

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? GENESIS 16:8

INTRODUCTION:

What two age-old questions, often asked today when people meet on the road, were asked by The God over 4000 years ago? Which of these is by far the most timely and most important? Read the story of Hagar (Gen. 16:1-14).

Where are you coming from? And, Where are you going? Two common questions that have vital, serious consequences for Eternity. Let's examine the impact of these questions, first in the life of Hagar, then in your life.

Think back c. four millenniums ago to 2092 A.C. or 2035 B.C., nearly 420 years before The Law was given. After being rebuked by Pharaoh, Abram took Sarai his wife, the handmaid she had gotten in Egypt, and all his household with much substance and his nephew Lot, his flocks and herds and went out of Egypt into the south (Gen. 13:1). Seven years after The God's call and leaving Ur to go to Canaan, Abram finally separated from Lot, thus fulfilling all the conditions of The God's call (Gen. 12:1).

Then seven more years of testing Abram's faith passed before The God instituted 'the land covenant' with Abram. At that time The LORD promised a son to be born out of his own bowels. This was fifteen years before The LORD established The Abrahamic Covenant with Abram and changed his name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah. The existing conditions at that time were pre-Law. The God's moral code for the Hebrews had not yet been given.

Then a year had passed since that land covenant and Sarah had no indication that she was going to overcome her barrenness. And, being seventy-five years old and becoming anxious in waiting The God's timing, Sarai lost confidence in being the means through whom Abram's son would be born, therefore she had a lapse in her faith which also affected Abram and tested his faith. Sara repeatedly said {The LXX (Septuagint) used the constant aorist tense calling for repeated action) to Abraham, "The LORD has constantly restrained (again the constative aorist) me from *child* bearing. I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be I may obtain children by her." This was the heathen custom, practiced back in Ur of the Chaldees, but it was not The God's spiritual way nor the way of faith. (Possibly she reasoned after all, Hagar was her chattel slave girl and Sarah had passed the age of child-bearing. Also the surrounding heathen nations would well understand the custom that was practised.) But this was in the land of Canaan and Abram and Sara had been called to a new land to live by faith in a relationship of The God's blessing upon them. And He had said otherwise than this concerning a son out of Abram's bowels! (Gen. 12:1-4a; 13:4-6).

Even though they had a family altar and a daily time of devotion with The God (Gen. 12:8; 23:4), eventually Abram was worn down by Sarai's repeated request until he acquiesced. Then he also had a lapse of faith. But this violated The God's initial intent when He created man. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). The Septuagint used the verb προσκολληθήσεται (proskollásetai) which translated reads 'he shall be cemented to' her. Thus the sinful, ungodly, immoral union took place. Now note what the lapse of faith of the godly couple wrought and how it affected the whole household in the end of the story. However, The God's grace is seen in The New Testament in Hebrews' Faith Chapter (11), where Sarah and Abraham's (note the name used)

triumph in faith is noted and emphasized with no mention of their lapse of faith, since they learned their lesson the hard way. And this noted triumph was after The Abrahamic Covenant was instituted (fifteen years later) and included the name change because they were acting in faith.

When Hagar saw that she was with child she despised and dishonored her mistress. When Sarah, disturbed by the misbehavior of her bondslave, complained to Abraham, she blamed Abraham for the outcome and invoked The LORD to judge between herself and him (v. 5). When Abraham gave Sarah freedom to do to her as she pleased, she dealt hardly with Hagar, so that Hagar fled from her face into the wilderness where The Angel of The LORD found her and questioned her. We shall consider these two questions that He asked, by means of three main points: From Where Are You Coming? Where Are You Going? and Contemplate The Most Important Question!

I. From Where Are You Coming?

A. Consider Hagar

Hagar had learned of The God and was taught faith in The God in the household where she served as a handmaid slave. When The Angel of **The LORD** spoke, Hagar answered His questions only partially because like Adam she was ashamed or afraid (Gen. 2:25 cf. 3:7).

1. There are at least five possible contributions that tested her faith and brought about her quandary.

Firstly, Hagar surely must have noted the violation of the standard of life to which the family professed and no doubt felt violated morally because of Sarah's insistence to resort to the heathen custom.

Secondly, Hagar was forced into uncleanness (vs. 3,4) [in the God's eyes (cf. Gen. 2:24)]. Her circumstances were beyond her control. Hagar was taken into the bedroom by Sarai, not voluntarily. Even though the sin of immorality belonged to Abraham and Sarai, she was in Sin, none-the-less.

Thirdly, Hagar's resentful attitude (vs. 4b,5) was reflected in her misbehavior. She "despised or dishonored" her mistress who ordered her to sin and urged Abram to comply.

Fourthly, Sarai's unreasonable treatment of Hagar (v. 6) resulted. It caused her to react. Sarai "dealt hardly with her."

Fifthly, Hagar rendered an unacceptable response to the question (vs. 6b,8). She admitted, "I fled." She was unwilling to pay the consequences of her bitterness and refused to look at the bright side.

2. The Message of The Angel of **The LORD** - Is this a Christophany (A preincarnation appearance of The Lord Jesus Christ to a human)?

Firstly, Hagar was told to return and submit to her mistress (v. 9).

Secondly, Hagar was promised a son to be called Ishmael meaning 'God shall Hear' because "The LORD heard your affliction." When we realize that The Lord knows your affliction, it is easier to bear, knowing that He is constantly with you.

Thirdly, the prophecy concerning Ishmael was pronounced (read v. 12).

3. Hagar's Reaction to This Unusual Occasion

Firstly, Hagar recognized Who The Messenger really was (v. 13).

Secondly, Hagar called the name of The LORD Who spoke with her **El Roi**, "Thou God seest me." "Have I also looked at the back of Him who continually sees me?"

Thirdly, Hagar returned and gave birth to Ishmael who according to prophecy has given birth to a nation opposed to Israel throughout time. Israel, Abraham's offspring has experienced endless trouble

even today because of Sarah's impatient insistence. All of Abraham's posterity have in some way been troubled because of Abraham's and Sarah's Sin.

B. Consider yourself?

From where are you coming? Is your answer like Hagar's was? Unwilling to accept the consequences of your behavior? Is there Sin because of another's behavior or of your own act of sin or of both? Are you unclean in The God's eyes morally and or spiritually or both? Have you never been cleansed from your sin by the blood of The Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7)? Do you display a resentful attitude because life has not dealt kindly with you? Have you experienced what you think has been unreasonable treatment? Have you demonstrated unacceptable response and fled to get away from your circumstances quietly to be alone or resorted to drugs? If any or all of these apply to you, then listen carefully, my friend!

There is hope for you as there was with Hagar. The God sees you just as He saw her. And He is ready to save you, refresh you, and change your whole future if you are willing and ready to meet His conditions. Or else you will die in your sins and meet with greater misery forever at death and throughout all Eternity at the end of time! Why continue in your misery now and forever?

II. Where Are You Going?

Hagar didn't answer The God's second question because she didn't know the answer.

A. Hagar's Future was:

1. Uncertain:

- A. She did **not** know where she was going;
- B. She had **no idea** what her future would be like;
- C. So she sat down by a fountain of water in the Wilderness of Zin (v. 7 cf. 14).

2. Unsafe - "in the wilderness" of Zin on the way to Shur, c. 15 miles north of Kadesh - among wild beasts, with no food, unprotected, and exposed to marauders.

3. Unseen - She thought she was not seen and alone. And she like you and I, could not see into the future. What lies ahead is all unknown! But she was **not** unseen and alone. The **LORD** saw her and was right there by her side though she did not know it. The **LORD** was waiting until she felt she needed help. Then He made Himself known to her.

B. What about Your Future?

Where are you going? Is your answer like Hagar's was? Are you uncertain because you don't have a clue what lies ahead? Do you **not** have The God's guidance because you do not know The Shepherd personally, persistently committing trust, hearing His voice, and obediently following Him closely as His disciple day after day? Although you know it is wrong, though it may not have been your fault initially, are you voluntarily living in the sin of immorality day by day? Do you feel unsafe because you are wandering in this world's wilderness with no Savior and no Protector. Do you feel unseen because you do not have The Way, The Truth, and The Life to be your Guide?

There is hope for you as there was hope for Hagar if you will only submit to The God's conditions, which are not hard to obey. Because, unlike Hagar, you will have The Holy Spirit enabling you to meet every condition which The **LORD** permits to come your way! But you must

cease your immoral relationship and begin a separated life of devoted discipleship with The Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Contemplate The Most Important Question!

The question, "Where are you going?" is more important than the question, "From where are you coming?" Your past can be cleansed and changed and the slate erased. But if your Eternal Future seems uncertain or surely to be to The Lake of Fire, it is because you have not a personal, committed, persistent, discipleship-relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave His Life for you, died a crucified life for you, and rose again and ascended on the third day for you. Your future can only be absolutely certain if you have personally committed total, persistent trust to The Lord Jesus Christ followed by on-going discipleship. If your future is uncertain it is also unsafe because the peril of Eternal Punishment in The Lake of Fire for your sins hangs over your head (John 3:36) like a thread ready to break at any moment. Why? Because you have not appropriated the vicarious work of The Lord Jesus Christ for your punishment. The future may be unseen and therefore perilous, but for the one trusting in Christ as, The Savior, The Shepherd, The Way, The Truth, The Life, and your Guide, it is not a concern. Because The God sees the future and He sees me, yea He sees every one trusting Him in union with His Son, The Lord Jesus Christ. He and He alone will enable you to answer the question properly when you personally acquaint yourself with Him and be at perfect peace in Him.

CONCLUSION:

Today we considered the sinful, forced, immoral perplexity that Hagar Sarai's bondslave handmaid faced in life and how she met **El Roi**, "Thou God seest me." Her life was changed and she returned to her mistress and yielded to her treatment without repeated immorality. However, the immoral sins of Abram and Sarai had to be also born by her for she sinned even though against her will. This all occurred before the Old Covenant was enacted and The Law was given. However, today we live under The Grace of The God who enacted The New Covenant by the crucifixion Death, burial, and resurrection-ascension of The Lord Jesus Christ, Who sent The Holy Spirit to indwell all who commit persistent, personal trust in The Lord Jesus Christ and persistently follow Him in on-going discipleship. This and this alone will enable you to give a positive proper answer to that question. You will be able to say, "Positively to Heaven to be with The Lord Jesus Christ forever when He comes again!"

APPLICATION:

What answer will you give in response to the question, "Where are you going?" If you cannot answer the question, "Heaven! positively," what will you do **NOW** to alter your eternal destiny? And if you will not act **NOW**, when will you respond positively? And how can you be sure you will have time to act properly?