

Hagar: The Resentful Slave

(Genesis 16 and 21:1-21)

Listen to intro song, “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen” (traditional African-American spiritual) sung by Jill Phillips, on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ib5-xmP3rA8>.

I. THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY

A. The Owners—righteous but flawed and very imperfect

- 1. Cultural Blindness**—considered normal and respectable; no one questioned it
- 2. Selfish Entitlement**—the deceitfulness of our hearts
- 3. Flawed Heroes**—two errors to avoid: overlooking either the sin or the good

B. The Slave—Hagar, also human and flawed

- 1. A Maidservant**—lived to serve a woman of a higher class
- 2. A Concubine**—a woman owned and kept by a man for sex without the full rights of a wife
- 3. A Surrogate Mother**—carried and delivered a child who would belong to someone else
- 4. A Human Being** (Job 31:13-15)—she had intelligence and feelings

C. The Consequences—Abraham’s actions had serious consequences.

- 1. Relational Mischief**
 - a. Sex changes a relationship.
 - b. The people you use will despise you.
- 2. Broken Family**—no way this could work
- 3. Rejected Son**—children suffer for the parents’ choices
- 4. International Animosity**—International wars start with family arguments.

II. THE CHARACTER OF GOD

A. God Is Just. (Job 31:13-15; Gal 3:26-27; Philemon: 15-19) No favoritism

B. God Is Realistic. Not so idealistic that He can’t deal with reality as it is

1. **Provision of Law** (Mat 19:8)—not to institute or approve but to *regulate*
 2. **Process of Change** (Mat 13:33)—gospel transforms culture slowly over time
- C. God Is Involved.** (Gen 16:7; Ps 10:14, 17-18; 34:18; Isa 43:2)—not blind or disinterested
1. **He knows.** (Gen 16:13; Ex 2:23-24 & 3:16; Ps 10:14, 17; Lam 3:59)—*intimate, relational knowledge.*
 - a. Hagar’s Name (Gen 16:8)—God knows it!
 - b. God’s Name (Gen 16:13)—Hagar names God; claims relationship
 - c. Ishmael’s Name (Gen 16:11)—memorial to relational experience of God
 2. **He feels.** (Ex 3:7; Isa 63:9) God is distressed by the distress of His people.
 3. **He sustains.** (Gen 21:18-19; Ps 105:41; Jn 16:33) With provision, with hope
 4. **He delivers.** (Ps 34:7; Ps 107) The Exodus, Judges...
 5. **He compensates.** (Gen 15:13-14; Ex 3:21-22; Ps 105:37; Joel 2:25)
 - a. He will reward our labor. (Eph 6:7-8; Col 3:22-24)
 - b. He offers us Himself. (Ps 10:14, 17-18; 34:18; Ps 68:5-6)—special concern

III. **THE INCARNATION OF JESUS**

- A. Jesus experienced the human condition.** (Isa 53:4, 7; Heb 2:17-18)
1. **He humbled Himself to serve us.** (Phil 2:3-8)
 2. **He sympathizes with our misery.** (Heb 4:15-16) understands, deeply feels
- B. Jesus came to set us free.** (Luke 4:17-21; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 4:7 & 5:1, 13)
1. **We can have internal freedom now, in spite of our circumstances.**
 2. **We will have complete freedom in the New Heaven & New Earth.**

Listen to concluding song, “I Love the Lord,” (from Psalm 116:1-2) sung by Whitney Houston and the Georgia Mass Choir on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPLP1ui4Ync>.

Study Guide

Lesson 2: Hagar

Read Genesis 16 and 21:1-21; Galatians 3:26-27 and 4:4-7.

1. What is Hagar's situation in life?
2. When Sarai gave Hagar to Abram as a wife (concubine), what was her motive? Did it change Hagar's social standing or give her any more control of her life?
3. What problems resulted from this arrangement that Sarai initiated and Abram accepted?
4. Pretend you are Hagar. How has life treated you unfairly? Who has wronged you?
5. Put yourself in Ishmael's place. How has life treated you unfairly? Who has wronged you?
6. What does Hagar experience with God that Sarai never gets to experience?
7. Do you have any questions for God as you read this story regarding His handling of the situation?
8. How does Jesus bring hope to the story of Hagar? (Psalm 10:14, 17-18; Galatians 3:26-27 & 4:4-7; Revelation 7:13-17.)