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ABRAHAM PART 19
ISHMAEL'S BIRTH

God had promised Abram that he would be a father of many nations (multitudes), but Abram confronted God that now, at age 85, he still had no son to be an heir. God answered, saying he would have an heir ***"Come forth out of thine own bowels (loins)."*** (Genesis 15:4).

This takes us into Genesis chapter 16. Sarai, at age 75 was barren. She knew Abram's concern about the lack of a male heir. She came up with a solution. She suggested that Abram take her Egyptian maid, Hagar, as a wife so he could have an heir. Instead of consulting God about it, Abram took up Sarai's offer. The servant, Hagar, then promptly conceived. Being now pregnant with Abram's child, she looked down on (despised) Sarai, figuring herself (pridefully) to now be in an elevated (superior) position. She probably even chided Sarai.

Sarai couldn't stand for this. She put all the blame on Abram and said ***"let God judge between me and you"*** as to who was at fault. Abram responded by saying, ***"She is your maid. Do with her whatever you wish."***

Sarai then dealt with Hagar so harshly that Hagar fled into the wilderness to get away from her. The angel of the Lord met her there, telling her to return and submit to Sarai. He also told her the child she was carrying was a son, and that because the LORD (Yahweh) had heard her affliction, the child shall be named Ishmael (which means "God shall hear.") The angel also told her that Ishmael would be a wild man. He will be against every man, and every man will be against him.

Hagar then called upon the name of the LORD (Yahweh, Jehovah). She renamed the well where she was located to Beer-lahai-roi which means "The well of Him that lives and sees me." She returned and gave birth to Ishmael. Abram was 86-years old at the birth.

Abram was pleased that he now had an heir to carry his name and his legacy. He grew to love Ishmael dearly. Not having consulted God about his decision, he did not know that God had a totally different plan. Both Sarai and Abram had acted out of their own reasoning or "wisdom". It was a "flesh" act, not a "faith" act. It would result in generations of grief and conflict.

Have you ever made a "flesh" decision that turned sour over the long haul of years? Do we act at times any wiser than Abram did? Abram's mistake caused problems, but God did not forsake him or Sarai. God still blessed him and brought about His ultimate plan for Abram, as we shall see later. Nevertheless, although correction and fulfillment came about, it did not prevent the negative consequences of Abram's choice.

You, my friend, might suffer some negative consequences from poor choices of the past, but as you trust God, He will still fulfill His righteous plan in you and for you as you trust Him.