

Community Bible Church

The Book of Genesis

Chapters 16-17

The narrative of God's dealings with Abram and Sarai continues in **chapters 16** and **17**. **Chapter 16** describes **Abram's Compromise** and **chapter 17** gives further details of **God's Covenant** with Abram. God changes Abram's name to Abraham, and Sari's name to Sarah in **chapter 17** to give them a newer identity in God's redemptive plan.

However, the central feature and theme of these two chapters is **God (Yahweh)** and His grand plan for mankind. The majority of verses in these two chapters record communication of God with man in order to reveal His will.

Chapter 16 describes a brief lapse in Abraham's faith and patience, but the highlight is the care and love displayed by the **Angel of the Lord** with Hagar. The **Angel of the Lord** is commonly considered to be a "Pre-incarnate Christophany," or an appearance of Jesus Christ during the Old Testament era. There are numerous such reassuring appearances of the Angel of the Lord throughout the Old Testament text.

Chapter 17 is characterized in **17:1** when the Lord appeared to Abram and "**said to him . . .**" This dialogue between God and Abraham continues throughout much of the chapter.

1. Read the story of Sarai and Abram in **16:1-2** and describe the plan that they came up with. What principles were they violating with this decision?
2. From **16:3-6**, how did this work out for them? Note that this practice was an acceptable legal custom according to the marriage codes of that day. What personal applications can you find in **16:1-6**?
3. The passage in **16:7-16** present a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ appearing to a distraught, pregnant Egyptian woman alone in the desert. As noted above, many commentators believe the "*angel of the Lord*" represents a pre-incarnate Christophany, or appearance of Jesus. who comes to Hagar in a gracious, loving encounter to encourage and minister to her. From **16:7-8**, describe the scene and the tender encounter.
4. What were Jesus' instructions to Hagar in **16:8**? From **16:10-12**, why was Hagar instructed to do this?

5. The name **Ishmael** in **16:11** means "**God hears.**" And, in **16:13**, Hagar spoke to God and said that "**You are a God who sees.**" What is the significance of these two titles in reference to the grace and character of God as He met this woman in a great time of need.

6. The **Immanence of God** is a divine attribute meaning that our sovereign God is "**close, present, knowable, and involved.**" In what ways do we observe God's immanence in **chapter 16**? In what ways do you see God's immanence working in your own life today? Why is this an important aspect of God's character to understand?

7. We even see the immanence of God in **chapter 17**. Read **17:1-8**. In a very personal way, God reiterates aspects of the covenant He made with Abram, now Abraham. Read this passage and write a brief summary of the key points. How did Abraham respond when he came into the presence of God in **17:3**. (This is the common response in the Old Testament when man enters the presence of the holiness of God).

8. Just as the rainbow was the "sign" of God's covenant with Noah, what was the "sign" of the Abrahamic covenant as described in **17:10-14**?

9. A rather intense dialogue between God and Abraham is recorded in **17:15-22**. Read this passage and give the highlights of their discussion.

10. How does **chapter 17** conclude in **verses 23-27**?