

# Seen: Hagar

As she went about her daily tasks, she wondered if anyone back home remembered her. Did they notice she was gone, or did they simply notice the tasks that went undone in her absence?

Hagar, the Egyptian handmaiden, lived her life in servitude to others. Valued only for the duties she performed, her needs were unnoticed, the desires of her heart went unmet. Time and again, she had been easily discarded and easily forgotten. As her name attests, *Hagar* felt *forsaken*— isolated and alone, without worth and significance.

But God sees when others do not.

1. Describe what it means to be seen. Unseen.
2. Shortly after God affirmed His promises to Abram a second time, a severe famine compelled him to travel to Egypt. Upon arriving— in an effort to self-preserve— he lied about his and Sarai's identities, and as a result, adversely altered his future. Great riches had been given to Abram on Sarai's account, including male and female servants. It is highly likely that Hagar joined his retinue at this time.

Read Genesis 12:10-20. What might Hagar have learned about Jehovah and His care for His people from this situation?

3. As a maidservant, Hagar had no rights of her own, no control over her life or her circumstances. She was not valued for who she was, but for what she did. Compose a list of synonyms describing how she may have felt as a servant.
4. Now read Genesis 16:1-16. Ten years after she was given to Sarai, Hagar found herself caught in her masters' faith-crisis. Although "this early form of surrogate motherhood was common and accepted in that day, it doesn't mean it was *right*."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Guzik, *Genesis*, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Ge 16:1-2.

In the Hebrew, Sarai's proposal to Abram literally reads, "*That I may be builded by her*" (v.2). Hagar would be used as a means to an end.

What would have to occur for Hagar to feel seen? Although she was without choice in the matter, how might Sarai's plan have appeased Hagar's desires?

What danger lies in seeking worth, or determining your value from others?

Regardless what she did, would Hagar ever be validated by her masters?

5. Once Hagar knew she was with child, how did she treat Sarai? (v.4)<sup>2</sup> What might the women have been at odds about? Why would this have been of paramount importance to Hagar?

Her greatest desire within grasp, how might Hagar have justified her actions?

6. As a result, verse 6 reveals that Sarai "*dealt harshly*" with Hagar. The same word, translated *afflicted*, is used of God's people in Genesis 15:13 and Exodus 1:11-14. Considering these verses, why did Hagar feel that fleeing was her only option?

7. The Angel of the Lord *found* Hagar in Shur enroute to her homeland, Egypt (v.7). How does He address her? What questions does He pose? (v.8)

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<sup>2</sup> Hagar "*despises*" Sarai, meaning she acts petty and trivial, disrespecting, belittling, and shaming her.

For the first time, the incarnate Christ appears in the Word, calling Hagar by her name *and* her title.<sup>3</sup> How does this speak to His knowledge of her situation? (Think on Psalm 139:1-18.)

He then *listens* as she shares her perspective and pain, saying in essence, "Where will this lead?" Considering her past life and her present situation, would she find what she was looking for in Egypt?

8. In verses 9-12, what instructions did Christ give her? What promises followed?

How did Christ fulfill the needs of her heart in spite of her situation?

9. How did Hagar respond? (vv.13, 15)

10. Hagar called the Angel of the Lord, "*El Roi, the God who sees me*" (v.13). Return to your description of what it means to be seen in Question 1.

At any point was Hagar unseen, nameless, worthless, insignificant, unimportant, etc. Who was she to Him? How might this have changed her perspective of her life?

Record Isaiah 49:16a.

11. Coupled with what she observed in Pharaoh's household 10 years prior, how would this encounter give her the confidence she needed to return to her masters?

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<sup>3</sup> Hagar's name means "flight" or "forsaken".

12. How might Abram and Sarai have felt after Hagar returned and reported that God told her to name her son, Ishmael, "*God hears*"?
13. Continue reading of Hagar in Genesis 21:8-21. Under what circumstances did Hagar leave her masters' household?
14. Although Ishmael was not the chosen son, this did not mean that God had no concern for him. How did God assure Abraham that He "saw" Hagar and Ishmael and would care for them? (vv.12-13)
15. How was Hagar's trust in God and His promise tested? (vv.14-16)
16. While wandering in the wilderness, Hagar had lost her way. She was without support and resources. How did God respond to her despondency? (v.17)
17. What had she failed to see? (vv.19-20) Had she/they been disregarded?
18. How was she to support Ishmael? (v.18)
19. "*God opened her eyes*" (v.19) to see that He had led them and provided for their needs. Per verses 18-20 of what could they be assured?

He Knows My Name by Tommy Walker

I have a Maker  
He formed my heart  
Before even time began  
My life was in His hands

He knows my name  
He knows my every thought  
He sees each tear that falls  
And hears me when I call

Let's all sing, I have a Father  
I have a Father  
He calls me His own  
He'll never leave me  
No matter where I go

He knows my name  
I'm so glad I can say  
He knows my every thought  
He sees each tear that falls  
And hears me when I call

He knows me, He knows my name  
He knows my name  
He knows my every thought  
He sees each tear that falls  
And hears me when I call

He knows your name  
He knows your every thought  
He sees all those tears that fall  
And He'll hear you when you call