearing age, and Abram's biological clock is ticking away. Yet, God PROMISED Abram he would bear offspring (seed). To Sarai, it seemed unlikely that God could accomplish His purposes without her assistance, so she conceives of a sinful manner of satisfying the promise of God. This is never a good idea, and it always leads to tragic results that may endure for millennia.

Sarai has an innocent servant girl named Hagar whom she was probably given by Pharaoh in Egypt where Abram went contrary to the counsel of God to stay-put in Canaan where He had led him. Hagar had no say in what would happen to her. Sarai decides to allow Abram to have the offspring God has promised through Hagar as a surrogate wife. Just as Eve tempted Adam, Sarai tempts her husband, Abram. Of course, Sarai loved Abram and desired to see him happy with a child. But love can be misguided as it certainly was in this case.

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 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. (Gen 16:2-3) This may have been an invitation for which some men may dream. But it was WRONG on two counts:

1. When God makes us a promise, He will be able to fulfill that promise according to the His Moral Law – He does not need our feeble hands to complete His promise.
2. *Though shalt not commit adultery.* I have read some commentary that defends Sarai and Abram saying that such an arrangement was acceptable in Abram's time. Do we really believe that? Has the Mind of God drifted from one extreme to another? I think not. It may have been a social norm, but it was not a Godly one. Adultery, under any circumstance, is wrong!

Please note that Abram raised not a single word of objection to Sarai's proposal. Unlike many times when husbands gripe and complain at the wife's suggestion, Abram immediately went in to the young woman, Hagar. Sinful desire may override a Godly disposition unless we are on our constant guard against it.

Hagar did, indeed, conceive and bear a child. When she realized that she had conceived, she was harshly treated by Sarai, so much so that she fled into the wilderness where the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water. *10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. 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; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. 12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. 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? ¹⁴Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. (Gen 16:10-14) Hagar called the place where she was comforted by the Angel of the Lord, Beerlahairoi (Fountain of Living Waters).

God told Hagar the name of the boy, which was in her womb, would be called Ishmael (God will hear)! Though Sarai had sinned in marring the virginity of an innocent girl, God dealt kindly with Hagar. God gives some very important prophecy to Hagar in the wilderness at Beerlahairoi – prophecies that have tremendous bearing on our own world today. As you will remember, Ishmael is the father of all of the Arab nations (Muslim). *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* Please observe the historical, as well as modern, political upheaval that exists today in the Middle Eastern countries. If they are not at war with non-Arab countries and peoples, they will be at war with each other. It has been the case since Abraham's day, and continues now. Ishmael and his progeny are "*wild men.*" They do not observe the norms of any civilized society. The answer for every refusal to follow Islam is beheading – nothing in between! See this: *his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.* The whole world is embattled by Islam. No nation is exempt from their terrorizing approach to spreading the so-called "religion of peace."

A summary glance at the world globe will reveal that the Arab nations have not disseminated among the other nations of the world, but remained together and isolated from the remainder of the world's societies. Even when they immigrate to other lands, they collect in the slums and decadent neighborhoods of their new homeland and persist in trying to recreate their miseries, brought from their own lands, in that place. This is yet another aspect of prophecy being fulfilled by the descendents of Ishmael: *and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* This is profoundly true today. The Muslim Arab refuses to assimilate in whatever land he is privileged to wander into. I say 'privileged' because any place on earth is better than the Hell they have created in their fatherlands.

So even today, the world is paying a price for the 'mistake' of Sarai and Abram in trying to get ahead of the Lord and make good on His promises. The growing menace of Islam may be the Lord's approach in bringing a speedy conclusion to this sinful world and its nominal Christian professors. Time will tell, for it ALWAYS does. Lesson learned – I hope!