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## Article

# Sarah's גָּרֶשׁ (*gāreš*) and Abraham's שְׁלַח (*šellach*) of Hagar: Expulsion or Apostolic Mission?

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**Abstract:** Abraham's sending forth of Hagar and Ishmael in Gen 21:14 has generally been viewed as an expulsion. Popularly it is held that the primary, if not sole, purpose behind this act was to prevent Ishmael from interfering with Isaac's inheritance. Interpreting, however, Sarah's גָּרֶשׁ (*gāreš*) demand and Abraham's שְׁלַח (*šellach*) of Hagar through the lens of the narratives of Israel, Jesus, and Adam opens the passage to a new dynamic, one in which Hagar has been sent on a mission to establish a colony as an extension of their faith-based activity. An examination of the LXX and Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews supports this view. Finally, an analysis of Abraham's rule and motivations enables a mission objective behind Hagar and Ishmael's being "sent forth" quite plausible. These approaches to the biblical story bring into focus a picture that is different from the standard interpretation where there are multiple objectives of Hagar and Ishmael's being sent into the wilderness primary among them being expanding Abraham and Sarah's evangelical mission.

**Keywords:** Hagar; Sarah; Abraham; drive; expulsion; Israel; Jesus; Adam

## 1. Introduction

Witnessing a certain behavior exhibited by Ishmael, e.g., מִצְחֶק (*m'etsachēq*, Gen 21:9), Sarah tells her husband to גָּרֶשׁ (*gāreš*) Hagar and her son. Though Abraham finds the request quite grievous, prompted by God, he complies and שְׁלַח (*šellach*) Hagar along with Ishmael (Gen 21:11-4). The story has commonly been interpreted as Ishmael's rejection. For example, both the NIV and NLT translate Sarah's *gāreš* demand as "Get rid of (*gāreš*) that slave woman and her son..." (Gen 21:10). Other translations of the word fair no better, e.g., "cast out" (RSV, NRSV, ESV, KJV, NKJV), "drive out" (HCSB, CSB), and "banish" (NET).<sup>1</sup> Generally, Sarah's demand and Abraham's compliance has been understood along these lines. For example, Rabbi Paula Reimer of the Congregation of Beth Israel, discloses in her Parshat Ha-Shuvua weekly Torah reading, the emotional discomfort caused by what she identifies as Sarah's "cruelty."

...fearing for Isaac's inheritance, Sara demanded that Abraham expel Hagar and Ishmael... I don't know what to say for Sara. I try to imagine her conflicting emotions, her pain and anxiety, but I cannot come to terms with her cruelty to a sister, a fellow woman. (Reimer, 2005)

Reimer goes on to say that the Rabbis share her torment. "I am not alone in my distress. Rabbinic tradition hints at its own pain" (Reimer, 2005). The same could be said of Abraham's execution of Sarah's "cruel" demand. For example, the candid observation of none other than Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate is emblematic. "Abraham is synonymous with loyalty and absolute fidelity; his life a symbol of religious perfection. And yet a shadow hovers over one aspect of his life. In his exalted biography, we encounter a painful episode which puzzles us. ... We refer, of course, to his behavior toward his concubine Hagar and their son Ishmael" (Wiesel, 1986, 235). Using the inclusive pronouns "we" and "us," Wiesel discloses, not only his, but the readers conflict with this episode in Abraham's life. One way to deal with this cognitive dissonance is to say that "The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. HCSB "drive out," and NJB "drive away."

Hebrew Bible presents its heroes in all their humanity, even the part that isn't pretty. In a sense, that relieves a lot of anxiety" (Reimer, 2005). This coping strategy, however, should not in any way deter one from revisiting the episode, looking for cues whereby Sarah and Abraham's actions may be interpreted afresh.<sup>2</sup>

As shown above Sarah's *gāreš* demand has been understood quite negatively by Bible translators. BDB and HALOT give for the piel form of the verb גָּרַשׁ "drive out, away" and cite among other biblical citations, Gen 21:10, i.e., Sarah's demand, and Exod. 23:29, 31, where the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites are expelled from the land permanently (BDB, s.v. גָּרַשׁ; HALOT, s.v. "גָּרַשׁ").<sup>3</sup> When Sarah's demand is understood in view of the conquest narratives of the Hivites, et al. it is almost impossible to conceive of a positive meaning to her demand.

Whatever גָּרַשׁ (*gāreš*) may mean, according to Noble it is not an "expulsion." "For one thing, Ishmael is *not expelled* [emphasis added] from the family of Abraham, either temporarily or permanently, but is available to assist Isaac in the burial of their common father (Gen. 25:9[P])" (2016, 53-4). Rather than presented negatively in the Bible, Noble says that "Hagar, is privileged with a form of birth annunciation (Gen. 16:10-12) that puts her in the company of Sarah (Genesis 18), Rebekah (Gen. 25:22-23), Manoah's wife (Judg. 13:9-11), and Hannah (1 Samuel 1), whose sons all constitute some of the leading figures of the biblical stories" (2016, 13). Noble believes that because Ishmael is a son of Abraham, he "fits therefore into the covenantal schema that begins with Noah and funnels down through Ishmael's father, Abraham and eventually to Jacob" (Noble, 2016, 151).

For Dozeman, Sarah's demand is a liberation. Referring to both Sarah's *gāreš* demand (Gen 21:10) and the *gāreš* of Israel in Exod. 11:1, he says, "in both instances expulsion is an act of liberation for the one being driven out, signifying release from slavery" (Dozeman, 1998, 30). He explicitly states in his footnote that "The meaning of 'to drive out' in Exodus must be distinguished from the use of this term in conquest traditions (e.g., Exod. 23:28, 29, 30, 31; 32:2; 34:11; Josh 24:12, 18; Judg. 2:1-7)" (1998, 30), that is, Hagar and Ishmael's *gāreš* should not be equated with the *gāreš* of the Hivites, Canaanites or Hittites. Besides Dozeman and Noble's observations, Zucker and Reiss' proposal that "It is likely that Sarah consults and conspires with Hagar in an attempt to proactively protect their children" (2015, 85) opens Gen. 21:9-14 to a whole new dynamic, in which Sarah's demand can be seen positively. Interestingly, the authors feel that searching beneath the surface of the text, an argument can be made for "An Alliance between Sarah and Hagar" (84). They write, "Many possibilities exist, possibilities that are in themselves both intriguing and full of intrigue. Biblical characters have in themselves multiple reasons behind their actions, just as is true of people today" (2015, 84). Further incentives to visit Hagar's story are recent findings in two areas: (1) the discovery of linguistic parallels between the narratives of Hagar and Israel<sup>4</sup>, and (2) the biblical writer's bestowal on Hagar qualities given to no one else in the Bible.<sup>5</sup> A final incentive to revisit Sarah and

<sup>2</sup> One must keep in mind that this is more easily said than done. As Teubal observes, "conventional assumptions are deeply embedded in our consciousness and therefore difficult to alter" (1990, 49).

<sup>3</sup> In Pro. 22:10 the piel imperative form of גָּרַשׁ *gāreš* is clearly used in a negative sense: "Drive out (גָּרַשׁ) the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended."

<sup>4</sup> See Dozeman, 1998, 28. "Recent research on Hagar has emphasized points of contact between her story and the exodus. David Daube, in his investigation *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible*, noted the similarity between Sarah's oppression (עָנָה) of Hagar (Gen 16:6) and Pharaoh's of Israel at the outset of Exodus (Exod. 1:11, 12), as well as the similar actions of Sarah and Pharaoh in driving out (גָּרַשׁ) Hagar (Gen 21:10) and Israel (Exod. 12:39). The inner-biblical connections have not gone unnoticed by others. M. Tzevat, too, notes the points of contact between Hagar and the exodus with regard to the themes of slavery and abuse, and Tribble adds to the comparisons by including the flight (בָּרַח) of the Egyptian Hagar from Sarah (Gen 16:6) and that of Israel from Egypt (Exod. 14:5)."

<sup>5</sup> Drawing on Tribble's observations John L. Thompson writes: 'Hagar is the first person to be visited by an angel (Gen. 16:7), as well as the first person to receive an annunciation (16:11-12). ... Hagar is also the only women in all of Scripture to ever receive a promise of innumerable descendants (16:10). And perhaps most striking of all, Hagar, is depicted in 16:13 as boldly bestowing a name on God — "a power attributed to no one else in all the Bible"' (Thompson, 1997, 214).

Hagar's story may realizing that our own bias toward Hagar may have colored our interpretation of their story. Rather than seeing Hagar as "the other" Frymer-Kensky, argues, that Hagar is "us."

The story of Sarai and Hagar is not a story of conflict between "us" and "other," but between "us" and "another us." Hagar is the type of Israel, she is the redeemed slave, she is "us" (2002, 236).

When Hagar is not seen separate from Israel, we may be free to see Sarah and Hagar's story afresh.

In this paper I endeavor to show that there were multiple reasons behind Sarah's "sending forth" of Hagar, primary among them being, the establishment of a colony as an extension of Abraham and Sarah's hegemony. I begin with a brief analysis of key assumptions which prevent a positive appraisal of Sarah's demand (Gen. 21:10). To uncover what the biblical scribes intended by Sarah's *gāreš* and Abraham's *šellach* of Hagar, Adam's "expulsion" narrative, and the history of the nation of Israel is analyzed. To see how Hagar's story was conceived around the first century, the LXX, early Christian conceptualization of Jesus' inauguration, and Josephus' view of Sarah's *gāreš* demand will be looked at. Finally, the biblical portrait of Abraham's actions and lifestyle will be used as a backdrop to understand the motivations behind Sarah's demand and Abraham's execution of it. At the end I provide a targum-like translation and commentary of Gen. 21:5-14.

This paper will employ both Lexicons and word analysis dependent on context. For example, the utilization of the Hebrew words *gāreš* and *šellach*, and their Greek equivalents ἐκβαλε and ἀπέστειλεν, in various biblical passages will be explored. This is akin to Goitien's approach to uncover the origin and meaning of the word YHWH who argues that "the meaning of that root is brought out not so much with the dictionaries as its actual use in Arabic literature" (Goitein, 1956, 2). Thus, to discover the meaning of Sarah's demand and Abraham's execution of it, both lexicons and word analysis will be provided.

## 2. Addressing Key Assumptions Supporting the "Expulsion" Narrative

The following are some of the key assumptions that contribute to the creation and persistence of the standard interpretation of Gen 21:9-14.

1. Sarah's use of Hagar to have a son was a folly and an act of faithlessness
2. Ishmael is the son of only Hagar, and not Sarah,
3. Ishmael "mocked" or "persecuted" his younger brother Isaac,
4. Ishmael was "a wild-ass man,"
5. Sarah and Hagar were only rivals, and not friends,
6. The sole purpose behind Sarah's driving away of Ishmael and Hagar was *so that* Ishmael would not threaten Isaac.

If the terms or verses that support these assumptions are shown to be open to different interpretations, they may be used to explore alternative views.

### 2.1. Sarah's Use of Hagar to Have a Child Is Not a Folly or an Act of Faithlessness

In Gen 16:1-3 due to her barrenness Sarah marries Hagar to Abraham with the intent to have a son through her.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.

At the outset it is important to mention that Josephus saw Sarah's act of giving Hagar to Abraham as her obedience to God's command. "Accordingly Sarai, at God's command, brought to

his (Abraham's) bed one of her hand-maidens, a woman of Egyptian descent, in order to obtain children by her" (*Ant.* 1.18 7). Thus, for Josephus Sarah was a prophetess. This is also the position of the rabbinic tradition. Feldman, in his commentary on the *Antiquities*, writes, "Josephus, by remarking that Sarah acted on G-d's command in giving Hagar to Abraham (*Ant.* 1.187), is in effect, presenting her as a prophetess (so also in rabbinic literature [Megillah 14a])" (Feldman, 1998, 225). In any case, for Josephus, Sarah's giving of Hagar to Abraham was intended by God, and thus, not a folly.

However, the contemporary scholarly position on Sarah's act seems quite negative. For example, Waltke calls Sarah's trying to have a son through Hagar "...the foolishness of Sarah's scheme" (Waltke 2001, 252), and a "faithless suggestion" (252). Waltke sees Eve's "taking" and "giving" (Gen 3:6) as the defining features of Sarah's act. He notes "Sarai ... took [*lqh*]... gave [*ntn*] ... to her husband. This is the same progression of verbs at the Fall in 3:6" (Waltke 2001, 252). Although, Wenham observes that "given the social mores of the ancient Near East, Sarai's suggestion was perfectly proper and respectable course of action" (1994, 7) and notes Westermann's view "that the author of Genesis approved of her action" (1994, 7), he agrees with von Rad and Zimmerli "that the narrator regards their action as a great mistake" (1994, 7). To make his case Wenham, like Waltke, draws the reader's attention to the parallelism with Eve's taking and giving of the forbidden food to Adam. "Note the identical sequence of key nouns and verbs in 3:6: 'The woman[wife]... took... gave it to her husband'" (Wenham 1994, 7-8). He quotes Berg who feels that both narratives, e.g., Eve and Sarah's, tell a story of a fall. "By employing quite similar formulations and an identical sequence of events in Gen 3:6b and 16:3-4a, the author makes it clear that for him both narratives describe comparable events, that they are both accounts of a fall" (Wenham, 8). However, parallelism in-itself is not enough to interpret Sarah's action as a folly, for there is no prohibitory injunction in her narrative as there is in the Edenic, e.g., "but you must not eat..." (Gen 2:17). Furthermore, Sarah is not reproached for her action as is Eve in Gen 3:16. Besides, the same parallelism occurs in Gen 30:9 where Leah *took* (*lqh*) her slave girl Zilpah and *gave* (*ntn*) her to Jacob to have children through her. There's no indication in the Bible of impropriety on the part of Leah. Rather than conveying a negative connotation, the words "taking," "giving" and even "eating" (which is part of the Fall) *by themselves*, should be viewed positively, as expressing charity. For example, the same progression of expressions is part of the Eucharist.

"...Jesus *took* bread... and *gave* it to his disciples, saying "Take and *eat*..." (Matt. 26:26).

Thus, Sarah's action of *taking* and *giving* Hagar to Abraham should not be viewed negatively due to certain parallelism with Eve's action.

There is another dimension to Sarah's act that is brought up, e.g., the lack of trust in God's power to 'cure' her bareness. For example, Waltke says Sarah was "guilty of synergism" (Waltke 2001, 251). This subtle idea seems to be related to the controversial dichotomy of faith and works, e.g., Rom. 4:2-3 and James 2:14-26. In any case, Sarah's action can be viewed as an expression of *hope* and *a form of prayer*, rather than synergy. For example, a person in the desert, dying of thirst, prays to God to sustain their life. Coming upon a well they put forth their hand, draw water from the well, and drink it. The actions of drawing water from the well, and drinking it, could be seen, if intended by the doer, as praying to God with actions,

"תפילה עם פעולה," i.e., the person *asks* God *with actions* to quench their thirst and hydrate their body. On the contrary, coming upon a well, and *willfully* refraining from drawing the water and drinking it, but just praying with one's heart for God to hydrate one's body because God has power to do so, would be an act in opposition to God's will which he has placed in the natural order.

Isaac's announcement story is also illustrative. The messengers inform Abraham and Sarah that they will have a son next year at this time (Gen 17:16). Having been informed of this, would any intimate contact, between Abraham and Sarah, with the intent of actualizing God's promise, be construed as being due to a form of synergistic belief? No. Nor would it necessitate any lack of faith or trust in God's power to make Sarah pregnant. For an act to be synergistic one must believe that God's power is inefficacious without some form of human action, or God's power is more efficacious when coupled with human action. There is nothing in the Genesis passage that warrants these



interpretations. Any intimate *act* between the patriarch and matriarch after the announcement of Isaac's birth should be interpreted as a sign of *hope* and *prayer* to have a son.

*Praying with appropriate actions* appears to be connected to wisdom tradition. In Q Jesus says, "So I say to you: *Ask* and it will be given to you; *seek* and you will find; *knock* and the door will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9; Matt 7:7). "*Seek*" and "*knock*" are expository terms to the word "*Ask*." In other words, asking involves actions, not just wanting or asking with one's lips or heart. To leave no doubt in this matter Jesus provides a parable in which the people *ask*, *seek* and *knock*, *to be let in*, but the door is not opened to them due to their lack of right actions.

Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will <i>try</i> (ζητέω) to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside <i>knocking</i> (κρούω) and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' (asking) "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!' (Luke 13:22-7)	"So I say to you:  <i>Ask</i> (αἰτέω) and it will be given to you;  <i>seek</i> (ζητέω) and you will find;  <i>knock</i> (κρούω) and the door will be opened to you. (Luke 11:19)
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That *asking*, *seeking*, and *knocking* in Jesus' saying is about wisdom seems evident in the saying of James: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should *ask* God... and it will be given to you" (Jas. 1:5). Since, "*seeking*" and "*knocking*" are actions, Jesus stresses to his audience that *asking* from God entails a dimension of *action*, i.e., *asking with appropriate actions*. This idea of asking with action is clearly reflected in Jesus' sending his disciples on their apostolic mission of preaching and healing in Matt 9:37-10:8 and Luke 10:1-12. In the story we're informed that Jesus *sent out his disciples* to preach instructing them to "*Ask* the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to *send out* (ἐκβάλλω) workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2).

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent (ἀποστέλλω) them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out (ἐκβάλλω) workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out (ἀποστέλλω) like lambs among wolves. (Luke 10:1-3) [More on these sayings later in the article.]

What does it mean to *ask* the Lord to send out workers into his harvest field when Jesus is sending you out as workers into God's harvest field? *Ask* here would mean to *ask with both words and deeds to be accepted* by God as his workers. Thus, to be God's workers, one must not only pray with one's heart to be accepted by God, but also *pray with actions*, that is, *act* (carry out Jesus' instructions) as well. Just being sent out by Jesus may not qualify a person as being sent by God. Judas is an example of that (Luke 9:1-2). Although sent out by Jesus, he would not be a worker sent out by the Lord because his heart wasn't right. The importance of exercising one's will in action is expressed in our common language as well, for example, "*Actions speak louder than words*." Hence, Sarah's *taking* Hagar and *giving* her to Abraham can be seen as her *asking with actions* for God to give her a son, rather than a type of synergism.

## 2.2. Ishmael Should be Viewed as Hagar and Sarah's Son

During patriarchal times a woman could obtain a child through her slave girl. This is practiced by not only Sarah (Gen 16:1-14), but also Leah and Rachel (Gen 30:1-22). Just as Leah is considered the mother of Gad and Asher, and Rachel, the mother of Dan and Naphtali, Sarah should be considered the mother of Ishmael. Commenting on Gen 16:2 Wenham says, "So Sarai here expresses the hope that she may 'have sons through her (Hagar)'" (Wenham 1994, 7). Teubal concurs. "Genesis 16 makes it clear that Hagar's child is Sarah's heir" (Teubal 1990, 121). Being his mother, one would expect Sarah to love Ishmael as her son. Not surprisingly this is what Josephus records: "As for Sarah, she at first loved Ismael, who was born of her own handmaid Hagar, with an affection not inferior to that of a son of her own..." (*Antiquities of the Jews* 1.12.3.).

It may be argued that even though Ishmael was Sarah's son, she later disowned him by calling him "Hagar's son," (Gen 21:10), rather than "*my* son." Teubal disagrees: "Nothing in the subsequent story gives any indication that Sarah rejected that relationship of Hagar's son..." (Teubal, 1990, 121). Rather than a rejection of Ishmael, she claims Sarah's demand in "(Gen. 21:10) indicates the equality of the status of the sons, at least in Sarah's eyes" (Teubal, 121). The expression "her son" need not be taken as a sign of maternal rejection. It may have informed Abraham that Hagar will henceforth be solely responsible for the care and upbringing of Ishmael. What Hamilton observes regarding Abraham's "placing" (*nāṭan*) Ishmael on Hagar's shoulder supports this. "When we learn that *nāṭan* means not only "put, place" but also to "commit, entrust," then the meaning is plain. Both "bread/water" and "child" serve as direct objects of *nāṭan*. Abraham places the physical provisions on her back and entrusts their son and his welfare to Hagar's care" (1995, 82). A similar expression to that of Sarah's occurs in John where Jesus says his own mother is now his disciple's mother.

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (John 19:26-7)

Jesus' telling the beloved disciple that Mary is his mother is in no way a disowning of the disciple's real mother. It informs the disciple that he is now entrusted with the responsibility of caring for Jesus' mother as he is responsible for the care of his own mother. The same could be said of Sarah calling Ishmael Hagar's son. As a performative utterance the saying, rather than disowning him, allocates total care and responsibility of Ishmael to Hagar.

### 2.3. מְשַׁחֵק (*m<sup>e</sup>tsachēq*) May Refer to "Rejoicing" and "Imitating" Rather Than "Mocking"

The reader is told that Sarah was prompted to make her demand due to a particular behavior exhibited by Ishmael, i.e., *m<sup>e</sup>tsachēq* (Gen 21:9). The term *m<sup>e</sup>tsachēq* is in the piel participle form, and of the same root of *tzahaq*, Isaac's name. The Septuagint saw *m<sup>e</sup>tsachēq* quite positively, e.g., "playing with Isaac, her son" (LES 2019, 21). This is the earliest view on Ishmael's action. Sarna agrees saying that Ishmael "was either amusing himself or playing with Isaac" (Sarna 1989, 146). Many of the Midrashic interpreters, on the other hand, are quite negative. Wenham summarizes the ancient opinions. "The midrash suggested it might involve idolatry (cf. Exod. 32:6) sexual immorality (cf. Gen 39:14, 17), or even murder (cf. 2 Sam 2:14[קִנְיָ])" (Wenham 1994, 82). Given these opinions one is hard pressed not to interpret *m<sup>e</sup>tsachēq* as drawing the ire of Sarah. However, Wenham says that a negative interpretation "...seems unlikely, for Ishmael appears in a quite positive light" (Wenham 1994, 82). Speiser writes Ishmael's "playing with Isaac need mean no more than that the older boy was trying to amuse his little brother. There is nothing in the text to suggest that he was abusing him..." (Speiser 1979, 155). Wenham also provides the opinion of Coats (1983, 153) who holds that Ishmael was playing the role of Isaac. "It suggests on the contrary, that Sarah saw Ishmael *mesaheq* playing the role of Isaac" (Wenham 1994, 82). Alter construes *m<sup>e</sup>tsachēq* "as 'Isaac-ing-it'—that is, Sarah sees Ishmael presuming to play the role of Isaac" (Alter 1997, 98). The positive appraisals of Speiser, Wenham, Coats, and Alter facilitate a constructive interpretation of Sarah's demand. For example, Rabbi Waskow feels that what Sarah saw was Ishmael's imitation interfering with the psycho-cognitive development of both boys. Thus, she took measures to thwart this.

“So perhaps the constant presence of each son in the other’s face was distorting both of them, making it hard for them to grow up together and yet grow into their own distinct identities. So to be themselves, they must live separately, free of each other’s control and imitation” (Chittister et al. 2006, 37).

The rabbi’s observation augments Sarah’s maternal concerns for both siblings. Ishmael’s imitation of Isaac could be detrimental to the development of both siblings. One may dismiss the seriousness of such rivalry between siblings, but the examples of Esau and Jacob (Gen 27:1-43), and Joseph and his brothers (Gen 37) are cause for pause. When Sarah’s demand is read with both sons in mind the partiality that is attributed to her voice is dampened if not excised, and her words now convey, besides wisdom, a deep maternal concern for both sons.



2.4. Contrary to Expectations the Expression פֶּרֶא דָּא מִן (pere' 'a ḏa m) Is Quite Positive

Accompanying Ishmael’s birth announcement, the angel of Yahweh tells Hagar that her son will be a pere’ ‘a ḏa m (Gen 16:12). This phrase is usually translated as “wild donkey of a man” or “wild ass of a man” (see NIV, ESV, RSV, NASB (1995, 1977), HCSB). Harlan explains the tendencies to interpret the passage negatively. “The natural inclination of Americans is to view this negatively as most standard translations do (e.g., ASV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NET, ESV, NLT), given the negative characteristics of associating someone with a donkey (especially, an “ass”) in American culture, for it indicates one who is stubborn, stupid, or despicable” (Harlan 2022, 61). One should note at the outset that in Hebrew the word for a domesticated donkey is חֲמֹר, (*hamor*) and not פֶּרֶא (*pere*). This distinction is lost in translation. For example, both Wenham and Sarna render פֶּרֶא דָּא “a wild ass of a man” (see Wenham 1994, 2; Sarna 1989, 121). Wenham comments that the animal פֶּרֶא (*pere*) symbolizes attributes such as an “individualistic lifestyle untrammelled by social convention” (Wenham 1994, 11), and Sarna, “a people free and undisciplined” (Sarna 1989, 121). However, once *pere*’ is translated into English as “donkey,” it doesn’t help much to say the word means “individualistic lifestyle untrammelled by social” (Wenham). The word “donkey” unconsciously colors one’s perception *even after* a positive definition is given. Because of this psychological dilemma Kraye suggests *pere*’ should be understood as a “wild mustang,” (2022, 79), and Pigott, as a “wild stallion” (2018, 513). Waskow chooses to translate the expression as “a free-running human” (Chittister et al. 2006, 8). What Speiser notes about *pere*’ – that it can refer to a “wild horse,” makes apologetic explanations unnecessary. Speiser says, “The qualifying Heb. noun *pere*’ could stand for either wild ass or wild horse” (1979, 118).

Another element that contributes to the negative appraisal of the expression *pere*’ ‘a ḏa m is the preposition אֶ (be) in the verse that follows. The preposition can have a variety of meanings depending on the context: “in, at, with, by, against” (Pratico and Van Pelt, 2019, 53). However, almost all standard translations chose to render the prepositions as “against,” e.g., “his hand will be *against* everyone” (NIV, NASB, HCSB, RSV, ASV, ESV). To illustrate that not only the preposition אֶ, but the whole verse Gen 16: 12 can very well be translated and understood positively Kraye and Waskow’s renderings are provided below. Compare with NIV.

Gen 16:12, NIV	Gen 16:12, Kraye	Gen 16:12 Waskow
He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.”	He (will be) a free man, his hand (will be free) from everyone, and everyone’s hand (will be free) from him, and he will live in the presence of all his kin. (Kraye 2022, 84)	He will be a free-running human His hand in everyone’s, Everyone’s hand in his, And he shall dwell facing all his brothers. (Chittister et al. 2006, 8)

In both Kraye and Waskow’s renderings the negativity toward Ishmael is quite absent.

2.5. Sarah and Hagar’s Relationship Not Based on Rivalry

Popular belief is that polygamous relationships breed only jealousy and conflict between co-wives. Miriam Peskowitz contends this view arguing that cooperation is essential. Julia Klein reports:

(Peskowitz) disputes the traditional picture of Sarah and Hagar as rivals. "I think the story's at odds with the way people would have lived," she says, with cooperation among women being essential to survival in the desert. (Klein 2008)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Although, the source is not peer reviewed Peskowitz is a credible authority on Jewish history and women’s studies.

Furthermore, the Bible says that Sarah *wed* Hagar to her husband (Gen 16:3). According to Zucker and Reiss this gave rights of a second wife to Hagar.

The biblical text terms Hagar a (second) “wife” (Gen 16:3) using the term *‘isha*, (not a *pilegish* – a concubine). Hagar presumably was given some undefined rights of a wife, albeit a secondary wife. (Zucker and Reiss 2009, 3)

If their relationship was defined by rivalry, why would the biblical writer present Sarah interested in increasing Hagar’s social status by giving her rights and privileges of a second wife? To have a son through Hagar Sarah could have offered her to Abraham as a concubine as Leah and Rachel do their respective slave-girls Zilpah and Bilhah (see Gen 30:1-12). Sarah’s action suggests they were friends.

Furthermore, Teubal feels the Bible reveals an intimate relationship between Sarah and Hagar. She refers to the expression “bearing on one’s knee’s” (Gen. 30:3) used by Rachel to have a child through her *shifhah* (see 84). She says that this implies “a prescribed practice”<sup>7</sup> (84). During delivery the surrogate “would sit between the legs of the woman who would become her child’s social parent while the midwife assisted in the delivery” (1990, 84). Since the terminology of both Sarah and Rachel’s narrative are quite similar, this procedure would have been most likely performed in Hagar’s birthing of Ishamel. She says that “if this specific procedure was followed when Hagar gave birth to Sarah’s presumptive heir, it presents a dramatic image of the intimate relationship necessary between the two women” (84). So, rather than being based on rivalry, their relationship seems to have been intimate.

The rabbinic tradition of how Hagar came to be a slave of Sarah support this conclusion. *Bereshit Rabbah* (54:1) notes that when Pharaoh saw how God punished him and his household due to Sarah, he takes his daughter, Hagar, and gives her to Sarah<sup>8</sup> saying “that it is better for his daughter to be a slave in Abraham’s household than a princess in the palace. There’s a midrash that suggests the Pharaoh’s decision to give his daughter to Sarah was *after* Hagar had persuaded him: “the Egyptian princess became so attached to Sarah that she told her royal father that she would accompany her when she returned to Abraham.” (Lockyer 1967, 61). According to this oral history Hagar’s decision to leave her royal status, home, and country, strongly suggests that she had been converted by Sarah in the harem and that she was emulating Sarah’s self-sacrifice, i.e., Sarah had left her home, status, and country for the love of God. Given this background the reason Hagar chose to attach herself to Sarah as a slave would be due to (1) that they had become intimate friends in the harem and that Hagar wished not to separate from Sarah, and (2) free women could not travel without a male guardian accompanying them. Solution: become Sarah’s slave.

Being friends does not mean that at times there were no tensions or heated quarrels. There must have been like in any relationship. However, this does not mean that they were not friends. For example, the midrash’s portrayal of Hagar being reluctant to accept Sarah’s suggestion to marry Abraham is also evidence of their friendship.

“She was at first reluctant when Sarah desired her to marry Abraham, and although Sarah had full authority over her as her handmaid, she persuaded her, saying, ‘Consider thyself happy to be united with this saint.’”<sup>9</sup>

Hagar’s reluctance to marry Abraham suggests she likely anticipated conflict to arise between her and Sarah due to the newly proposed marital arrangement. One also notices Sarah’s concern with

<sup>7</sup> Teubal provides a photo of a sculpture which depicts a surrogate giving birth between the legs of her mistress. The midwife is assisting. (see page 83)

<sup>8</sup> Given the Bible says Hagar was Sarah’s slave-girl (Gen. 16:6), it appears the reference to “Abraham” in *Bereshit Rabbah* 45:1 functions like a synecdoche, that is, Hagar was given to a member in Abraham’s household, e.g., Sarah, and not to Abraham personally.

<sup>9</sup> *JewishEncyclopedia.com*, s.v. “Hagar,” accessed March 21, 2022, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7021-hagar>. (See also Zucker and Reiss 2015, 106).

Hagar's reluctance to marry Abraham, for she shows an effort to put Hagar's heart and mind at ease (see *Bereshit Rabbah* 45:3). These behaviors are expected from intimate friends, not rivals.

Some may insist that these rabbinic traditions should be dismissed on grounds they were penned at a much later date. However, if the Bible clearly presents Sarah and Hagar as rivals, why would the rabbis be interested, in not only elevating Hagar's status, but presenting the women as friends? The criterion of embarrassment warrants a serious reconsideration of the reason(s) behind the Rabbis' inventing such "tales."

## 2.6. The Particle כִּי (kî) (Gen 21:10) Introduces the Causal Basis for Hagar and Ishmael's Being Sent Away

Harris, noting the particle כִּי (kî) can be used in four ways, points out that in Gen 21:10 it is used to introduce "a causal clause" (Harris 1980, 438). Although, almost all Bibles translate the preposition כִּי (Gen 21:10) as "for," it is understood as "so that" (intended consequence), i.e., Hagar and Ishmael were driven away *so that* Ishmael does not threaten Isaac's inheritance. Although, not explicitly stated, commentaries on Sarah's *garesh* demand, de facto, labor under this assumption. For example, summarizing Van Seters' understanding of Sarah's demand (Gen. 21:10), Latvus writes that Hagar and Ishmael were sent away "so that" Ishmael does not inherit with Isaac:

In the context of 21:18, Van Seters underlined the expulsion motive. Sarah's order to "expel" (גרש) Hagar and Ishmael *so that* [emphasis added] Ishmael would not "inherit" (ירש) with Isaac (v. 12) is a reflection on how to treat non-Israelites" (2010, 256)

Understanding the particle כִּי (kî) in Gen. 21:10 as "so that" confines into Sarah intent to saving Isaac from coming under the overbearing presence of Ishmael. However, כִּי (kî) introduces a causal clause which provides the explanation for Sarah's demand (see Waltke 2001, 640), not the intended consequence. Thus, it should not be understood as *so that*, but as *because*, e.g., *because* this slave girl's son is not to share in the inheritance, drive her away. The passage from Exodus 20:4-6 may illustrate better the function of כִּי (kî) in Genesis 21:10. In the text below, "*so that*" and "*for*" will be used for the particle. Compare.

### Exodus 20:4-6

4 thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; <b>so that</b> (כִּי) I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;	4 thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; <b>for</b> (כִּי) I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;
5 and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.	5 and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.
6 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; <b>so that</b> (כִּי) the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.	6 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; <b>for</b> (כִּי) the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

In the above passage the particle כִּי cannot be "read" or understood as "so that" because it does not make any logical sense. The motivations behind the prohibitions of not bowing down to idols or taking the name of the Lord in vain are implicit. These can be rendered explicit. For example, compare Ex. 20:4 where the motivation of the command is made explicit.

### Ex. 20:4

thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them;	thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; (" <b>so that</b> " I the LORD thy God do <b>not</b> become jealous and punish thee...)
--	--

<p><b>so that</b> (כִּי) I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;</p>	<p><b>because</b> (כִּי) I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;</p>
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Clearly, it is not *so that* God will be a jealous God that the nation of Israel must not bow down to idols, but *because* God is a jealous God that they must not. When כִּי (*kî*) is understood as introducing the reason why Ishmael is sent away, rather than just the intended result, Sarah's motivation is open to embrace the interests of both sons, e.g., she intends to prevent Isaac and Ishmael from coming under each other's overbearing presence. Compare the two renderings of Sarah's demand.

Gen. 21:10, כִּי so that  
'Drive away that slave-girl and her son,'  
**so that** (כִּי) this servant-girl's son does not share  
the inheritance with my son Isaac.'

Gen. 21:10, כִּי because  
'Drive away that slave-girl and her son,'  
(*so that both Isaac and Ishmael do not come under  
the overbearing presence of each other, as both of them,  
in their unique ways actualize God's promise*),  
**because** (כִּי) this servant-girl's son is not to share  
the inheritance with my son Isaac.'

This preliminary analysis may be summarized as such:

1. Sarah's use of Hagar may be seen as an act of prayer
2. Ishmael should be viewed as Hagar *and* Sarah's son
3. מְצַחֵק (*me'tsachēq*) seems to refer to Ishmael "rejoicing," and "imitating" Isaac
4. The term פֶּרֶא (*pere'*) symbolizes being free and independent
5. Sarah and Hagar's relationship was not based on rivalry, but cooperation,
6. כִּי should be read, as it relates to Ishmael, that both Isaac and Ishmael do not come under the overbearing presence of each other, as both of them, in their unique ways actualize God's promise.

We may now turn our attention to Sarah's גֵּרָשׁ demand and Abraham's שְׁלַח act.

### 3. Hagar, Archetype of Israel

Dozeman had observed the conquest narratives, e.g., Exod. 23:27-33, should not be used to frame Sarah's גֵּרָשׁ of Hagar (Dozeman, 23). The reasons for this are the following: first, the expulsion of the Canaanites' is not a liberation. Second, an extra prohibitory injunction is given to the Israelites regarding the Hivites, et al.: "do not let them live in your land" (Exod. 23:33). We do know Ishmael and Isaac's separation was not permanent for they later came together to bury their father (Gen 25:9). Noble writes that this shows "Ishmael is not separated or otherwise cut off, but cooperates with Isaac in the task" (Noble 2016, 117). And third, contrary to the prohibition of living with those driven out for fear of worshiping their gods, after the death of Sarah Isaac went and *lived* with his brother Ishmael near Beer Lahai Roi, i.e., Ishmael's home (Gen 25:11). There is also the rabbinical tradition that Isaac, after the death of his mother, returned his aunt Hagar back to his father. The concern here is not so much with the historicity of the tradition, but with the meaning of the word גֵּרָשׁ. The rabbis did not consider גֵּרָשׁ to imply, at least in the case of Ishmael, a rejection or a permanent separation.

If the conquest narratives (Exod. 23:27-33) are not the proper frames to understand the meaning of Sarah's גֵּרָשׁ demand as Dozeman observes, then what is? Dozeman contends it is Moses and Israel's expulsions from Egypt. He says, that "in both instances expulsion is an act of liberation for the one being driven out, signifying release from slavery" (Dozeman, 30). He goes on to say, "The Salvific character of expulsion for Hagar is made explicit when she received a divine oracle of

salvation in Gen 21:17..." (Dozeman, 30). No divine oracles are mentioned in connection with Hivites, Canaanites or Hittites. Dozeman claims that God indirectly orchestrated and sanctioned both Hagar and Israel's expulsions.<sup>10</sup> For example, in Ex. 6:1 God informs the reader that He was the cause of Pharaoh's גרש of Israel out of Egypt.

"...with a strong hand he will גרש them out of his land" (Exod. 6:1).

Dozeman is not alone in his appraisal of Hagar being like Israel. Tribble, Frymer-Kensky, and Kamionkowski also see a prefiguration of Israel in the life and person of Hagar. Tribble observes, *"Having once fled from affliction (Gen 16:6b), Hagar continues to prefigure Israel's story even as Sarah foreshadows Egypt's role."* (Tribble 1984, 21). And Frymer-Kensky and Kamionkowski. note that "Hagar, the slave from Egypt, foreshadows Israel, the future slaves in Egypt." (2021). The parallel language between Hagar and Israel, invites one to consider that the Priestly writer was framing Sarah's גרש demand of Hagar in view of Israel's being גרש out into the desert.

### 3.1. ענה ('ā. nāh) to Be Tested, the Reason for Israel's גרש

Deut. 8:2 says that Israel was led out of Egypt into the desert to be ענה ('ānāh) as part of God's divine plan. "Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to *humble* ('ānāh) and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands" (Duet. 8:2). In this verse 'ānāh is in the piel form. BDB gives the meaning of "humble, mishandle, afflict" for the piel form of the verb (see BDB s.v. ענה). The piel form is also used in Lev 16:31. Some like NASB (1977, 1995), ISV, NAB, YLT have translated it as "humble": "It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, so that you may *humble* (ענה) yourselves; it is a permanent statute" (Lev. 16:31, NASB 1995) Others have chosen to translate it as "afflict" e.g., ESV, NKJV, ASV, DRB, ERV. Whatever the case, God's severe and harsh treatment (ענה) of his servants is not a sign of rejection or punishment, it is a test, an act of grace. It is through such severe trials that Israel learned humility and wisdom (Deut. 8:2-3). Although, in the Hithpael form, in Psalms 119, the Psalmist praised being subjected to ענה claiming they learned God's decrees and submission to it. "It was good for me to be ענה so that I might learn your decrees" (Ps 119:71) and "Before I was ענה, I went astray; but now I keep Your word" (Ps 119:67). Thus, the meaning of the word ענה, like גרש, when associated with Israel has at times a positive meaning.

### 3.2. ענה ('ā. nāh) in the Narrative of Hagar

The word 'ānāh (*humbled*) used of Israel in Deut. 8:2 and in Lev. 16:31, is also used of Hagar in Gen. 16:6. All of these words happen to be in the piel form. Hagar's subjection to ענה 'ānāh (Gen 16:6,9) occurs after Sarah *lost stature* תקל (têqal) in Hagar's eyes (Gen. 16:4). The verb קלל in Gen 16:4 is in the Qal. form. Almost all Bible versions translate it as "despise," e.g., NIV, NASB, BSB, NKJV, DRB, or "contempt," e.g., ESV, HCSB, NRSV, RSV, ISV, conveying the idea that Hagar *despised* her mistress or looked with *contempt* at her mistress. Hamilton disagrees. He renders the word in Gen. 16:4 as "lost stature"<sup>11</sup> and notes the following on the word קלל. "V. 4b can hardly be translated 'she looked with contempt on her mistress' (so RSV). Such an active display of contempt would require the Piel form of this verb, with its factitive effect. It is loss of face which Sarah felt had impelled her to complain to Abraham in v. 5 as she does" (Hamilton 1990, 442). Thus, one can say, becoming pregnant

<sup>10</sup> "Sarah demands the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from the camp (Gen 21:10), while pharaoh drives out Moses from his house (Exod. 10:11) and the Egyptians drive out Israel from their land (Exod. 12:39) In each case, however, God indirectly orchestrates and sanctions the expulsion" (Dozeman, 30).

<sup>11</sup> "When she learned that she had conceived, her mistress *lost stature* in her estimation" (Hamilton 442). The NAV also translates the word as "lost stature." Both the YLT and LSV render the word as "lightly esteemed."



Hagar was putting on airs. Sarah was deeply hurt by her attitude. Interestingly, Sarah faults, not Hagar, but Abraham for her demeanor. It appears Abraham's preferential treatment of Hagar is responsible for the self-image created in her mind. This episode underscores Hagar's receptivity. The scribe is saying just as Abraham's intimate relation with Hagar resulted in her *involuntarily* conceiving and having a son, Abraham's preferential relation with Hagar resulted in her *involuntarily* conceiving and giving birth to her new self-image of being the instrument of the divine promise. We're not told how Hagar behaved towards Sarah. It appears to be irrelevant. The biblical narrative continues.

Then Sarai *mistreated* (ענה) Hagar; so she fled from her. ... Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and *submit* (ענה) to her." (Gen 16:6-9)

In Gen. 16:6 ענה *'ānāh* is in the piel form, while in v. 9 it is in the Hithpael form. And although, Sarah could have treated Hagar severely, e.g., the piel suggests this as in Deut. 8:2, the form God used to instruct Hagar to *ānāh* herself to Sarah is in the Hithpael and less severe. For example, in Ezra 8:21 and Dan 10:12 the Hithpael form is used and is usually translated as "humble yourself." The NIV, HCSB, and NAB translate ענה in Gen 16:6 as "mistreated," and YLT, DRB, BST and LSV translate it as "afflicted." However, between co-wives ענה may not be so severe. It may refer to the emotional pain experienced by a wife who does not receive from her husband love comparable to that shown to the other. An example of this usage is by Leah who says God gave her a son for her ענה (misery) (Gen. 29:32): "Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "It is because the LORD has seen my *misery* (ענה). Surely my husband will love me now."

If Sarah's *'ānāh* of Hagar was intended by God as was Pharaoh's *'ānāh* of Israel in Deut. 8:2-3, or the self-inflicted *'ānāh* of the sabbath observance in Lev 16:31 (both are in the piel form), then, Sarah's *'ānāh* should be read as a *humbling* of Hagar, rather than a *mistreatment* or *affliction*. Ellicott's Commentary agrees. "...its more exact meaning is, *Sarai humbled her*, that is, reduced her to her original condition" (Ellicott 1971, 43). Rather than submitting to her status of being Sarah's handmaid, it appears Hagar had submitted to the status which Abraham (unwittingly) had conferred on her. Thus, the writer appears to be saying that God *humbléd* Hagar through Sarah as he *humbléd* Israel (Deut. 8:2-3).

#### Gen 16:6-9

Sarai *humbléd* (*'ānāh*) her (from Ellicott's commentary) so much that Hagar ran away from her.  
...  
And the messenger of Jehovah saith to her, 'Turn back unto thy mistress, and *humble* (*'ānāh*) thyself under her hands;' (YLT)

#### Deut. 8:2-3

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to *humble* (*'ānāh*) and test you. ...  
He *humbléd* (*'ānāh*) you, causing you to hunger...

Thus, it appears that the purpose behind both Israel and Hagar's *gāreš* was to subject them to *'ānāh*. One may argue that the word *'ānāh* is not mentioned *after* Sarah's *gāreš* demand in Gen. 21:10, but earlier. That may be because the *'ānāh* (testing) theme in Gen. 16 is continuing. For example, comparing the words behind the "expulsion" narrative of Ishmael with the words of the "binding" narrative of Isaac, Adelman concludes that Hagar and Ishmael were both tested by God. In her article, "The Expulsion of Ishmael: Who Is Being Tried?" she writes,

It is clear ... that both Ishmael and Hagar, like Isaac and Abraham, undergo a trial of near sacrifice and salvation emblematic of God's elect (Adelman, *thetorah.com*)

It appears that through *ānāh* Israel learned "that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3). And the same could be said of Hagar, that

is, through *'ānāh* she learned not to live on inferences drawn from the preferential treatment of Abraham, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord.

#### 4. Hagar like Jesus

One may think modern liberal sensibilities may be implicitly at work guiding these interpretations. In this section we will see that early Christians portrayed Jesus' inauguration in a way that is very similar to the language of Hagar's so-called "expulsion" narrative demonstrating thereby that Hagar's story was viewed as an initiation of a mission in ancient times.

In the synoptic Gospels Jesus' mission commences with the baptism of John, the Baptist. Mark says that coming out of the water the Spirit ἐκβάλλω Jesus into the desert (Mark 1:12). Surprisingly the LXX uses the very same Greek word to translate Sarah's גַּר of Genesis 21:10.

##### Gen 21:10, LES

then she said to Abraham, "Banish (ἐκβάλλει) this maid and her son..."

##### Mark 1:12, ESV

The Spirit immediately drove (ἐκβάλλει) him into the wilderness.

Liddell gives "throw or cast out" for the general meaning of ἐκβάλλω (see LSJ s.v. ἐκβάλλω) and provides "casting out of evil spirits" in Mark 1:34 and 3:22. For example, "The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebul in Him!'" and, "He drives (ἐκβάλλει) out demons by the ruler of the demons!" (Mark 3:22, HCSB). In Mark 9:47 the imperative form of the verb is used. "And if your eye causes your downfall, gouge it out (ἐκβάλει)" (Mark 9:47, HCSB). Obviously, one should not associate the Spirit's ἐκβάλλω of Jesus with the casting out of evil spirits or the gouging out of an evil eye.

Is there a less forceful or mission-oriented usage of ἐκβάλλω? Liddell and Bauer, both provide examples. A biblical example provided by Liddell is Mark 1:43 which usage is described as "a weakened sense, cause to depart" (LSJ s.v. ἐκβάλλω). In the passage Jesus heals a leper and sends (ἐκβάλλω) him with certain instructions to not inform anyone that Jesus healed him. Jesus also gives him certain instructions which will enable him to be reintroduced back into society (see Lev. 14). The purity laws of Lev. 13-14 may explain the harshness of Jesus' ἐκβάλλω (sending out) of the leper. The aorist indicative tense of ἐκβάλλω is used in Mark 1:43 which suggests a duration continuing into the future. For example, a person ostracized from social interaction for some time may find it quite difficult to become resocialized back into society. We see examples of this today among released prisoners: being imprisoned for many years they become institutionalized, i.e., they are unable to function autonomously in society.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, when one's sickness becomes their master status, it may be quite difficult to leave the community of outcasts and resocialize back into society. Thus, the use of a word ἐκβάλλω which signifies being forced into society by being expelled from the status of outcasts. But there's more to the word in the passage—the idea of some assignment. This refers to the instructions given to the leper when he was sent away. Jesus instructs him not to tell anyone that he healed him. Thus, there appears to be two functions of Jesus' ἐκβάλλω of the healed leper: (1) to cast him out of the social status of outcasts, and (2) to send him away with certain instructions. One may see Sarah's ἐκβάλλω in a similar vein, that is, (1) to cast Hagar out from the status of a slave, i.e., liberate her, (2) to remove Ishmael from the social status of inheriting Abraham's promised land and rule, and (3) to send away Hagar with certain instructions.

The examples given by BGAD Matt 9:38 and Luke 10:2 show conclusively that the word ἐκβάλλω does at times indicate a mission objective. "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out (ἐκβάλλω) workers into his harvest field"

<sup>12</sup> The same could be said of slaves, i.e., not exercising their will for a long period of time, a person may lose the ability to function autonomously. Such a person will most likely fear being released. Thus, they may have to be forcefully liberated. This appears to be at least one of the reasons why the word *gāreš* (casting out) is used for the release of slaves (see Deut. 15:12; Jer. 34:9-16). However, *gāreš* also appears to address a slaveowner's desire not to free his slave, due to loss of revenue. Thus, the forceful language of casting out (*gāreš*) also addresses the intention of the slaveowner who is emotionally conflicted, i.e., they must oppose their own desires to keep their slaves enslaved.

(Matt 9:37-8, Luke 10:2). In this context ἐκβάλλω is used of Jesus's sending the disciples on their apostolic mission (Matt 10 and Luke 10). The use of the strong term ἐκβάλλω suggests Jesus saw society in some sense to be like a prison which an inmate wishes not to leave. The rich man (Luke 18:18-23) who couldn't leave his social status is a case in point. In any case, the pairing of ἀποστέλλω with ἐκβάλλω in Luke 10:1-2 leaves no doubt that ἐκβάλλω has been used to express the idea of a mission. However, strangely enough BGAD fails to mention this. They describe the usage of ἐκβάλλω in Matt. 9:38 and Luke 10:2 as "to cause to go or remove from a position (without force)" (BGAD s.v. ἐκβάλλω). There is no indication of the meaning or connotation of a mission objective connected with the word. Observe how the pairing of the words ἐκβάλλω and ἀποστέλλω clearly express the idea of being sent on a mission.

#### Luke 10:1-12<sup>13</sup>

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and *sent* (ἀποστέλλω) them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to *send out* (ἐκβάλλω) workers into his harvest field. Go! I am *sending* (ἀποστέλλω) you *out* like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

A reason for the use of ἐκβάλλω, i.e., a term signifying forcefulness, in the disciples' being sent out appears to be due to the social world's being fraught with danger. For example, Jesus warns the disciples to beware of wolves: Matt 10:16 and Luke 10:3. In any case, this context shows conclusively that ἐκβάλλω does function at times as the word ἀποστέλλω "to dispatch someone for the achievement of some objective" (BGAD s.v. "ἀποστέλλω"). For whatever reason, both LSJ and BGAD fail to mention this meaning of ἐκβάλλω. A possible reason for this may be to avoid any association between the Lord of the harvest sending out workers (Matt. 9:38, Luke 10:2) and the story of Adam's so-called "expulsion" (Gen 3:23) from the garden. When the two sayings are compared it appears the Lord of the harvest has sent out Adam as a worker on a mission to harvest the field. Compare.

"[T]herefore the LORD God *sent him out* (gāreš) Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to *send* from the garden of Eden to work the ground *out* (ἐκβάλλω) workers into his harvest field. from which he was taken" (Gen. 3:23, ESV). (Luke 10:2)

The affinity between these two sayings may be problematic theologically. It is usually held that Adam's removal from the garden was only a "fall." However, Hamilton notes that "Not all commentators agree that Gen. 3 describes a 'fall'" (1990, 211). For example, he says "According to Westermann, to see in the text any doctrine of the transmission of sin, or fall from original righteousness, is to read into the text something that it does not claim" (1990, 211). In the Gospel saying of Luke 10:1-3 Jesus appears to be countering contemporary views of Adam's fall, that is, Adam's being sent out into the world entails being sent out on a *mission* "to work the ground from which he was taken" (Gen. 3:23, ESV). [More on Adam's so-called "expulsion" in the section "Hagar like Adam."]

Although Mark was not uncomfortable using the word ἐκβάλλω to express the Spirit's *driving* Jesus into the desert, Matthew and Luke appear to be for different words have been used in their accounts of the story. Compare.

LXX Gen. 21

Mark 1:12

Matt 4:1

Luke 4:1

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Matt 9:37-10:8.

10	καὶ εἶπε τῷ	And at once the Spirit	1	Then Jesus was led	1	Filled with the Holy
	Ἀβραάμ· ἐκβαλε	drove (ἐκβάλλει)		him (ἀνίχθη)		Spirit, Jesus left the
	(Drive) τὴν	into the desert...		into the desert to be put		Jordan and was led
	παιδίσκην ταύτην			to the test by the devil.		(ἤγετο) by the Spirit
	καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς					into the desert...

This appears to have been precipitated by three factors: (1) the uncomfortable association ἐκβάλλω created between Jesus and the evil spirits, i.e., the Spirit could not have “driven out” Jesus into the desert like the demons were “driven out” of people, (2) Jesus being identified as a worker sent out by the Lord as were the disciples, and (3) Jesus’s being compared with Hagar. Thus, just as it is wrong to use the exorcism narratives or the “gouge out one’s eye” saying to frame the Spirit’s ἐκβάλλω of Jesus into the desert, it is wrong to use the conquest narratives of Ex. 23:27-33 to frame Sarah’s שָׂרָא or ἐκβάλλω (Gen. 21:10, LXX) demand.

When the narratives of both Hagar and the Jesus’ being driven into the desert (Mark 1) are compared one is confronted with the following uncanny similarities.

Jesus (Mark 1)	Hagar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use of ἐκβάλλω (v. 12)</li><li>• has a theophany (v. 11)</li><li>• a call from heaven (v. 11)</li><li>• sent into the desert (v. 12)</li><li>• severely tested in the desert (v. 13)</li><li>• with wild animals (v. 13)</li><li>• angels minister to Jesus (v. 13)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use of ἐκβάλλω, i.e., LXX Gen 21:10</li><li>• has a theophany, Gen 16:13, Gen 21:16-21(?)</li><li>• a call from heaven, Gen 21:17</li><li>• sent into the desert, Gen 21:14</li><li>• severely tested in the desert, Gen 21:16-7</li><li>• with son, i.e., describes as a wild donkey or horse, Gen 16:12</li><li>• angel ministers to Hagar, Gen 21:17-8</li></ul>

These commonalities suggest some early Christians conceived Jesus’ ἐκβάλλω to parallel that of Hagar’s. In comparison to the will and activity of the Spirit on Jesus’ being driven into the desert, Sarah’s *demand* to drive Hagar and Ishmael away alludes to the *will* of the Holy Spirit, and Abraham’s *act* of driving them into the desert alludes to the *work* of the Holy Spirit.

Since the Spirit’s ἐκβάλλω of Jesus signals the inauguration of Jesus’ ministry the Markan community appears to have seen a similar dynamic at work with Sarah’s ἐκβάλλω (Gen 21:10, LXX) demand of Hagar. But why would early Christians couch the inauguration of Jesus’ mission in words paralleling Hagar’s if they believed it was only an “expulsion” as it is commonly read today? They wouldn’t. It appears they saw Hagar’s ἐκβάλλω as (1) a release from Sarah’s authority, (2) a subjection to trials, and (3) the commencement of a mission. These elements parallel Jesus’ ἐκβάλλω into the desert, i.e., (1) as a release from the Baptizer’s authority, (2) subjection to sever trials, and (3) the commencement of his divine mission. But why use Hagar’s narrative rather than Moses’ to frame Jesus’ inauguration?<sup>14</sup> The answer may lie in what Dozeman says, that Ishmael was seen as an extension of Israel’s mission of salvation to the Gentiles. “There are many dimensions to the relationship between Ishmael and Israel as it is fashioned by Priestly writers. When read from the perspective of Israel, Ishmael represents an expansion of election beyond the boundaries of Israel, and as such Ishmael models the proselyte who undergoes circumcision” (Dozeman 1998, 42). The prominent role of Ishmael in salvation history is observed in Paul’s decision to journey into Arabia (Gal. 1:17) after his encounter with the risen Christ (Gal. 1:15-6). Harlan writes that Paul’s “targeting Nabataean Arabs as the first Gentiles accords with Isaiah’s view of Ishmael’s descendants as ‘first-responders’ to the dawn of eschatological glory (60:1-7)” (Harlan, 2023, 88). Thus, it appears highly

<sup>14</sup> Dozeman contends that Hagar models Moses more than Israel (See 1998, 23).



likely that the reason the Markan community used Hagar's narrative to frame Jesus' *εκβαλλω* into the desert, may be due to not only the prominent role of Hagar and Ishmael in salvation history, but also how they viewed their own relationship to Israel: being Gentiles they saw Jesus' mission, as far as it relates to them, to be sent to the Gentiles like Hagar and Ishmael were.

## 5. Hagar like Adam

Because of the pairing of the words *שלח* and *גרש* in both Adam and Hagar's stories, any analysis of Hagar's story that does not take into account Adam's will be incomplete. The general view happens to be that Adam experienced some form of "alienation" from God for his disobedience, rather than "sent out" on some mission. A popular scholarly translation, the NIV, is a case in point which translates God's *šellach* of Adam from the Garden as "banished."

[T]he LORD God *banished* (*šellach* – piel form) him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. (Gen 3:22)

Dozeman had observed that for both Hagar and Israel "expulsion is an act of liberation for the one that is being driven out" (Dozeman 1998, 30). However, translating the *šellach* of Adam (Gen 3:23) as "banish" as the NIV does, confines the scope of God's action to some form of punishment and rejection. Thus, the NIV's translation of Adam's *šellach* does not convey a divine mission. What confounds the problem is that, at times, *šellach* in the Torah refers to divorce (Deut. 22:19).<sup>15</sup> Read from the perspective of a divorce, Adam's *šellach* (Gen 3:23) reflects *some form* of estrangement from God. Hence, the justification of the word "banished" (NIV).<sup>16</sup> When this understanding of Adam's narrative is used to frame Hagar's story she appears to be estranged from Abraham's family and God's salvific promise.

However, contrary to expectations the piel form of *שלח* *šellach* in both Adam and Hagar's stories appears to express two ideas: (1) being set free, and (2) being sent on some kind of mission.

### 5.1. *שלח*. Being Set Free, Extending One's Reach, and Being Sent Out on a Mission

For the piel form of *שלח* HALOT gives the release of slaves of Deut. 15<sup>12</sup> and Jr 34<sup>9-16</sup> (HALOT s.v. *שלח*). So, Abraham's *šellach* of Hagar can be read as giving freedom to her. The piel form has also been used to express the idea of a tree spreading its roots and a vine producing shoots. "c) a tree, spreading *שָׁרָץ* its roots Jr 17<sup>8 17</sup>, of a vine producing *פָּאָרוֹת* shoots Ezk 17<sup>6</sup> tendrils (*דְּלִיּוֹתָהָ* textual emendation) Ezk 17<sup>7</sup>, branches (*קַצְיָרִיָּה*) Ps 80<sup>12</sup>" (HALOT s.v. *שלח*). This meaning enables interpreting Abraham's *šellach* (sending forth) of Hagar as extending the reach of his organization like a tree spreading its roots, or a vine producing shoots and tendrils.<sup>17</sup> This correlates with Pinker's observation that *שלח* "implies extension of reach and therefore continuation of links" (Pinker, 2009, 16). It appears Abraham was using Hagar to extend his reach to other peoples.

In Gen. 19:13 the piel form of *šellach* is used of angels sent on a mission. The angels inform Lot that they have been sent to destroy the city. "The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has *sent us* to destroy it" (Gen. 19:13). There is also the piel form of *šellach* used in Psa. 104:30 to signify the *sending* of the Spirit to renew the earth. "[T]he *רוּחַ*, which was sent out from Yahweh,

<sup>15</sup> At times *gāreš* also refers to divorce (see Lev 21:7,14; 22:13; Num 30:9).

<sup>16</sup> Although most Bible's translate *šellach* as "sent him forth" or "sent him out" people still have a tendency to "understand" this as being "banished."

<sup>17</sup> There is a similar usage of *שָׁרָץ* for Joseph in the Bible, that of a field producing and yielding fruits. For an example of this usage BDB gives Deut. 33:14 "thing thrust or put forth, yield" (BDB s.v. *שָׁרָץ*). "About Joseph he said: "May the LORD bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below; with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can *yield* (*שָׁרָץ*);" (Deut. 33:13-4). Could *שָׁרָץ* have been used of Joseph because he, like Ishmael, was "cast out" temporarily from his family? Surprisingly some hold that Joseph is also described as a *פָּרָא* "wild donkey." "Joseph is a wild colt, a wild colt by a spring, a wild ass on a hillside" (Deut. 49:22, NAB). To see parallels between Joseph and Ishmael see Noble 2016, 43.

and whose generative power (יְבִרָתוֹ) was present at the creation, and is the power which renews the soil on the arable land Ps 104<sup>30</sup> (HALOT s.v. שָׁלַח). The wording of this verse appears quite similar to Adam's being *šellach*-ed out of Eden (Gen 8:6-12), suggesting Adam's being sent into the world, was like the Spirit being sent into the world, that is, both are connected with the soil.

Furthermore, in Gen 8:11 the piel form of *šellach* are used to express Noah's sending forth a raven and dove to find dry ground. Clearly, this can be thought as a mission. The birds are released with the intent that they bring back information on the flood. The raven does not return, but the dove does. The dove's returning with "a plucked olive leaf" (Gen 8:11, HCSB) in its beak conveys critical information to Noah about the condition of the flood. One should also note that in these "send outs" there is no notion of a banishment as is understood in Adam's narrative (Gen 3:23).

## 5.2. Adam Sent Out to Find That Which He Lost

In the *šellachs* (piel form) or *send outs* of the angels (Gen. 19:13), the Spirit (Psa. 104:30), and raven and dove (Gen 8:11), there is a mission objective. But it is generally held that the send out (*šellachs*) of Adam was an expulsion. For example, for the "expel" meaning of שָׁלַח HALOT gives Gen 3:23, e.g., the expulsion of Adam. However, the Bible says that Adam was sent out for the purpose of *working* the ground: "So the LORD God *sent him away* from the garden of Eden *to work* (לַעֲבֹד) the ground from which he was taken." (Gen 3:23, HCSB). The word for "ground" *hā'ādāmāh* is a play on the name Adam (*hā'ādām*). Just as *hā'ādām* represents "humankind," *hā'ādāmāh* represents "the nature of human beings" which is intrinsically tied to the ground. So, toiling on the ground represents toiling on human nature, either of one's own, or that of another—it entails bringing to fruition the character and intellectual faculties of a human being. This metaphor shapes our own language and thinking on learning and developing ourselves. For example, the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* says that the word "culture" stems from the 17<sup>th</sup> century French word *culture* and means "denoting a cultivated piece of land" (2004, s.v. "cultivate"). Thus, Adam's being driven from the Garden to work *hā'ādāmāh* suggests he was sent on a mission to cultivate himself and others to attain that which was lost. Rather than attempting to establish this observation from inferences drawn from the Torah—an exercise that should be tackled in another paper, the beliefs of early Christians on Adam's removal from the garden will be explored, for the Christians of the first Century are not as removed as we are from the Jewish milieu of when the Torah was written. This may not establish the meaning of "to work the ground" (Gen 3:23) but it will show that the view argued in this paper is not novel and existed in the Jewish society of the first century.

## 5.3. Sent Out to Work *hā'ādāmāh*: Parable of the Sower

The parable of the Sower (Mark 4:2-9; Matt 13:3-9; Luke 8:11-5) illustrates the idea that human nature must be worked for the reception and fruition of God's word.

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear." (Matt 4:2-9)

The parable points out that the ground that is not worked does not bear fruit. This parable reminds one of, first, Adam's "send out" to work the earth (Gen 3:23), and second, Jesus' saying about the workers "sent out" to harvest the fields (Matt 9:38; Luke 10:2).

So the Lord God *sent* (ἐξαπέστειλεν) him *away* He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest,

from which he was taken. So he *threw* therefore, to *send out* (ἐκβάλλω) workers into his (ἐξέβαλε) Adam *out*... (Gen. 3:23, LES) harvest field. (Luke 10:2)

It appears that Jesus or the early Christian community saw Adam as being sent out on a mission. The Parable of the Sower illustrates Adam's, and therefore, humankind's, mission of cultivating themselves and helping others cultivate themselves. Just as the ground that is not worked is incapable of bringing to fruition the planted seed, so, the human who has not worked their intellect, is incapable of bringing forth the fruit of the word of God. The preconditions of working the intellect to procure wisdom involves (1) a world of adversity, (2) skilled hard labor, and (3) the exercise of free will. The Sower parable stresses the importance of a receptive mind to the word of God. An aspect of this is the cleansing of the mind from false ideas. This extends to helping others achieve this goal as well. For example, "The laborers of the field" (Matt 9:38; Luke 10:2) illustrates this very idea. The same is the case in John 4:38 where Jesus talks about previous messengers who labored and toiled on the people. "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." These laborers are most likely prophets who throughout Jewish history were sent out to work the *האדמה* (*hā'ādāmāh*) of the people. It is due to their labor that the people have mental categories of a personal loving God, God revealing his will through scripture, a day of reckoning, forgiveness, salvation, etc. In the cases of Adam and Hagar, a particular dimension of their toiling of *hā'ādāmāh* appears to involve the depreciation of their ego, i.e., both were *humbled*. Adam had tried to be like *elohim* (Gen 3:5, most likely referring to an archangel<sup>18</sup>) and Hagar, appears to have esteemed herself above<sup>19</sup> Sarah (Gen 16:4-5). To prevent his disciples from falling into a similar predicament of ego inflation, i.e., feeling solely or primarily responsible for the conversion of the people, Jesus tells them, in John 4:38, that previous prophets and messengers tilled and planted the people before them.

Thus, the Sower parable suggests that Adam was sent into the world to find wisdom through cultivating himself and others. For early Christians, however, "finding wisdom" is not confined to the vocation of farming. Humans can find wisdom in any occupation. This is part of the freedom entailed by the piel form of Adam's *שלח* *šellach* from Eden.

#### 5.4. Pastoral Occupation: Lost Sheep

The theme of searching for wisdom because it gives life, is at the heart of wisdom literature. Nowhere is this more clearly expressed than in the book of Proverbs.

<sup>18</sup> The targums take the word *אֱלֹהִים* *elohim* in Gen. 3:5 to mean an angel, e.g., in place of *elohim* Jonathan reads *מַלְאָכִין רַבְרַבִּין*, *great angels*, (Etheridge, 1862, Gen. 3:5), Onkelos reads, *רַבְרַבִּין* *great ones*, (Onkelos Genesis, 2009, Gen. 3:5), and Neofiti reads *כַּמְלָאכִין מִן קֳדָם*, *angels before the Yhwh* (Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, 2005, Ge 3:5). McNamara translates Neofiti 3:5 as "because it is manifest and known before the Lord that on that day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and that you will be like *angels before the Lord*, knowing to distinguish between good and evil" (1992, 60). It's clear that by the term "elohim" in this verse the targums understood an angel that knows the good and evil as mentioned in 2 Samuel 14:17, 20: "And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king secure my inheritance, for my lord the king (David) is like an *angel of God* in discerning good and evil'" (2 Samuel 14:17). If the word *elohim* in Gen. 3:5 refers to an angel, rather than God, then Adam's intention in eating of the forbidden fruit lies with seeking to be wise like an angel of God, and not trying to be God.

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton says "V. 4b can hardly be translated 'she looked with contempt on her mistress' (so RSV). Such an active display of contempt would require the Piel form of this verb, with its factitive effect. It is a loss of face which Sarai felt that impelled her to complain to Abram in v. 5 as she does. Cf. NJV "her mistress was lowered in her esteem" (Hamilton, 442). Both YLT and LSV translate Gen. 16:4 as "her mistress is lightly esteemed in her eyes."

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.<sup>20</sup>

...For he who finds me finds life<sup>21</sup> and obtains favor from the LORD; (Prov 8:17, 35)

Kloppenborg says that there is a broad consensus on the structure of Q, that “it is ... more like Proverbs 1-9...” (Kloppenborg 1996, 321). He presents Schulz’s position on Jesus which in the earliest strata of Q was viewed as a messenger of Sophia (wisdom).

“...in the younger stratum of Q, to which Schulz assigns most of Q, the words and deeds of the earthly Jesus came to be interpreted kerygmatically. Thus Jesus was seen as an emissary of the heavenly Sophia...” (Kloppenborg 1996, 320)

Comparing Adam’s *šellach* into the world with the Spirit’s *šellach* into the world (Psalm 104:30) suggests that all humans were meant to be emissaries of the heavenly Sophia.

[T]herefore the LORD God sent (*šellach*) him out    When you send (*šellach*) your Spirit, they are from the garden of Eden to work the ground    created, and you renew the face of the ground (*hā’āḏāmāh*) from which he was taken. (Gen 3:23,    (*’āḏāmāh*). (Psa. 104:30) ESV)

The “lost sheep” parable (Matt 18:12-13) of early Christians exemplifies this universal mission of human beings, i.e., they must seek wisdom that was lost. Commonly the lost sheep is interpreted as a sinner. This can be a secondary meaning, that is, one who loses wisdom is lost (see the prodigal son, Luke 15:32). However, the initial reference of the lost sheep is to wisdom as in Wisdom Literature.<sup>22</sup> Like a shepherd seeking his lost sheep, humans have been sent out into the world to seek and find the wisdom which they lost in the garden. We’re told that even Jesus—although conceived to be the embodiment of wisdom by Paul, e.g., “Christ the power of God and the *wisdom* of God. (1 Cor 1:24), “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

If the Lost Sheep parable is about seeking and finding wisdom, then the sheep that is sought should signify wisdom. This is what we find in Q.

Matt 10:16

Behold, I send you out as *sheep* (πρόβατα) in the midst of wolves.

Luke 10:3

Go your way; behold, I send you out as *lambs* (αἰνῆς) in the midst of wolves.

The usage of *sheep* and *lambs* in this saying shows that Jesus had taught his disciples wisdom. “I will give you a mouth and *wisdom*, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.” (Luke 21:15). Jesus had said that “...every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40). Thus, the disciples being called *sheep* and *lambs*, would be in reference to being like Jesus, possessing wisdom. Paul had observed that Jesus was “the *wisdom* of God” (1 Cor 1:24). This idea that Jesus embodies wisdom is also expressed by the Baptizer or the early Christians. For example, in John Jesus is referred to as *the Lamb of God*.

“Look, *the Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

Although the saying does not come from the synoptic tradition or Q source, it appears to be connected to the semantic field of the Lost Sheep or Lamb parable. Placed in the milieu of the time this saying would have been understood as such:

<sup>20</sup> Gospel theme: “seek and you shall find” (Matt 7:7).

<sup>21</sup> Also see Pro. 3:17-8 and Eccles. 7:12.

<sup>22</sup> Matt 18:14 and Luke 15:7 appear to be later additions to the parable.

Behold, the *Wisdom of God* (which Adam lost in the garden), who takes away *missing the mark*<sup>23</sup> of the people. (John 1:29)

Thus, for at least some Christians, Jesus, as “the Lamb of God,” that is, as “the wisdom of God,” was imparting wisdom to people enabling them to make morally wise decisions. Some early Christians appear to have believed that all humans were sent into the world to find wisdom, i.e., that which was lost. The following saying attributed to Jesus expresses this very idea.

“For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10, ESV)

A brief analysis of the term “the son of man” may be required to understand the saying. Crossan’s argument is quite cogent. “My proposal is that those early traditions also held texts in which Jesus spoke of ‘son of man’ in the generic or indefinite sense...” (Crossan 1992, 255). Thus, early Christians used “son of man” inclusively of all humans. Crossan observes that Paul never uses the title “son of man” for Jesus even when one would expect it. For example, referring to the prophecy of Daniel of “one like a son of man” (Dan 7:13), Paul uses the title “the Lord”<sup>24</sup> (1 Thess. 4:17) for Jesus, rather than the “Son of Man.” Notice, first and above all, that Paul’s title for the returning Jesus is ‘the Lord,’ a title repeated four times within that section. Neither here, nor anywhere else, does he ever mention the ‘Son of Man’” (Crossan 1992, 244). When this is taken into consideration Jesus’ saying of Luke 19:10 would read,

For *humans* have come into the world to seek and save, i.e., *find*, that which was lost (by Adam in the Garden, e.g., wisdom).

Thus, for early Christians Adam’s שלח and גרש in Genesis seems to entail being sent out to find wisdom through trials and tribulations, rather than just being punished or banished.

## 6. Was Abraham’s שלח (šellach) of Hagar a Divorce?

One of the meanings given to the words גרש (gāreš) and שלח (šellach) is “to divorce” (see HALOT and BDB s.v. גרש and שלח). Pinker notes that Hapner is of the opinion that Abraham’s šellach of Hagar was a divorce, but doubts the words גרש and שלח “are used in this episode with that sense” (Pinker 2009, 16). There may be a way to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory positions. Just as there were different forms of marriages at the time, there may have been different forms of divorces. The kind of “divorce” entailed by Abraham’s šellach act may have involved giving Hagar the freedom to

<sup>23</sup> The word *hamartia* “sin” derives from *missing the mark*. See BGAD, s.v. “ἀμαρτάνω.” There are many dimensions to Wisdom. A major aspect though of Wisdom involves enabling one to “hit the mark” in matters of the Halakha (see Matt 23) which encompasses every aspect of one’s life. In the language of Wisdom Literature this is termed *finding wisdom* which gives life (see Prov 8:17, 35). For example, a person who hears the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31) [recounted to them by a worker of the field (Luke 10:2)] is reminded (becomes *conscious*) of God’s unconditional all-embracing love and feels the desire to return to God. In that state of mind, they are more likely to find wisdom, i.e., make the wise choice of returning to God. At the end of the parable the father describes the repented son, as being *alive* and being *found* (Luke 15:31). He is *alive* and *found* because he *found* wisdom in his decision to return to God, that is, he *hit the mark* of God’s intent when he made the choice to return to his father. Also see Pro. 15:24 and Eccles. 7:12.

<sup>24</sup> The reason early Christians did not use the title “son of man” for Jesus may be due to the angel’s interpretation of Daniel vision (7:13), that it refers to “the holy people of the Most High” (Dan. 7:18). “I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever’” (Dan. 7:15-8). This interpretation of the angel is generally forgotten.



complete the divorce or separation if she decided to do so. Being sent far away from home, and being alone, a woman may need, or wish, to remarry to survive and complete her mission. Thus, the piel form of שלח *šellach* may indicate that Hagar was released from the marital authority of Abraham.

A similar social norm may be at work with Abraham referring to Sarah as “my sister” (Gen 12:19; 20:2). As a performative utterance, the expression “She’s my sister” may have meant “Sarah is now as a sister to me,” i.e., sexual relations are now prohibited. This may have given Sarah the freedom or legal right to finalize “the divorce,” if she wished to do so. Why would a woman be interested in such a divorce? A woman in Sarah’s situation may be interested in the life of opulence and royalty offered by marrying a king. Thus, in that situation Sarah could have legally and morally “divorced” Abraham and married the Pharaoh or King Abimelech. But that would be petty. Sarah willfully refrained from the temptation offered by the marital release of Abraham’s “my sister” statement, demonstrating her love and commitment to remain part of God’s special plan with Abraham. God’s saving her on both occasions (Gen 12:20; 20:14) shows the reader the degree of Sarah’s self-sacrifice and her continuing disinterest in the status and lifestyle of a queen. She is returned to her husband and given the good news of the termination of her barrenness. These episodes in the life of Sarah appear to be more a test of her than of Abraham. Furthermore, it looks as if the rabbis saw Hagar’s separation or “divorce” from Abraham in a similar light for in some rabbinic traditions she is returned to Abraham with fruitful consequences.<sup>25</sup>

## 7. The sending of Hagar in the Septuagint

As noted above, scholars feel that being in the intensive form (Piel) the words גרש and שלח convey harshness in the narratives of both Adam and Hagar. Therefore, it is instructive to see how the LXX translator(s) rendered these words into Greek.

<p>So the Lord God <i>sent</i> (ἐξαπέστειλεν) him <i>away</i> from the luxurious garden to work the earth from which he was taken. So he <i>threw</i> (ἐξέβαλε) Adam <i>out</i>... (Gen. 3:23-4, LES)</p>	<p>And she said to Abraham, “<i>Banish</i> (ἐκβαλε) this maid and her son, for the son of the maid will not inherit with my son Isaac.” ... Abraham rose early and took bread loaves and a skin of water... and <i>sent</i> (ἀπέστειλεν) her away. (Gen. 21:10,14, LES)</p>
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Comparing both narratives, we see that, although there isn’t a difference between how גרש has been translated, there is a difference in how the word שלח in Gen. 3:23 and Gen. 21:14 is translated into Greek. The translators have chosen to render שלח in Adam’s narrative (Gen 3:23) as ἐξαπέστειλεν, but ἀπέστειλεν for Hagar in Gen 21:14. For ἀποστέλλω the Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint gives “to send off, to send away” (s.v. ἀποστέλλω). The use of this word strongly suggests that the translators believed she was sent on a mission, for ἀποστέλλω is often used in the LXX for the sending of angels, messengers, and prophets, e.g., Gen. 19:13; 24:7; 45:7; Num 13:17; 20:14; Deut. 34:10-1, 1 Kings 19:20.<sup>26</sup> To get a feel for a mission objective of the Greek word ἀποστέλλω in the LXX references to some biblical passages are helpful. Notice that in these passages *šalach* is in the Qal form.

<sup>25</sup> Kadari says that “After Sarah’s death Abraham brought his divorcée back and she bore him additional children. Despite her divorce, Hagar’s purity was not suspect, and she remained chaste until Abraham brought her back” (Kadari 1999).

<sup>26</sup> The presence of the prefix ἐξ as in Adam’s being “send out” does not exclude the idea of a mission, for in Malachi 3:1 (*šalach*, Qal form) the messenger is “sent out” ἐξαποστέλλω on a mission to prepare the way of the Lord. Also, when שלח is used for divorce (Deut. 22:19, 29; 24:1,3,4), LXX translates it as ἐξαποστέλλω (sending out), not ἀποστέλλω as in Gen. 21:14.

God sent (*šalach*, Qal form) me before you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

For God *sent* (ἀπέστειλε) me ahead of you, to leave you a remnant on the earth and to nourish your great remnant on the earth. (Gen. 45:7, LES)

When Moses sent (*šalach*, Qal form) them to explore Canaan....

These are the names of the men whom Moes *sent* (ἀπέστειλε) to seek out the land. (Num. 13:17, LES)

Moses sent (*šalach*, Qal form) messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: "This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come on us.

And Moses *sent* (ἀπέστειλε) messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom" (Num. 20:14, LES)

Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent (*šalach*, Qal form) him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land.

And no prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, with all the signs and wonders that the Lord *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and his attendants and to all his land, the great wonders and the mighty hand that Moses did before all Israel. (Deut. 34:10-1, LES)

By choosing to translate נָשַׁל, the Piel form in Gen 21:14 and the Qal forms in Gen. 45:7, Num. 13:17, Num. 20:14 and Deut. 34:10-1 into Greek as ἀπέστειλεν, suggests the translators made no distinction between the Piel form of נָשַׁל in Gen 21:14 and the Qal form used in these passages. Furthermore, we saw earlier that the Piel form of נָשַׁל in Gen. 19:12 clearly expresses the idea of a mission. The same Greek word ἀπέστειλεν has been used there as well.

The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has *sent* (*šellach*, piel form) us to destroy it." (Gen. 19:13)

"...because their outcry has risen before the Lord, and the Lord *sent* (ἀπέστειλεν) us to wipe it out" (Gen. 19:13, LES)

Thus, the LXX's use of ἀπέστειλεν for Abraham's sending of Hagar in Gen. 21:14 is a strong indicator that the translator(s) believed she was sent on a mission.

## 8. The Sending of Hagar in Josephus' Antiquities of The Jews

What Josephus reports, in regards, to the objective of Sarah's demand demonstrates conclusively that the idea of Hagar and her son Ishmael were sent away on a mission is not due to modern liberal sensibilities. Josephus literally says that Sarah persuaded Abraham to send out Ishmael and his mother *to establish a colony* (εἰς ἀποικίαν).

ἔπειθεν (she persuaded) οὖν τὸν Ἀβραμὸν εἰς ἀποικίαν (to found a colony) ἐκπέμπειν (send out) αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς μητρὸς (him with his mother). (Antiquities 1.12.216)

For the meaning of "ἀποικία ἐκπέμπειν" LSJ provides Thucydides 1.12: "*send, lead to form a settlement*" (LSJ s.v. ἀποικία). That Josephus believed that Ishmael was sent out to establish a colony is noted by one of the leading authorities on the writings of Josephus, Louis Feldman: "...when she (Sarah) decides that Ishmael must be sent away, she seeks merely to have him found a colony..." (Feldman, 1998, 244). It is evident that Josephus understood Sarah's *gāreš* demand as a directive to

establish a colony. Thus, the thesis put forth in this paper is not a novel idea due to modern liberal sensibilities.

However, there is a popular assumption that Josephus has Hellenized the Biblical stories, especially the main personalities, to make them attractive to his aristocratic Roman audience. For example, van der Lans notes, "Josephus deliberately "Hellenized" Jewish scriptures to appeal to his (Jewish, Roman, Greek) audience." (2010, 38). Feldman says that Josephus "[aggrandizes] Abraham the philosopher and scientist, the general, the perfect host and guest, and the man of virtue generally..." (1998, 249). To some degree there is truth to this view. However, should this position be accepted by default, that is, whenever something written by Josephus doesn't correspond to our understanding of the biblical stories, should we assume that it is due to Josephus recasting Abraham in Hellenized garb? One must enquire: "Are Josephus' interpretations justifiable from the Masoretic text?" Avioz, for one, thinks so. He writes that "Josephus' central aim is not apologetic but interpretative and that his *Antiquities of the Jews* are classified as 'rewritten Scripture', focusing mainly on the interpretive aspects of the biblical text" (2019, 95). To this end he provides many examples of Josephus' exegetical skills (see 2019, pp. 96-101) and observes "The existence of apologetic in Josephus' retelling cannot be denied, but what I have tried to show is that his exegetical motivations is more inherent than some scholars assume" (Avioz, 108). Furthermore, one cannot dismiss the possibilities that beside his own personal interpretations of the Masoretic, Josephus may convey in his *Antiquities* and other writings lost rabbinic traditions. Feldman allows that even the Masoretic text used by Josephus could have been different. "The fact, however, that the *Letter of Aristeas* (30) seems to refer to corrupt Hebrew manuscripts of the Pentateuch, and that the Dead Sea fragments of the Pentateuch sometimes disagree with the so-called Masoretic Text, may indicate that the Hebrew text available to Josephus was different from ours" (Feldman, 1998, 25). In any case, Josephus' stating that Sarah persuaded Abraham to send Ishmael and his mother to establish a colony as an extension of their rule could very well depend on a legitimate rabbinic exegesis.<sup>27</sup>

What Josephus says about Ishmael being sent to establish a colony, he says about Abraham's other sons (from Keturah) as well, that is, that they too were sent to establish colonies (Gen. 25:6): "Now, for all these sons and grandsons, Abraham contrived to settle them in colonies" (A.J. 1.239). It's clear that Josephus is interpreting Abraham's שְׁלַח (*šellach*) (Gen. 25:6) of his sons from Keturah.

But while he (Abraham) was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent (*šellach*) them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east. (Gen. 25:6)

As in Gen. 3:23 and Gen. 21:14, the Piel form of the word שְׁלַח is used here. And although, the intensive form of the word שְׁלַח is generally seen as negative (covered earlier in the paper), in case of Abraham's actions, Josephus doesn't read it as such. He understands it as a mission objective. As noted earlier, this understanding correlates with Pinker's observation of the Piel form of שְׁלַח in Gen. 21:14, that it "implies extension of reach and therefore continuation of links" (Pinker, 2009, 16).

## 9. The Rule of Abraham

For some the sending of Hagar to establish a settlement seems implausible, due to the fact that Abraham is often conceived as the head of a nuclear family aimlessly roaming in the desert looking forward to the promise of God being actualized in the future. As mentioned earlier, even, Josephus, who portrays Abraham as an active leader of a political organization of quite considerable size, e.g., "ἡγεμονίας" (see *Antiquities* 1.12.215), is dismissed and suspected of aggrandizing (see Feldman 1998, 249) Abraham. However, the Bible has Abraham involved in a military campaign of more than 300 trained men (Gen 14:14-16). It presents him making alliances with chieftains (Gen 14: 17-19). We are told that Abraham was extremely wealthy in "livestock and in silver and gold" (Gen 13:2). Providing these and other examples, Gordon writes, "The patriarchal narratives, far from reflecting

<sup>27</sup> Feldman notes Josephus' own testimony concerning his intellectual prowess among his peers: "If, indeed, Josephus is to be taken at his word, his compatriots admitted that in Jewish learning (παρ' ἡμῖν παιδείαν), he far excelled them (*Ant.* 20.263) (1998, 14).

Bedouin life, are highly international in their milieu, in a setting where a world order enabled men to travel far and wide for business enterprise" (1958, 30). Gordon argues that Abraham was "a merchant prince, a *tamkârum*" (1958, 31). He says, "Abraham comes from beyond the Euphrates, plies his trade in Canaan, visits Egypt, deals with Hittites, makes treaties with Philistines, forms military alliances with Amorites, fights kinglets from as far off as Elam, marries the Egyptian Hagar, etc." (Gordon, 1958, 30). Based on the meaning of Sarah's name, one can argue that she appears to be a key actor in Abraham's organization. For example, *Sarai* means ruler, steward or chief captain (See Harris 2295b, סָרָא *śārâ*). Sarah's use of Hagar as a surrogate (Gen 16:1) to realize the promise of God (Gen 12:2-3) hints at agendas going beyond future expectations, such as realizing immediate religiopolitical goals. Her confronting Abraham and framing his role in her loss of stature in Hagar's sight (Gen 16:5) suggests a formal hierarchical structure to the organization. Thus, it is not surprising that Josephus calls Abraham's rule an ἡγεμονίας "government" (Feldman renders it "chieftaincy," see 1998, 243), which Ishmael was raised to succeed:

“ἴδιον υἱὸν εὐνοίας, ἐτρεφετο γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς ἡγεμονίας διαδοχῇ” (Antiquities 1.12.215)

“for he (Ishmael) was brought up in order to succeed in the government.”

Sarah's request that Abraham marry Hagar also appears to be part of the professional concerns and counsels of an executive officer in a diarchy. Since Hagar did not have to marry Abraham for Sarah to have children, e.g., she could have been given to him as Zilpah and Bilhah were given to Jacob as a *pilegish*, marrying Hagar to Abraham implies Sarah was promoting her position in the ἡγεμονίας (government or chieftaincy). If the rabbinic tradition of Hagar's being a princess of Egypt is true, Sarah's marrying Hagar to Abraham would reveal political motivations behind her action, e.g., establishing political alliances with Egypt. One could argue that Josephus' claim that Hagar and Ishmael were sent (Antiquities 1.12.216) to establish a colony, supports strongly that he believed in the rabbinical tradition of Hagar being a princess of Egypt, for it is highly improbable that he would think that Abraham and Sarah would choose a Bedouin concubine to establish a colony for Ishmael to later inherit and oversee. Not a female Bedouin slave, but a princess of Egypt—especially one who has spent many years in the service of Sarah and Abraham's ἡγεμονίας, would have the qualifications of establishing a colony.<sup>28</sup>

Other evidence that suggests Abraham and Sarah had a large organization is the Bible's presenting them in the company of Pharaoh (Gen. 12:10-20) and Abimelech's (Gen. 20:1-18) officials. This intimates that they were of the upper class and of the movers and shakers of society. That is why Pharaoh and Abimelech desired to marry Sarah (Gen 12:19). Sarah was exceptionally attractive, yes, but her leading role in a large dynamic socio-political movement would have been the primary reason for her marital appeal. Accordingly, Sarah should be conceived more like the wise Queen of Sheba, rather than a tent dwelling desert Bedouin.

What about the nature of Abraham's "organization"? The Bible's saying that all humans will be blessed through Abraham (Gen 12:3) and calling him a prophet (Gen 20:7) indicates religious characteristics. These statements point to an evangelical nature behind Abraham's motivations. The angelic visitors (Gen 18:1-33) may reveal what the writer believed of the *extent* of Abraham's missionary activity. For example, the angels inform Abraham of what is about to transpire at Sodom and Gomorrah. Why would they do that? A reasonable answer is for Abraham and Sarah to retract their servants from the area. Elie Wiesel couldn't reconcile Abraham's "expulsion" of his wife and son into the desert with so little rations (see Wiesel, 235). However, a missionary organization of some size can resolve this "problem," i.e., he expected his servants would assist them in their journey. Just as Jesus sent out his disciples two by two with almost no provisions—he expected others to take care of them on their missionary journey (Mark 6:7-9), Abraham may have had a similar organizational model which provided food and shelter for Hagar and Ishmael until they reached their destination.

<sup>28</sup> If Hagar was from a leading Arabian family (see footnote 28), then besides political motivations, sending her into Arabia to establish a colony would make more sense.

Rabbinic tradition, also, affirms that Abraham and Sarah were heads of an evangelical organization of considerable size.

Regarding Sarah's good attributes, it is said that Abraham and Sarah converted the Gentiles. Abraham would convert the men, and Sarah, the women. (Kadari 1999)

Sarah's decision to use Hagar as a surrogate to fulfill God's promise, may be tied to Hagar's being identified as Sarah's שפחה (*shifhah*, Gen 16:1). Harris gives שפח (*shph*) as the root of both שפחה (*shifhah*) and מִשְׁפָּחָה (*mishpāḥā*) (see Harris s.v. שפח). Concerning the Hebrew word Teubal provides the following critical information: "*shifhah* could mean 'someone who joins or is attached to' a person or clan" (Teubal, 58). Earlier God had said "...in you all the families (משפחה, *mishpāḥā*) of the earth shall bless themselves" (Gen. 12:2-3, RSV). It appears Sarah saw Hagar's שפחה reflective of the משפחה (families) who will in the future be blessed by *attaching* themselves to Abraham's family. Thus, the sacred writer seems to suggest Sarah used Hagar as a surrogate to extend God's promise to Abraham to all the families of the earth, i.e., as Hagar *attached* herself to Abraham and Sarah's family, she will play an important role for other families to *attach* themselves to Abraham and Sarah's family.

There is also the insertion of the letter ה (abbreviated form of the tetragrammaton?<sup>29</sup>) into the names of Abram and Sarai (Gen. 17:5,15). Since the word "Hagar" already has the ה in her name, is God aligning Abraham and Sarah with her? Is the sacred writer informing the reader that the roles of abraהam, saraה, and הagar, in realizing God's plan of making Abraham a father to many nations (Gen 17:5), are existentially bound up together? Besides the insertion of the letter ה into Abram and Sarai, the meaning of the name "Abraham" may also suggest this. The Bible says Ab-raham means "father of multitudes of people."

No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be אַבְרָהָם (Ab-raham), for I have made you a father of many nations. (Gen. 17:5)

Although the Bible explains the name אַבְרָהָם (Abraham) as meaning "father of many nations" (אַבְ-הַמֶּוֹנִים גֵּוִיִּם, *ab-ha mōwn gōyim*) (Gen. 17:5), JewishEncyclopedia notes that "The form 'Abraham' yields no sense in Hebrew..."<sup>30</sup> This is quite strange. Why would God give the Israelite Patriarch a name that has no meaning in Hebrew? All the more surprising is that "Ab-raham" happens to be Arabic. Harris observes the following: "Some propose that the root *rāham* is no more than a variant of *rūm* "to be lofty" (E. A. Speiser, in AB, Genesis, pp. 124, 127). But in light of the known Arabic noun

<sup>29</sup> Waskow says that "...both names changed by addition of the Hebrew letter *hei*, a breathing sound (and the letter that appears twice in God's name)" (Waskow 9). Ellicott makes the following observation on the new names. "By some commentators the stress is thrown upon the insertion of the letter "h," as being the representative of the name Yahveh or Hehveh, (Compare the change of Oshea into Jehoshua, Num. 13:16)" (Ellicott's Commentary 44). If the ה is representative of God's divine name Yhwh, then the name "Hagar" (ha-ger) could mean "Yahweh, a stranger." In Jer. 14:8 Yahweh is referred to as a stranger in the land. "You who are the hope of Israel, its Savior in times of distress, why are you like a *stranger* (ger) in the land, like a traveler who stays only a night?" (Jer. 14:8). Drawing on the correspondence of language of Hagar's story (Gen. 16) with that of Elijah's in 1 Kgs. 19:1-18, Noble makes the following important observation about the intimate relationship between Hagar and Yahweh. "...the affinities do point out a certain intimacy with YHWH that Hagar seems to have in common with prophet Elijah" (Noble 2016, 36). If the ה in הagar's name refers to YHWH, then the biblical writer may be informing the reader that the primary reason why Sarah chose Hagar to have a son (בנה) was because she recognized the creative power of the Name YHWH in Hagar's name.

<sup>30</sup> *JewishEncyclopedia.com*, s.v. "Abraham," accessed May 21, 2022, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/360-abraham#>.



*ruhāmun*, “multitude” (KB, p. 8) the changes in meaning which the verse itself teaches should be upheld” (Harris 1980, 6),<sup>31</sup> that is, rather than being a variant of “ab-ram,” the Bible’s explanation of the word “ab-raham” in the Arabic tongue “father of multitudes of people” should be upheld. But this begs the question, “Why would God give an Arabic name to Abram?” The answer may lie in the word “Hagar.” “Hagar” has a double entendre, e.g., meaning *the stranger* in Hebrew, and *fugitive* in Arabic. Sarna tells us that “the very name Hagar suggests a word play on Hebrew *ger*,<sup>32</sup> ‘stranger,’

<sup>31</sup> Ellicott agrees. “Abraham = ‘Father of a multitude,’ raham being an Arabic word, perhaps current in Hebrew in ancient times” (Ellicott’s Commentary, 44).

<sup>32</sup> Waskow notes a correlation between Israel’s being called “a stranger in the land of Egypt,” and Hagar’s name which means “the stranger.” “When the Torah says that the Israelites were *gerim b’eret Mitzrayyim*, ‘strangers in the Land of Egypt,’ that *gerim* is the same word as Hagar’s name. And the connection is made even clearer because Hagar is called Hagar *ha’mitzria*, ‘Hagar the Egyptian’ — The Egyptian Stranger” (Waskow, 38).” If the parallelism with Israel is kept in mind *Hager ha’mitzria* should be understood as “the stranger (in the land) of Egypt.” One must keep in mind that being called an “Egyptian” does not mean necessarily a native of Egypt. It can also mean “from Egypt” especially given that *Hagar’s* name means “the stranger.” For example, Moses, whom we know is not a native Egyptian, is called a *Mitzri* (Egyptian) in Exod. 2:19. It obviously means “from Egypt.” In Acts 21:38 the authorities refer to a Jewish messianic aspirant as “The Egyptian.” This means the man was a Jew *from* Egypt, not a native Egyptian. This suggests that Hagar, like Israel, was a stranger in Egypt, not a native. Metonymically the word “*ha’mitzria*” in this context could stand for “civilization.” If so, then the expression *ha-ger ha’mitzria* (Ha-gar, the Egyptian) would mean “the stranger of civilization” that is, someone who has renounced living by the social constructs or conventions of civilization. What supports the view that Hagar was not Egyptian is that the name “Hagar” is not Egyptian. Harris notes the name “Hagar” “is Semitic not Egyptian” (Harris, s.v. 470, הָגָר). As mentioned earlier the name “Hagar” suggests a double entendre, having a meaning in Hebrew and Arabic. For the Arabic meaning of the word both Sarna and Wenham give “fugitive” (*hegira*). If her name has connections to Arabic, one would expect her to be also associated with Arabia. Pinker mentions an opinion of Winckler “that Mizraim (Egypt) and the North Arabian tribe of the Muzrim, to whom Gerar belonged, have been confused. In this process, Hagar, who was a Muzrim woman, became a woman of Mizraim” (2009, 15). There is other evidence, probably oral tradition, that supports an Arabian connection. For example, Paul observes in Galatians: “Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia...” (4:25). Rather than associating her with Egypt, surprisingly Paul associates Hagar with Arabia. There may be more to Paul’s allegory. If the ה in her name represents Yhwh (see Ellicott’s Commentary, 44), the connection to Arabia is strengthened even further, for the word “Yhwh” is believed to have its genesis in Arabia. Summarizing his analysis on the origin of the word Yhwh Fleming writes, “In the end, the best analogies for thinking about Yahweh before Israel come from South Arabia, where new inscriptional evidence allows detailed knowledge of political structures and ritual practices integrated with them” (Fleming, 2021, 274). If the origin of Yhwh is Southern Arabia, then it is in Arabic or proto-Arabic, not Hebrew. Arguing for an Arabic origin of Yhwh Goitein writes, “For reasons which will be discussed at the end of the article, the root *hwy* has almost disappeared from Biblical Hebrew and is used in it only in a pejorative sense, as indicated in the examples adduced. In Arabic, however, the root had an extremely rich life and in many respects resembled the Hebrew root *qn’*. In the examples of Biblical הָגָר quoted above, the word appears in connection with *nefeš*, soul, and the same is the case in Arabic, where *nafs*, the soul, is the seat of *hawā*,

(Sarna, 119), but also “suggest a connection with Arabic *hajara*. ‘to flee,’ and may mean ‘fugitive’” (Sarna, 119). Wenham also notes the same: “הגֵר seems to be Semitic rather than Egyptian (cf. Arabic *hegira*)” (Wenham, 6). By giving Abram an Arabic name like “Hagar,” the biblical scribe may be saying that God is *attaching* Abraham to Hagar, as she had earlier *attached* herself to his family, e.g., “*shifhah* means ‘someone who joins or is attached to’ a person or clan” (Teubal, 58). Thus, Hagar will play a significant role in bringing the *raham*<sup>33</sup>—Arabic, “multitudes of people”—into attaching themselves to Abraham. Dozeman had noted that for the priestly writer “Ishmael represents an expansion of election beyond the boundaries of Israel, and as such Ishmael models the proselyte who undergoes circumcision” (Dozeman, 1998, 42). Harlan had explained that Paul’s “targeting Nabataean Arabs as the first Gentiles accords with Isaiah’s view of Ishmael’s descendants as ‘first-responders’ to the dawn of eschatological glory (60:1–7)” (Harlan, 2023, 88). Thus, according to Harlan Paul’s first choice in his apostolic mission to the Gentiles was Arabia. Besides Arabia being first in the Apostle Paul’s itinerary, early Christian view of where the Magi came from supports Harlan’s view that scripture teaches the ‘first-responders’ to the dawn of eschatological glory would come from Arabia, for early Christian tradition has the Magi coming from Arabia to pay homage to the infant Messiah (Matt 2:1–12). For example, Justin Martyr, a second century Church father, preserves an early Christian tradition that the Magi came from Arabia. In his attempt to ascertain the origin of the Magi Maalouf quotes Justin Martyr who in his testimony says on numerous occasions that the Magi came from Arabia.

For, at the time of His birth, the Magi came from *Arabia* and worshipped him, after they had met with Herod, then the king of your country, whom Scripture call king of Assyria because of his wicked ungodliness. ... At the time when the Magi from *Arabia* came to King Herod and said. ... Now these Magi from *Arabia* cam to Bethlehem, worshipped the child, and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ... There the *Arabian Magi* found Him. ... Now when the *Arabian Magi* failed to return to Herod... (Maalouf, 2003, 198)

Maalouf goes on to say that “Justin may very well reflect the apostolic tradition, for he was born A.D. 100–110 and raised in Neapolis (today’s Nâblus), Samaria” (2003, 198). He also mentions Tertullian, Clement of Rome, and Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, as early authorities who believed that the Magi were from Arabia (see Maalouf, 2003, pp. 198–200). Harlan summarizes the nine

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passion” (Goitein 1956, 2–3). Fleming refers to the existence of an ‘*am Yhwh* (people of Yahweh), separate and distinct from the nation of Israel (see Fleming 2021, 198–210). Could Hagar’s father, and therefore, Hagar, have belonged to this group? If so, it is plausible her father travelled into Egypt from Arabia and conquered a part of it. And when he had a daughter, he gave her a name expressive of his (and his god’s) condition in Egypt, in both ancient Hebrew and Arabic, that is, “the stranger and fugitive” (of Egypt). We witness, a similar custom with Moses in the land of Midian where, when he has a son, he calls him “a stranger” based on his own condition in the land of Midian. “Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him *Gershon*, saying, “I have become a foreigner (*ger*) in a foreign land” (Ex. 2:22). Furthermore, Josephus’ saying that Abraham consigned Arabia over to Ishmael bolsters the connection between Hagar and Arabia. van der Lans notes that according to Josephus there appears to be a “significant and deliberate connection” between where Ishmael (and the other sons) were sent to colonize. “That there is a significant and deliberate connection between the relocation of all of Abraham’s children is confirmed in the second book of the *Antiquitates judaicae*, A.J. 2.213, where we are told that Abraham had ‘bequeathed (καταλιπεῖν) to Ishmael and to his posterity the land of the Arabians...’” (van der Lans, 2010, 194). Sending Hagar to Arabia suggests a strategic move on the part of Sarah and Abraham, that is, Hagar would more likely succeed in establishing a settlement if she were sent to her own people.

<sup>33</sup> See Ellicott’s Commentary, 44.

arguments brought by Maalouf and the views of other scholars to substantiate the Arabian origin of the Magi (2023, 85-86) writing at the end “All of this is further evidence that God’s plan for Ishmael’s descendants continues beyond the Old Testament and that an Arab origin of the magi is consistent with scriptural development and prophetic expectations” (Harlan, 2023, 86). Thus, “Isaiah’s view of Ishmael’s descendants as ‘first-responders’ to the dawn of eschatological glory (Isa. 60:1-7)” (2023, 88), as Harlan puts it may be due to families in Arabia being the first peoples *reached out to* by Sarah and Abraham via Hagar and Ishmael, and later by Abraham via his sons from Keturah. Some may dismiss the biblical evidence and rabbinic traditions about Abraham leading a large evangelical organization, arguing that such a structure requires a society based on an extensive agricultural economy. However, our concern is not so much with historical accuracy, as with the intended meaning of the biblical writer(s). Besides, the biblical record of nomadic pastoral-herdsmen being involved in an extensive religious organization is not at all anachronistic. For example, the discovery of Göbekli Tepe (Harari, 2015, 89) has forced a reassessment of the view on non-agricultural societies being able to create and sustain some form of a very sophisticated religious organization. Harari observes: “Archeological community initially found it difficult to credit these findings, but one test after another confirmed both the early date of the structures and the pre-agricultural society of their builders. The capabilities of ancient foragers, and the complexity of their cultures seem to be far more impressive than was previously suspected” (Harari, 2015, 89-90). It may be that as a merchant prince, Abraham (and with him Sarah), had an extensive evangelical organization as the Bible and rabbinical traditions record.

Other biblical evidence that alludes to an apostolic objective of Abraham and Sarah’s sending away of Hagar is with the angel of Yhwh *finding* (*māṣā*) Hagar in the desert (Gen 16:7). Hamilton notes that *māṣā* carries the meaning of divine election. In his commentary on Genesis 16:7, he quotes McEvenue. “When God is the subject of *māṣā*, and the following object is personal, *māṣā* ‘carries a technical meaning going well beyond connotations of the English verb: it includes elements of encounter and of divine election’” (Hamilton, 1990, 451). Thus, it is not a surprise that Hagar “is the first person in scripture whom such a messenger visits” (Trible, 14; see also Sarna, 120). Given this episode in Gen. 16 one expects Hagar to be in some major way instrumental in Abraham and Sarah’s future missionary plans. One must keep in mind that the elements in this episode (Gen. 16:1-15) frame the background of Sarah’s *gāreš* and Abraham’s *šellach* of Hagar (Gen. 21:10, 14). After her “send-off” in Gen. 21:14 the angel’s *call from heaven* in Gen 21:17 confirms to the reader not only the *apostolic nature* of Abraham and Sarah’s sending of Hagar, but the role of God in their decision, that is, Hagar’s mission is due to a divine *calling*, and not just the personal decisions of Sarah and Abraham. The prophecy given to her concerning Ishmael, i.e., “I will make him into a great nation” (Gen 21:8), also affirms apostolic motivations behind her send out. For example, besides putting her heart at ease about her son’s survival, it discloses to the reader *her* future apostolic success, that is, *she* will become a great nation. Teubal concurs: “Hagar is the only woman in the Bible who, protected by her personal god, receives the promise that she (via her son) will become a great nation” (Teubal 1990, 168). Hagar’s becoming a great nation ensures her role in actualizing God’s plan of making Abraham a “father of many nations” (*ab-raham*) beyond the boundaries of Israel.

## 10. Gen 21:9-14 Meaning-Based Translation and Commentary

The Bible suggests to the reader that Ishmael was conceived with the intent of realizing the promise of God to Abraham. With the birth of Isaac, however, there appears to have been some serious rethinking of each son’s role in the future of the organization. Incorporating the results of the above analysis, a meaning-based<sup>34</sup> targumic translation and commentary of Gen 21:5-14 is provided below.

### Gen. 21:5-14, personal rendering

### Commentary

<sup>34</sup> As Krayner observes: “A principle of meaning-based translation is, if the form distorts the meaning, change the form and keep the meaning” (Krayner 2022, 86).

Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made *rejoicing* for me; everyone who hears will *rejoice* with me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son whom *the stranger of Egypt*, had borne to Abraham – *rejoicing [with Sarah] and playing with, and imitating, Isaac*, **[innocent of the social implications]**. So **[foreseeing the conflict between the siblings]**, she **[grievously]** said to Abraham, "*Send forth the female servant and her son [to establish a settlement as an extension of our hegemony, so he can fulfill a role in accordance with the purpose he was conceived, while avoiding coming under Isaac's authority]*, for the son of the female servant will not inherit **[the hegemony]** with my son Isaac!" And the matter was grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son. God said to him, "Let it not be so grievous in your sight on account of the boy and your female servant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that offspring will be called to you. But I will also make the son of the servant wife into a great nation, because he is your offspring as well." Early in the morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He put them on her shoulders, gave her the child, and *sent her [to establish a settlement as an extension of their evangelical hegemony]*.

The narrative begins by informing the reader that everyone who hears Sarah's story will *rejoice* (laugh) with her. A great feast is given but no one is mentioned rejoicing (laughing) <sup>35</sup> *except* Ishmael. Pigott notices this. "Ironically, the only person who explicitly laughs about Isaac is Ishmael" (2018, 521) There must have been others rejoicing as well but the writer wants to focus the reader's attention on the reason(s) for Sarah's demand. Hamilton notes that Ishmael's action can be understood as the author of Jubilees: "Sarah saw Ishmael playing and dancing, and Abraham rejoicing with great joy, and she became jealous of Ishmael" (Hamilton 1995, 79). Rather than ascribing jealousy to Sarah (which the text does not say) what Sarah saw of Ishmael's innocently rejoicing and imitating Isaac, made her conflicted. One must not forget that Sarah was the cause of Ishmael's conception. And following Josephus, she had loved him like her own son, raising him to inherit his father's rule. Sarah must have told Ishmael on numerous occasions that he will inherit the rule. However, Sarah sees in Ishmael's imitation of Isaac the constraints on their personalities and the perils pregnant in the siblings living in close proximity with each other. One may say she's more concerned with Ishmael than Isaac because Isaac will inherit his father's dominion. She wants to live up to the purpose for which Ishmael was conceived, i.e., of her being built up<sup>36</sup> through him. Her solution is to modify Ishmael's role in the organization. Rather than inherit Abraham's rule and future estate, Ishmael will model (inherit?) Abraham's role and life, of leaving his home, and father's inheritance, to evangelize. Ishmael will be sent forth, i.e., separated temporarily from the family, to take over the settlement or colony established by Hagar as an extension of Abraham and Sarah's rule.

The Priestly writer appears to convey the following ideas behind Sarah's גרש demand and Abraham's שלח of Hagar:

<sup>35</sup> Concerning the verb *shiq* Speiser says it "covers a wide range of meanings, including 'to play, be amused,' and notably also 'to rejoice over, smile on a (newborn child).'" (Speiser, 125)

<sup>36</sup> Both Sarna and Wenham notice the word play in the Hebrew. Sarna comments on אִבְנָה ('ibbaneh) in Gen 16:2: "Hebrew 'ibbaneh contains a double entendre, suggesting both the stem *b-n-h*, 'to build,' and *ben*, 'a son'" (Sarna 1989, 119). Wenham quotes Speiser: "The verb as it stands (אִבְנָה) can only mean 'I shall be built up... At the same time however, it is an obvious word play on בן 'son'" (Wenham 1994, 7).



- (1) the temporary separation of the brothers to prevent sibling rivalry,
- (2) removal of Ishmael from the candidacy of inheriting Abraham's rule,
- (3) bestowal of freedom on Hagar, i.e., (1) freedom from slave status, (2) freedom to continue with the marital relationship with Abraham, and (3) freedom to choose the mission objective of Sarah and Abraham,
- (4) subjecting Hagar to ענה as was Israel in the wilderness, e.g., for demonstrating faith and gaining wisdom through trials and tribulations,
- (5) the conferral of a new role to Hagar in Abraham's rule, i.e., establish a settlement as an extension of the ministry of Sarah and Abraham's evangelical mission. (This is in accordance with Sarah's motive of conceiving Ishmael, for she had said that she intended "to be built up," through him.)

## 11. Did Abraham Carry Out Sarah's *gāreš* Demand as God Commanded Him?

Sarah's demand was that Abraham *gāreš* Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:10). Finding the request quite grievous Abraham refrains. However, commanded by God to carry out Sarah's demand, he capitulates, but, rather than *gāreš* Hagar and Ishmael, Abraham *šellach*-ed them. Some are troubled by the difference in words. Pinker notes, "Targum Jonathan seems to be bothered by the fact that Abraham did not execute Sarah's demand and did not ויגרשה but rather וישלחה (Pinker, 9). Did Abraham fully obey God's command? The analysis offered in this paper provides a framework in which an answer can be provided. Some of the key elements of this framework are:

- (1) Sarah's giving of Hagar to Abraham was due to God's command (*Ant.* 1.187).
- (2) Sarah had Ishmael conceived "to be built up" (Gen 16:2),
- (2) Sarah loved Ishmael no less than she loved Isaac (*Ant.* 1.12.3.),
- (3) Ishmael was brought up to succeed Abraham's chieftaincy (*Ant.* 1.12.215),
- (4) Sarah witnessed signs of future sibling rivalry, detrimental to both sons (Gen. 21:9),
- (5) Sarah was torn between her love for Ishmael and Isaac (she wanted to be a good mother to both sons) (reasonable inference from the above premises),
- (6) Conclusion: remaining faithful to the purpose for which she had Ishmael conceived, i.e., to be built up by him, (not necessarily inherit the chieftaincy) she assigned a new role for Ishmael in Abraham's rule, that of overseeing the settlement Hagar will establish as an extension of Sarah and Abraham's rule (*Ant.* 1.12.216).

When Sarah used Hagar to have a son, she had not foreseen her future pregnancy to Isaac. Although, she may not have had explicitly conceived Ishmael for the purpose of inheriting Abraham's ἡγεμονίας, following Josephus it appears she had raised him as such. However, after the birth and weaning of Isaac, she found herself between a rock and a hard place when it came to her sons. Her solution is twofold: (1) separate the siblings *temporarily* to prevent sibling rivalry, and (2) give the role to Ishmael of expanding the boundaries of Sarah and Abraham's missionary organization (see Dozeman, 1998, 42). The harshness of Sarah's *gāreš* demand was due to her being conflicted owing to the following reasons:

first, she felt she was being compelled to separate from her son Ishmael whom she loved dearly, second, she felt she was acting contrary to the expectations she had given Abraham, Hagar, and most importantly Ishmael, that he will inherit Abraham's chieftaincy, and third, this mission necessitated hardships for both Hagar and Ishmael.

Abraham's response to Sarah's *gāreš* was וַיִּרַע אַבְרָם (*wayyêra' mē'ōd*) (Gen 21:11). Sarna renders the words "greatly distressed" (Sarna 147), and Wenham, "very displeased" (Wenham, 77). In this verse רע happens to be an imperfect qal stem. The word is generally understood as "evil" (see Wenham, 77 footnote 11a). Abraham's רע response is due not only to the thought of separating from his wife and son Ishmael, but to the heavy burdens imposed on them (and on him as well) to establish a colony of believers. We have a similar usage of רע (Hiphil stem) by Moses addressing God. "Why hast



Thou done *evil* (רעע) to Thy servant? and why have I not found grace in Thine eyes -- to put the burden of all this people upon me?" (Number 11:11, YLT). It appears Abraham felt the same way about Sarah's demand, that is, it is evil (רעע) to subject such a difficult burden like establishing a colony on a woman and her son far from home. For the culture of the time, it would be normal to think and feel this way. But God intended to subject Hagar to trials. What about Sarah? Was she conflicted as Abraham? The word *gāreš* suggests that she was. Sarah most likely felt the same way about the situation she was in and the choice she was forced to make, i.e., separating from her son Ishmael and placing a heavy burden on the shoulders of Hagar and Ishmael to establish a colony distressed her. It may be that Mark felt the same about the Spirit's *sending* of Jesus (Mark 1:12) into the desert to be severely tested in inauguration of his mission. Thus, he used the word *εκβάλλει* to express the forcefulness of the Spirit's action. The Markan writer may have intended to convey the idea that the Spirit, just like Sarah, was conflicted. Paul's reference to a grieving Holy Spirit in Ephesians may shed some light on this phenomenon. "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (4:30). This *grief* is due to God's love and compassion as explained in Jer. 31:20.<sup>37</sup> Committing sins, humans inadvertently subject themselves to punishment which grieves God. It appears God's grief is due to not only punishing his servants when they sin, but, includes the distress they will experience due to being subjected to severe trials and tribulations.

Once God consoled Abraham about the hardships or dangers of sending Hagar and Ishmael to establish a colony, i.e., God will take care of both of them (Gen 21:12-3), the subjective aspects of his distress was eliminated or greatly diminished. So, instead of *gāreš*-ing his wife and son as Sarah had explicitly demanded, Abraham *šellach*-ed Hagar with his son. He did not *gāreš* them because he was no longer conflicted like Sarah due to God's consolation. The objective and subjective features of Sarah's *gāreš* demand can be presented as such.

#### Objective aspects of Sarah's *gāreš*

- (1) send Hagar and Ishmael on a mission to establish a settlement as an extension of Sarah and Abraham's rule,
- (2) fulfill the purpose of Sarah's conception of Ishmael, i.e., being built up through him,
- (3) separate the brothers temporarily to prevent sibling rivalry,
- (4) subject Hagar and Ishmael to severe trials in preparation and fulfillment of their mission.

#### Subjective aspects of Sarah's *gāreš*

- (1) conflicted due to separating from her son Ishmael whom she loved dearly, i.e., behaving contrary to her feelings of wanting her son Ishmael by her side,
- (2) conflicted due to demanding something contrary to her reason for having Ishmael conceived and raised, i.e., he was raised to inherit the chieftaincy,
- (3) conflicted due to acting contrary to the expectations she had given everyone, especially Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael, that Ishmael would inherit Abraham's rule, and
- (4) conflicted because she is concerned with the safety and well-being of both Hagar and Ishmael, i.e., knowing that the mission necessitated serious hardships for both.

In this analysis Sarah's *gāreš* does not carry the meaning of a rejection or banishment of Hagar or Ishmael. Rather than being rejected or "cut off from Abraham", Ishmael actually builds up Sarah, which is ultimately in accord with, and fulfillment of, the reason for his conception (Gen 16:1-3).

## 12. Conclusion

I began this chapter with the lamentations of Paula Reimer and Elie Wiesel on the "expulsion" of Hagar and Ishmael. In "*Reading the Women of the Bible*" Frymer-Kensky observes that "readers today tend

<sup>37</sup> For other passage where God grieves see Gen. 6:6; Judg. 2:18; and Isa. 63:9-10.

to be angry at Sarai, to castigate her for being insensitive to the plight of someone for whom she should have felt both compassion and solidarity” (2002, 226). Rather than seeing Sarah as insensitive or cruel, the analysis in this paper opens a window to view Sarai, as being full of wisdom and compassion. Her sending out Hagar to establish a colony, enable her to safeguard her filial relationships with Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael, while carrying out the will of her God in a way that would preserve and strengthen her intimate relationship with Him.

Finding parallels between Hagar and prominent biblical heroes enabled a positive appraisal behind Sarah and Abraham’s “sending forth” of Hagar and Ishamel. Further parallels may continue to shed light on their intent. For example, referring to Hagar’s encounter with the angel of Yahweh in Chapter 16, Hamilton observes, “This narrative is similar in some details to the story of Elijah (1 K. 19). Both Hagar and Elisha (sic) flee in order to escape abuse or potential abuse. Left alone in the wilderness, each is accosted by the *angel of Yahweh*. Both are instructed to return whence they came” (Hamilton 1990, 449). He also finds the angels solicitation of information about “Hagar’s origin and destiny” to parallel “the divine question to Elijah: ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ (1 K. 19:9)” (Hamilton 1990, 452). Pigott discovers parallels between Hagar and Abraham to the degree which she believes Hagar is presented in the Bible as a patriarch. “...the purpose of this article is how Hagar and Abraham are mirrored throughout their stories, suggesting that Hagar should be viewed on the same level as Abraham, as a patriarch” (Pigott, 2018, 573). Comparing the two theophanies of Jacob (Gen. 32:23-33) and Hagar (Gen. 16:7-14) Noble makes a crucial observation—that God listens to Hagar like he does to a great prophet. “If the two theophanies demonstrate nothing else, they show that YHWH, at least, does in fact ‘attend to’ or ‘hear’ Hagar in a way that is similar not only to the way he relates to the patriarch, Jacob, but also to a great prophet” (Noble 2016, 36). Dozeman, on the other hand, feels that Hagar actually mirrors Moses more than she mirrors Israel. “Inclusion of the wilderness setting in a comparison of Hagar and the exodus suggests a more heroic quality to Hagar as a character who models the life of Moses more than she prefigures the slavery of Israel” (Dozeman, 1998, 29). One of his crucial observations is that “each is a founder of a nation” (Dozeman, 23). The heroic qualities of Hagar noted by the writers above is echoed by Thompson as well: “...recent investigations have called attention to a number of remarkable features that ought to signal Hagar as one of the preeminent biblical heroes” (Thompson, 1997, 214). In view of Hagar’s affinities with great prophets and biblical heroes, it appears the Priestly writer believed that not only was Hagar successful in founding a colony or nation of believers, but also, as argued in this article, that the primary intent behind Sarah’s גֵּרָשָׁה (*gāreš*) demand, and Abraham’s שְׁלַח (*šellach*) of Hagar, was the initiation of an apostolic mission.

## Abbreviations

ALS	Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint: Expanded Edition (2009)
BDB	<i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon (1907)
BGAD	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (2000)
ESV	English Standard Version (2001, 2016)
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (2001)
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
KJV	King James Version (1611)
LES	The Lexham English Septuagint (2019)
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. (1996)
LXX	Septuagint, according to the text of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Hellenic Bible Society ( <a href="https://www.septuagint.bible/">https://www.septuagint.bible/</a> )
NASB	New American Standard Bible (1977, 1997)
NET	New English Translation (2001)
NIV	New International version (2011)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)

YLT Young's Literal Translation (2016)

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