

Genesis Bible Study Assignment

March 25, 2021

Reading: Genesis Chapter 16 through 18:15

Discussion Questions

Chapter 16

1. Desperate times call for desperate measures, yet Sarai's idea of having children by giving her slave girl to Abram to impregnate has unforeseen consequences. What are they?
2. The name of Hagar's son will be "Ishmael" which means "God hears". What has God heard? What does this episode imply about anyone suffering injustice?
3. In the NRSV translation of the Bible, Sarai "dealt harshly" with Hagar. The Hebrew word translated "dealt harshly" is literally "oppressed". In this case, an ancestor of the Israelites is oppressing an Egyptian. The tables turn in the book of Exodus when the Israelites are oppressed by the Egyptians. Is this a coincidence, or do you believe there is a relationship between oppressor and oppressed that perpetuates over time? If so, give an example.

Chapter 17

4. A covenant is a mutual commitment with each side promising to fulfill certain obligations. What does God promise to do for Abram? What does God require of Abram to uphold his side of the covenant?
5. Why do you think God wanted there to be a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (and his male offspring)?
6. Why do you think God didn't establish a sign of the covenant with Sarah and her and Abraham's female descendants?
7. God tells Abraham what God will do with each of Abraham's sons. What does God say? What is the main difference between the promises God makes to Abraham about Isaac and the one God makes to Abraham about Ishmael?

Chapter 18:1-15

8. Abraham sprinted all over the place in the heat of the day to provide hospitality for three strangers. Why do you think he made such efforts on their behalf?

9. Why do you think God chose to work with (and through) two people well beyond childbearing age to lay the foundation for the Israelites?

10. Sarah laughs at the thought that she'd bear a son but later denies it because she was afraid. What do you think she feared?

11. What might make someone doubt (or laugh about) their ability to fulfill a calling from God?