



Patriarchs and Matriarchs: The Importance of Abraham and Sarah in The Old Testament

Figure 1: Sarah Leading Hagar to Abraham



Sarah's Struggle with Barrenness

Sarah's inability to conceive children brought a challenge to God's covenant with Abraham, leading her to bring her servant Hagar to Abraham as a surrogate mother. This reflects mankind's difficulty in trusting God's plan, as when the time was right for Sarah to conceive, God bestowed this blessing upon her.¹

Genesis 12:2 – “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

God's Covenant with Abraham

‘Abram is challenged by God to establish a new humanity’²



Figure 4: Abraham and the Angels

References

- ¹ New International Version Bible, 'Sarah and Hagar: The Consequences of Our Way vs. God's Way', [n.d] <<https://www.thenivbible.com/blog/hagar-and-sarah-in-the-bible/>> [accessed 18 March 2026].
- ² Michael Abramsky, 'Jacob Wrestles the Angel: A Study in Psychoanalytic Midrash', International Journal of Transpersonal Studies, 29 (1), (2010), 106-117, (p. 113) <<https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=ijs-transpersonalstudies>> [accessed 16 March 2026].
- Figure 1: Caspar Netscher, *Sarah Leading Hagar to Abraham*, 1673, oil on canvas, <<https://www.theleidencollection.com/artwork/sarah-leading-hagar-to-abraham/>> [accessed 16 February 2026].
- Figure 2: Peter Paul Rubens, *The Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau*, 1625-1628, oil on panel, <<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/5656>> [accessed 16 March 2026].
- Figure 3: Gustave Dore, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, 1866, engraving, <<https://www.wikiart.org/en/gustave-dore/jacob-wrestling-with-the-angel-1866>> [accessed 18 March 2026].
- Figure 4: Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Abraham and the Angels*, 1646, oil on panel, <<https://www.sothebys.com/Rembrandt>> [accessed 18 March 2026].

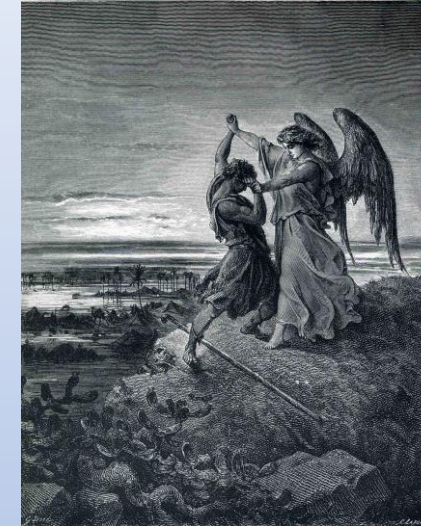


Figure 3: Jacob Wrestling with the Angel

Wrestling at Peniel

Jacob's struggle with the angel provides the ultimate transformation. It is one of the richest metaphors of the Bible. It entails numerous levels of meanings, all echoing transformation. The act of wrestling is an undoing and a transformation of Jacob's past relationship to Esau.³

Genesis 32:28 - “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel,^[b] for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

Genesis 33:4 - But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Figure 2: The Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau

