

Hagar: The Woman who Found a Well

The Good	Slave: <u>Hagar became the property or slave girl of the princess.</u> She must have served her mistress with devotion intensified by the feelings of loneliness and separation from the things familiar and dear. Hagar must have loved and admired the beautiful and gracious Sarah. She was fortunate, indeed, to be slave for such a noble and good family. Courageous Hagar had left her position as handmaid without notice and without permission, so she must return. Sarah had wronged her, but she was not permitted to retaliate by doing wrong herself. Two wrongs do not make a right. <u>It was no easy matter for Hagar to return and submit herself to Sarah, but it was the only right course, and a divine revelation helped her to pursue it.</u> God Hears <u>To know that God cared, that he saw her suffering and heard her cry, and that he helped her when she needed him most.</u> God's Promise God gave her a promise that although the wrongdoing of her master and mistress had led her into a false position, yet His favor would rest upon her and she would have a son who would be the progenitor of a great multitude. The soothing promise of God was a balm for the wounded spirit of the poor and lowly handmaid. Though Ishmael, the name God gave Hagar for her coming son, might not be the Child of Promise as Isaac would be, yet he would be the child of a promise made to her. Obedient to God At that renowned well Hagar met God, and in awe cried, "Thou God seest me." <u>He had given her counsel, and although not pleasing to flesh and blood, Hagar took it and went back to Sarah.</u> The Angel and The Well She called the well where God spoke to her and revealed the future of her son "The well of Him that liveth and seeth me". It was there that the veil fell from Hagar's eyes, and <u>she received the assurance that she was the object of God's special care.</u> Wilderness Rescue I <u>In the wilderness toward Egypt, the angel of the Lord finds her.</u> The angel gives Hagar pity for Sarah and the promise of a son whom she must call Ishmael. He promises her great blessings but reminds her that she is still a servant and must return and be obedient to her mistress. With a consciousness that God sees and watches over her she returns to Sarah. Ishmael "God Shall Hear" <u>Hagar has a son and, following the command of the angel, Abraham calls him Ishmael.</u> Abraham now had his son. How pleased he was! For thirteen years the father and son share a comradeship that grows and a close relationship of sharing the wondrous promises of God. Wilderness Rescue II There was mercy in the visit of the angel. <u>Hagar was a specially blessed woman, for this was the second time that the angel of the Lord had come to her aid. Of what other woman can this be said?</u> He showed her springs of water, and she and her son drank and lived. He followed her with a blessing, and made of her son a great, strong nation The Ishmaelites <u>Hagar became the foundress of the Ishmaelites</u> and Arab peoples from whom came Mohammed, the founder of Islam.
The Bad	Her Life <u>A lonely woman with few resources, she suffered harsh punishment for her mistake</u> Ambitious Hagar should not have yielded to such an unholy alliance [as second wife] merely to gratify any <u>ambition she may have had.</u> The Wilderness In the wilderness, with the last drop of water gone, <u>Hagar tenderly places her almost dead boy under the shrubs, unable to watch him die.</u> Prideful <u>Hagar chides the childless Sarah,</u> and the jealousy begotten between these two women was transplanted to their maternal hearts and penetrated even their children.

The Ugly	A Slave and Foreigner That she was <u>taken from her homeland to become a slave in a foreign land</u> where she was mistreated for many years. A Second Wife For Hagar, the unexpected elevation from servant to the master's wife was most amazing. With understandable pride she stands besides him as his other wife. Imagine her elation when she finds that she is going to have a child. It is apparent that she is to bring the precious heir into the world, and she expects every consideration. Sarah had expected no rival in the humble slave, or she would never have made her such an intimate member of the family circle. That Hagar, unexpectedly taken out of her lowly station and admitted to the high privilege of being the master's wife, became high minded is to be understood. She could not fully understand the reasons and the motive of Abraham, nor the changed attitude of Sarah. The Failure of Sarah & Abraham's Plan Sarah had sown seed for a family feud, and now she was reaping what she had sown. She had made for herself a situation which was too involved for her to cope with. The pain of childlessness was nothing compared to the wild tumult in her heart now. Sarah can no longer stand the insolence of Hagar and...complains to Abraham. "Do to her as it pleaseth thee." So Sarah takes out her remorse on Hagar by pressing her tired back hard to menial tasks. <u>Hurt and bewildered (and pregnant), Hagar flees into the wilderness toward Egypt</u> The Birth of Isaac After 13 years with Ishmael, the Lord talks with Abraham again. <u>Abraham was baffled by the news that Ishmael was not the promised seed, and he prayed the Lord, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"</u> How disturbing to the mind of Ishmael had been the increasing popularity of Isaac. How little could the youth understand the change in his, heretofore, favored circumstance. Ishmael, who had long been pampered, did what many another child would have done: he taunted and teased Isaac. Hagar, the Outcast Sarah, so exasperated at Ishmael's behavior, she tells Abraham to <u>cast out the bondswoman and her son.</u>
US: Good	• The same God who defended Hagar and heard the cries of her son in the desert hears the cries of <u>helpless women and their children today</u>. When we are at our weakest, God is at his best, ready to step in and say to us as he said to Hagar, "Do not be afraid" (Gen. 21:17) • Because <u>he is an all-knowing Father who hears the cries of his children</u>. Nothing that happens to us can ever escape his notice. • <u>There is a Divine purpose in the life of everyone, however, obscure and friendless.</u> • <u>It is the task of every parent to teach children consideration for others, to require obedience, and to exercise authority.</u> Consideration for others would have kept Ishmael and Hagar, who failed to discipline her son, safe at home. • That the Lord runs after the weak and the helpless to show them his mercy and his plan of blessing for their lives.
US: Bad	<u>Any pride, selfishness, or other sin</u> that may have contributed to your present circumstances.

Sources:

<i>Women of the Bible: A one-Year Devotional Study of Women in Scripture,</i> By Ann Spangler & Jean E. Syswerda, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999, ISBN: 0-310-22352-0	<i>All the Women of the Bible</i> by Herbert Lockyer, Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, ISBN 0-310-28151-2	<i>she shall be called Woman,</i> by Frances Vander Velde, Kegel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957, ISBN:0-8254-4003-3
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NOTEWORTHY:

- Pharaoh gave female servants during the Sarah incident – Gen. 12:16
- Egyptian – Gen. 16:1
- Belonged specifically to Sarah – Gen. 16:1

- *Was Hagar a “gift” from Pharaoh? (Ancient rabbinic speculation and tradition...)*
- Angel of the Lord seeks her out in the wilderness – twice (Gen. 16:7-14; 21:14-21)
- Receives a direct annunciation concerning her child. (Gen. 16:10-12)
- Personally receives a promise from God (Gen. 16:10)
- Her child is named by God before birth (Gen. 16:11)
- She names God “El-Roi” the God who sees” (Gen. 16:13) *A pagan gentile’s promise and naming of God is preserved in Scripture!*
- God promises her son a nationhood (Gen. 21:18)
- God remains specifically “with” Ishmael (Gen 21:20)
- “Unchosen,” foreign, pagan, female, enslaved, pregnant, alone, running away after mistreatment...and God seeks her out.

Paul’s ALLEGORY of Sarah and Hagar – Galatians 4:22-31

Hagar / Ishmael	Sarah / Isaac
LAW	GRACE
Sinai Law (OLD COVENANT)	Covenantal promise (NEW COVENANT)
Human process (INFERIOR)	Divine Grace/Love (SUPERIOR)
slavery	Freedom
enslaved woman	free woman
child born “ according to the flesh ” (kata sarka)	child born “ through the promise ” (dia tēs epangelias)
present Jerusalem	Jerusalem expanded to creation

Galatians 4:22-31, *The Message*

Tell me now, you who have become so enamored with the law: Have you paid close attention to that law? Abraham, remember, had *two* sons: one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. The son of the slave woman was born by human connivance; the son of the free woman was born by God’s promise. This illustrates the very thing we are dealing with now. The two births represent two ways of being in relationship with God. One is from Mount Sinai in Arabia. It corresponds with what is now going on in Jerusalem - a slave life, producing slaves as offspring. This is the way of Hagar. In contrast to that, there is an invisible Jerusalem, a free Jerusalem, and she is our mother - this is the way of Sarah. Remember what Isaiah wrote: “Rejoice, barren women who bears no children, shout and cry out, woman who has no birth pangs, Because the children of the barren woman now surpass the children of the chosen woman.” It is it clear, friends, that you, like Isaac, are children of promise? In the days of Hagar and Sarah, the child who came from faithless connivance (Ishmael) harassed the child who came - empowered by the Spirit- from the faithful promise (Isaac). Isn’t it clear that the harassment you are now experiencing from the Jerusalem heretics follows that old pattern? There is a Scripture that tell us what to do: “Expel the slave mother with her son, for the slave son will not inherit with the free son.” Isn’t that conclusive? We are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. (Phil. 3:20-21)