

Hagar

YOUNG PEOPLE'S DICTIONARY OF SCRIPTURAL & RELIGIOUS TERMS

Hagar was the maid servant of Sarah, Abraham's wife. Hagar was an Egyptian girl who evidently was the main servant of Sarah. Hagar was part of that time when dear Abraham's faith seemed to waver. God had promised that Abraham would have a son and there would be a multitude of blessing through that promised son. Abraham's heirs through God's promised son would someday occupy the land of Caanan where Abraham dwelt as a stranger.

But Abraham's wife was *barren* ... that means that she was unable to bear children. Instead of trusting God to perform what He had promised that by Sarah a son would be born, Sarah encouraged Abraham to marry her handmaid so that they would have a son by the handmaid Hagar. Abraham agreed and Hagar conceived (became pregnant) and bore a son to Abraham. He called the name of his son, Ishmael.

Unfortunately, things did not work out well. They never do work out well when faith loses confidence in God's promises. Hagar became proud and rebellious against her mistress and ran away. Eventually Ishmael grew to be a teenager and when the promised son, Isaac, was born to Sarah, he mocked Isaac. This made Sarah angry and she demanded that Abraham force Ishmael and his mother to leave the family and go away on their own. God told Abraham to obey Sarah in this for the blessing He had promised could only come through Isaac. Abraham was very sad for his first born son, Ishmael.

When Hagar and her son were cast out into the wilderness by themselves, Hagar wept, thinking that her son would die. But God was with the boy for he had heard Ishmael cry to Him for help. Later Hagar ended up back in Egypt and picked out a wife for Ishmael to marry. From this union developed the tribes of those we now call Arabs. And ever since then, there has been conflict and contention between Ishmael's seed and Isaac's seed (the Jew and those who trust in God). We see the very sad results of that today in all the wars, terrorism and conflicts that are taking place in the Middle East between the Jews and those countries who protect Israel, and the Arab nations who hate Israel and want to destroy it.

Spiritually Hagar and Ishmael are a type of the flesh even as Isaac is a type of Christ. The flesh cannot please God and is at constant enmity with the Spirit. The book of Galatians specially takes up these spiritual teachings as to Hagar and Sarah. We might say that Christians today are connected with Sarah, and the flesh cannot, under the bondage of the law ever bring blessing to man after the flesh. God's blessing is only found in Christ.

In Galatians Hagar is called Agar. Thus we read in Gal. 4:22-25: "*For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid [Hagar], the other by a freewoman [Sarah]. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai [the law], which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children*".