



YES, NO & MAYBE

05

1. Many of the people I know are manipulative.
2. I have some fears regarding my preparedness for God's return.
3. God does not intervene and bless Muslims, Buddhists & Hindus.
4. If I run away from God, He will not stop me.
5. It is still a mystery to me how God can hear everyone's prayers at the same time.

DIG DEEP

° In your experience, how involved is God with the daily matters of our lives? In other words, does He respectfully step in only when we ask, or does He do what He wants when He wants...or not at all?

READ: Genesis 16:1-6 (NLT)

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. 3 So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

4 So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The Lord will show who's wrong—you or me!"

6 Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

∞ Some cultural insights:

- "Maidservant" (*šiphâ*) is not a common slave but the personal servant of the "mistress" of the house.
- The name "Hagar" (*hāgār*) is a wordplay on *gēr*, "stranger."
- If the wife could not produce children, the husband might marry another; perhaps the offer of a substitute circumvented the acquisition of a second wife. That barrenness was grounds for a divorce after a ten-year period is a rabbinic explanation for Sarai's actions (Gen. Rab. 45.3).

» What is Sarai's perspective of God's character here (vs. 2), and is it a common practice for people to blame God for things such as this?

READ: Genesis 16:7-16 (NLT)

7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. 8 The angel said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai," she replied.

9 The angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority." 10 Then he added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count." 11 And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means 'God hears'), for the Lord has heard your cry of

How
GOD
LEADS

DIG DEEP...CONTINUED

distress. 12 *This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.*

13 *Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the Lord, who had spoken to her. She said, "You are the God who sees me." She also said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?"* 14 *So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means "well of the Living One who sees me"). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.*

15 *So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.*

∞ It is striking that Hagar is the first woman to receive a birth annunciation and the first woman to receive promises from the Lord regarding her life purpose.

« Scripture tells us that an angel of God FINDS Hagar beside a spring in the desert. **What does it say about God that he searched for her—an Egyptian maid?**

« **Why would he ask her, "Where did you come from, and where are you going?" Doesn't God see and know everything? Why would he ask this question?**

« **Does it fit or clash with God's character that he would say to Hagar, "Go back to your mistress. Put up with her abuse." Does God do that to us even today? Why would He?**

« The messenger from God continues by saying, "I'm going to give you a big family, children past counting." **Isn't that the same promise he gave to Abram? What does it say about God that he would use this same line to encourage both Hagar and Abram, and yet be talking about two very separate lineages?**

« **What does it say about God's character that he would request Hagar to name the child Ishmael; which means, *for God hears you, God answers you*?**

«Hagar responds by giving God a name. She exclaims, "You're the God who sees me! Yes! He saw me; and then I saw him!" **What does this say about the very nature of God?**

NOTES

TALK WITH GOD THIS WEEK ABOUT...

1. How much do I believe that God hears and answers me?
2. In what areas of my life am I denying that God truly sees me?
3. What do I see more clearly about the character of God this week?



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