

# Genesis 16-17

## Worldview: God's Ways Are Not Our Ways

From "My Way" as performed by Frank Sinatra

For what is a man, what has he got?  
If not himself, then he has naught  
The right to say the things he feels and not the words of one who kneels  
The record shows I took the blows and did it my way!

Songwriters: CLAUDE FRANCOIS, GILLES THIBAUT, JACQUES REVAUX, MARCELO DRUMOND NOVA  
My Way lyrics © WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC FRANCE, JEUNE MUSIQUE EDITIONS, BMG RIGHTS MANAGEMENT US, LLC, SONGS MUSIC PUBLISHING

### Part I: My Way – Genesis 16

#### Consider the parallel nature of Genesis 3 and Genesis 16

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Gen 3:6-7)

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. (Gen 16:1-2)

Consider:

1. Eve's plan is to gain wisdom apart from God.
2. Sarai's plan involves trying to fulfil God's promise apart from God.
3. Both Adam and Abram had been given clear direction from God. Both listened to their wives instead.
4. Recall Abram's flight to Egypt due to the famine. Where was Hagar acquired – see verse 1.

#### Consider the consequences of Sarai's way:

1. Hagar treats Sarai with contempt

And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" (Gen 16:4-5)

2. Marital Strife

And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her. (Gen 16:5-6)

3. Sarai takes it out on Hagar

But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her. (Gen 16:6)

4. The resulting offspring will be great in number, but will be “against everyone”.

He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen." (Gen 16:12)

## **Part II: God's Way – Genesis 17**

After 13 more years of waiting...

Note the “I ams”, “I wills”:

1. I am God Almighty: El Shaddai – verse 1
2. I have made you the father of a multitude of nations – verse 5
3. I will make you exceedingly fruitful – verse 6
4. I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you – verse 6
5. I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant – verse 7
6. I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings – verse 8
7. I will be their God – verse 8
8. I will bless her – verse 16 (of Sarah)
9. I will give you a son by her (verse 16)
10. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant-verse 19 (of Isaac)
11. I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly-verse 20 (of Ishmael)
12. I will make him into a great nation-verse 20 – of Ishmael.
13. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year-verse 21

How do Sarai and Abram contribute to the promise?

1. Abram fell on his face-verse 3
2. Abram had his name changed-verse 5 So did Sarai-verse 15 – Remember our discussion on the authority implicit in the naming of something or someone – Genesis 1&2.
3. Sarai was barren – see chapter 16
4. Abram laughed-verse 17
5. Abram's idea is shot down – verses 18-19
6. Abram and all males of his household were circumcised-verses 22-27

**Next Week: God's Covenant with Abraham fulfilled in the Birth of Christ**