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BOOK TWO / 25 WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

# HER NAME IS WOMAN

*Gien Karssen*

NAVPRESS 

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## **Dedication**

In grateful remembrance  
of  
my parents

*"If there is anything in my thoughts  
or style to commend, the credit is due to  
my parents for instilling in me an early love  
of the Scriptures."\**

DANIEL WEBSTER  
(American statesman, 1782-1852)

## Foreword

All my life I have read about the women of the Bible, learning much from them even though they were somewhat vague, historic characters.

While reading *Her Name Is Woman, Book 2*, these same characters have suddenly come alive. Because of Gien's careful research, sanctified imagination, and skill as a writer, I found myself understanding these women and their situations in a new way.

Knowing more about the customs of their day helps us understand better why they acted as they did.

It is interesting to note that God's women, down through the centuries, have enjoyed a freedom the world will find difficult to understand—the freedom to be and to do that which God intended.

You will find this book both interesting and enlightening.

Ruth Bell Graham  
Montreat, North Carolina

## Preface

My first book, *Her Name Is Woman*, was limited by its size and therefore could only include a few of the many women in the Bible. Questions like, “What about Ruth or Deborah?” and, “Why wasn’t Mary Magdalene mentioned?” were bound to come up. *Her Name Is Woman, Book 2* explores the lives of 25 more biblical women who were not dealt with in the first book.

The Bible should be the guide for every woman searching for the meaning of her existence. In the Scriptures a woman can read that God created her in His own image, and that she can become personally acquainted with Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. She will also learn that to function well she must live in close relationship with her Maker. These exciting facts clearly express her deep-down desires and ideals.

Scripture offers guidelines to every woman who longs for a meaningful life, who seeks to become whole and fulfilled. These inborn, inner urges originate from the commission God gave woman at her creation. He expects woman, an equal partner with man, to be willing to take her part in the well-being of the home and society. This book, like the first, illustrates that the spiritual side of a woman is extremely important.

In *Her Name Is Woman, Book 2*, you will discover how

selected women of the Bible fulfilled their tasks and how they carried out their calling. In biblical times, as well as in our own twentieth century, some women succeeded and others failed. The questions we need to ask are “Why?” and “How?”

“These things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction,” Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 10:11). So we ought to consider these biblical women as vivid instructions for our lives. We should learn from them, be encouraged, comforted, and warned by them, and meet Jesus Christ through some of their lives.

The reception *Her Name Is Woman* received was encouraging to me. I hope that this book will receive the same warm-hearted acceptance.

You may approach this book in two ways. First, just read it. But be sure to include the Bible passages at the beginning of each chapter in your reading. They are an important part of the book. Second, discuss the book in a small group. Consider the subjects and questions with some other people, in the home or with a small group. This will give added insight into your study of these women.

References at the bottom of many pages will help you dig deeper into the Bible’s wealth of truth and wisdom. You may answer the questions at the end of each chapter personally or discuss them with your group. You may also conduct topical studies of these women or research accompanying themes. Whatever your direction might be, you will be stimulated as you discuss these women with others, especially after your own individual preparation.

I trust that meeting these women will turn out to be a happy surprise for you, and that you will notice how up-to-date and relevant their experiences are to yours.

I pray that they will show you the way to a richer and happier life with God and other people.

## Suggestions

I feel, as many do, that the most fruitful discussion results when small groups of people share what the Bible has said to them personally.

The following suggestions will be helpful for those interested in being in or in leading a Bible study group.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

1. Start with a small group—usually with a minimum of six and a maximum of ten people. This way your group will be large enough for an interesting discussion, but small enough for each member to participate. As your number increases, start a second group.

2. Before you start the group, you should decide how often you want to meet. Many people may hesitate to give themselves to something new for an indefinite period of time. This problem can be settled if you decide beforehand to meet, for example, four to six times. If after that time period you decide to continue on, then agree on a number of meetings.

3. Remember that a Bible study group should discuss the Bible. To prevent some from riding hobby horses, it is advisable that each participant prepare her study at home

beforehand. Then the meeting can be used for discussing each person's prepared study. Groups flourish where each member shares her personal findings.

4. Stress the need of applying the lessons learned and help one another in doing this. There is a far greater need for spiritual growth than for an increase of knowledge *per se*. "How can what I learned influence my life?" is a question each participant should ask herself and answer during each discussion.

5. Determine, before you start, to attend every meeting. Miss only when you absolutely cannot attend. If you can't attend, do the study anyhow and make up for it at the next meeting.

6. Consider yourself a member of the group. Feel free to make a contribution. Lack of experience should not keep you from taking part in the discussion. On the other hand, resist the temptation to dominate the group.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

1. Be sure you have given sufficient time to your own Bible study and that you have completed it.

2. Come prepared. Make notes of the points you want to stress. Approach these points with questions.

3. Teach by asking questions instead of by making statements. Few mountain climbers enjoy being carried to the top. Leave the joy of climbing to them. Don't do all the talking. Guide the discussion in such a way that each member of the group can participate.

4. Prepare thought-provoking questions. Ask questions which apply the Bible to daily life problems. Omit questions which can be answered by a simple yes or no.

5. Arrange your time and seating arrangement beforehand. (A circle is generally the best.) Begin and end on time. Unobtrusively keep your eye on your watch.

6. Pray for yourself and for each member of the group.

Pray that Christ will speak to each person present by His Word. Pray that the Holy Spirit will make you sensitive to the needs of others. Prayer results in enthusiasm, and this is absolutely essential for the success of your discussion.

These suggestions are not limited to a certain type of Bible study group. You can use the same principles for the study of Bible books, chapters, or biblical subjects.\*

### SUGGESTIONS FOR A GROUP DISCUSSION ABOUT HAGAR (an example for all the chapters)

1. Be sure that every member of the group has completed her own study. Encourage each to take notes during the discussion.

2. Decide ahead of time that you as a group will restrict yourselves to answering only the given Bible study questions or closely related subjects.

3. Let every discussion center around the Bible. Always ask, "What does the Bible say about this subject?"

4. The success of each Bible group discussion is strongly dependent on the questions the leader asks and on how she starts and guides the conversation. Four types of questions are:

- Questions to start the discussion.
- Questions to guide the discussion.
- Questions that help clarify and deepen the subject.
- Questions which stimulate application.

5. Examples of the above questions as pertaining to Hagar:

- Questions to start the discussion:  
(1) What did we learn about Hagar?

\*For practical guidelines on this, see *The Navigator Bible Studies Handbook* (NavPress, 1979). This book explains several simple methods for analytical Bible study, along with important principles.

- (2) What were the consequences of Sarah's willfulness?
- (3) What did we learn about obedience?
- (4) How can we apply Christ's love to our own needs?

When you introduce every main point of the study this way, you will avoid getting the stated Bible study questions parroted back and you will guarantee an interesting discussion. It is wise to summarize one point before going on to the next.

b. Questions to guide the discussion:

- (1) What did someone else discover?
- (2) Does anyone else have anything to add?
- (3) Is there anyone else who wishes to say something?

Address the whole group with these sorts of questions, not just one person in particular. This provides an open discussion in which everyone present can participate.

c. Questions that help clarify and deepen the subject:

- (1) What does obedience to God entail?
- (2) What do you think was Hagar's main fault?

Prepare these questions in view of the emphasis the group needs most. Have Bible verses ready to help find the right answers. Ask these questions at the proper place in the discussion under the questions mentioned above in 5a (in this instance in 5a3).

d. Questions which stimulate application:

- (1) What do you consider the most important warning in this story?
- (2) How does this affect your life personally?

Since questions on application can be asked last in the Bible discussion, you can, going around the circle, expect each member of the group to give her personal answer. Words to keep in mind while asking questions are: what, how, why, when.

6. Make a time schedule for yourself to guarantee that

every part of the discussion receives sufficient attention. Reserve enough time for those points you think are of utmost importance. Since the last question of the Bible study is an application question, you may want to emphasize it.

7. Shy participants often can be drawn into the discussion by asking them to read a Bible verse. It is difficult to control those who want to dominate the discussion. Calling for contributions from others often helps. "What do others think?" would be an example of this type of approach. Sometimes it is necessary to talk privately with the over talkative person, explaining the necessity of group participation. Getting back on track when the subject begins to wander can be done by saying, "Perhaps we could discuss this further after the study," or, "Let us, as we agreed, try to stick to our subject of the study."

8. Sharing the application is the most important part of your discussion. Be sure to allow sufficient time for each person present to answer the last stated question. The answer to that question should be personal, specific, and practical. An example of an application in connection with Hagar could be, "The most important principle for me to consider is that Jesus Christ loves me and cares about my needs. Therefore I need to trust Him continually and let Him know my problems and my joys."

9. If you close the discussion with a time of prayer, pray about the things you have discussed. For example, pray for your own application or for someone else's. Don't force anything. Encourage short prayers. Someone who is too shy to pray aloud could enter in by saying, "Amen." As the openness of the group increases, so will the prayer. Then other points can be added for intercession.

10. Close with the promise that at the beginning of the next meeting time will be given for sharing experiences in connection with your group's applications.

*These guidelines can be used for all the group discussions about the women in this book.*

## Biography

Gien Karssen was raised in a Christian home and became a Christian at the age of 12 as a result of her parents' lives and training. After she had been married only six weeks, the Germans interned her husband in a concentration camp where he died. Just before his death he inscribed Luke 9:62 in his diary, "But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" This verse challenged Gien and has given purpose and direction to her life.

She met Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, in 1948 in Doorn, Holland. She started the Navigator ministry there by translating The Navigators *Topical Memory System* into Dutch and handling all the enrollments. Over the years she has worked in many capacities with The Navigators. Girls who have been personally helped by Gien can be found on almost every continent of the globe.

Gien is a popular speaker, Bible study leader, trainer of women, and has many years of experience as a free-lance writer for Christian periodicals in Europe. *Her Name Is Woman, Book 2* is her second book and is a sequel to her bestselling *Her Name Is Woman, Book 1* in her studies on the women of the Bible. The first book has been translated into several languages and is currently being used as a Bible study aid around the world.

# 1

*“If she has given a maid to her husband and she has borne children and afterwards that maid has made herself equal with her mistress, because she has borne children her mistress shall not sell her for money, she shall reduce her to bondage and count her among the female slaves.”\**  
From the Laws of King Hammurabi

## **Hagar, whose extreme need was met by Jesus Christ**

**Genesis 16:1-16** Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the Lord judge between you and me.” But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And he

\*From *The Women of the Bible* by Herbert Lockyer, page 62. Copyright © 1967 by Zondervan Publishing House. Used by permission.

said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." Then the angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority." Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count." The angel of the Lord said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers."

Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "Thou art a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?" Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

**Genesis 21:1-21** Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac." And the matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the

lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant."

So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water in the skin was used up, and she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand; for I will make a great nation of him." Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Hagar plodded slowly along the rough path. Her chafed feet and ankles hurt with each step and the seams of her long robe were frayed and torn. Her heart beat quickly from the exertion of her long journey; her eyes burned from the scorching glare of the sun.

The wilderness in which she walked day after day offered no protection. During the day terrible heat rose off the sand in vapors and the fierce wind blew dust into her mouth and nose. At night the temperature dropped and the land became bitterly cold.

In spite of the risks, Hagar pressed on toward Egypt, her home country. She wanted to return to the place where Sarah, the wife of Abraham (as they were later named), had bought her about 25 years before and then taken her to Canaan as a slave.

While she walked, she reflected on the years which had passed. They had been good years. Even though a slave girl, she had enjoyed a good life. *After all*, she thought, *I have been privileged to live with Abraham and Sarah, with whom God has even made a special covenant.* Through their example, she had come in contact with the living God.

Despite the good memories of her past, no thoughts of gratitude stirred Hagar's mind now. Far from that! Feeling that she had been wronged and even insulted, she was in a bitter frame of mind.

In a strange way, Hagar was suffering the consequences of a bad situation in Abraham's household. When he had moved from the land between the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers to Canaan, God had promised him a son. Through that son, Abraham was told that he would become the father of a multitude of nations.<sup>1</sup>

But years passed and the son didn't come. Worried, Sarah got the idea that the promised child should be born to a concubine, a second wife, instead of to her. According to the laws of that time, such a practice was allowed. In fact, a baby born of this arrangement was legally considered to be the child of the true wife and as such a rightful heir. In order to carry out such a plan, Sarah considered Hagar, who occupied a favorable position within the family circle. After Hagar became Abraham's second wife, it was not long before she told him the happy news, "I am pregnant!"

Before Hagar's pregnancy, Abraham, since he had no son,<sup>2</sup> had thought that the male head of his household, Eliezer, would be his legal heir. But now, through Hagar, the child God had promised him might once again be coming into sight. Though Abraham had reason to expect that his heir would be a son of Sarah, up to that point God had never mentioned to him who the mother would be. He waited 13 years for God to give him the answer.<sup>3</sup>

Before long, it was evident that Sarah's solution had been a purely human one. God's blessing toward Hagar had never been asked for and was not given. Impatient and doubting God's ability to work her situation out, Sarah had

1. Genesis 12:1-5  
2. Genesis 15:2-5  
3. Genesis 17:15-16

chosen her own way and Abraham had given in too readily to her plans. No wonder the peace of God had left the house.

At this time in history, a childless woman was despised by all. Unfortunately, Hagar didn't miss an opportunity to communicate such feelings toward Sarah. Then, as now, few things in the world were so subtle and yet transmitted so clearly as the feelings of one woman toward another.

Sarah in turn reacted to Hagar's nonverbal communication. She too knew her weapons and how to use them. As the mistress, she had the oldest and first rights, a fact confirmed by the laws of her time. Even now Hagar remained her personal possession, to do with as she pleased.

Unable to approach Hagar without Sarah's permission, Abraham likewise could not prevent Sarah from using her power to humiliate Hagar.

Although all three of them had trespassed God's laws and were equally guilty in His sight, it is understandable that Hagar's attitude hurt Sarah deeply. This hurt partially explains Sarah's terrible treatment of Hagar. Yet, knowledge of Sarah's inner turmoil does not make Hagar's humiliation any easier for us to accept.

Hagar, tiring of Sarah's treatment, finally lost her patience. Without asking permission, she fled to the wilderness. In this way she was true to her name. Hagar literally meant "flight."

Knowing full well that she and her yet unborn child might be heading toward death, she stalked out of the camp. Alone, without food, she knew that she might never reach her homeland. Her child might never see life. But she had to try.

Instinctively she began walking south on the long road toward Egypt. The farther she walked, the more her danger dawned on her. She had given up a sheltered community for the endless, inhospitable wilderness. Neither man nor beast could be seen for miles; there was no one to help her.

Somewhere in the northeastern section of the Sinai Peninsula, Hagar reached a desert spring along the road to

Shur. The oasis offered refreshment and rest, but it did not still her inner needs.

Alone, separated from security and friendship, she cried out from her innermost being to the God of Abraham, the only One who could save her. And He had not abandoned her. The slowly moving dot in the rough desert terrain of the Sinai had not escaped His attention. He had kept His eye on Hagar just like He continues to do for all mankind.

“Hagar,” He called loudly, addressing her by her first name.<sup>4</sup> He knew precisely who she was.

“Maid of Sarai,” He added, placing her into the framework through which He saw her. In His eyes, she was still Sarah’s maid. He did not begin the conversation with a rebuke, though under the circumstances He could have.

“Where have you come from, and where are you going?” He then asked. It was a disarming approach that gave Hagar room to speak her mind freely. Jesus Christ, who during His years on earth would use the same approach with guilty women and win their hearts, was speaking to her.<sup>5</sup> Jesus Christ Himself was visiting her in the person of the Angel of the Lord. It was one of the pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament.

Later, He would reveal Himself in the same manner to Abraham, the father of all believers,<sup>6</sup> and to Moses, the Law-giver,<sup>7</sup> both of whom the Bible calls friends of God.<sup>8</sup> Both the Patriarch Jacob and Gideon, the hero of faith, would also be deeply impressed when they met Christ under similar circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

But Jesus Christ’s first documented meeting with a person was with Hagar, long before He came to earth to redeem mankind. A young heathen woman who did not belong to the people of God, she—the mother of an unborn child—had come before God in extreme need. God in turn showed her the way to deliverance. In humility and repentance, she obeyed Him and turned back toward Abraham’s camp. Her sin, like that of Eve, was pride. Renouncing her proud spirit of rebellion and willful independence, Hagar returned to Sarah her mistress.

4. Genesis 16:7-9

7. Exodus 3:2-6

5. John 4:4-42; 8:3-11

8. James 2:23; Exodus 33:11

6. Genesis 17:4-5

9. Genesis 28:12-17; Judges 6:11-23

Instead of asserting herself or speaking out for her own rights, Hagar had to abase herself. The Lord Himself had given her an example of humility when He had stooped down to speak with her. Later, He would humble Himself much more in order to provide sinful people with an alternative to death.<sup>10</sup> He would give new life to everyone who personally trusted in Him to the honor of God.

God, who gives special blessings to those who have the courage to humble themselves,<sup>11</sup> honored Hagar’s obedience. “The baby you are expecting is a son,” He said. “You are to name him Ishmael [that name meant ‘God hears’]. You will get a large offspring, Hagar, so large that it cannot be counted.”<sup>12</sup>

The son she expected would not be an easy man with whom to get along. He would have a wild and untamed character. Yet how she must have rejoiced in her heart at these words of God. There was hope again. Instead of expecting death, she now had the perspective of life. The future was blossoming for her and her unborn child. Jesus had a plan for their lives and had come down to share it with her personally.

“O God who sees me!” she exclaimed in adoration and worship. Yet she was also afraid and overawed. *I have seen God and am still alive*, she thought after God left her. *I am able to tell others*.

Later, the spring oasis where she encountered God was named Beer-lahai-roi,<sup>13</sup> which translated meant, “the well of the Living One who sees me.” Hagar had experienced the true God who saw and answered her during her time of need.

As long as she lived, she no doubt remembered this experience with God. Every time she pronounced Ishmael’s name, she reminded herself of the fact: the living God had heard and had acted.

Approximately 17 years passed. Ishmael had now become a strong young man. Isaac, the son of promise, had now been born and at three years of age was finally ready to be weaned.

10. Philippians 2:5-11

12. Genesis 16:10-12

11. 1 Peter 5:6

13. Genesis 16:14

The weaning of a child during this time was cause for much celebration, for it was considered to be a milestone in the youngster's life. Abraham's entire household and many of his friends from neighboring cities came to celebrate and to see for themselves the miracle God had performed for Abraham and Sarah. One hundred-year-old Abraham and 90-year-old Sarah had been blessed with a son in their old age, the son of promise from whose offspring the Messiah would later come.

But the party atmosphere was not entirely pleasant. Ishmael, the oldest son, could not tolerate all the attention his younger brother was receiving and began to mock him. There was, of course, more going on behind the scenes than just an innocent rivalry between two brothers. Ishmael, the son of natural birth who was procreated in unbelief and impatience, felt inferior to Isaac, the son of promise. Unwilling to accept second-place billing, Ishmael refused to acknowledge Isaac's privileged position. Unaware of God's promises to his mother in the wilderness many years before, Ishmael could not accept his subservient position.

Abraham loved both boys equally as only a father could. Only Sarah understood what was at stake. "Send the slave girl and her son away," she demanded of Abraham. "I won't have him sharing your inheritance with my son."<sup>14</sup>

In response to his wife's strong statement, Abraham became upset and confused. As he prayed, God showed him that the separation of his sons was necessary. The patriarchal line of the tribe God had chosen for His future people, Israel, would run through Isaac. He alone was the son of God's promise<sup>15</sup> and would become the forefather of a family of 12 tribes. From now on, Abraham came to understand, the difference between both sons had to be clear. Sarah was right. But through this confusion, God's promise to Hagar that her posterity would become great remained valid. Like Isaac, Ishmael would become the father of a family of 12 tribes because he was a son of Abraham.<sup>16</sup>

Thus Abraham had to send Hagar and her son away into the wilderness. After living in Abraham's household for

14. Genesis 21:10

15. Galatians 4:22-23

16. Genesis 25:12-16

nearly 30 years, she was now forced to leave. As Abraham filled up a water skin for Hagar, all three of them realized that the food and water for Hagar and Ishmael would not last long. Nevertheless, the difficult journey began.

The inevitable came all too quickly. The water supply ran out and, despite their frenzied searches, Hagar and Ishmael could not find a spring. Ishmael, weakened from walking and dehydration, was the first to fall to the ground, exhausted. When it became clear that her son would soon die, Hagar used the last of her strength to drag him beneath a small but sheltering bush. It was the final service she could render to her child.

Having done all she could do for her beloved son, Hagar could not bear to sit and watch him suffer any longer. Numb with fatigue and pain, she sat down some distance away and cried as if her heart would break.

Suddenly from heaven she heard the same familiar voice she had heard in the wilderness so many years before. Once again, the Angel of the Lord asked her a question, "What is the matter, Hagar? Be not afraid. God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Get up and support your son, for I will make a great nation of his descendants."<sup>17</sup>

Startled, she looked up and saw a well of fresh water only a few feet away. Struggling to her feet, she hurried over and refilled the water skin. With the water God had provided, her son drank in new life.

For the second time, Jesus Christ had visited Hagar in her misery to save her life and the life of her son. Again, there had been the promise of a hopeful future for Ishmael.

As Ishmael grew older, his mother traveled to Egypt and brought him back a wife. By this act, she proved that she was still a heathen in her heart. Her extended time around Abraham and Sarah had not completely changed that. Even the visitation by Jesus Christ had not really changed her heart. The Lord on whom she had called in her need, who had helped her, had not become the Lord of her life. He was not allowed to possess her heart.

Because the Lord knew that she would choose the idols of

17. Genesis 21:17-18

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her past, He had permitted her forced departure from Abraham's family. Instead of enjoying a sheltered and secure existence near Abraham, she had chosen to live a nomadic life in the desert. Because of Hagar and Ishmael's dreadful choice to assert themselves instead of living by faith in Abraham's God, the entire history of the world has been affected. Ishmael became the founder of the Arab nations, while the Israelites are the descendants of Isaac. The enmity of these two races still continues today and the Middle East situation remains extremely explosive.

Yet, in spite of everything, Hagar stands in history as a proof that Jesus Christ loves people. Every man, woman, and unborn child is loved by Him. His demonstration to Hagar proved that every person in need who calls out to Him will be answered. Jesus Christ, who was willing to reveal Himself to a woman who had reached the end of her possibilities, even now is available to everyone who seeks Him.

**Hagar, whose extreme need was met by Jesus Christ**  
(Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-21)

### **Questions:**

1. Describe the story of Judges 13:3-24 briefly in your own words. What similarity do you see with Hagar?
2. The Bible tells of other appearances of the Angel of the Lord (Genesis 32:24-30; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-24). What were the reactions of these people and in what ways are they similar to Hagar's?
3. How deeply did Jesus Christ humble Himself before men? (Philippians 2:5-11)
4. What goal did He have in mind when He came to earth?
5. What attitude should people have toward one another? (1 Peter 5:5-6) Why?
6. Have you experienced Christ's personal interest in you? If you have, give an example.