

### ~BARRENESS (403)

[Hebrew, *'a-qar'* barren, *gal-mudh'*, sterile, Greek, *stei'ros*, sterile]

- The idea of the inability to bring forth children is conveyed by the Hebrew words *'a-qar'* barren.
- But Sarai continued to be **barren**, she had no child. (**Genesis 11:30**)
- And *gal-mudh'*, **sterile**.
- And you will for certain say in your heart; Who has become father to these for me, since I am a woman bereaved of children and **sterile**, gone into exile and taken prisoner? As for these, who has brought them up? Look! I myself had been left behind alone. These, where have they been? (**Isaiah 49:21**)
- Sheol and a **restrained womb**, a land that has not been satisfied with water, and fire that has not said, Enough! (**Proverbs 30:16**)
- **Barrenness** is literally described as **restraint of the womb**. The Greek word for **barren** is *stei'ros*.
- But they had no child, because Elizabeth was **barren**, and they both were well along in years. (**Luke 1:7**)
- And, look! Elizabeth your relative has also herself conceived a son, in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her, the so-called **barren** woman. (**Luke 1:36**)
- **Barrenness** is also spoken of as **deadness of the womb**.
- And, although he did not grow weak in faith, he considered his own body, now already **deadened**, as he was about one hundred years old, also the **deadness of the womb** of Sarah. (**Romans 4:19**)
- Yehowah's original mandate to Adam and Eve, later repeated to Noah's sons, included the command, Be fruitful and become many.
- Further, God blessed them and God said to them; Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in

subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28)

- And as for you men, be fruitful and become many, make the earth swarm with you and become many in it. (Genesis 9:7)
- Failure on the part of a married woman to bring forth children was therefore viewed in ancient times as a **reproach, an affliction, a punishment, one of the greatest misfortunes**. Give me children or otherwise **I shall be a dead woman**, pleaded Rachel with her husband Jacob.
- When Rachel came to see that she had borne nothing to Jacob, Rachel got jealous of her sister and began to say to Jacob; Give me children or otherwise **I shall be a dead woman**. (Genesis 30:1)
- That Yehowah is capable of making a **barren** woman fruitful is shown by the words of Jacob to Rachel; **Am I in the place of God, who has held back the fruit of the belly from you?** Finally, we are told, God remembered Rachel, and God heard and answered her in that he **opened her womb**. And she became pregnant and brought a son to birth.
- At this Jacob's anger burned against Rachel and he said; Am I in the place of God, who has held back the fruit of the belly from you? (Genesis 30:2)
- Finally God remembered Rachel, and God heard and answered her in that he **opened her womb**. (Genesis 30:22)
- And she became pregnant and brought a son to birth. Then she said; God has **taken away my reproach!** (Genesis 30:23)
- Other cases demonstrating Yehowah's power to give children to women afflicted with natural **barrenness** over a long period of time may be cited that of Sarah.
- But Sarai continued to be **barren**. She had no child. (Genesis 11:30)
- To this God said; Sarah your wife is indeed bearing you a son, and you must call his name Isaac. And I will establish my

covenant with him for a covenant to time indefinite to his seed after him. (**Genesis 17:19**)

- And Yehowah turned his attention to Sarah just as he had said; and Yehowah now did to Sarah just as he had spoken. (**Genesis 21:1**)
- And Sarah became pregnant and then bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. (**Genesis 21:2**)
- **Rebekah**
- And Isaac kept on entreating Yehowah especially for his wife, because she was barren. So Yehowah let himself be entreated for him, and Rebekah his wife became pregnant. (**Genesis 25:21**)
- **Samson's mother.**
- Meanwhile there happened to be a certain man of Zorah of the family of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. And his wife was **barren** and had borne no child. (**Judges 13:2**)
- In time Yehowah's angel appeared to the woman and said to her: Look, now, you are **barren** and have borne no child. And you will certainly become pregnant and give birth to a son. (**Judges 13:3**)
- **Hannah.**
- And she was bitter of soul, and she began to pray to Yehowah and to weep greatly. (**1 Samuel 1:10**)
- And she went on to make a vow and say; O Yehowah of armies, if you will without fail look upon the affliction of your slave girl and actually remember me, and you will not forget your slave girl and actually give to your slave girl a male offspring, I will give him to Yehowah all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head. (**1 Samuel 1:11**)
- The satisfied must hire themselves out for bread, but the hungry actually cease to hunger. Even the **barren** has given birth to seven, but she that was abundant in sons has faded away. (**1 Samuel 2:5**)

- **A Shunammite woman.**
- **And he went on to say; What, then, is there to be done for her? Gehazi now said; For a fact, a son she does not have, and her husband is old. (2 Kings 4:14)**
- **Immediately he said; Call her. So he called her, and she kept standing at the entrance. (2 Kings 4:15)**
- **Then he said; At this appointed time next year you will be embracing a son. But she said; No, my master, O man of the true God! Do not tell lies in connection with your maidservant. (2 Kings 4:16)**
- **However, the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son at this appointed time the next year, just as Elisha had spoken to her. (2 Kings 4:17)**
- **Elizabeth.**
- **But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well along in years. (Luke 1:7)**
- **And, look! Elizabeth your relative has also herself conceived a son, in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her, the so-called barren woman. (Luke 1:36)**
- **With Yehowah's blessing, the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt became so prolific that the Egyptians were alarmed, thinking they would soon be outnumbered.**
- **And the sons of Israel became fruitful and began to swarm, and they kept on multiplying and growing mightier at a very extraordinary rate, so that the land got to be filled with them. (Exodus 1:7)**
- **In time there arose over Egypt a new king who did not know Joseph. (Exodus 1:8)**
- **And he proceeded to say to his people; Look! The people of the sons of Israel are more numerous and mightier than we are. (Exodus 1:9)**
- **Come on! Let us deal shrewdly with them, for fear they may**

- multiply, and it must turn out that, in case war should befall us, then they certainly will also be added to those who hate us and will fight against us and go up out of the country. (**Exodus 1:10**)
- So they set over them chiefs of forced labor for the purpose of oppressing them in their burden-bearing, and they went building cities as storage places for Pharaoh, namely, Pithom and Raamses. (**Exodus 1:11**)
  - But the more they would oppress them, the more they would multiply and the more they kept spreading abroad, so that they felt a sickening dread as a result of the sons of Israel. (**Exodus 1:12**)
  - In time the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them; Why is it you have done this thing, in that you preserved the male children alive? (**Exodus 1:18**)
  - In turn the midwives said to Pharaoh; Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women. Because they are lively, they have already given birth before the midwife can come in to them. (**Exodus 1:19**)
  - So God dealt well with the midwives, and the people kept growing more numerous and becoming very mighty. (**Exodus 1:20**)
  - And it came about that because the midwives had feared the true God he later presented them with families. (**Exodus 1:21**)
  - Yehowah was also given credit for granting conception to Ruth the ancestress of David.
  - Accordingly Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and he had relations with her. So Yehowah granted her conception and she bore a son. (**Ruth 4:13**)
  - When Yehowah withheld his blessing even the land would become a barren and desolate waste. On the other hand, with divine blessing, the land was capable of bringing forth much fruitage.
  - If you continue walking in my statutes and keeping my commandments and you do carry them out. (**Leviticus 26:3**)

- I shall also certainly give your showers of rain at their proper time, and the land will indeed give its yield, and the tree of the field will give its fruit. ([Leviticus 26:4](#))
- And your threshing will certainly reach to your grape gathering, and the grape gathering will reach to the sowing of seed, and you will indeed eat your bread to satisfaction and dwell in security in your land. ([Leviticus 26:5](#))
- Similarly, with Yehowah's rich blessing, it was promised, neither a woman suffering an abortion nor a barren woman will exist in your land.
- Neither a woman suffering an abortion nor a barren woman will exist in your land. I shall make the number of your days full. ([Exodus 23:26](#))
- And he will certainly love you and bless you and multiply you and bless the fruit of your belly and the fruit of your soil, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the young of your cows and the progeny of your flock, on the soil that he swore to your forefathers to give to you. ([Deuteronomy 7:13](#))
- The most blessed of all the peoples you will become. There will not prove to be in you a male or a female without offspring, nor among your domestic animals. ([Deuteronomy 7:14](#))
- Blessed will be the fruit of your belly and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your domestic beast, the young of your cattle and the progeny of your flock. ([Deuteronomy 28:4](#))
- Yehowah will also make you overflow indeed with prosperity in the fruit of your belly and the fruit of your domestic animals and the fruitage of your ground, on the ground that Yehowah swore to your forefathers to give you. ([Deuteronomy 28:11](#))
- Look! Sons are an inheritance from Yehowah, the fruitage of the belly is a reward. ([Psalms 127:3](#))
- Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the sons of youth. ([Psalms 127:4](#))
- Happy is the able-bodied man that has filled his quiver with them. They will not be ashamed, for they will speak with

enemies in the gate. (**Psalms 127:5**)

- Your wife will be like a fruit-bearing vine in the innermost parts of your house. Your sons will be like slips of olive trees all around your table. (**Psalms 128:3**)
- Conversely, Yehowah, on one occasion, **tightly shut up every womb** of Abimelech's house when he contemplated taking Sarah as wife.
- And Abraham began to make supplication to the true God, and God proceeded to heal Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, and they began bearing children. (**Genesis 20:17**)
- For Yehowah had **tightly shut up every womb** of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. (**Genesis 20:18**)
- Because of the terrible distress foretold to come on **First-Century Jerusalem**, Jesus said **barren** women would be happy, relieved, not having the anguish of seeing their children suffer.
- Because, look! Days are coming in which people will say; Happy are the **barren** women, and the wombs that did not give birth and the breasts that did not nurse! (**Luke 23:29**)
- Isaiah and the psalmist prophesied of a **barren** woman whose reproach and shame are to be forgotten, for she will bring forth many sons, all of them taught by Yehowah.
- He is causing the **barren** woman to dwell in a house as a joyful mother of sons. Praise Yah, you people! (**Psalms 113:9**)
- Cry out joyfully, you **barren** woman that did not give birth! Become cheerful with a joyful outcry and cry shrilly, you that had no childbirth pains, for the sons of the desolated one are more numerous than the sons of the woman with a husbandly owner, Yehowah has said. (**Isaiah 54:1**)
- Make the place of your tent more spacious. And let them stretch out the tent cloths of your grand tabernacle. Do not hold back. Lengthen out your tent cords, and make those tent pins of yours strong. (**Isaiah 54:2**)
- For to the right and to the left you will break forth, and your own

offspring will take possession even of nations, and they will inhabit even the desolated cities. (**Isaiah 54:3**)

- Do not be afraid, for you will not be put to shame, and do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disappointed. For you will forget even the shame of your time of youth, and the **reproach of your continuous widowhood** you will remember no more. (**Isaiah 54:4**)
- For your Grand Maker is your husbandly owner, Yehowah of armies being his name, and the Holy One of Israel is your Repurchaser. The God of the whole earth he will be called. (**Isaiah 54:5**)
- For Yehowah called you as if you were a wife left entirely and hurt in spirit, and as a wife of the time of youth who was then rejected, your God has said. (**Isaiah 54:6**)
- For a little moment I left you entirely, but with great mercies I shall collect you together. (**Isaiah 54:7**)
- With a flood of indignation I concealed my face from you for but a moment, but with loving-kindness to time indefinite I will have mercy upon you, your Repurchaser, Yehowah, has said. (**Isaiah 54:8**)
- This is just as the days of Noah to me. Just as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more pass over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not become indignant toward you nor rebuke you. (**Isaiah 54:9**)
- For the mountains themselves may be removed, and the very hills may stagger, but my loving-kindness itself will not be removed from you, nor will my covenant of peace itself stagger, Yehowah, the One having mercy upon you, has said. (**Isaiah 54:10**)
- O woman afflicted, **tempest-tossed, uncomforted**, here I am laying with hard mortar your stones, and I will lay your foundation with sapphires. (**Isaiah 54:11**)
- And I will make your battlements of rubies, and your gates of fiery glowing stones, and all your boundaries of delightful stones. (**Isaiah 54:12**)



- And **all your sons will be persons taught by Yehowah**, and the peace of your sons will be abundant. (**Isaiah 54:13**)
- You will prove to be firmly established in righteousness itself. You will be far away from oppression, for you will fear none, and from anything terrifying, for it will not come near you. (**Isaiah 54:14**)
- If anyone should at all make an attack, it will not be at my orders. Whoever is making an attack upon you will fall even on account of you. (**Isaiah 54:15**)
- The apostle Paul applies Isaiah's words to the free woman, that is, the Jerusalem above.
- But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. (**Galatians 4:26**)
- For it is written: Be glad, you **barren** woman who does not give birth, break out and cry aloud, you **woman who does not have childbirth pains**, for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than those of her who has the husband. (**Galatians 4:27**)
- Now we, brothers, are children belonging to the promise the same as Isaac was. (**Galatians 4:28**)
- But just as then the one born in the manner of flesh began persecuting the one born in the manner of spirit, so also now. (**Galatians 4:29**)
- Nevertheless, what does the Scripture say: Drive out the servant girl and her son, for by no means shall the son of the servant girl be an heir with the son of the free woman. (**Galatians 4:30**)
- Wherefore, brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman. (**Galatians 4:31**)