

# Hagar's Egyptian Understanding of Marriage in Genesis 16

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Thanks for being here. It's wonderful to see you. We are blessed once again to have our beloved David Falk. I always like to drop into conversation that I know an Egyptologist.
- A little bit of cachet. But if you've heard David speak before, you know how both educational but thoroughly researched and interesting his thoughts are.
- I know that the Ark of the Covenant talk was really thought-provoking for me and really, really interesting. He's still at UBC? Yeah. In the department of not Egyptosia?
- No, Classics Near East and Middle East, sorry, and Religious Studies. So, and you wonder why I can... Yeah, I can never keep it straight. It's one of those departments where they keep changing the name.
- Go back up. Go back up. Hot water. Hot coffee might not. All right, anyway, please join me today in welcoming David for a delightful talk on Hagar, Egyptian concepts of marriage in Genesis 16.
- [ 1 : 0 7 ]     Who would ever have thought? Now I have questions I didn't even know that I have. Thank you, David. Well, thank you for that warm welcome.
- I hope I don't disappoint here. No pressure. No pressure. All right. Shall we open in prayer? Yes. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to come together and to study your word and to praise your name and to take a deep look at this very interesting relationship between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar.
- Lord, illuminate the text for us and help us to learn the context of this passage and help us to bring it into our own lives. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.
- We pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right. If you have your Bibles, you can open up to Genesis 16. Otherwise, you can follow along on the screen. I will be reading from verses 1 to 11.
- Verse 1. Now Sarai, that's the same as Sarah, by the way, Abraham's wife, born him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.
- [ 2 : 2 5 ]     So Sarai said to Abraham, Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go into my maid. Perhaps I shall attain through her.
- And Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah. And after Abraham 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 into 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.

[ 3 : 34 ] 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 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.

This is the word of the Lord. Today we are going to be talking about the relationship between Abram, Sarah, and Hagar.

The immediate question is, why should we care about events that took place nearly 4,000 years ago? Besides being a very important passage in the biblical text, and in the whole biblical narrative, I would suggest that what happened then, is very relevant to us today.

[ 5 : 01 ] This passage speaks to the complexity of human relationships, but more importantly to the faithfulness of God. To explain what's going on in this chapter, Sarah can't conceive a child.

So she gives her Egyptian slave, Hagar, to be a surrogate for Abraham. Abraham takes Hagar as his wife, according to verse 3.

Please note that Hagar was given to wife as, in Hebrew, Isha, a wife, and not a pilagash, a concubine. This is an important distinction.

Being a wife in the ancient Near East conveyed a very different understanding than being a concubine, as we will see. When Hagar conceived a son, Hagar despises her mistress.

Verse 4, Then disobeyed by running away. Hagar is a slave and a foreigner. In the eyes of Abraham, Sarah, and the weight of Mesopotamian law, Hagar is property, and on the absolute bottom of the social hierarchy.

[ 6 : 13 ] According to the perspective of her masters and the law, Hagar is completely in the wrong, despising her mistress. Yet, for some reason, Hagar not only received kind words from the Lord, but the Lord appears to her in a double theophany.

Genesis 16, 7, and 21, 17. Hagar is only one of two women in the Bible blessed with a double theophany. The other one is the mother of Samson, by the way.

There is an inconsistency between Abraham and Sarah's actions, their righteousness, their rightness in the eyes of the Lord, and how the Lord treats Hagar.

Something more is going on here than merely who's in the wrong. Perhaps this inconsistency arises from the fact that Hagar was not Mesopotamian, but Egyptian, per Genesis 16, 1.

So it is possible that Hagar's concept of marriage, being an Egyptian understanding, may have dictated her actions. So we need to make a careful assessment of the Egyptian concept of marriage to see how this might apply to Hagar's situation, or what she might have understood.

[ 7 : 32 ] Unfortunately, our understanding of Egyptian marriage is to some degree uncertain, and must be pieced together using fragmentary sources. such as wills and divorce decrees.

In this talk, we're going to dive into the status of marriage in Pharaonic Egypt, and its implications for how we view the Genesis 16 narrative. When assessing the status of marriage in Egypt, it is important to gauge the cultural imperatives as well as the legal framework.

Mesopotamia and the Levant underwent a period of depopulation during the Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age. Creating cultural imperatives were property rights, and inheritance became a concern.

This is the reason why Abraham needed a son. This depopulation seems to stem, possibly from a region-wide inability to conceive children, perhaps from famine.

Genesis 26, 1. Conversely, because the yearly inundation in Egypt, the annual flooding of the Nile River, that is, land holdings were not permanent and had to be reparsed annually.

[ 8 : 46 ] People in Egypt owned few goods of any real value, but they had larger families. Often, the most valuable possession that one could inherit was the title or job of a parent.

As such, instead of inheritance, rank and status became the cultural imperative that drove Egyptian society. The focus upon rank and status within Egypt led to a stratified culture.

Every person was part of a social rank that dictated that person's place in Egyptian society. This, in turn, affected the Egyptian view of marriage in profound ways.

For example, their view on polygamy. In the Levant, because of its problem with depopulation, people of modest means often took multiple wives.

However, polygamy was not seen as normative in Egyptian culture. Papyrus Meir A, shown here, lists those who were convicted of tomb robbery crimes during the reign of Romsey's 11, and included a statement alluding to a man having two wives.

[ 9 : 59 ] Quote, the citizeness Herere, wife of Pa'am Tawamet, watchman of the treasury of Pharaoh, the citizeness Tanefri, his other wife, totaled two wives.

End quote. Because wives, concubines, and divorcees were all called hemet, or wife in Egyptian, we cannot exclude other possibilities, such as one of Pa'am Tawamet's two wives was a wife from a previous marriage, or perhaps even a concubine, that is, a sexual partner with a lower status than a wife.

While in Egyptian society, many concubines were from the slave class, by no means were all concubine slaves. While in theory, a woman from any class could agree to be a concubine, the origin of most concubines were probably from the slave and peasant farming classes.

The question, then, is why would any free woman want to voluntarily become a concubine? As a concubine, a woman received food and shelter and only had to be of service to one man, a situation that was far better than the life of a prostitute.

Furthermore, if a concubine gives birth to the only heirs, then it was customary for her status to be elevated to a wife, with her child receiving a share of the inheritance.

[ 11 : 31 ] This is the concubine's gambit. If the concubine conceives when the wife cannot, the concubine wins it all. In general, with the notable exception of the king, true polygamy, that is, having multiple wives, was rare in Egyptian culture.

From the El Amarna documents, we know that the king of Egypt accepted foreign wives as part of treaties, but did not reciprocate. For example, Amenhotep III did not reciprocate the exchange of treaty wives with Kadashmen El-Einil, king of Babylon.

The only documented example of a foreign king receiving a daughter from the king of Egypt was Solomon in 1 Kings 3.1. The Egyptian king maintained a large harem and bore many children.

For example, the 120 sons and daughters of Ramses II listed upon the monuments at the Ramazigham, Luxor, Wadi-es-Sebuah, Abidos, and Divers Ostrica, a fact that is confirmed by Kent Weeks' excavation of Tomb KV-5.

KV-5 is the largest tomb in the Valley of the Kings and was created for the children of Ramses II. This tomb contains no less than 134 chambers.

[ 13 : 00 ] By the way, this tomb is so large they still haven't finished excavating it. They don't know how deep it goes, but it goes at least three levels down. It's a massive tomb.

It's really an incredible piece of architecture. However, polygamy for the king did not appear to be limited to foreign wives. The king also took wives from the daughters of regional governors and close hereditary princes in order to cement a claim to the throne or to secure goodwill in important regions that he depended upon.

For example, the Hermopolite nome in Upper Egypt. Polygamy on this scale led to problems with titular inheritance. It was expected that only the son of the great queen would become king.

The early hypothesis that the great queen had to be of royal descent was refuted by Gay Robbins, who noted the fact that the great queens of Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, and Amenhotep III were all non-royal.

And, in some cases, not even Egyptian. For example, the Hittite wife of Ramses II, who he had renamed Ma'athor Neferure.

[ 14 : 22 ] Also, several kings were sons of women other than the reigning great queen. For example, Thutmose II, whose mother was Mutnofret, being shown here.

Mutnofret was a concubine. She wasn't a wife, and she wasn't noble. Even so, the concubines of kings, whose offspring took the throne, were retroactively bestowed the title great queen, in addition to the title king's mother.

This suggests that the great queen was perhaps not so much a designation as an achievement, cemented by the bearing of legitimate heirs to the king.

Nevertheless, wives of the king normally had either noble birth or had high status, which meant that these marriages were very permanent.

Likewise, the daughters of the king were restricted in their marriage options because their rank conferred some claim to the throne, albeit a weak claim.

[ 15 : 31 ] daughters of kings were not traded as part of treaty marriages. Very unusual in the Middle East. But were on occasion married to specially favored court officials or as a means in order to secure fields with the regional hereditary nobles.

You have to kind of understand that Egypt is a tribal society. We kind of think of it as one big country, but it was really sort of a collective of tribes. So in order for Pharaoh to maintain order, he had to do treaty arrangements with his own provinces.

During Dynasty 6, the vizier Meriruka married Seshesesh, Watekeker, elder daughter of King Teti.

And Shepseskaf married Princess Kamaat of Dynasty 4. Such marriages outside one's social rank did occur, but were considered unusual.

While a king had a harem in practice, the ideal for the king was a monogamous complementary relationship of one man and one woman, as attested by the iconography of Akhenaten and Nefertiti.

[ 16 : 48 ] Records from El Amarna show that Akhenaten had many wives in addition to his queen. Monogamy was seen as the ideal of Egyptian society and was the normative marital relationship through all levels of Egyptian culture.

Even in religious stela, craftsmen are named with each man's wife in monogamous pairings, for example, as seen in Luvra C50. Even a crown prince, such as Rahotep, shown here, first son of the great queen, was no exception to this, not being permitted a harem until he became king.

Even though Rahotep was a crown prince, he did not live long enough to become king. The only real difference between the various strata of Egyptian society appears to be the permanence of marriage.

At the highest tiers of hereditary princes and nobles, marriage appeared to be for life. This may reflect more upon the rank of the women involved than in any intrinsic respect for marriage.

marriage, and marital relationships were shown as persistent unions that even transcended death. Both living and deceased spouses would be portrayed within tombs of the nobility and upon religious stele.

- [ 18 : 12 ] As one descends the social ranks, however, marriage becomes less permanent. At the level of scribes and craftsmen, status and connections still played a role in marriage, but the actual arrangement was more laissez-faire.

Both men and women had the right to divorce, and at times exercised that right repeatedly. Among craftsmen at the workers' village at Dyer el Medina, divorce appears to have been quite common.

Marriage as an institution was actively encouraged in ancient Egypt. In the wisdom of Harjedeph, a son is advised to take a wife when he has founded a household.

Quote, when you prosper and establish your household, take a hardy wife. End quote. Good advice. I like that advice. What do you mean by hardy?

I'll leave that to your imagination. Good answer. The establishing of a house was not just an abstract idea, but represented the husband's duty to build a house for the marital couple.

- [ 19 : 34 ] Conversely, divorce was characterized by the act of, quote, being thrown out of the house, end quote, or leaving the household. In the maxims of Tahotep, which may date to Dynasty 6 of the Old Kingdom, the sage gives advice to young scribes on how to live at peace with one's wife in an attempt to prevent divorce.

Quote, if you are well to do and establish your household, be gracious to your wife in accordance to what is fair. Feed her well. Sound advice.

Put clothes on her back. Ointment is the balm for her body. Rejoice her heart all the days of your life, for she is a profitable field for you, her lord.

But keep her far away from judicial authority. End quote. Essentially, if you do not persecute her, she will not seek out higher authorities against you.

Ultimately, her stay in your house will be in accordance with how she's treated. Now, the last part of this passage alludes to the fact that women in Egypt were not compelled to stay within a relationship.

- [ 20 : 53 ] Women also had access to judicial redress and had the right to appeal a ruling to a higher authority. In fact, many of the rights that Egyptian women had, they no longer have today.

Okay? Women in ancient Egypt had the right to seek out, they had the right to earn money, they had the right to hold jobs, they had the right to adopt children, they had the right to hold high rank and status.

In fact, some women held very high rank. An example is Demiosnai, the wife of the butler Merera at Edfu, who was priestess of Hathor, one of the highest religious titles in all of Egypt.

As we examine classes beneath craftsmen, the details become hazy because of the lack of surviving records. The lowest class, which is not slaves, but peasant farmers, we know virtually nothing about their marriages.

And among the slave class, slaves were given wives as a reward from their owner, although the exact status and permanence of a slave-to-slave marriage is unclear.

- [ 22 : 20 ] Slaves were occasionally given to free men, and in those situations, the Egyptian slave was considered to be a concubine, unless emancipated through an act of adoption.

Such concubine arrangements were not considered to be true marriages in the Egyptian context, and neither the spouse nor the children had any legal rights, especially inheritance rights.

That is, unless the concubine wins the concubine's gambit. In marrying a slave as a wife, as opposed to a concubine, the relationship would become monogamous, and the husband would not be permitted to take another wife simultaneously.

The marriage ceremony itself seemed to involve little more than setting up a house together and an exchange of gifts. While this seems in line with our concept of common-law marriage, Egyptian societal mores were more rigid than this situation would suggest at first blush.

While marriage was easy to enter and exit, it was limited to one partnership at a time. The Egyptians also often used the term brother and sister as terms of endearment within the marital union.

[ 23 : 45 ] But it is a mistake to think that sibling incest was common. Even though marriages between cousins and uncles were common, sibling marriage was not.

Yaroslav Czerny examined 490 marriages from the first intermediate period through to Dynasty 18, finding only two instances where spouses were siblings.

Sibling incest was practiced at times, but usually during periods of distress and appears to be a form of sympathetic magic. famous example is the King Tut shown here and his half-sister wife Anksunamun.

In the belief, they were paired in the belief that the royal blood would strengthen the bloodline and solve the succession problem. This, of course, had the opposite effect as the consanguineous relationship failed to produce any viable offspring, turning the succession problem at the end of Dynasty 18 into a succession crisis that ultimately ended the dynasty.

Infertility was seen as a problem in either a man or a woman, and a man who could not bear children from his wife could expect to be the object of derision. The letter of Neku Emmet was mocked, the man was mocked when he could not conceive a child with his wife, when his friend conceived with the same woman.

[ 25 : 20 ] Quote, you are no man. You couldn't even make your wife pregnant like your companion could. Another thing, you're strong on promises, marvelously, but you've not given anything to anyone.

As for someone who has no children, now he gets for himself some others, orphans that he may bring up. It is he who thus provides himself with offspring.

You are just a big kid on your own. End quote. His impotence was further mocked with his adopted orphan when he adopts orphans, and his childlessness was compared to his inability to keep his promises.

In another text, the act of adoption served another purpose, which was as a means for wives without children to inherit property from their husbands and to avoid inheritance claims by brothers or sisters.

Having children in Egyptian culture established a blood tie to the husband from which a wife could inherit property. And without having children, stronger claims to an inheritance could be presented by either brothers or sisters of the husband.

[ 26 : 49 ] We can determine by this that the marital bond in Egypt was weak at best, but a bond that was made permanent with the introduction of children. By the late period, couples appear to have refrained from entering into any sort of marital agreement until they had children, although marriage contracts do not appear as a normative part of Egyptian society until after the 6th century BC, unless there was some unusual stipulation that made such a contract necessary.

While the Egyptians did practice alternate forms of sexuality, such as homosexuality, those forms were deprecated in religious literature. For example, the Book of the Dead, shown here, Spell 125.

This is and were not recognized as a form of marriage. Adultery, too, was in general frowned upon as one of the practices to be avoided in the Book of the Dead.

This is true despite the laissez-faire state of marriage. The maxims of Tahotep, again, mentions when one enters a house of a friend to maintain a standard of propriety with respect to the women of the house.

Quote, If you wish a friend to endure, in the house which you enter as a lord, as a brother, or as a friend, into every place which you enter, beware in approaching the women.

[ 28 : 25 ] Miserable is the place where it is done. The face is not delighted when it is discovered. End quote. Like marriage today, when adultery was discovered, it had a negative effect upon the marital union.

In general, a married woman was expected to bear legitimate heirs for her husband. Men who engaged in sexual congress with married women could expect to be threatened with death, mutilation of nose and ears, or banishment into forced labor in a quarry, for example, at the mines at Elephantini.

In the tale of the two brothers, the elder brother killed his adulterous wife. But in practice, women caught in adultery more often forfeited their share of marital property, and more warnings than punitive measures were issued.

An exception was forced sex or rape with a married woman, where such sentences were enforced. Think here of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39.

Prisons were more or less open quarries where forced labor was performed. Besides a few guards, walls were not necessary, given the prison's remote desert locations.

[ 29 : 52 ] Although vigilantism and mob justice were certainly actions that could take place against an egregious adulterous affair that offended community standards, most adulterous spouses had their marriage end in nothing more serious than a divorce.

Excessive adultery was even a formal charge that could be put forward against a superior, for example, against the infamous Pa Neb.

In this particular case, it has to be made clear that the problem was not that adultery was immoral, but that Pa Neb's adultery with the workers' wives and their daughters was disturbing the peace of the community at large.

Egyptian society was organized around the concept of Ma'at. Ma'at means order. Egyptian justice was not about right and wrong.

It was about order and disorder. And what Pa Neb's excessive adultery did was cause turmoil at the community of workers. This was seen as a very bad thing.

[ 31 : 11 ] Divorce in Egypt was something that, as already said, could be initiated by either the husband or the wife. And having been divorced did not carry any social stigma.

This is unlike the Levant, where being divorced or having premarital sex carried the stain of damaged goods. Both men and women in Egypt could have been married to accession of spouses.

Mut and Hab, wife of the goldsmith Ramosa, stated in her testimony at the tomb robbery depositions, that she was Ramosa's fourth wife, with two of his former wives being deceased, and one still alive at the time of the deposition.

Now, when a marriage ended in divorce, the property was divided along a two-thirds, one-third split, with the wife receiving the smaller share.

If children appeared on the scene, the house, which was normally part of the husband's two-third portion, would transfer to the possession of the children and the wife.

- [ 32 : 20 ] While this division may seem unfair by modern standards, and that's mostly because of our incredible affluence, there was a logic to it. Now, remember, these people had very few goods of any real worth, so the property that both members are bringing into this is pretty small.

When a couple married, a man brought his property and a house into the marriage, and the wife brought her property. property. Thus, it was the scene that the man brought two-thirds of the assets into the marriage to begin with, even if this number was symbolic as opposed to a true accounting.

Thus, when a marriage ended by death or dissolution, the total sum of property was also divided along these lines. While not normally the case, a divorce might even involve the use of courts, especially when property division and grain rations were at issue.

Another text dating to Amaseses mentions the divorce of Kasa, where he swore an affidavit in the name of Amun, rejecting his wife, stating that she did not show love and they no longer cohabited.

This case, occurring again at the workers' village at Deir el-Medina, is significant since the workers had, as part of their income, an allotted ration of grain, fish, and wine, from which a wife would have been entitled a share.

- [ 33 : 52 ] At Deir el-Medina, wives were entitled to a three-quarters ration of grain, so the courts were sometimes used to settle entitlements that were not a normal part of property divisions and did not neatly split along that two-thirds, one-third line.

Now that we have assessed the Egyptian concept of marriage, we can apply what we know to Hagar.

Hagar probably entered into the narrative as one of the female slaves given to Abraham in Genesis 12-16 by the king of Egypt as gifts to take Sarai as a wife.

Hagar is not named in the text until Genesis 16-1, when Sarai concocted the scheme to use her as a surrogate in verse 2. Hagar's original name in Egyptian is unknown, but is referred to by a similar-sounding Hebrew nickname, meaning the stranger.

Now, no one names their baby girl the stranger. Something similar is found in 1 Samuel 25, where Abigail's husband is called Nabal, which means fool.

- [ 35 : 08 ] Nobody names their baby boy fool either. Not normally, unless your parents are extremely vindictive. More likely, the Jews often gave those they wrote about similar-sounding names to convey deeper truths.

As a nickname, the stranger is appropriate for Hagar. She just doesn't fit in. She's an unequal third wheel. She's a foreigner who is out of place and doesn't understand the rules.

And she becomes the architect for strangers and righteous Gentiles that come to live in the midst of the Israelites. While Abraham, having multiple wives, would not have been normative within the Egyptian context of monogamy, it was allowed for kings.

Abraham's princely status in the Levant, Genesis 23, 6, may have created a cultural tolerance for polygamy by both Sarai and Hagar.

According to Egyptian custom, if a free man marries a slave as a true wife to produce children that had inheritance rights, per Genesis 16, 3, then that slave, Hagar, would have been entitled to the rights of a free woman.

- [ 36 : 26 ] As a true wife, the offspring of Abram and Hagar would have been endowed with some legal inheritance rights. Within the Egyptian context, the children of a marriage to a free man were expected to inherit and normally voided the slavery for the wife.



If Hagar were just a concubine, she would not have been given freedom and her children would never have inheritance rights. But even as a concubine, she should have won the concubine's gambit.

When such freedom and elevation of status did not ensue in Genesis 16, 6, Hagar's expectations of how marriage should work came in conflict with those who really held the power.

As mother to the only heir, apparent heir, Hagar's status should have been greatly enhanced by the situation. This is even affirmed by Sarai's response, which seems to assume that Hagar's status is elevated to the extent that Sarai must appeal to Abraham for redress concerning Hagar's slight, Genesis 16, 5.

Abraham, being that great man of courage, takes the expedient solution of asserting that Hagar's status had not changed.

[ 37 : 57 ] With Abraham's apparent blessing, Sarai dealt with her upstart slave in accordance with harshness. The word in Hebrew, harsh, is the same word used in Exodus 1, 11, with how the Egyptians were treating the children of Israel.

It means to torment or humiliate. And that is how Sarah treated Hagar. Abraham, for his part, was caught between two legal traditions, one that gave the new wife permanence and standing, and the other that subjugated the new wife as property.

Gerhard von Roth stated that Abraham was, quote, a man torn between conflicting loves and rent by the rival claims of what society and law permitted and what righteousness seemed to demand, end quote.

Now, Hagar's response to Sarah was to run away and beat a path to the way of Shur. Now, the way of Shur is marked in red here.

It goes from Hebron through Beersheba all the way to Heliopolis. And when people normally traveled between Egypt and the Levant, they typically took the way of Horus.

[ 39 : 24 ] Even if they start off at Hebron, they usually cut across and go down. The reason why is because the way of Horus was protected by fortresses.

It was safe. It had water. It was the nice way to travel. Very few people took the way of Shur because it was extremely deadly.

In fact, the only people who really negotiated that route were caravanners. And they would stock up on seven days of water before heading out.

Because after Shur, which is probably somewhere right around there, there is no water on that route. route. It was a deadly route that killed by dehydration in days.

So this shows Hagar's desperation. She knows this. She knows this when she sets out. And she's willing to take that risk. That shows how desperate she is.

[ 40 : 27 ] Okay? That a pregnant woman, a woman who's not only eating for two but drinking for two, is going to try her out like this. Think about that. Now, the Lord meets her at the spring of the way ashore and advises her to return to Sarah in Genesis 16, 7 through 10.

Promising that if she returns and submits to Sarah's authority, the Lord will greatly multiply her descendants. Note also that Abraham, most of you don't understand how little property Abraham controls in this time.

He only controls from Hebron to Beersheba, about a span of about 25 miles. It's really a small territory. The Lord does not condemn Hagar and receives and recognizes the injustice beneath the hand of Sarah as a form of affliction.

Genesis 16, 11. In short, the Lord promises to Hagar posterity for obedience. And Hagar's response is to trust in the word of the Lord.

When she trusts in their Lord, that places her in the category of righteous Gentile. One who hears the word of the Lord and puts her faith in it.

- [ 41 : 56 ] It's the same recognition that Abraham gets. He trusts in the word of the Lord and is ascribed to him as righteousness. Prior to the time of Abraham, the Levant had already witnessed incursions of Egyptian hegemony.

An early recorded Egyptian campaign into Canaan was by Sinwosir III of Dynasty 12, 1870 to 1831 BC, in the Stila of Cui Sobek.

And the extent of this hegemony, this control over the Levant, continued to rise into the early part of the second intermediate period. even though Abraham must have had some familiarity with the laws and the customs of Egypt.

His obeisance was ultimately to Sarah and to the laws of his forefathers. In response to Ishmael mocking Isaac in Genesis 21, 9, Hagar and Ishmael were driven out of the camp with almost nothing.

Genesis 21, 10 to 14. Now, in Egyptian culture, sarcasm and eloquent speech were taken to a high art.

- [ 43 : 11 ] Many administrators were lauded by the king for their excellent and entertaining words. Now, we have to recognize that cultures view sarcasm very differently.

For example, if you lived in 17th century France, sarcasm was praised. It was one of the greatest things you could do.

Voltaire was lauded for his elegant-sounding sarcasm. In English culture, less so. Well, in Levantine culture, such speak was seen as a challenge.

Sarcasm was fighting words. And you can see this in various episodes in the Bible, where one person's sarcasm is treated with extreme condyene.

mockery by one gifted in speech could have easily eroded the standing of Isaac.

- [ 44 : 15 ] So Sarah saw Ishmael and all other male heirs as serious rivals that had to be eliminated. Under Mesopotamian law, this law of Hammurabi, subsection 147, Hagar had one right, which because she bore children as a surrogate, she could not be resold.

Quote, if a man married a naditum, and she has given a slave girl to her husband, and she has borne children, but afterwards that slave girl makes herself equal to her mistress, because she has borne children, her mistress may not sell her for silver.

Okay? This applies really aptly to Hagar. She shall place a slave mark upon her and count her among the slave girls. If she has not borne children, her mistress may sell her for silver.

Now, a naditum is a woman who has taken a vow to be the wife of a god during which she may not bear children. It's sort of similar to the Nazarene vow of the Old Testament, you know, a vow to separate yourself, to make yourself holy.

It's unknown how long such a vow would last. But in a legal context, which this is, a naditum and a free woman were more or less treated the same.

- [ 45 : 48 ] So if you see the word naditum in a Mesopotamian law, you can fit in the word free woman and it pretty much means the same thing. Now, the intent of this law was to prevent a surrogate from being dumped when she was no longer needed by guaranteeing the surrogate a place within the household, even if only as a slave.

The law of Hammurabi, which was the law in Abraham's day, so this is the law that Abraham and Sarah are operating under, tried to solve the problem that surrogates were being used to create sons and heirs, then the mothers were being tossed out with nothing, to face poverty, destitution, and if they were very lucky, prostitution.

Okay? Yeah. Lucky. Because a lot worse could happen to a woman that was not able to sustain herself. Okay? Yeah. That's lucky.

Yeah. That's how bad the situation was. That's no joke. It was a woman in the Levant that had that was either widowed or just say thrown out after being used sexually had very grim prospects.

Extremely grim prospects. Okay? But Sarah wanted all the male heirs gone.

[ 47 : 24 ] The only opportunity that Abraham and Sarah saw for getting rid of Hagar and Ishmael was to appeal to an older superseded law from the region of Izzan.

The laws of Lipit Ishtar. Lipit Ishtar section 25 stated that a slave woman and a wife both bear children the slave woman and her child could be granted freedom without a division of the inheritance.

Quote If a man takes a wife and she bears him a child and that child is still alive and a slave woman also bears children to her master then the father shall grant freedom to the slave woman and her children.

The slave woman's children shall not divide the inheritance with their ex-master's children. Now, notice the birth order in this law. It's an important detail.

The wife bears the first child. That's the true wife. Then while the first child is still alive, the surrogate gives birth. This law doesn't quite fit the situation, but that doesn't prevent its convenient misuse.

[ 48 : 38 ] Abraham and Sarah circumvent the law of their day with an older law that's a tad more convenient. This is like appealing to an archaic Roman law when a clear, modern, Canadian legal precedent already exists.

Any inheritance rights that Ishmael would have had as the son of a true wife of Abraham were unilaterally stripped when he was driven out of the camp.

Whether or not she wanted it, Hagar gets her freedom, but at the high cost of her offspring losing any claim to inheritance. Abraham, for his part, knows this is wrong and is distressed by the injustice of this.

Genesis 21 11. By the time he comes to this way of thinking, it is too late. He is advised by the Lord to listen to Sarah, but is reassured by the Lord that Hagar and Ishmael will have his protection.

Genesis 21 12-13. So Abraham, respecting the wishes of Sarah, gave gifts to his other offspring and sent them eastward out of the promised lands.

[ 49 : 52 ] So as to ensure the inheritance of his unique son could not be contested by any rival claimants. As a result, Ishmael, the sons of Keturah, described as a wife in Genesis 25-1, and a concubine in 1 Chronicles 1-32, and the sons of Abraham's other concubines, about whom we know little, received no inheritance from Abraham.

Genesis 25-6. Abraham had multiple children from his concubines, and only the sons were driven out. Abraham's daughters were permitted to stay.

God permitted Sarah to have her desire, because it elevated the status of Isaac as the unique son of Abraham as his heir. But God had a plan for Hagar and her son Ishmael, that works into the plan of salvation.

God promised to bless Ishmael, and made him a great nation, Genesis 17-20. The posterity of Ishmael is complicated.

Hagar and Ishmael relocate to Paran, which is on the south, let's see if I can go back here, which is on, Paran is around there on the southeastern side of the Sinai.

[ 51 : 15 ] Ishmael lived to age 137, so he lived a long life. He married an Egyptian woman in Genesis 21-21, and had 12 sons that formed 12 tribes that inhabited villages from shore on the eastern side of the Sinai, and up towards Assyria in Genesis 25-16-18.

The Ishmaelites became traders and caravanners, very successful caravanners, and they specialized in aromatic gum like frankincense and the mer trade, Genesis 37-25.

They became merchants, and one of their most interesting episodes is they are also the merchants whom the sons of Jacob sold Joseph to in Genesis 39-1.

Now, while probably best known for a daughter of Ishmael burying Esau in Genesis 28-9, and their descendants, the Edomites and the Ishmaelites, allying themselves against Israel in Psalm 83-6, the relationship with the Israelites was not always antagonistic.

In fact, it sounds like the relationship between the Ishmaelites and the Israelites was, say, a lot less antagonistic than between the Edomites.

[ 52 : 55 ] When Abraham died, Isaac and Ishmael buried him together at the cave of Machpelah in Genesis 25-9. one of the generals of Judah, Amasa, son of David's sister Abigail, his father was Jether, an Ishmaelite, 1 Chronicles 2-17.

And the Ishmaelites were even part of David's household, for example, Obel, who was in charge of David's camels, in 1 Chronicles 27-30.

In conclusion, we have seen by examining the Egyptian concept of marriage that Hagar assumed that once she became Abraham's wife, she would be entitled to freedom and possibly becoming the great wife of the local ruler, and that her child would share in at least a third of Abraham's share of the property as inheritance.

But Hagar was both a slave and a foreigner, and she was living on the wrong side of Middle Egyptian Middle Kingdom Egyptian customs and culture. And despite these broken expectations, God shows his repeated faithfulness to Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar.

God affirms the claims of Abraham's unique son, Isaac, upon Abraham's inheritance. And for Hagar, like many who move to a foreign land with one set of expectations, only to discover that those expectations come in conflict with the local customs and those who hold the power, God sustains where injustice prevails.

[ 54 : 40 ] Thank you.