

"Helping God"

Genesis 16

Introduction: The story of Abram has roots in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Judaism stops with the story of Isaac and is waiting; Islam follows the story of Ishmael and celebrates the arrival of the prophet Mohammed; but Christianity follows the story of Isaac that leads to Jesus Christ rooted in the promise of Genesis 12 and this story.

Abram's household - Genesis 16:1-6 - What Sarai did was normal and expected; the family line had to be kept alive and if that meant another mother, so be it.

Polygamy - Is polygamy part of God's plan for marriage?

First, we must recognize the difference in the Bible between descriptive and prescriptive texts.

Second, the nature of polygamy in the Old Testament is spoken of negatively.

Third, the New Testament speaks of Abraham and David's faith but not as examples for marriage.

Fourth, God states His design for marriage in Genesis 2:22-24; Mark 10:6-9.

Fifth, God's design for marriage is to display the gospel. In marriage, the husband represents Christ, and the bride is represented by the church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Sixth, the language of the New Testament explicitly states that marriage is between one man and one woman. (Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Timothy 3:2, 12).

Finally, children also need the *one husband-one wife* structure in the family for two reasons. First, God is our Father, and children need their earthly fathers to model godliness to them. Second, children need to see the gospel in their parents' marriage.

Hagar's wilderness - Genesis 16:7-12

Ishmael's birth - Genesis 16:13-16

Precept: God is fully present and fully aware of all circumstances. Psalms 139:1-16

Summary: When Sarai called or heard Ishmael's name, she would have been reminded and again prompted to "call on God who hears", something she did not do in our story.

Conclusion: God is a God who sees, hears and understands the situations we find ourselves in; God also has the power to bring his plans to fruition and all he asks us to do is to be patient, wait upon him and rest in his goodness. God has the power to care for us when we are caught in things created by others and he is ready to hear our confession when we are the one who caused the anguish we are in at this moment - this is our God! He is omni-competent, he does not need our help; but when he speaks we must obey, until then be patient.