



Dear Precious Friend,

August, 2014

GOD of RELATIONSHIP: Sarah and Hagar

God is a God of relationship. He cares about the quality of our relationship with Him and our relationships with one another. Some months ago, the Lord said to me, "the gods of the nations are wood and stone, but the God of the Hebrews became flesh and blood." The true God is relational and beyond that, through His Son, He has disclosed to us that He is also incarnational. He became a human being, feeling and caring about every aspect of human life.

I woke up a recently with a new song that opened up this relational aspect of the Father's heart to me: "**He wants us all together, for that is so much better, He wants to be the Father of us all.**" He used my personal history to show me His heart for the Jews and the Arabs. He had healed me some months ago of a wounded heart, the result of the divorce between my mother and father when I was a child. In a dream, I saw my **PARENTS TOGETHER**. My father was happy and in love with my mother. I woke up with words flowing out of my heart, "bless my PARENTS Lord." I had never said that before. God created us with PARENTS, male and female, so that the image of God would be before us from the womb. This image was designed to keep us secure and protected until we came to the knowledge of God for ourselves. This image in my life was marred, and like a cracked mirror, I couldn't find the right image of God nor of myself until I met the Lord in 1982. When I saw my PARENTS in the dream TOGETHER something was quickened and set back in divine order in my heart. A missing piece was restored and I was able to bless. I was able to honor. I can't remember using the word parents before, only mom. This was a faulty picture that gave me a deficient understanding of God and left me insecure from infancy. I am now restored. When I woke up singing, "He wants us ALL together, for that is so much better, He wants to be the Father of us ALL," I understood His heart about the "divorce" within the family of Abraham. The Arabs have a cracked image of Father God from the absence of father Abraham. Because of this, a false father image has been able to deceptively creep in and that is the father of lies, the one who was a murderer from the beginning.

God was not happy with Sarah's unbelief resulting in taking things into her own hands, but He was not pleased with the separation either, just as He was not pleased about having to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden, Cain out of His presence and Ishmael out of the family of Abraham. He had to act to prevent greater evil: to keep the first couple from eating of the tree of life, to prevent Cain from more heinous acts, and perhaps to keep Ishmael from going beyond mockery and harming the chosen seed. God knows the deceitful human heart so He had to act, but it was not His preference, nor His perfect solution, but His protection. It was temporal until the time that the Promised Seed would come whose sinless shed blood would break the power of sin and change our nature once and for all. This was His perfect solution.

What is the real relational story in the Middle East, what does God want us to learn from it and what is the greater ultimate good that He is working out here and for the world? I began to ponder how Sarah might have felt entrusting her servant Hagar to her beloved husband. Did Sarah love Hagar and trust her, or in desperation was she using her? Had she shared her sorrow regarding her barrenness with Hagar? Did Hagar obey Sarah from a heart of compassion because she truly wanted to give her barren mistress seed or was she simply doing her job, or is it possible that she was ambitious? And what about father Abraham? What's the real relational story? What did God know about their human hearts? He works in the supernatural, but He has shown us that He is incarnational and "enters" the human arena to bring about His perfection.

When Hagar conceived, it says that she began to DESPISE Sarah. *Gen 16:14* In Hebrew, this means to lightly esteem or devalue. Did Sarah feel betrayed by this sudden transformation? Have you ever felt this pain? Have you ever felt this violation of love? God made us to be relational like Him. Sarah could not have expected this. Perhaps Hagar did not expect to react the way she did upon feeling life in her womb. Sarah begins to treat her defiant servant now with HARSHNESS, but something much more significant is going on. These two women are now vying for supremacy. Hagar, the servant, now pregnant with Sarah's husband's child, is no longer submitting to her mistress. "For three things the earth is disquieted and for four it cannot bear: a handmaid that is heir to her mistress." *Prov 30:21-23* Sarah's whole plan backfires and her whole world changes...forever. What we sow, we reap. Sarah is hurt, so she hurts back. Hagar runs away from Sarah's harshness. *Gen 16:6* God finds her and asks, "from where are you coming and where are you going?" He is speaking beyond the physical realm. She answers that she is fleeing from the face of her mistress, Sarah. **God tells her to return to her mistress and to SUBMIT herself under her hand** and that He will bless Hagar's seed exceedingly. *Gen 16:9* The word God uses here for submit is the same word that is used for Sarah's harshness. We are told in the New Testament to submit to one another in the fear and the love of God. *Eph 5:21-22* Wives are to submit to their husbands, children to their parents, slaves to their masters in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, he will receive of the Lord, whether he be BOND or FREE. *Eph 6:5-8* We cannot expect true blessing without heart submission.

The family of Abraham is still together. **When Isaac comes on the scene, there is joy and LAUGHTER.** The promise has come, but Sarah's joy is tainted by Ishmael's MOCKERY. *Gen 21:9-10* So Sarah wants to cast him out. There's only one problem with this seemingly "simple" scenario, however: Ishmael's mockery is the same word used when Sarah laughed (*mocked?*) concerning the promise of Isaac. *Gen 18:12-15* When Sarah denies laughing/mocking at God, the Lord tells her she is lying. Even Abraham had laughed (*same word, Gen 17:17*) when he heard the news that Sarah would conceive. There's a whole lotta laughing/mocking going on! When Isaac is born, Sarah says, "God has made me to LAUGH so that ALL THAT HEAR WILL LAUGH WITH ME." Ishmael fulfills Sarah's prophecy. Ishmael is now laughing/mocking to the tune of unbelief about the promised seed, Isaac. He is mocking, believing that he will be co-heir with his half brother, Isaac. Ishmael is mocking the promise of God even as Sarah did. Sarah had refused to admit that she was in unbelief, mocking God about His promise to her, but now she is restored to faith, and she won't allow Ishmael to disrupt God's plan concerning Isaac. For this reason, she tells Abraham to cast out the bondwoman and her son, for he will not be heir with Isaac. God tells Abraham to listen to Sarah. Hagar is now

separated from the father of her child, and from the family of promise. She is no longer under the protective shadow of Abraham, the man of promise who has made a covenant in His flesh with God which included Ishmael. "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!" "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you (*Abraham*)...." *Gen 17:20*

God blesses Ishmael for Abraham's sake. God is relational. He understands Abraham's heart. But why didn't He stop this mistake from the outset? He had intervened with Abimelech, why not in this case? *Gen 20:3* The Lord has shown me that some things in the human soul cannot be healed without God allowing our "mistake" in order to bring much deeper sin to the surface to bring about a greater ultimate good. These "mistakes" are symptoms of much deeper disease in the human soul and God wants it healed. He allowed this whole human scenario to unfold to expose the awful root sin of all sins which is our unbelief in the integrity of the God of the universe and in His absolute sovereignty and good will toward all the creatures He has made. He is the God of promise.

God told Hagar to return and to submit to Sarah. Part of submitting to the plan and purpose of God is to rejoice when your brother is blessed and when your brother does well. When God tells us to bless Israel and we will be blessed, He is not commanding us to robotically bless the nation. Submission to His will is a heart attitude. When He sees us blessing what He blesses from our heart, it causes Him to delight in us as a Father and He blesses us too. Rejoice with your brother when he rejoices and weep when he weeps. God wants us to think and feel the way He does about all He has made. Had Hagar and her seed submitted from the heart, might things have turned out to be better for them and for the chosen seed as well? How many in the church and in the world rather than submit to the plan of God concerning Israel, have despised and devalued her, even after they have "conceived" from their union with her? Might things have turned out to be better for the world and the church by submitting to God's plan and giving honor where honor is due for the heritage that Israel has given the world?

The word Islam means submission. Could it possibly be that in not properly submitting to her mistress Sarah, Hagar and her seed opened the door to an even harsher, deceptive and demonic spirit of submission devoid of God's love? This is the spirit that rules over the Islamic peoples in this region, a harsh submission without love that has subtly replaced a submission inspired by love which is the expression of our relationship to the true relational God and to one another. Had Hagar submitted in genuine love to the Spirit of God and to His purposes regarding the chosen seed and taught Ishmael to do the same, might she have received a greater blessing and remained in covenant relationship with the family of promise?

Even as Satan would not submit to God, and was cast out of the heavens, so the Moslems of the Middle East are reeling under this same satanic spirit that refuses to bow the knee to the God and Messiah of Israel and they too are receiving the just recompense of their defiance. There is no way to be relational other than through genuine submission inspired by divine love. It is the mark of true identification with the Godhead. Through Islam, Satan deviously attempts to get whole nations, and the whole world to rebel in his likeness, submitting to him, the false god, rather than to the true God of Israel. In coming to the earth, Jesus demonstrated the eternal value of love-submission when He emptied Himself, became a servant, died a painful death, all in heart submission to the father. He said, "not my will, but yours" and in so doing, won for us the restored position of sons.

Jesus is the only perfect and eternal solution for the Middle East, between Arabs and Jews. Through His perfect submission to the Father, the promise of the Spirit was granted to us and we can now walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Hagar (*the flesh*) can submit to Sarah (*the Spirit*). Hagar who is in bondage with her children can be born of the Spirit and enter the New Jerusalem from above who is the mother of us all. *Gen 4:22-26* By His Spirit, we CAN ALL submit to one another in love. We CAN ALL rejoice when our brother is blessed. We CAN ALL bless one another. May the Middle East experience this love- submission by the Spirit of Christ because "He wants us all together, for that is so much better. He wants to be the Father of us all."

Good News from the Land:

Anton, my spiritual son, a Russian Jew, got baptized last week in water and gave a powerful testimony about why he has chosen to follow Yeshua and not the other idols and religions he has been pursuing. The Lord has already delivered him from drugs and from other gross sin. Please pray for him to be rooted and grounded in the word of God so that his life will make a difference here in these last days. Please pray for Tal a student at the university who continues to be open to Yeshua and to visit our prayer meeting. Pray for the many Israelis who have received the NT and prayer.

I will be sharing with the youth of my congregation on evangelism this week. Please pray for a deep awakening in hearts and for them to be equipped to go out of their comfort and safety zones to preach the gospel to the Jew first and also to the Gentile with much fruit that remains. The door for effective evangelism needs to be opened here and we desire to see a wave of new births in the land that will continue until the coming of the Lord.

Thank you so much. Your faithfulness in prayer and support continues to amaze and humble me. May all your needs be met according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

In His Amazing Love,

Greta