

BE ROOTED, KNOW GOD BY HIS NAMES: EL ROI

DECEMBER 6, 2020

WORSHIP

God So Loved,
Your Name-
Christmas Version,
Never Once

WELCOME

Is there someone
you wish you could
see in person this
Christmas? How
about someone you
wish would see you
this holiday season?
Why?

WORD

GENESIS 16:13-14

13 Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees me"; for she said, "Have I even seen Him here and lived after He saw me?"
14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

Have you ever felt invisible, that nobody cared about what's going on in your life? It is normal for us to want to be noticed, to feel that we are significant to others and that our lives matter. But even when nobody seems to truly see us or care about our situation, there is Someone who always does. One of the names of God in the Bible is **El Roi** -- "**God Who Sees**".

We find God's name El Roi in Genesis 16, but the context is found in Genesis 15. Yahweh had an encounter with Abraham and made a covenant with him (**Gen. 15:18-19**) based on His promise that through Abraham the whole world will be blessed (**Genesis 12:3**). Abraham for sure, shared this promise with his wife, Sarai. Now Genesis 16 highlights the story of two women and reveals to us who the main character in the story is.

Genesis 16:1 shows Sarai's (Sarah) predicament—her inability to bear children. Barren and in her old age, Sarai comes up with her own solution to fulfill God's promise. She adapted to a culturally and socially acceptable practice at that point in world history (**Gen. 16:2**). A barren woman can have her slave woman be her surrogate and bear a child who will be considered as Sarai's own. A common practice in those days, but the Bible clearly says that sex is for a man and his wife only (**Gen. 2:24**). Sarai's solution led to compromise, and Abraham, instead of encouraging his wife to continue to trust the Lord to fulfill His promise His way, went along with what Sarai wanted. Maybe Abraham felt that God was taking too long in fulfilling His promise "...Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan" (**Gen. 16:3**). Have you been waiting for so long and you feel like God will no longer fulfill His promises to you? Abraham and Sarai compromised and did not wait on God. But **when you don't trust God, there are always consequences.**

Genesis 16:4 says this about Hagar: "**...and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.**" Sarai thought that Hagar will remain unchanged after the slave woman becomes pregnant. But Hagar's attitude towards Sarah changed. The shortcut that Sarah took to solve her problem in childbearing created so much havoc in her relationships. Sarai blamed Abraham for Hagar's attitude, though it was her idea in the first place to let Abraham bear a son through Hagar! It is so easy for us to blame others for the consequences of our own shortcomings. We do not take responsibility for our own wrongdoing. Abraham abdicates his responsibility and passes it back to his wife to deal with the situation (**Gen. 16:6**). Even Abraham, a man of faith, made wrong decisions. When this happens to you, do not keep beating yourself over your head but take steps to make things right.

Sarai made Hagar's life miserable enough for the pregnant Hagar to run away from her mistress and end up in the wilderness. But in this desolate place, Hagar encounters God. "**Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur**" (**Genesis 16:7**). The angel of the LORD is the pre-incarnate Christ, making Himself known in the Old Testament. What does the angel tell Hagar? "**Hagar, Sarai's slave woman, from where have you come from...?**" (**Gen. 16:8a**). Most people's natural reaction to problems is to want to run away, just like Hagar. All of us have a past; are you trying to run away from something in your past?

The angel also asked Hagar another question, "**where are you going?**" Hagar answers the first question: "**And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."**" (**Gen. 16:8b**) but does not answer the second question. Hagar does not say anything about where she was going probably because

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she had no idea herself. Hagar was wrongly treated, a victim of circumstances she did not choose. She probably believed in her heart that she had no future. Has the same thought crossed your mind as you continue to face trials during this pandemic? The angel of the LORD tells Hagar to return and submit to Sarai's authority (**Gen. 16:9**). But this difficult command comes with a promise: **"I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count."** (**Gen. 16:10**). Amazingly, Hagar is the first woman in the Bible that the angel of the LORD (Jesus) had a conversation with. Hagar was a slave, a foreigner (an Egyptian), with no social standing, she was marginalized in society. Yet, the God of the Bible reached out to her and found her when she was lost. The main character in the story was neither Hagar or Sarai, but El Roi. It was all about what He does for the marginalized, outcast, forgotten, unseen person in the story.

The angel tells Hagar to call her son Ishmael **"because the LORD has heard your affliction"** (**Gen. 16:11b**). **God not only SEES but He HEARS us!** Ishmael however was predicted to live a troubled life (**Gen. 16:12**). The decision of Abraham and Sarai to compromise the promise of God did not only have immediate consequences for their family, but from generation to generation. But the beauty of this passage is that it shows how **no one has a monopoly on God!** Even a woman like Hagar was sought by God. **"Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "El Roi" (Gen.16:13)** which means the "God who sees". Hagar has seen God, and was the only woman given the privilege to name God. Prior to this encounter, God had revealed Himself using His own words— "I am Elohim... Yahweh...El Shaddai", but here, it was Hagar who gave God a name. Hagar was surprised that God would reveal Himself to her (v. 13)—a foreigner, slave and marginalized. **God cares about every single person;** He cares about you and me.

God intervened in the life of Hagar, despite the wrongdoing of Abraham and Sarai. The LORD also fulfilled His promise to Abraham --Sarah gave birth to Isaac a miracle of miracle! (**Genesis 21:1-3**). God appeared to Hagar once more in the wilderness after she and Ishmael were sent away from Abraham's family. God assured her that she does not need to be afraid—He sees, hears and rescues (Genesis 21:14-21). Pray to God about everything in your life. Let's not be paralyzed by fear, let's do our part and trust that God will do His part! Even with the consequences of our wrong decisions, God is greater than our mistakes. He is able to make all things work together for good to those who love Him (**Romans 8:28**). **God sees you—but do you see God at work in your life?** If you sense God speaking to you, do not harden your heart. Put your trust in Jesus TODAY (**Hebrews 3:15**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Self-Check.

Why Knowing that God sees you, how does that impact your relationship with Him? What is preventing you from completely obeying Him?

2. Setting It Right

How will knowing God as El Roi affect the relationships you have in your life? What changes need to take place?

3. Living It Out

In what ways can you help people see that God is El Roi? What is a need you see that you can meet?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray that people will truly know God as El Roi. Share how you experienced the reality that God sees you and hears you especially during the times you felt so alone and without hope.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
A God-centered Philippines
Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

Worship and Training Center
Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

Deeper intimate relationship with God
Righteous living
Salvation of family and friends