REFLECTIONS with Andy Rawl




# *God Sees Us – Genesis 16*

Do you ever feel invisible, unloved, or alone? Maybe you feel unseen by others or even by God. We all have felt this way at times. Genesis 16 tells the story of Hagar, the Egyptian slave of Abram and Sarai, who found herself pregnant and abandoned in the wilderness. Her story can tell us a lot about how God sees us in our times of need.

## Abram and Sarai Try to Help God

For ten years, Abram believed God's promise to make him into a great nation. But after waiting, he still had no children because his wife Sarai was barren, a social curse in that society. The older they got, the less sure they became that God would fulfill His promise through Sarai. So Sarai suggested her own Plan B to help God.

Our Plan B's to help God out often end in disaster, and this one did. Rather than trusting God and waiting for Him, Sarai offered her slave, Hagar, to Abram. She reasoned that if she could not bear a son for Abram, then she could still build a family through Hagar, a common practice at that time. Abram agreed, and Hagar became pregnant.

But things quickly unraveled when the household's balance of power suddenly shifted. The previously powerless Hagar began to flaunt her pregnancy to the barren Sarai. Feeling even more insignificant, Sarai reacted with rage, blamed Abram, and drove Hagar out of the household and into the desert to fend for herself.

## God Sees Hagar in the Wilderness

Alone and pregnant in the wilderness, the terrified Hagar was visited by the Angel of the Lord. Through the Angel, God called her by name and asked her where she had come from and where she was going. In a world where she had been treated like property with no personal identity, God saw her as a beloved and valuable person.

Like our own wilderness experiences, Hagar's was more than physical - it was emotional and spiritual. She felt completely alone. She had no safety net, no advocate, no plan for survival. She was at her lowest point when God came to her, told her to return and submit to her mistress, and then promised to make her into a great nation.

Hagar met God's command and promise with an act of worship. She called God by the name Jehovah El Roi, exclaiming, "You are the God who sees me. I have seen the God who sees me." (Genesis 16:13) She then returned to Sarai and Abram and had Abram's son named Ishmael, who grew to become the father of the Arab nations.

## Does God See You?

What about you and me? What lessons can we learn from this four-thousand-year-old story that will help us when we feel like we're stuck in the wilderness, unseen, unloved, and off-track? Here are three thoughts:

**God Delights in Our Obedience** – Sarai's decision to "help" God fulfill His promises with her own Plan B came from a place of deep pain and impatience. Waiting on God is never easy. But when we take matters into our own hands, we often compound problems instead of solving them.

**God's Promises Are Bigger Than Our Mistakes –** The tension between Sarai and Hagar did not derail God's covenant plan. Thankfully, God's promises and plans for you and me don't depend on our perfection. They rest on His faithfulness and our obedience.

**God Sees the Overlooked –** Throughout the Bible**,** God sees His people. He promises that we are never invisible to Him. To fulfill this promise, He sent His own Son, Jesus, so we can have a personal relationship with Him. Even in your loneliest moments, He knows your name, sees who you are, and loves you.

Maybe you are like Sarai - waiting for a promise that seems delayed. Or perhaps you feel like Hagar – alone in a wilderness you did not choose. Either way, be assured that God sees you. He knows you by name. He knows your pain. And He knows the future you can have when you trust Him to lead you in your next step. So trust Him today.



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