

Sarai Helps God  
Lesson #7  
Genesis 16-17

God sealed his covenant promises to Abram by taking both parts. This confirmed that if Abram or any of his descendants did not keep their part of the covenant, then God would die in their place. This was an unconditional covenant based only upon God and His faithfulness. In spite of God's promise and Abram's faith, Abram's wait for the promised son was not over. After many years had gone by, and with Abram in his mid-80's and Sarai in her 70's, Sarai decided to help God out.

1. What was Sarai's solution? (Genesis 16:1-4a)

Although this is very strange to us, it was the custom of this day. If no male heir existed, then a faithful servant could be named heir, or a maidservant (considered property of the wife) could cohabit with her husband. If the maidservant had a son, he would become son to the wife and heir of the father's estate.

2. Sarai gave Abram her maidservant Hagar. What happened when she was pregnant? (Genesis 16:4)
3. How did Sarai handle this? (Genesis 6:5, 6)
4. Hagar couldn't deal with this treatment, so she fled to a spring in the desert. Who met her there? (Genesis 16:7, 8)
5. What were his instructions to Hagar? (Genesis 16:9)
6. What additional information was Hagar given that day? (Genesis 16:10-12)

7. If Hagar did not have a relationship with the God of Abram before this, she did now. How did she describe this very special meeting? (Genesis 16:13,14)
8. Hagar returned to Abram and bore him a son. What was he named? (Genesis 16:15)
9. How old was Abram when he became a father? (Genesis 16:16)

### **Covenant of Circumcision**

10. For the next 13 years, God was silent. Had He forgotten His promise to Abram? But it was not God's time yet. When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him again. What name did the LORD use for Himself? (Genesis 17:1a)
11. What was God's reminder to Abram about his covenant part? (Genesis 17:1b)
12. God confirmed his covenant with Abram for a second time. What did God say He would do? (Genesis 17:2)
13. Abram fell face down in reverence. At this time, God gave Abram a new name. What did God name Abram and what did that mean? (Genesis 17:4, 5)
14. What additional information did God give to Abraham about these future generations? (Genesis 17:6)
15. What type of covenant was this? (Genesis 17:7)

16. What did God reveal about the land of Canaan and his relationship to Abram's descendants? (Genesis 17:8)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
17. After reminding Abraham about his covenant responsibilities, what was the sign that God gave to Abraham for this covenant? (Genesis 17:10-14)

When one's name was changed, it was an indication of a unique relationship between the one who named, who had power and authority over, the one who received the name. In this case, the name change during the covenant also reflects the role of God over them. Abram (exalted father) was now Abraham (father of a multitude), and Sarai (princess) was now Sarah (princess in a broader sense meaning from whom kings and rulers would come).

Circumcision was practiced in other cultures at this time, but God used this as a sign that every male would carry on his body. This was to remind them that it was through the seed of Abraham (which they now carried and passed on to future generations) that the covenant relationship with God remained and it was through this seed that the whole world would be blessed.

18. God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah and told Abraham He was about to bless her. What did God say He was about to do for Sarah? (Genesis 17:15,16)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
19. How did Abraham respond to God's words? (Genesis 17:17)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
20. What else did Abraham say to God? (Genesis 17:18)

