

God Sees Me

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Genesis 16:1–15 (CSB)

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

16 Abram's wife, Sarai, had not borne any children for him, but she owned an Egyptian slave named Hagar. ²Sarai said to Abram, "Since the LORD has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps through her I can build a family." And Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³So Abram's wife, Sarai, took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband, Abram, as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan ten years. ⁴He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for my suffering! I put my slave in your arms, and when she saw that she was pregnant, I became contemptible to her. May the LORD judge between me and you."

⁶Abram replied to Sarai, "Here, your slave is in your power; do whatever you want with her." Then Sarai mistreated her so much that she ran away from her.

⁷The angel of the LORD found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸He said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"

She replied, "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai."

⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her authority." ¹⁰The angel of the LORD said to her, "I will greatly multiply your offspring, and they will be too many to count."

¹¹The angel of the LORD said to her, "You have conceived and will have a son. You will name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction. ¹²This man will be like a wild donkey. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; he will settle near all his relatives."

¹³So she named the LORD who spoke to her: "You are El-roi," for she said, "In this place, have I actually seen the one who sees me?" ¹⁴That is why the well is called Beer-lahai-roi. It is between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵So Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son (whom Hagar bore) Ishmael.

Backstory:

A. God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would be the founders of a great nation.

1. God promised them a son to be born with God's help.
2. What we humans misunderstand is the difference between imminent and immediate.
3. We believe that as soon as God promises something, that gift is immediate.
 - a. Sometimes it is.
 - b. Often, God attaches a waiting period to the promise.
4. Imminent means impending, approaching, or overhanging.
5. For example, Jesus' return has always been imminent:
 - a. Jesus' return is always on our mind, on the radar, and overhanging us.
 - b. Jesus' return is approaching and impending, but it may not happen in the next few minutes.

B. God had given Abraham an imminent promise.

1. Abraham and Sarah would have a child of their own.
2. This child would grow up and father other children.
3. Those children would father more children.
4. These children would become a great nation, Israel, and through their story God would bless all of creation.

C. Some of you are struggling with the difference between immediate and imminent.

1. God has given you a promise.
2. God has given you a call.
3. God has given you a vision.
4. But for now, it isn't coming to pass.
5. Don't lose faith by confusing imminent with immediate.

1. We often make poor decisions while waiting on God's promises.

A. Abraham and Sarah were old when God gave them the promise.

1. Genesis 16 is 10 years later.
2. 10 years, waiting on God's promises, is a long time.
3. When we are waiting, one of our tendencies is to make stuff happen.
 - a. When we can't do it on our own, we have another plan:
 - b. We call that nagging (and men nag too).

B. Sarah had a different idea.

1. She owned a slave named Hagar, who was still young enough to bear children naturally.
 - a. We are told that Hagar was from Egypt (Gen 21:9)
 - b. She was probably acquired there when Abraham visited in Genesis 12.
 - c. Can you imagine the irony:
 1. Moses telling the story of how Israel's greatest ancestor mistreated an Egyptian.
 2. And Moses' audience consisted of people that had recently escaped the mistreatment of Egypt!

2. Genesis 16 says that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to sleep with.

a. Moses is writing this, and this “custom” was common in that part of the world.

b. Just because something was a custom it doesn’t mean it was God’s will.

c. Therefore, Moses uses language that informs the reader that this was not God’s plan.

d. In fact, Sarah’s giving of Hagar to Abraham uses the same language of Eve handing the fruit to Adam.¹

3. Just as Eve led Adam into sin, Sarah leads Abraham into sin.

4. Together, Sarah and Abraham sin against God and against Hagar.

C. Stuck in the middle Is Hagar.

1. She has no say in the matter.

2. She has no choice.

3. The son will not be hers, since she is property.

D. It is fair to say that Hagar’s life in this moment is not the kind that anyone dreams of.

1. Abraham and Sarah used Hagar to fulfill a promise that God had made.

2. Abraham and Sarah’s decision of unbelief resulted in all sorts of terrible circumstances for Hagar and her boy.

3. The Bible doesn’t shy away from telling the worst, and this was one of Abraham and Sarah’s worst moments.

2. Hagar’s response to the turmoil is to run.

A. After the baby was conceived, Sarah made her life miserable.

1. Things were not good at home.
2. She would always be the slave woman.
3. She would always be the one Abraham used.
4. Hagar experiences rejection from the only family she had.
 - a. Yes, she was a slave.
 - b. But the people lived for no longer wanted her around.

B. So Hagar runs.

1. Maybe she had always been like that, since her name means "to flee". (Hagar means "to flee".)
2. Maybe she had always wanted to run.
 - a. Maybe she had run before.
 - b. But this time, she runs.
 - c. She runs pregnant, broke, and broken.

C. I think everyone of us can relate to Hagar at some level.

1. You would love to be able to run away from the stress, the pressure, the striving.
2. At your lowest moments you hear a voice that says "Run".

3. God asks a powerful Question in Gen. 16:7-8

A. God asks Hagar: "Where have you come from and where are you going?"

1. Hagar knew where she had been, but didn't know where she was going.
2. Running won't fix your problems if you don't run to the right place.

B. The great thing about God is that **anyplace can become the right place when God meets you there.**

1. God spoke to Hagar and Hagar named God "El-roi".
 - a. El-roi means "God sees me".
 - b. The place had a well and people named that place "Beer-lahai-roi."
 - c. "Well of the living one sees me."
2. In that wilderness place, God cared for Hagar and saw her suffering.

C. Genesis 16 is the first time we meet "The Angel of the Lord".

1. This encounter is what we call a "theophany".
 - a. A "theophany" is a physical appearance of God in the Old Testament.
 - b. This is not an ordinary angel, for He makes promises that only God can make.
 - c. God promises Hagar that her family, lineage, will be more than anyone can count (the same kind of promise God made to Abraham and Sarah).
2. Hagar exclaims that she has seen God, not just an angel!!!

4. When Hagar was at her lowest, God allowed her to see what others could not.

A. This is the first time that the Angel of the Lord is mentioned in the Scripture.

1. And it wasn't to Abraham.
2. It wasn't to Noah.
3. It wasn't to someone rich, or worthy, or wealthy.
4. God showed up to a runaway slave woman that God's chosen Patriarch and Matriarch had rejected.
 - a. In Hagar's world, she was disposable.

b. In Hagar's world, she was a commodity.

c. But GOD reveals Himself to her in a way that He hadn't done yet.

d. 47 times, God reveals Himself as the Angel of the Lord in the OT, and Hagar was the first to experience this.

5. God has an incredible way of seeing and loving people that we dismiss.

B. As Hagar ran in her rejection, her pain, and her certain death, God saw her.

1. He saw her as someone to love.

2. He saw her as someone of immense value.

3. He saw her as someone worthy of a Promise from God.

5. Our value does not come from how others see us, but by how God sees us.

A. Abraham saw Hagar naked, a woman to use to bring about a desired goal.

1. Sarah saw Hagar with eyes of contempt, jealous of what she could do.

2. But God saw Hagar as someone who needed an encounter with Himself.

a. God didn't send her somewhere else.

b. In fact, He said go back to your master and serve her.

c. God didn't build her a new house, or give her a new husband, or anything like that.

What God did do was give her hope and purpose in the midst of her struggles.

B. To whoever God is speaking to today, God wants you to know that He sees you:

1. In your pain.
2. In your struggle.
3. In your lostness.
4. In your confusion.
5. In your brokenness.
6. In your rejection.

C. God sees you:

1. When you feel like a slave to others.
2. When you are abused, broken, beaten, sold, scolded, and rejected.
3. He sees the Tears you cry for your children.
4. He sees your relationships that promised much and delivered little.
5. He sees you at work, at home, and in the wildernesses of life.
6. **Women, your value is not defined by your children, your occupation, your marital status, or your location.**
7. Your value comes because God has created you, loves you, and died for you.

Close: Hagar wasn't perfect.

A. She doesn't handle herself perfectly in this situation either.

1. Yet, God loved her in spite of her imperfection.
2. Many of us, women and men, are striving for perfection so that we can feel worthy of love.
3. But Scripture tells us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

4. Scripture tells us that God so loved the whole world, that He gave His only Son.

a. God doesn't give gifts to perfect people, He gives to lost people.

b. We are all either lost or were lost.

B. Don't wait until everything is perfect before you seek God and His love.

1. If you find yourself in the hardest place of life, God can meet you there.

2. If you find yourself in a wilderness place, God knows how to speak to you there.

3. If are wondering "does anybody see me" know that God sees you and is able to send the help and deliverance you need.

As we close, I want to speak to two groups of people:

#1. If you are not right with God, and want to repent of sin and be forgiven today, and start a relationship with Jesus, here in just a moment I ask that you give your life to Jesus.

a. We want to help you in this by inviting you to come to the front so some of us can pray with you and connect with you in the days to come.

b. In just a moment, if that is you, would you be so bold to come to your FAR LEFT, my right.

#2. If you have felt like Hagar lately for one reason or another, or perhaps God is really speaking to you today, I want to invite you to spread across the front and far right.

a. I feel really impressed that God is wanting to remind some of us that He sees you.

b. You are NOT alone.

c. You don't have to strive for perfection, because Jesus is already perfect.

d. You don't have to earn God's love, for He gives love away.

e. Maybe your identity has come under-fire and today God is reminding you to find your identity in Jesus and not other things.

I'm going to lead us in a short prayer, and if you want to follow Jesus, come to your left, if you want prayer, come across the front.

Let us pray!!!

ⁱ Steinmann, Andrew E. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Edited by David G. Firth. Vol. 1. The Tyndale Commentary Series. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2019.