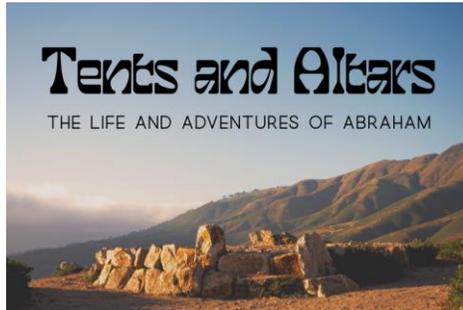


DISCIPLE'S QUEST

If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.

John 8:31



June 25, 2023
Genesis 16
Faltering Faith

Main Idea

Although God had cut a covenant with Abram (C. 15) assuring him of innumerable descendants, his (and Sarai's) faith faltered when God's schedule didn't align with their own. This led to an ill-conceived attempt by the couple to gain an heir by the world's methods, in this case by using Sarai's maidservant Hagar as a surrogate. This arrangement produced anticipated yet profound consequences including severe strife which led Hagar, now carrying Abram's unborn son, to flee alone in the wilderness. God, however, graciously intervened. The Angel of the LORD rescued Hagar and sent her home, and Abram's son Ishmael was born. The episode shows the danger for believers in seeking worldly solutions to their perceived challenges. The right and rewarding course of action for believers is always to embrace God's promises and wait patiently and prayerfully on Him.

Outline

1. **The faltering faith of Abram and Sarai** produces serious unforeseen consequences (v.v. 1-6)

2. **God graciously intervenes** to rescue Hagar and her unborn son.

Questions for further contemplation and application after the message:

- #1 Abram and Sarai were believers. Still, their faith as it pertained to God's promises faltered. Why?

What can cause believers today to stumble in this way?

- #2 Should believers ever seek worldly solutions for spiritual needs and challenges? Why not?

What kind of outcome should a believer expect if he values the world's wisdom over God's word?

- #3 God graciously intervened to rescue Hagar and her unborn son. What does that teach us about His character?

- #4 When a believer encounters an unexpected trial, or perceives that the fulfillment of one of God's promises may not be as soon as he would like, what course of action should he take?

Digging Deeper – Recommended Resources:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/descendants-of-Ishmael.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/angel-of-the-Lord.html>

Select helpful resources:

Alders, G. Ch. (1981). *Genesis, Vol. 1*. Zondervan.

Davis, J. J. (1975). *Paradise to Prison*. Revell.

Phillips, John. (2001). *Exploring Genesis*. Kregel Publications.

Ross, A. P. (1997). *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Baker Academic.

Swindoll, C. R. (2014). *Abraham: One Nomad's Amazing Journey of Faith*. Tyndale House.

Wood, L. J. (1998). *A Shorter Commentary on Genesis*. Wipf & Stock.