

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #38

Genesis 16:7-16

Hagar was the most innocent party in this entire bizarre, ugly episode from the life of Abram.

GOD WILL GIVE HIS PERSONAL COMFORT TO ONE IN MISERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES IF ONE WILL LISTEN TO HIS WORD.

This text is very positive because it shows that no matter what you have done or run from, no matter what skeletons are in your background, you can find comfort and blessing from God if you turn to Him.

COMFORTING REALITY #1 - God comforts one who is miserable. 16:7-12

Hagar had been misused and mistreated supposedly by those who were godly. She had been nothing more than a slave in life and now she was pregnant, scared and all alone.

Way #1 - God found Hagar. 16:7

Here is the first mention in the Bible of a very important Person - “the angel of the LORD.” In this first mention it is very obvious that both “the angel of the LORD” and Hagar identify this Person as God (v. 10, 13). There are many other passages in the O.T. in which “the angel of the LORD” is identified as being God (Genesis 22:11-18; 32:24-30; Exodus 3:2-6, 14; Judges 2:1-4; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; Zechariah 1:12-13, 20). Determining that “the angel of the LORD” is God is simple; the only question is which member of the Godhead is He? The O.T. is very clear that no one will ever see Jehovah - God the Father, and live (Exodus 33:20). John said no one had ever seen the Father (John 1:18). So we may quickly rule out this Person is God the Father. We also know that the Spirit of God is not seen, but the power of His work is seen (John 3:6-8). So we may also rule out God the Spirit. **The only member of the Trinity who reveals Himself physically to humanity is God the Son, who is the full manifestation of God (John 14:9; Colossians 1:15-19).** These facts lead us to the proper conclusion that “the angel of the LORD” is an appearance of Jesus Christ before His incarnation. In fact, the angel of the LORD does not show up in the N.T. This is called in theology a Theophany.

So in Hagar’s loneliest moment of life, Jesus Christ “found” her. That word “found” does seem to suggest that she was lost. The fact that she was found at the “spring of water” in the wilderness has rich symbolic and spiritual meaning.

Hagar had left Hebron and was on her way to “Shur”, a place located between Hebron and Egypt (Genesis 25:18; I Samuel 15:7). Hagar is going back to Egypt, her original home. She certainly could not have been too impressed with Abram and Sarai’s example of godliness. The fact that Christ found her in the “wilderness” indicates that God reveals Himself to people when they are at their worst places in life. The fact that God tracks her down reveals that salvation is by God’s sovereign, elective purposes. In fact, it is later revealed that God is the one who opens Hagar’s eyes and permits her to see the fountain of life (Genesis 21:17-19).

Way #2 - God speaks to Hagar. 16:8-12

Notice that five times in this context we read that the LORD spoke to Hagar - 16:8, 9, 10, 11, 13. What this teaches us is that when we are totally miserable, comfort will be found from the Word of God.

Verbal Reality #1 - God's word asks her to admit the truth of the problem. 16:8

God knows where and why Hagar is going to Egypt, but He asks her to tell Him.

Verbal Reality #2 - God's Word asks her to change her direction in life. 16:9

God asks Hagar to stop running, to return and submit to His ordained authority. **The way to God's blessings is never proud rebellion, but humble submission to God's word.**

Verbal Reality #3 - God's word promises to bless her if she obeyed Him. 16:10-12

(Blessing #1) - She would be fruitful. 16:10

Notice the promised blessing to Hagar is a numerical blessing, not a land or spiritual blessing. There are certain times in Genesis when God specifically promises that He will multiply descendants. Six times God says this to Abram (12:2; 13:14-16; 15:5; 17:8; 18:14; 22:17); one time God says this to Isaac (26:4); and one time God says this to Jacob via Isaac (28:3-4).

Hagar is the only woman to receive this direct promise from God. Even though she had a rough background, she became a highly honored woman of God.

(Blessing #2) - She would be parental. 16:11-12

Fact #1 - Her son would have a specific name. 16:11

The name "Ishmael" means "whom God hears." The word "affliction" means God carefully watched Hagar when she was in her poor, wretched, miserable condition and He Personally understood and attended to her in her hurting moments of life.

Fact #2 - Her son would have a specific character. 16:12a

This may not have thrilled the heart of an expectant mother, but God revealed that her son would be an untamable, unruly man who would be at war with everyone and he would live east of his brothers.

It is a known fact that Ishmael became the father of the Arabs, who do live east of the promised land, and history has proved they are a warring untamable people, even to this very hour.

Fact #3 - Her son would have a specific lineage. 16:12

Her son would always be in the presence of Israel. The lineage of Ishmael will always be in war with the lineage of Isaac.

COMFORTING REALITY #2 - Hagar was comforted by God. 16:13-16

(Action #1) -Hagar worshipped God. 16:13-14

Hagar worshipped God and named the well “Beer-lahai-roi” which means “the well of the Living One who sees.” This sinful, abused, hurting woman with a checkered past found great emotional encouragement by worshipping God. In fact, **Hagar is the only woman in the O.T. who names God - “Thou art a God who sees” (16:13).**

(Action #2) - Hagar returned home. 16:15-16

W.H. Griffith Thomas wrote: “If we have made mistakes which have led us into sin, the primary condition of restoration is complete submission to the Will of God, whatever that may involve.” (Genesis, p. 149)

No matter what the sin or failure, or the circumstances or misery, any person who will turn to God and purpose to obey Him, will experience His blessings.

You cannot hide from God or runaway from God, but you can turn to God. If you do, He will forgive you and bless you.

Want to discover God’s encouragement?

1. Admit the truth of your sin or circumstances.
2. By faith turn to the Lord.
3. By faith obey God’s Word.
4. Continue to worship God.