

DESPERATION AND FRUSTRATION: AVRAHAM'S SEARCH FOR A SUCCESSOR

YISHMAEL

I. Genesis 16

'Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ²And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the LORD has kept me from bearing. **Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a son through her.**" And Abram heeded Sarai's request. ³So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian— **after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years**— and gave her to her husband Abram as concubine. ⁴He cohabited with Hagar **and she conceived**; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem. ⁵And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong done me is your fault! I myself put my maid in your bosom; now that she sees that she is pregnant, I am lowered in her esteem. The LORD decide between you and me!" ⁶Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her. ⁷An angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, and said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" ⁸And she said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai." ⁹**And the angel of the LORD said to her,** "Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment." ¹⁰**And the angel of the LORD said to her,** "I will greatly increase your offspring.^A And they shall be too many to count." ¹¹**The angel of the LORD said to her further,** "Behold, you are with child And shall bear a son; **You shall call him Ishmael,*** For the LORD has paid heed to your suffering. ¹²He shall be a wild animal of a man; His hand against everyone, And everyone's hand against him; He shall dwell alongside of all his kinsmen." ¹³**And she called the LORD who spoke to her,** "You Are El-roi," by which she meant, "Have I not gone on seeing after He saw me!" ¹⁴Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it is between Kadesh and Bered.— ¹⁵Hagar bore a son to Abram, **and Abram gave the son that Hagar bore him the name Ishmael.**^o ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

בראשית פרק טז

אִשְׁרֵי אִשְׁתְּ אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לּוֹ וְלֵה שִׁפְחָה מִצְרַיִת וּשְׁמָהּ הָגָר: וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם הִנֵּה־נָא עֲצַרְנִי יְהוָה מִלָּדֶת בָּאֵ־נָא אֶל־שִׁפְחָתִי אוּלַי אֲבִנָה מִמֶּנָּה וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שְׂרַי: וַתִּקַּח שְׂרַי אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם אֶת־הָגָר הַמִּצְרַיִת שִׁפְחָתָהּ מִקֵּץ עֶשְׂרֵי שָׁנִים לְשִׁבְתָּ אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַתִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ לֹא אִשָּׁה: וַיֵּבֵא אֶל־הָגָר וַתְּהַר וַתֵּרָא כִּי הָרְתָה וַתִּקַּל גְּבֻרָתָהּ בְּעֵינֶיהָ: וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם חֲמָסִי עָלֶיךָ אֲנֹכִי נָתַתִּי שִׁפְחָתִי בְּחִיקְךָ וַתֵּרָא כִּי הָרְתָה וְאִקַּל בְּעֵינֶיהָ יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־שְׂרַי הֲגֵה שִׁפְחָתְךָ בְּיָדְךָ עֲשִׂי־לָהּ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיהָ וַתַּעֲנֶה שְׂרַי וַתִּבְרַח מִפְּנֵיהָ: וַיִּמְצָאָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה עַל־עֵין הַמַּיִם בְּמִדְבָּר עַל־הָעֵין בְּדֶרֶךְ שׁוּר: וַיֹּאמֶר הָגָר שִׁפְחָת שְׂרַי אִי־מַעַד בָּאת וְאַנָּה תִּלְכִּי וַתֹּאמֶר מִפְּנֵי שְׂרַי גְּבֻרָתִי אֲנֹכִי בִרְחַת: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה שׁוּבִי אֶל־גְּבֻרָתְךָ וְהִתְעַנִּי תַחַת יְדֶיךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה הֲרַבָּה אֲרַבָּה אֶת־זַרְעֶךָ וְלֹא יִסְפֹּר מִרְבּוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה הֲנָה הִנָּה הָרָה וַיִּלְדֶּת בֶּן וּקְרָאתָ שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל* כִּי־שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל־עֲנִיָּהּ: "וְהוּא יְהִי פָרָא אָדָם יָדוֹ בְּכֹל גֵּיד כָּל בּוֹ וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־אָחִיו יִשְׁכַּן:" וַתִּקְרָא שֵׁם־יְהוָה הַדֹּבֵר אֵלֶיהָ אֵתָהּ אֵל רֹאֵי כִּי אִמְרָה הִגַּם הָלָם רֹאֵיתִי אַחֲרַי רֹאֵי: יִדְע־לְכֹן קָרָא לְבָאָר בְּאֶרֶץ לְחֵי רֹאֵי הִנָּה בֵּין־קֶדֶשׁ וּבֵין בְּרֶד: וַתֵּלֶד הָגָר לְאַבְרָם בֶּן וּקְרָא אַבְרָם שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָהּ הָגָר יִשְׁמָעֵאל: וַיִּבְרָאֵם בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּלָדְתָ־הָגָר אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל לְאַבְרָם:

A. Genesis 22

17 I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes.

Genesis 17

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. ... ¹⁵And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. I will bless her; **indeed, I will give you a son by her.** ¹⁶I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her." ¹⁷Abraham threw himself on his face **and laughed, as he said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?"** ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, "**O that Ishmael might live by Your favor!**" ¹⁹God said, "Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, **and you shall name him Isaac;*** and I will maintain My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring to come. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. **He shall be the father of twelve chieftains,** and I will make of him a great nation. ²¹**But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac,** whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." ²²And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.

A. בראשית פרק כב

יז כִּי־בָרַךְ אֲבָרְכְךָ וְהִרְבָּה אַרְבֵּה אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שֹׁפֵת הַיָּם וַיִּרַשׁ זַרְעֲךָ אֶת שַׁעַר אֹיְבָיו:

בראשית פרק יז

^אוַיְהִי אֲבָרָם בְּנֵי־תִשְׁעִים שָׁנָה וַתֵּשַׁע שָׁנִים וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אֲבָרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי־אֵל שַׁדַּי הַתְּהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי וְהָיָה תָּמִים: ... ^טוַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אֲבָרָם שָׂרִי אֲשֶׁתְּךָ לֹא־תִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ שָׂרִי כִּי שָׂרָה שְׁמָהּ: ^{טו}וַיְבָרַכְתִּי אֹתָהּ וְגַם נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָךְ בֶּן וַבְּרַכְתִּיהָ וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם מִלְכֵי עַמִּים מִמֶּנָּה יִהְיוּ: ^יוַיִּפֹּל אֲבָרָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ הֲלֵבֶן מֵאֵה־שָׁנָה יוֹלֵד וְאִם־שָׂרָה הַבְּתִילִתִּישְׁעִים שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד: ^יוַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁמַעֲלִי יִחְיֶה לִפְנֵיהֶ: ^יוַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אָבֵל שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ יֵלְדָת לָךְ בֶּן וְקִרְאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק* וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתּוֹ לְבְרִית עוֹלָם לְזַרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו: כִּי־לִישְׁמַעֲלֵאל שְׁמַעְתִּיהָ הִנָּה | בְּרַכְתִּי אֹתוֹ וְהִפְרִיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֹתוֹ בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר נְשִׂאִם יוֹלִיד וְנָתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל: כ^אוְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲקִים אִתְּךָ: יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד לָךְ שָׂרָה לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בַּשָּׁנָה הָאַחֲרִית: כב^בוַיִּכַּל לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ וַיַּעַל אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל אֲבָרָם:

Genesis 21

¹The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. ²Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. ³**Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac.** ⁴And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. ⁵Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶Sarah said, “**God has brought me [šəhoq] laughter; everyone who hears [yišhaq] will laugh with me.**” ⁷And she added, “**Who would have said to Abraham That Sarah would suckle children!** Yet I have borne a son in his old age.” ⁸The child grew up and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹Sarah saw **the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham [mēšahēq] playing.** ¹⁰She said to Abraham, “**Cast out that slave-woman and her son, for the son of that slave shall not share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.**” ... ¹⁷God heard the cry of the boy, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heeded the cry of the boy where he is. ¹⁸Come, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and let the boy drink. ²⁰God was with the boy and he grew up; he dwelt in the wilderness and became a bowman. ²¹He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

בראשית פרק כא

אִיְהוָה פָּקַד אֶת־שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר׃ בְּיַתְהֵרָ וּתְלִד שָׂרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזִקְנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֵׁם בְּנֵו הַנּוֹלָד־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה־לוֹ שָׂרָה יִצְחָק׃ וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֵו בֶן־שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃ וַיִּתְאַמֶּר אֲשֶׁר־יָצָק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כִּלְהִשְׁמֹעַ יִצְחָק־לִי׃ וַיִּתְאַמֶּר מִי מָלַל לְאַבְרָהָם הַיְנִיקָה בָנִים שָׂרָה כִּי־יָלְדָתִי בֶן לְזִקְנָיו׃ וַיִּגְדַּל הַיָּלֵד וַיִּגְמַל וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם מִשְׁתָּה גְדוֹל בַּיּוֹם הַגָּמַל אֶת־יִצְחָק׃ וַיִּתְרָא שָׂרָה אֶת־בֶּן־הַגֵּר הַמִּצְרִית אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם מִצְחָק׃ וַיִּתְאַמֶּר לְאַבְרָהָם גֵּרֶשׁ הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בֶּן־הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת עִם־בְּנֵי עַם־יִצְחָק׃ ... וַיִּשְׁמָע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־קוֹל הַנְּעִרָ וַיִּקְרָא מִלְּאַךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַגֵּר מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַה־לָּךְ הַגֵּר אֶל־תִּירָאִי כִּי־שָׁמָע אֱלֹהִים אֶל־קוֹל הַנְּעִר כַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא־שָׁם׃ וַיִּקְוִי שָׂאִי אֶת־הַנְּעִר וְהַחֲזִיקִי אֶת־יָדָךְ בּוֹ כִּי־לִגְוִי גְדוֹל אֲשִׁימְנוּ׃ וַיּוֹפֶקֶח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרָא בְּאָר מַיִם וַתִּלְכֶּה וַתִּמְלֵא אֶת־הַחֲמֹת מַיִם וַתִּשָּׂק אֶת־הַנְּעִר׃ כִּי־הִיא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַנְּעִר וַיִּגְדַּל וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיְהִי רֹבֵה קֶשֶׁת׃ כִּי־יֵשֶׁב בַּמִּדְבָּר פָּאֲרָן וַתִּקַּח־לוֹ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה מֵאַרְץ מִצְרָיִם׃