

# The Secret to Resilient Confidence

## Hagar and Her Empowering Encounter



ncient Egypt. Pyramids. Pharaohs worshiped as gods. Hieroglyphics. That was the homeland of our "shero" Hagar. Yet she had been taken away from Egypt

to live as one of many foreign slaves—outsiders—in the home of Abram and Sarai (later named Abraham and Sarah), who lived in Canaan.

1. Genesis 16 is where we are introduced to Hagar. Based on Genesis 16:1-4, what was Hagar's situation?

This was a common practice in ancient biblical times because having a child determined a woman's status in that world. Surrogate mothers would birth children for barren women who would then have full legal rights over those children. When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to look down on Sarai, based on Genesis 16:4. When Sarai complained to Abram, he told Sarai to do whatever she wanted to her slave girl. Sarai then treated Hagar so harshly that she ran away into the wilderness. See Genesis 16:5-6

**Enter: the "angel of the LORD"—his first-ever appearance recorded in scripture.** This is a distinctive description that occurs 50 times in the Old Testament and it is a physical appearance of God. Many believe it was an appearance of Jesus before he became human.

2. What was the first word the angel said to Hagar?

And then, was it followed by a command or a conversation? See Genesis 16:7-9.

3. It is interesting to note: in the whole story of Hagar, the *only* one to call her by name is God! Based on this example of God's conversation with this foreign, pregnant girl, how important is a person's name?

4. In Genesis 16:10-12, we see how **this one encounter empowered Hagar with a personal promise directly from God.** What was the meaning of her baby's name?

Why would God choose a pregnant runaway—not even one of the Chosen People—to be the **first person ever** to encounter the Angel of the LORD?

*Note: God revealed the child's name to the mother, not to Abram, the father.*

**5. This one encounter with God was Hagar's secret to resilient confidence** and empowered her to return to her mistress. But before Hagar left the angel of the LORD, she did another first. In Genesis 16:13, **Hagar was the first person ever to give God a**

**name.** What did Hagar name God and what did it mean?

6. Names in biblical times were very significant. What do these two names reveal about God's character?

7. Genesis 16:15-16 tells us Abram named his firstborn son Ishmael. Where did he get that name?

### Making It Real for Today

8. Identify at least two ways you can help or encourage "outsiders" in your church or community.

9. What has been the most empowering encounter you have ever experienced? What kind of resilient confidence did it give you?

10. On the back, list the personal promises Ephesians 1 reveals to followers of the Resurrected Christ that should give us resilient confidence.