



## Sarah and Hagar

### Unusual Women in the Bible Zoom Bible Study

May 31, 2022

#### Genesis 21:1 – 7

Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." <sup>7</sup> And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

"The Lord was gracious to Sarah" – abundantly gracious to her. Name the ways God was gracious to Sarah.

Would you have been as patient and gracious to Sarai/Sarah as God was?

God is a promise-keeper, but keep in mind that some of God's promises are conditional and some of unconditional. Examples:

#### *Conditional Promise:*

...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. - 2 Chronicles 7:14

#### *Unconditional Promise:*

I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. – Genesis 12:2

Can you name other conditional and unconditional promises of God?

Sarah gives birth to Isaac, the son of promise. And Isaac became a wonderful type or picture of the Messiah to come, Jesus Christ:

- Both were specially promised sons
- Both conceptions were miraculous
- Both were born after a period of delay
- Both mothers were given assurance that they would have a miracle baby

#### Genesis 18:13 – 14:

Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

### **Luke 1:34 – 37:**

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.”

- Both births occurred at God’s appointed time  
**Genesis 21:2:** Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.  
**Galatians 4:4:** But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law...
- Both births brought great joy  
**Genesis 21:6:** Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.”  
**Luke 1:46 – 47:** And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...

### **Genesis 21:8 – 10**

The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

This would be our definition of a dysfunctional family. It is a blended family, creating even more challenges. But families are dysfunctional because people are dysfunctional. That just means we don’t function the way God intended us to. We have a dysfunctional culture which affects all of us. Jesus came to make it possible for us to function correctly.

Where are you not functioning the way God wants you to? Here are some scriptures that speak to this:

**2 Timothy 2:15:** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-5:** It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God...

**Ephesians 4:1:** As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

**Colossians 1:9 - 10:** For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...

### **Genesis 21:11 – 14**

The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, “Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.

Why was Abraham greatly distressed when Sarah’s demanded that he get rid of Hagar and Ishmael? Did Abraham have to obey Sarah?

God instructs Abraham to listen to what Sarah tells him.

Do you find these instructions from God a bit puzzling?

Whatever wrong we may see in Sarah's reaction, the fact was that God's promise was through Isaac and nothing was going to change that promise. So, Abraham gives Hagar some provisions and sends her into the desert.

### **Genesis 21:15 – 21**

When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she began to sob.

God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

Why didn't Abraham give Hagar and Ishmael donkeys and lots of provisions?

When the water in the skin is gone, Hagar is ready to call it quits. Then God heard Ishmael crying and once again, God calls to Hagar from heaven.

God supplied her need right where she was.

### **Genesis 25:17:**

Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people.

### Lessons from the life of Sarai/Sarah

**Hebrews 11:11:** And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise.

- Nothing is impossible with God.

He isn't limited to the laws of biology and physics as humans are.

- God always delivers on his promises.

- God's timing is always perfect.

We cannot begin to fathom how and why God does things or when he does things, but we can rest in knowing that his timing is always perfect.

- Infertility is not a punishment.
- We all mess up and God doesn't hold it against us.
- Following God isn't always easy but it is always worth it.

### Lessons from the Life of Hagar

- God never rejects us.

When it seems like others are rejecting you, God sees and hears you. Don't let rejection by others define you, but allow it to refine you.

- God is near to the brokenhearted.
- God's plan is always the best plan to follow.

## Conclusion

This passage in Galatians 4 gives us a theological understanding of how our new life in Christ should operate, based on the story of Sarah and Hagar.

### **Galatians 4:22 – 29:**

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written:

“Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

True Christianity is based on the true gospel of grace, which offers liberty in Jesus Christ and is a promise received by faith. It is salvation by grace alone—not of works. No matter how good you are, you are never good enough to earn your salvation.

“Legalism does not mean the setting of spiritual standards; it means worshipping these standards and thinking we are spiritual because we obey them. It also means judging other believers on the basis of these standards.” (Wiersbe)  
How many people today believe they will earn their way to heaven by being good—being better than most other people? Why is legalism so attractive to us even today?

The whole point of this passage is for us to understand that we who are born from above are not children of the bondswoman but of the free. Paul knew the bondage of trying to earn his own way before God, because he lived that way for decades.

**Galatians 5:1:** It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

If you are not living in the freedom that Christ intends, then why not?

- Are you truly born again?
- If so, what is keeping you in bondage?
  - Lack of forgiveness?
  - Fear of some sort?
  - Afraid to trust God?
  - An unconfessed sin that you are holding on to?
  - Not focusing on getting to know God better?
  - The allurements of this world?

Stand firm! You are the child of the freewoman!