I wondered if anyone can explain this to me, since I was reading in Judges 19 that the Levite's concubine was also referred to as his wife by her father, and the father as the Levite's father-in-law.

Then there were the other mothers of Jacob's children, who are never referred to as concubines because they were also employees.... or, is that co-incidental? :-?

There are also places where a person has more than one wife and concubines. :-o

At the back of my mind I have the idea that the Levite should never have had a concubine in the first place... but... that may be a detail. ;-) Any light will be gratefully accepted. Thank you.

Hi Linn

Interesting question...

As far as I understand, a concubine was a slave-wife. She was a proper wife, but didn't have the same status as the free woman. Paul of course allegorises this in Galatians.

You will know of course the importance in that culture of having sons. From the Biblical accounts, it seems it was the custom for a girl to be given a slave (or maybe more than one?) as a maid when she married. The maid would act as "insurance" so that (especially if the wife failed to have children) her husband could marry the maid as well.

From the accounts of Abraham and Sarah, and of Jacob with Rachel and Leah, it seems that the husband had no rights to these slave girls, they belonged to the wife. The wife alone had the right to give the girl to her husband as a wife, the husband couldn't just take her.

Any children of this union would legally be the chief wife's, not the concubine's. And presumably, if the chief wife had a son afterwards (as with Sarah) that son, not the son of the slave, would inherit his father's property.

However, when Abraham sent Ishmael and Hagar away he was in effect divorcing Hagar and disowning Ishmael. When he married again after Sarah's death he also sent the sons of these wives away, but with an inheritance (Genesis 25). Ishmael and his mother, on the other hand doesn't seem to have been given anything except a few provisions for the journey.

If the chief wife (or wives) had no sons the son of the slave would inherit instead. Or even the senior slave, whether his master's son or not, if there was no-one else to inherit.

Genesis 15#65279:2#65279; But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" &65279;3#65279; And Abram said, "Behold, thou hast given me no offspring; and a slave born in my house will be my heir." I think it was probably very unusual that Abraham hadn't taken a concubine before, as he and Sarah had been married for many years without children. To me it says a lot about Abraham's great love for her.

In the time of Moses, God gave strict laws governing treatment of female slaves who were taken as concubines. I was especially struck by the parts underlined:
Exodus 21:

When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt faithlessly with her. If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.

Even if he takes another wife who is not a slave he must not neglect his concubine in any way!

Deuteronomy 21

When you go forth to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God gives them into your hands, and you take them captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you have desire for her and would take her for yourself as wife, then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails. And she shall put off her captive's garb, and shall remain in your house and bewail her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her, and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. Then, if you have no delight in her, you shall let her go where she will; but you shall not sell her for money, you shall not treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.

Slavery was a fact of life, yet a girl was allowed to mourn and had her rights, including the right to her freedom if she wasn't treated properly. Most slaves in other cultures of those days had no rights.

Blessings

Jeannette

on a lighter note, on: 2007/11/26 6:57

When she was a child, a friend, who grew up on a farm, thought Solomon must be a farmer in a big way, because he had hundreds of concubine harvesters!

Jeannette :lol:

Re: on a lighter note, on: 2007/11/26 8:13

Wife legal, concubine illegal.

Wife moral, concubine immoral.

wife divine, concubine satan.

Re:, on: 2007/11/26 9:35

The very word “Concubine” sounds like a Farm Machinery.

On a serious note though. My Dad had a wife and I suppose a concubine (which is my Mother). We all lived under one roof. The wife had 10 children and my Mother had 5. Oh by the way the wife and the concubine are Sisters. My Mother was 10 years younger than the wife, raised the wife's children and helped them with the school work etc. She was also the baby sitter. When not in the house, she would do farm work. I can still see her carrying two 16 litre pails of chicken feed to one end of the barn while carrying my youngest Sister in her womb. When not in the barns, she was in the field, sowing or weeding. Dad abused her physically, mentally and spiritually. Though he's dead now, the wife remarried and my Mother built her own house on the estate that was divided up between the wife and the concubine. This could make a good mini series. I have very few good memories living in that atmosphere. One good thing while in that mess, I found the LORD.

I thought I mentioned this modern day version of a concubine Linn. I hope this helps.
chandras... Your answer is correct. However, I notice that you always require people to respond to your questions with scripture to back their opinions... yet you usually don't.

Could you please give us some scripture to back up your latest post?

Krispy

Re:, on: 2007/11/26 17:56

Quote:
---------------------------------
chandras wrote:
Wife legal, concubine illegal.
Wife moral, concubine immoral.
wife divine, concubine satan.
---------------------------------
Hi Chandras

You are mistaken that a concubine was illegal. In those days it was perfectly legal. Although it wasn't a good thing it was part of that culture, and as I said, a concubine did have rights as a wife - she wasn't just her master's "bit on the side". He was her husband and responsible for her, even if she had a very lowly status in society.

Jeannette

Re:, on: 2007/11/26 18:13

Quote:
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Compliments wrote:
The very word "Concubine" sounds like a Farm Machinery.

On a serious note though. My Dad had a wife and I suppose a concubine (which is my Mother). We all lived under one roof. The wife had 10 children and my Mother had 5. Oh by the way the wife and the concubine are Sisters. My Mother who was 10 years younger than the wife, raised the wife's children and helped them with the school work etc. She was also the baby sitter. When not in the house, she would do farm work. I can still see her carrying two 15 litre pails of chicken feed to one end of the barn while carrying my youngest Sister in her womb. When not in the barns, she was in the field, sowing or weeding. Dad abused her physically, mentally and spiritually. Though he's dead now, the wife remarried and my Mother built her own house on the estate that was divided up between the wife and the concubine. This could make a good mini series. I have very few good memories living in that atmosphere. One good thing while in that mess, I found the LORD.

I thought I mentioned this modern day version of a concubine Linn. I hope this helps.
---------------------------------
HI Compliments, you must be up from a culture where this is acceptable (unless your family was Mormon.

But praise God that He used even this difficult upbringing to bring you to Himself.

What about your mother? Maybe we should pray for her...

In Uganda, in the 1970's, they had a Scripture Union conference at the school where I was. At one point the students were asked to write down questions for the guest speaker. There was one which asked what was wrong with having a multiple family of this kind. The speaker asked if the questioner came from such a family. The answer was "no". He said, "I thought so. If you were you wouldn't ask that question!"

Although I did read a book by an Iranian lady whose father had several wives. She grew up in the days when the Shah ruled. She said that she had a very happy childhood in a large compound where each wife had her own house with her children, and their husband lived in a bigger house in the middle. Perhaps because of having separate houses and a kind husband, they all seemed to get on well.

However, I'm sure that is very much the exception!
Jeanette

Re:, on: 2007/11/26 19:49
Do you feel Hagar wife or concubine?

Gal 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a
bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he
of the freewoman was by promise.


Jeanette, I appreciate all the time you've taken to reply in detail from scripture. I do feel clearer.

Does this explanation mean that Solomon's many concubines would have been provided for as if they were all wives?

I have to do some research on the story of Abraham and may have a question after that.


Quote:
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The very word "Concubine" sounds like a Farm Machinery.

This comment reminds me of a film, where a little girl has a fish in a jar for travelling. 'What's his name?' she was asked; 'Harold.... after the angel.' ;-)  

Seriously, brother, that is quite some family you came from. I appreciate your sharing all that detail, and that it may have shaken a few roots to do so. How do you feel now, having written that all down? I bet it's helped put some things in a slightly new perspective - not that that is necessarily better...

Quote:
-------------------------I thought I mentioned this modern day version of a concubine Linn. I hope this helps.

I'll be honest, that it seems vaguely surreal. But I do know it was utterly real, and it was your total reality as it was happening. Again, thank you for bringing it into the public domain. And praise the Lord for how He gave you His unmistakable companionship at an early age.

Re:, on: 2007/11/27 10:16

Quote:
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chandras wrote:
Do you feel Hagar wife or concubine?

Gal 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a
bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he
of the freewoman was by promise.

In Israel at least, a concubine was a wife AND a slave.

I looked it up in Wikipedia just in case. Here are the relevant parts:
"The term concubine generally signifies ongoing, quasi-matrimonial relationships where the woman is of lower social status than the man or the official wife or wives. Some historical Asian and European rulers maintained concubines as well as wives.

"Historically, concubinage was frequently voluntary (by the girl and/or her family's arrangement), as it provided a measure of economic security for the woman involved.

"Involuntary, or servile, concubinage sometimes involves sexual slavery of one member of the relationship, typically the woman.

"In the Bible (Genesis 16 and 21), Abraham took the slave girl Hagar as a concubine. Since Sarah had not conceived up to this point, she offered her maid servant Hagar to Abraham to produce an heir. Abraham did marry Hagar, residing with her according to the Jewish laws of a Pilegesh (Hebrew for Concubine)."

Of course, not all female slaves became concubines. There's no suggestion for example that Naaman's wife's maid was , or was intended to be, anything but an ordinary servant girl, as a result of being captured in a raid on Israel (2Kings 5).

Blessings

Jeannette

Re: Hagar, on: 2007/11/27 11:07

I wrote a short play about Hagar once, not for performing but for personal enjoyment and edification. Exploring the personalities and reactions of the central figures was fascinating. It also helped me understand how Sarah must have been able to talk herself and Abraham into believing that marrying Hagar was God's way of fulfilling His promise. It wouldn't have seemed like disobedience or unbelief to them. There wasn't any law against concubinage in those days, so it wasn't deliberate sin either.

Here's the relevant part of the play:

SARAH: Abraham, I've been thinking. I... still have no child. Most men would have taken another wife, years ago. Why should you stay with me any longer? I'm getting old - not much chance of having a baby now!

ABRAHAM: Sarah, my darling! You know I have eyes only for you!

S: Yes, I know. But I also know your grief at having no child. You need an heir; why should you share my shame? Today I overheard two of the menservants talking. They said that perhaps it is you who cannot have children; that you are a fraud to take another wife in case of failure!

A: What impudence! But I don't care! God has promised me a son. We must be patient.

They both become silent as HAGAR enters. She is about 14 years old, and servant to Sarah. She is quite pretty, but her looks are spoiled by a sulky expression. She clears away the remains of the meal and goes out into another room of the tent.

S: ...You say we should be patient! We've been ten years wandering in this so-called Promised Land, and the years in Ur and Haran before that! I'm sick of being patient! I will be too old to have any hope of children soon - it will be too late then to talk of God's promises! How can you be sure that it really was God who spoke to you? Â…I do believe in Him - that there is only one true God, who is nothing like the idols of Ur - but it's hopeless. Surely you can see that?

A: Sarah, I'm sure, I know it was God who told me that my descendants would be as numerous as the stars! There's no mistake. ... See how He's looked after us all these years! We are rich. Our flocks and herds have increased. Even in famine and all kinds of dangers He helped us to prosper. He will keep His word, I'm certain of it.

S: It was to you He promised a son, He didn't promise me anything!

...I want to help you fulfill God's promise. Don't you see? You will have to marry again and get a son through another wo
man. I won't be jealous because I know you love me..... No, WE will get a son! Why don't you marry my maid Hagar? She's a pretty girl in her way, though a bit too pert for my liking. You know the custom: Hagar will bear a son - the promi
sed heir - for me. He will be mine legally; a slave can't own anything - not even her child. Please Abraham! You are get
ting older too. Get a child with my maid. Prove you are still as virile as a young man! Silence the hateful gossip once a
nd for all. This has to be the way the Lord will fulfill His promise to you - it all makes sense now!

A: Mmm. Perhaps you're right. But I don't like it very much.

---


LittleGift said

Quote:
----------------------I think it was probably very unusual that Abraham hadn't taken a concubine before, as he and Sarah had been married for many ye
ars without children. To me it says a lot about Abraham's great love for her.
----------------------

**Genesis 25**
1 Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah.
2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.
3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Ashurim, Letushim, and Leumnim.
4 And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.
5 And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.
6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them e
astward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

Can we really assume these children had arrived only after Isaac's birth?

It seems most unlikely to me, they only arrived after Sarah's death - even though they had not been mentioned earlier.
Not being Sarah's (Abraham's real wife's) would have invalidated all of them as the promised seed.... wouldn't it?

---


Another question has just crossed my mind....

Is it really necessary to assume Hagar was so young? Would not she have been travelling with the family unit for some
time. Okay, she might have been much younger than Sarah, but mightn't she just as easily have been heading for middl
age?

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**Re:, on: 2007/11/27 17:18**

Quote:
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dorcas wrote:
LittleGift said

Quote:
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Can we really assume these children had arrived only after Isaac's birth?

It seems most unlikely to me, they only arrived after Sarah's death - even though they had not been mentioned earlier. Not being Sarah's (Abraham's real wife's) would have invalidated all of them as the promised seed... wouldn't it?

I thought that was after Sarah's death, which is recorded in chapter 23. It's also mentioned in the last verse of 24, as if introducing Abraham's further marriages.

It doesn't say in as many words that this was after the death of Sarah, but the context suggests that's what it means.

Jeannette

Re: on: 2007/11/27 17:20

don't know why this last post came up twice!

Re: on: 2007/11/27 18:29

Quote:

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dorcas wrote:

Another question has just crossed my mind...

Is it really necessary to assume Hagar was so young? Would not she have been travelling with the family unit for some time. Okay, she might have been much younger than Sarah, but mightn't she just as easily have been heading for middle age?

I only wrote how I imagined it might have been - just a personal interpretation, mainly because Hagar was of marriageable age, but not married yet. In that culture it was apparently the custom for girls (slaves or not) to be married young.

It was certainly possible for Sarah to have got a young maid quite recently, there seemed to have been a number of trade routes in the area, (as Joseph later found out to his cost!) Whether she actually did of course we don't know...

Or maybe Hagar's mother was already a slave in Abraham's household? As well as no doubt encountering traders in his wanderings in the wilderness, Abraham stayed places where we know he acquired slaves - including Egypt. Perhaps Hagar (and/or her mother) was a gift from Pharaoh, to compensate for taking Sarah into his harem that time? (Genesis 12). Or when he later stayed in Gerar (Genesis 20), which wasn't so far from the border of Egypt.

Another reason for imagining her to be young is that Hagar seemed to me to react more like a young girl than an older woman. She gives the impression of being very spirited, not yet either broken or reconciled to her slavery. An older woman would probably have been much wiser in not attracting her mistress' anger and in hiding her pride and resentment.

Older women usually choose more subtle ways of "getting their own back". Taunting Sarah with her pregnancy, as she surely did, seems to me more in the character of a young girl. An older woman would probably be less likely to show such open insolence - if only to protect herself. She might also have thought twice about running away - however badly she was treated.

It isn't that important of course; as I said, it was only imagining how things may have been. But it's good to check if I did my research properly!

I understand your desire to get things right, even in an imaginary account - inaccuracies can irritate. A Biblical novel I read recently was a terrific read, and very faithful to the Scriptural account. Except for one thing - the writer pictured the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, and that onlookers were filled with awe at this amazing sight of it glittering in the sunshine.

But when the Ark was moved it was always to be covered with cloths first, (a picture of Jesus hiding His glory under the outer covering of ordinary human flesh). Only the priests were allowed to see, let alone touch it. Even the Levites, not o
f the family of Aaron, weren't allowed to see or carry the most precious Tabernacle furnishings.

A small mistake but...

Blessings

Jeannette

Genesis 12:
When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, he-asses, menservants, maidservants, she-asses, and camels.

Genesis 20: From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah... Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his wife to him...

A concubine may have been legal and politically correct in that day, but not morally by the standards that Jesus presented.

Like a person who looks upon another with lust in their heart, they have already committed adultery in their heart.

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

If you hate your brother, you have not killed him physically, but you have already committed murder in your heart.

Matthew 5:21-22 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

A wife, cleave.

A concubine, only attached.

In Christ: Phillip

Re:, on: 2007/11/28 12:40
Quote:

Christinyou wrote:
A concubine may have been legal and politically correct in that day, but not morally by the standards that Jesus presented.

Hi Phillip

YOU are right of course.

As Jesus says also in Matthew 19:

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,
5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one
flesh?
6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

You are absolutely right - who on this forum would dispute it? God's highest is the law in Eden, one man and one woman only married to one another for life.

However, the original question was about the status of a concubine, where she fitted in in the context of that culture.

Because God's highest is also no slavery, yet it was part of the culture, and Paul later gave advice to slaves to accept their status, and serve "as unto the Lord", especially if their master was also a believer. He also exhorted those who owned slaves to treat them right.

It's good to keep God's ideal in view at all times. But we live in an imperfect world, among a fallen creation, as did Abraham, and the practical outlooking of spiritual principles and behaviour is under less than perfect conditions. In days when slavery was normal there were slaves that were actually better off than hired labourers. In the history of slavery in the USA for example, there were those individual slaves who were far worse off as freemen after abolition.

That doesn't make slavery right, any more than it makes concubinage right, but some concubines were also a lot better off than some free women.

You see what I'm saying?

Blessings

Jeannette

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Re:, on: 2007/11/28 16:37
Hi Jeanette, thanks for your comments and questions.
Quote:
---------------------------------you must be from a culture where this is acceptable (unless your family was Mormon.
---------------------------------
We live in Canada, not much culture there, eh? And we were not Mormons at all, though we do have a Mormon past way back in the early 1800's.

The best thing for Dad to have done was to build my Mother a house of her own, to run her own household, I think it would have saved a lot of misery.

Quote:
---------------------------------What about your mother? Maybe we should pray for her...
---------------------------------
Mom has had great faith throughout this whole thing. While she had no say in a house that wasn't hers, but she believed in the power of prayer. Therefore she prayed and gave us over to the LORD. To this day I marvel over her steadfastness in trusting the LORD.

---

Re:, on: 2007/11/28 17:13
Thanks for this reply, Bro. Your mother must indeed be an amazing woman, to be willing to receive the grace to forgive must have been a huge battle - for her and for you also.

I'm reminded of a Christian Nigerian lady I worked with. Her husband not only brought his girlfriend home to live with the man (no pretence of marriage, though polygamy might have been allowed) but expected his wife to look after her children!
It's good to keep God's ideal in view at all times. But we live in an imperfect world, among a fallen creation, as did Abraham, and the practical outworking of spiritual principles and behaviour is under less than perfect conditions. In days when slavery was normal there were slaves that were actually better off than hired labourers. In the history of slavery in the USA for example, there were those individual slaves who were far worse off as freemen after abolition.

That doesn't make slavery right, any more than it makes concubinage right, but some concubines were also a lot better off than some free women.

Yes I understand what you are saying, and God puts us in surprising circumstances and situations. But we have this admonishment from Paul about servants, if a concubine is a servant. If a concubine is female only, then subservient to the number one wife, is she truly a second wife or just a concubine servant of the male master of the family for his pleasure. I guess it would depend on the Master if the concubine was to be a servant freed to become an individual member of a functional part of a family that would benefit all concerned and been made to drink of all that the Family is.

Is a concubine a fellow heir?

Like we are all part of Christ, but individual member there of. He is master over all, but not for self, but for the whole body of His Church placing us as fellow heirs in The Family of God. 1Cr 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1Cr 7:21 Art thou called a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use rather.

1Cr 7:22 For he that is called in the Lord, a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, free, is Christ's servant.

A concubine in the Family of God, free in Christ.

Jhn 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Phillip asked

Quote:
---------------------------------------------Is a concubine a fellow heir.
---------------------------------------------
I don't think so. But her children might be heirs in a measure, though not above the children of the first wife.