

El Roi - The God Who Sees Me

[Pronunciation: El Roi = el ro-ee]

Think of a time that felt like a wilderness time in your life. How did God show up for you?

As you think about the relationship between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, what thoughts and emotions rise to the surface?

Sarai: (Genesis 16:1-4)

Sarai (later Sarah) was barren and had not given Abram (later Abraham) any children. In ancient Near Eastern culture, this was a source of great shame and anxiety.

- Sarai suggests that Abram sleep with her Egyptian slave, Hagar, to build a family through her.
- This practice, while culturally acceptable at the time, was not God's ideal plan for family.

? Have you ever made decisions out of desperation that didn't align with God's plan?

Conflict Arises: (Genesis 16:4-6)

After Hagar becomes pregnant, tension develops between her and Sarai.

- Hagar begins to despise Sarai, possibly due to her newfound status as the mother of Abram's child.
- Sarai blames Abram for her troubles and mistreats Hagar.
- Abram allows Sarai to do as she pleases with Hagar, leading to Hagar's flight.

? How do you see the human tendency to blame others or mistreat those we perceive as threats in this passage?

? How can we guard against these behaviours in our own lives?

God Sees Hagar (Genesis 16:7-14)

The angel of the Lord finds Hagar by a spring in the desert.

- God acknowledges Hagar's distress and promises to multiply her descendants.
- Hagar is instructed to return and submit to Sarai, with the promise of a son named Ishmael.
- Hagar calls God "El Roi," meaning "the God who sees me."

? How does God's interaction with Hagar demonstrate His care for the marginalized and oppressed?

? How can this shape our view of God and our treatment of others?

The Birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16:15-16)

Hagar returns and bears Abram a son, whom he names Ishmael.

- The name Ishmael means "God hears," reflecting God's attention to Hagar's affliction.
- Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

? How does the birth of Ishmael demonstrate both human attempts to fulfill God's promises and God's faithfulness despite our missteps?

Key Lessons from Hagar's Story

- God sees and cares for the marginalized and oppressed.
- Human attempts to fulfill God's promises often lead to complications and pain.

- God's plans are bigger than our mistakes and can redeem difficult situations.
- God hears our cries and responds with compassion and guidance.

Reflection:

Reflect on a time when you felt unseen or marginalized. How does Hagar's encounter with "the God who sees" speak to your experience?

How can we be more attentive to those who are overlooked in our communities?