

## Sarai and Hagar



Abram was seventy-five years of age when he departed out of Haran, “and they [Abram and his wife, and Lot his brother’s son] went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came” (Genesis 12:5). In verse seven, “Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.” But, there was a problem, i.e., “And Abram said, O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.” (Genesis 15:2-4).

Time passed! Abram had been in the land of Canaan for ten years. He had gone to Egypt, then back to Canaan, and now he is eighty-five, and Sarai is seventy-five, but Jehovah had promised a seed! So, what does a person do? Maybe Jehovah needs some help.

“Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now,

Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” Sounds like a plan headed for disaster. But, nevertheless, “Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife.” What else should a person do? How long do you wait on Jehovah to do what was promised? By taking Hagar as a wife, and any children she had would be of the seed of Abram, and the promise fulfilled. So, “And he [Abram] went in unto Hagar, and she conceived.”

The Conflict: “and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.”

Solomon said, “For three things the earth doth tremble, and for four, which it cannot bear: For a servant when he is king; and a fool when he is filled with food; for an odious woman when she is married; and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress” (Proverbs 30:21–23). Such apparently came to pass in the house of Abram. So, what’s a wife to do? “And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I gave my handmaid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: Jehovah judge between me and thee.” Abram has a conflict!

What would you have done? Well, “Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her that which is good in thine eyes. And Sarai dealt hardly with her, and she fled from her face.” What comes to mind here is something along the line of the wrath of a woman scorned.

How often do individuals make decisions that back fire on them, the decision becomes the fault of someone else, and others pay the price of the ensuing wrath? However this event may be viewed, the ensuing conduct of Sarai is described as “Sarai dealt hardly with her.” The word “hardly” is defined as, having an attitude of “looking down or browbeating; to depress literally or figuratively” (Strong).

Considering these events there is a lot of blame to go around: Sarai's resolution to the childless problem; Abram's acquiescing to Sarai's plan; Hagar despising her mistress after she had conceived; Abram putting Hagar's well-being in the hands of Sarai, and Sarai's abuse of that care. What does a person do when a Conflict goes awry and the purposed Resolutions do likewise?

The abuse of Hagar rose to such a level that Hagar fled: "And the angel of Jehovah found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, whence camest thou? and whither goest thou? And she said, I am fleeing from the face of my mistress Sarai."

Out of all the events that unfolded it was here in the wilderness that Hagar received counsel from "the angel of Jehovah [that] said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands."

Sometimes the Resolution to a bad circumstance is a hard pill to swallow. In this case the Resolution to Hagar's Conflict was return to your post, and "submit thyself under her [Sarai's] hands." But the Resolution did not come without hope, for "the angel of Jehovah said unto her, I will greatly multiply thy seed, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son; and thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction."

Afflictions may present themselves in numerous ways, but no matter the affliction, those who trust in the God of Host, those who endure, can do so through hope. The prophet James said, "Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth,

being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:4–8), and, the apostle Peter, also said, “Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Peter 2:18–20).

No matter the Conflict the Lord of Sabaoth has the Resolution, and that Resolution is contained in His word, as the Psalmist said, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path. I have sworn, and have confirmed it, That I will observe thy righteous ordinances. I am afflicted very much: Quicken me, O Jehovah, according unto thy word. Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill-offerings of my mouth, O Jehovah, And teach me thine ordinances. My soul is continually in my hand; Yet do I not forget thy law. The wicked have laid a snare for me; Yet have I not gone astray from thy precepts. Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever; For they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes For ever, even unto the end” (Psalm 119:105–112).