

Series: Questions

Title: Whence Camest Thou?

Text: Genesis 16: 7-8

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Unregenerate sinners love any religion that tells them they can come to God by their work. And we who believer, are often plagued by the self-righteousness of our old fleshly man.

So when we see in the scriptures how God turns sinners from their will, their works to submit to Christ, it give us great assurance because Christ our Head is doing the same in the earth now.

Some time ago I began preaching a series of sermons on questions which God asked to men.

- Adam: Where Art Thou?
- Cain angry because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected his: Why Are You Angry? Why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?
- After Cain murdered Abel: Where is your brother?
- Then I jumped to Sarah, when she doubted the Lord's promise that she would bear the promised child: Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?
- But I missed two questions which I will go back to here in Genesis 16. These are two questions the Lord asked Hagar, Sarah's handmaid.

Genesis 16: 7: And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. 8: And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?

It is possible for a sinner to come into the house of God where the truth is really preached. They hear that salvation is through God's eternal, everlasting covenant of grace, fulfilled by Christ.

God sent forth his Son who took the form of a servant as a Man to fulfill the covenant of grace made with God in Christ in the covenant of grace. Christ manifest the righteousness of God, apart from the deeds of the sinner's law-keeping.

By Christ's doing and dying for his people, God is both just and the Justifier of all who believe. Christ Jesus fulfilled the law for all the elect children of God. Concerning the commandments, the law says the believer is righteous as God's own Son; concerning the justice due us because of our law-breaking, the law says we are dead, justified.

True faith rests in Christ who is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe. Christ is All. He is the fullness of God and the believer is complete in Christ. We are accepted in the Beloved.

A sinner hears and publicly professes faith in Christ: profess to be married to Christ, to be his willing servant, they are baptized, join the church, make moral changes in their lives.

Yet, in reality their trust is not in Christ at all but in the changes they decided it was time to make. They are proud of the fruit they have produced.

Their hypocrisy is proven one day when they really begin to hear the gospel. Because they are proud of their fruit, the gospel of the covenant of grace comes to them as dealing hard with them; they are offended.

So they turn from the face of God, from the house where he is preached, from the brethren and flee into the wilderness. That is what Hagar did.

Proposition: Hagar is an example of a sinner who professes to believe on Christ yet was mixing law and grace, man's works, with God's work. But she is also a picture of child saved by grace.

Genesis 16: 1: Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

Hagar in God's House

Hagar had come into God's house. She was brought out of Egypt into the house of Abraham. Abraham's house was one of the few places—if not the only place at that time—where God met with his people declaring to them the gospel. Hagar was in God's house.

Hagar had heard the word of God in truth. God said Abraham was faithful to teach the gospel to everyone in his household. Therefore, Hagar had to have heard how that God promised a son to Abraham through Sarah (Sarah represents the everlasting covenant of grace.) God promised a son through the covenant of grace, Christ, in would God would save his people.

If left there, Hagar, would stand as a good picture of a believer. But Hagar did something that changes her from a picture of a believer to an example of a sinner mixing law and grace.

Genesis 16: 1: Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

Hagar Mixed Her Work with God's Work

Hagar was not an innocent participant in all that. She joined with Abraham and Sarah in mixing their works to the work God promised to perform himself. It was the same as a sinner mixing our works with God's work. Hagar's marriage to Abraham was as unlawful a union as the false professor unlawfully claiming a marriage to Christ who is all along is looking to the works they have performed themselves.

Genesis 16: 4: And [Abraham] went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

When Hagar saw she bore fruit, it filled her heart with pride. She began to despise Sarah her mistress. When a sinner is really looking to their fruit: their act of faith and repentance, their baptism, their morality and good deeds, their knowledge of the doctrine of grace (which they taught themselves) then their pride makes them despise Christ and the gospel when they hear it, just as Hagar saw she had conceived and despised Sarah.

God Honors his Gospel and Purpose of Grace

Genesis 16: 6: But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee.

When Sarah brought the matter to Abraham, Abraham honored Sarah, rather than Hagar. Sarah is a picture of the everlasting covenant of grace.

In that we see an example of how God will not share his glory with another but honors the gospel of his everlasting covenant of grace. Christ IS the Truth. Christ sends forth his gospel just as Abraham sent Sarah saying, “Hagar is in your hand to do with her as you please.” And the word of God is sharper than any two edged sword, it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. When a self-righteous professing believer begins to truly hear the gospel, he hears it as dealing hard with him—like as Sarah dealt hardly with Hagar.

The Gospel is Offensive to Will Workers

Genesis 16: 6: And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

The gospel is offensive to all (and only to all) that mix their works with the work of Christ. It becomes unbearably offensive to the self-righteous.

I am sure Hagar overlooked all the good things about Abraham and Sarah, magnifying every fault they had in order to justify her fleeing from the house of God. That is what happens anytime self-righteousness rules the heart.

The men who rejected Christ spent the whole of his ministry trying to find some fault in him to justify themselves for not believing his gospel—when the whole time the real issue is the sinners own heart.

But rather than repent from vain works and submit to Christ in truth, a sinner will flee from God’s presence, forsake God’s house, and those he once counted brethren like Hagar did.

It does no good for a pastor to try to go to sleep by counting sheep. If there is one missing he lies awake begging God to intervene in mercy. Sometimes you are able to go yourself and speak to them. But a drowning man is hard to reason with. Most of the time, God shuts you up to his sovereign hand. Christ is in control of this whole situation. Remember, how the Lord dealt with Gomer?

Hosea 2: 14: Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

If that one who is running away is his—he shall intervene!

Genesis 16: 7: And the angel of the LORD found her...I don’t know if Hagar was a lost sheep that Christ found and saved or not, but she’s sure a good example of one.

I. CHRIST JESUS, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, ALWAYS FINDS HIS LOST SHEEP.

Genesis 16: 7: And the angel of the LORD found her.

Christ Found Her

Hagar was not seeking him, she was fleeing. But Christ is the good Shepherd who seeks and finds his lost sheep. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. The Shepherd of the sheep goeth after his sheep until he find it! God gave his sheep to him in electing grace. Christ redeemed them by his blood, perfecting them

forever. He has all power in heaven and earth given him of the Father. Christ the Head and Shepherd of his church must find them or his body is not complete, justice is a miscarriage. So he shall—none shall be lost.

A Fountain in the Way

He found her **“by a fountain of water, by the fountain in the way to Shur.”** Shur is on the border of Egypt. She was heading back to her people. But she came across a fountain in the way.

Usually when we are offended and flee, if something good comes our way, like this fountain, we pat ourselves on the back, justify ourselves. God is blessing me. If we flee from the house of God, we may come across some fountain in the wilderness: some false preacher, some worldly increase, some new friends who justify us. But Christ is the only Fountain who gives everlasting life, true peace with God.

Remember what Christ said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well: “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4: 13-14)

II. WHEN CHRIST COMES HE SPEAKS EFFECTUALLY.

Christ Awakens and Convicts

First, he awakens and convicts us of our sin. Christ asks Hagar two questions, and you know, the Lord asks a sinner a question to bring us to confess the truth about ourselves and/or about him.

Genesis 16: 8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai’s maid, [his word is personal, he calls his sheep by name, knows where we’ve been, knows our heart] **whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?** From where have you come; and where will you go?

From whence camest thou?: from Adam—guilty, dead and dying; from my mother’s womb speaking lies; from Egypt, from the world, but worst of all, Hagar was fleeing from the house of God, fleeing light she had been given, the very place God had made himself known, fleeing from the face of God. The house of God was the best place on earth for Hagar to have remained in—you and me too! Jonah said, “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.” (Jonah 2: 8)

And where will you go? You’ve heard the gospel that God saves through Christ Jesus, by grace, apart from any works of righteousness you’ve done—now forsake mercy and where will you go? Who will you look to save you if not Christ?

Acts 4: 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

John 14: 6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Sinner, your will, your wisdom and your work has made you flee, brought but affliction, yet you still think yourself wise? Sinner, you can run but you will run right into God in the end—face-to-face with the wrath of God abiding on you.

Hebrews 10: 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another; to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not

forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. 26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

So Christ first awakened her, made her see her sin. She had never seen him, but he saw her, knew her whole case. His words went to the depths of her heart and laid it wide open so she could see it for the first time. She acknowledged it. **V8: And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.** Is there anyone here to whom he is speaking now? If so then listen up, see what happens next.

Christ Gives Repentance and Faith by Commanding It

Genesis 16: 9: And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress,...Christ grants repentance by commanding it in the heart he has made alive. Return to thy mistress. Repentance is forsaking you trying to save yourself.

Genesis 16: 9:...and submit thyself under her hands. Sarah represents the gospel. True faith is submitting to Christ, to the gospel of his free grace—“submit thyself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time,” rather than we trying to exalt ourselves. Faith is given when Christ commands it.

Christ Gives his Covenant Promise

Genesis 16: 10: And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. 11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; [this is what Ishmael means] because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. 12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

Spurgeon, “Grief has an eloquent voice when mercy is the listener.”

Christ promises his children that the fruit of grace shall be given us by the power of Christ and his work for us. And as he promised Hagar that the child in her womb would be a wild man, so he promises us that none of the fruit which we produced by our hand will profit.

III. CHRIST PRODUCES THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, NOW WE OURSELVES.

Genesis 16: 13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

Thou God Seest Me

When the Son of God speaks in spirit in the heart, his word convinces us, “thou God seest me.” This is not just omniscience—but thou God carest for me, thou God has seen me in your Son since before the foundation of the world, thou God has protected me and now you have brought me to yourself. Thereby the Word of the Lord proves itself to be truly the Word of God and for the first time we look to him with the eye of faith and have communion with God.

Psalm 27:8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

Remember Saul of Tarsus after he spoke effectually to him on the road to Damascus, “Behold, he prayeth.”

Amazing Grace

When Christ speaks and works this work of grace effectually in the heart for the first time, you will marvel at God’s amazing grace to you! And she said, v13: “**Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?** After all my enmity against God, has he really been so gracious as to give me this sight. Never a man saw God and lived, yet he has shown me his glory in the face of Christ his Angel!” This song fits Hagar:

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
But now am found
Was blind
But now I see

That is when our theology stops being a system, when we stop listening to a sermon just to check off the letters T.U.L.I.P then go home proud of ourselves for enduring yet another burdensome duty. That is when we come with delight, crying out from the depths of our heart, “I AM my Beloved’s and my Beloved IS MINE!”

Genesis 16: 14 Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; The well of him that liveth and seeth me. And note this one last verse

Genesis 16: 15: And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son’s name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

That means she went home to the house of God. I think that means Hagar was saved by his grace and believed God.

If you are running, I do hope the Lord will sweetly force you to answer, “Whence Camest Thou? And Whither Wilt Thou Go?” Return and submit to him and you will rejoice and delight in his goodness forevermore.

Amen!