



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 16:7-16 The Lord Himself Meets Hagar

Lesson 35

In the second half of Genesis 16 we see the Lord Himself meeting Hagar, who had run away from Sarai. The Lord encouraged Hagar and told her to return and submit to Sarai.

"Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

9 The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." 10 Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." 11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction. 12 He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

13 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" 14 Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi, observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. 15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram."

Background Notes

In verse 7 we read that the Angel of the Lord found Hagar by the spring on the way to Shur. Shur was on the road from Beersheba to Egypt, so most likely Hagar, who was running away from Sarah, intended to return to Egypt. Remember Hagar was an Egyptian, and she was probably obtained by Abram and Sarai when they went down to Egypt (Genesis 12).

Who was "the Angel of the Lord" who met Hagar? Was this one of the many of God's good angels, or is the Angel of the Lord someone special? We believe that the Angel of the Lord is a theophany, or more precisely, a Christophany. A Christophany is the God the Son taking on the appearance of man in Old Testament times. The Angel of the Lord appears a number of times in the Old Testament, and this is the first time! However, the Angel of the Lord disappears from the pages of Scripture when we come to the New Testament. We read of angels of the Lord in the New Testament, but we don't have "the Angel of the Lord." Why? Because God the Son became incarnate -- that is, the second person of the Trinity became man. The Lord Jesus Christ is 100% God and 100% man. So the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Himself before he became incarnate.

Notice how Hagar referred to the Angel of the Lord in verse 13, *"Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"* Hagar knew that this was not just an "angel" that had been speaking to her. This was the Lord Himself!

In verse 12 the Lord told Hagar that her son Ishmael would be a "wild man" or a "wild donkey of a man." This is a great description of the Bedouin way of life in the desert! The Bedouin move freely in the wilderness, and are a law unto themselves. Many of the Arab Bedouin, even today, trace their history back to Ishmael. The last part of verse 12 indicates that the descendants of Ishmael would face hostility. The friction between Jews and Arabs down through the centuries, to the present day, is well known. The friction between different Arab peoples may also be in view here as well. Arab states are never at peace with one another for any length of time. The only thing that unites the Arab countries in any significant way today is their common cause against Israel.

Doctrinal Points

1. God hears and sees the disadvantaged.

Hagar certainly falls into the category of the disadvantaged, doesn't she? Abram and Sarai took her advantage of Hagar. She was reduced from a personal maidservant to Sarah to slave status – just for following orders. Her chances for marriage had been taken away, certainly in that culture. She was treated harshly and forced to flee. If ever you wanted an example in Scripture of someone who is disadvantaged, take a look at Hagar in Genesis 16.

But God hears and sees the disadvantaged. God knew all about Hagar's problems. He heard her cries and saw her situation, and the Lord personally came to her to strengthen her and encourage her. *"Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness" (v7)*, Hagar had no idea the Lord was seeking her. She was unaware that the Lord cared for her personally. But the Lord found her.

Just this past week someone at a Bible study asked me "Why did the Lord come personally to Hagar? Why didn't he send a regular UPS angel?" The answer, of course, is that God personally cares for every disadvantaged individual. God hears and sees the disadvantaged. Isn't that a wonderful truth? The **Lord Himself** came to Hagar.

Notice what the Lord said to Hagar: *"Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction."* (v11). Ishmael means "God hears." God hears the cries of the disadvantaged. And notice Hagar's response: *Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"* (v13).

Hagar used the name "El Roi" when she referred to God: "You are the God who sees." God hears and sees the disadvantaged. Do you feel disadvantaged? Do you have a disability? Has someone taken advantage of you? Are you downtrodden? God hears and sees the disadvantaged. If ever you feel like you got "the short end of the stick," or you feel like the underdog, or feel disadvantaged in any way, read Genesis 16. Or if ever you need to counsel and encourage someone who is downtrodden, or feels like they are the underdog, or is disadvantaged in any way, turn them to Genesis 16. What a tremendous lesson for us from the life of Hagar! God hears and sees the disadvantaged.

2. God's plans are not ruined by man's mistakes.

God's plans were to give Abram and Sarai a son. Abram and Sarai made the mistake of rushing ahead of God, and tried to help God out in their own way. As a result, Ishmael was born -- and ever since there has been a lot of bad fallout. It continues even to this day. But in spite of all the bad fallout from Abram and Sarai's mistake, God's plans were not ruined. Isaac, the child of promise, was eventually born. The Jewish nation was formed, from whom the Messiah would come. God's plans for Israel are still on track today.

God's plans are not ruined by man's mistakes. Yes, there will be bad fallout and sad consequences, but our sovereign God and His plans are not ruined. In Galatians 4 we see that God even used the consequences of Abram and Sarai's mistake to illustrate the important doctrinal differences between law and grace, and works of the flesh versus the way of faith.

When we make mistakes, we can be sure we will reap the consequences, and they may be long lasting. Galatians 6:7, "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*" However, even when we sin God will still continue to work out His plan for our lives. We will reap what we have sown, but even the discipline that we experience because of our mistakes fits into God's plans for us.

Have you made some mistakes in life? Maybe some BIG ones! Have you rushed ahead of God, and not patiently waited for Him? Are you experiencing some of the consequences even now? Be encouraged, because in spite of the mistakes, and in spite of the consequences, God is still working out His plans for your life! Remember, God's plans not upset or overthrown or nullified by man's mistakes. God's plans are not ruined by man's mistakes.

Practical Application: Don't try to run away from your problems!

Hagar tried to run away from her problems, but notice what the Lord told her: "*Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.*" (v9). In other words, "Hagar, running away will not solve your problem. Return and face your problem and I will help you in that situation. Change your attitude, Hagar, and submit to Sarah." Notice by the way, that when Hagar conceived, she didn't have the right attitude. She despised Sarah (v4). We don't know whether she went as far as to taunt Sarah, but she obviously provoked Sarah into treating her harshly.

Hagar did return and she did change her attitude. She submitted to Sarah, and she submitted to the authority structure in which she was placed. God helped Hagar to face her problem with a proper attitude, and the situation greatly improved. The baby was born, and Abraham named him Ishmael, in accordance with the name revealed to Hagar by God.

Are you facing a problem right now In your marriage? In your family? In your finances? In your relationship with a brother or sister in the Lord? In your relationship with the Lord Himself? Don't try to run away from your problems. That is not the solution. Face the problem, and trust the Lord to give you the strength to deal with it. He will help you to cope, and you may find the situation will greatly improve, although it may take time. However, even if the situation doesn't improve, the Lord will give you the strength and the courage and the means that you need to deal with that problem. Don't try to run away from your problems!