

God Sees Me

Genesis 16:7-13



Rock Hill Baptist Church
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FOCAL Read Responsively Genesis 16:7-13 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. {8} And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. {9} And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. {10} And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. {11} And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. {12} And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. {13} **CONGREGATION** And she called the name of the LORD that spoke unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

ILLUSTRATE A friend was in front of me coming out of church one day, and the preacher was standing at the door as he always is to shake hands. He grabbed my friend by the hand and pulled him aside. The Pastor said to him, "You need to join the Army of the Lord!" My friend replied, "I'm already in the Army of the Lord, Pastor." Pastor questioned, "How come I don't see you except at Christmas and Easter?" He whispered back, "I'm in the secret service."

In the fall of 1987 the pollster **George Gallup** wrote¹:

“There's little difference in ethical behavior between the church and the unchurched. There's as much pilferage and dishonesty among the church as the unchurched. And I'm afraid that applies pretty much across the board: religion, per se, is not really life changing. People cite it as important, for instance, in overcoming depression--but it doesn't have primacy in determining behavior.”

“Religion is not really life changing”. I don't know if Gallup is a Christian or not, but I do know the Scripture teaches us that Christianity *is life changing*. When God comes to someone and – in mercy saves them – their life is changed forever.

Hagar, the Egyptian slave of Sarai, knew many gods and goddesses in her lifetime. She came out of Egypt as a gift from Pharaoh to Abraham. She came to a household of faith from a household of many faiths. Hagar knew nothing of **the God Who Sees**. She was quite satisfied with the many gods of Egypt until the day she found herself lost and without a home in the harsh desert.

There are many people who, like Hagar, feel that they're in a *right place* with God. These people usually say "I've never done anything *really* wrong. I may have told a lie or two, but I've never *murdered* anyone." That's a wonderful thing never to have committed murder, never to have aborted a baby, never to have taken life cheaply. But we must never forget that the God Who rules the

universe **sees all things**. Our God sees. And our God is the One Who determines right from wrong, good from evil. To our God sin *in any form* is a terrible master who, if left uncontrolled, will eventually destroy your life. The Bible tells us that **"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)**. Sin brings death. If sin is not controlled it leads to physical death. People die of disease because of sin. People lose their homes because of sin. Families are destroyed because of sin.

Hagar is alone, pregnant, and in the desert because of her sin, Sarai's sin, and Abraham's sin. God promised Abraham - a childless old gentleman - **"If you will leave your family and friends and go where I tell you to go I will bless you. Though you are childless I will make of you a mighty nation, and I will bless all of the nations of the earth for your sake"** (you can read the **original promise at Genesis 12:1-3**). Abraham heard God's promise and did as God decreed. He left Ur of the Chaldees believing in God, but before long Abraham got his eyes off of God and let worry drive him. He passed his wife Sarai off as his sister when he was approached by the Pharaoh of Egypt. The Pharaoh, in turn, gave Abraham Hagar to be his slave (**see Genesis 12:16**). Once Pharaoh returned Sarai to Abraham then he, trying to make up for his foolishness, gave Hagar to his wife. As time passed and Sarai had no children she convinced Abraham that he could *help God* by going in to Hagar. Abraham did what his wife said, and Hagar was with child. Hagar, in turn, mocked childless Sarai until she was beaten for her pride. This caused her to run away.

That sounds like a bad soap opera, don't it? But every bit

1 George H. Gallup, "Vital Signs," Leadership, Fall 1987, p. 17.

of it is true. Sin destroys that which it touches. Sin is a barbed chain that hooks, tears, grates, and binds. Sin afflicts. Yet, praise be unto God, "**the Lord hath heard thy affliction**"(Genesis 16:11). My prayer is that there is someone here today who has touched - and continues to touch - the hot stove of sin. **Our God sees and has heard you in your affliction.**

For God is looking for you who are without hope, lost in the desert of sin. He calls you to turn away from the desert that you have placed yourself in and to turn to Him. Are you in sexual addiction? Turn to God while turning away from the pornography. God can remove the venom from the snake, but not while you keep it as a pet. Are you bound by drug addiction? Turn to the Lord Who sees you – He has heard your cries of affliction. Confess to Him that you have no strength, and call upon the name of Jesus Christ for salvation – you will not be ashamed. Flush the drugs down the toilet, pour the liquor down the drain, and turn to Christ. Are you enslaved to the ways of this world? Stop marching to the tune of this evil age, and begin following Christ. Follow Christ and let the dead bury the dead (Matthew 8:22). Follow Him, and turn away from your thievery (Matthew 9:9). Deny the evil impulses that have so often led you astray and follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24), for here is power for living. In Him is life, and life more abundantly!

May God open your hearts to His call.

1. God Is Looking For Sinners

FOCAL Genesis 16:7 And the **angel of the LORD**

found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

Why is Hagar **by a fountain of water in the wilderness (the desert)**? She's in this deserted place – homeless, pregnant and hungry – because of **sin**. What is this thing called “**sin**”? The Bible defines **sin** as actions or attitudes that **lead to either spiritual or physical death**. We are told:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin pays off in death, but God wants us to have **eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**. Sin is a ruler, and God is a ruler. Again we are told that:

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Sin is a master that leads its servants to death. God is a Master Who leads His servants to life.

Sin, contrary to what the world teaches, is *very, very bad for you*. God is looking for sinners, looking for people who have – like Hagar – allowed sin to rule in their lives. He is looking for you because He wants to lead you away from sin, away from death, and toward a *greater life*.

In much of the Church today people have been taught that the sole purpose of Christianity is to *give eternal life*. That's not true. The Bible says:

John 20:31 {the Bible is written} that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

It doesn't say that believing you might *eventually* have life through His Name. God doesn't come to a person to save them for some future life. He has

John 10:10 ... come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

When the Lord found Hagar by the fountain in the wilderness He found a woman who was outcast because of her sins. She was a slave in Egypt and probably a follower of the many Egyptian gods and goddesses. When she was given to Abraham by Pharaoh she came into a household of faith. Certainly it wasn't a perfect household – Abraham often tried to *help out God* instead of just trusting Him – but it was nonetheless a household of faith. Hagar saw what Abraham did, saw the relationship he had with the Lord, and instead trusted in her own abilities. She was able to bear a child while Sarai wasn't, therefore she must be better – a better woman, a better mistress – than Sarai. She began to taunt Sarai in her pride and Sarai, in time, began to attack back.

You are not living life if you are living in sin. You

are *living death*.

Job 4:7-8 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? {8} Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Those who **plow iniquity and sow wickedness, always reap what they sow**. Our God sees what man does. He sees the sinfulness that we do, and longs to rescue us from it. The Bible says:

Proverbs 5:21-23 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. {22} His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. {23} He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Oh, how terrible sin is. How it destroys what it touches! Look what just *sexual sin* has done to humanity. Many men and women, bound together in unnatural and godless ways, will never know the joy of bearing a child. Many will willfully *kill the fruit of the womb* so that they may go out and participate in more fruitless sin. Women and men sell themselves to a terrible and offensive industry. Families are destroyed because of the **wages of sin, death**.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

God is watching, and waiting to deliver us from evil. The Bible tells us that **God delights in showing mercy**. He wants to save. Jesus Christ – God's blessed Son – came to this earth ...

Luke 19:10 ... to seek and to save that which was lost.

He is the Blessed Redeemer, He Who is the **Friend of Sinners (Matthew 11:19)**. When He speaks to Hagar He *calls her by name*.

CONTEXT Genesis 16:8 ... Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? ...

God sees you. He sees your heart, and He loves you. The Lord speaks to Hagar saying “**Where did you come from?**” and “**Where are you going?**”. God doesn't ask these questions because He is ignorant of her intentions. The Lord can see our hearts. He knows our very thoughts.

Jeremiah 17:10 I, the LORD, examine the mind, I test the heart to give to each according to his way, according to what his actions deserve.^{HCSB}

God asked Hagar these questions because He wanted her to examine herself. **Why are you doing this? Where are you going?**

I am concerned about you, and I do not want you to

perish. God seeks to save the lost. What a beautiful and familiar pattern. God found **Hagar by a fountain**. “**What are you doing here? Where are you going?**”. The Lord found the **Samaritan woman drawing water at a well (John 4:9 ff)**. “**If you knew Who you were speaking to, you would ask Me for My living water**”. The Lord looked for a tax collector called **Zacchaeus** and found him **sitting in a tree (Luke 19:2)**. “**Hurry up, Zacchaeus, get out of that tree. I plan on going to your house today!**” and brought salvation to the household of a hated tax collector. God found a man possessed of a thousand devils in a graveyard and, casting out Legion (Mark 5:9), said:

Mark 5:19 ... Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

“Before you met Me you lived for the devil. Now that I've found you, live for ME! Go and tell others about Me!” God is seeking sinners to save them from the wilderness of sin.

2. God Saves Those Who Repent

In the local Church today we have made the main focus of the Gospel **salvation of souls so that we can go to Heaven**. Now it's certain that the Christian is saved from Hell, and I praise God for that! But salvation also *radically changes* a person.

Christians are concerned about living for Christ. Christians are part of the Kingdom of God. They live their *daily* lives in obedience to God. They are God directed people!

Pastor John MacArthur writes in his book *The Gospel According to Jesus*²:

“The Bible does not recognize 'conversion' that lacks {a} radical change of direction (Luke 3:7-8). A true believer cannot remain rebellious – or even indifferent. Genuine faith will inevitably provoke some degree of obedience salvation is a sovereign work of God ... But true salvation wrought by God will not fail to produce the good works that are its fruit...”

I find it significant that, in God's promises to *both* Abraham as well as Hagar – there is *no mention of Heaven*. God tells Abraham:

Genesis 12:1-3 ... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: {2} And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: {3} And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

“Go where I tell you, and I will bless you”. Certainly

Abraham expected to – if God blessed him – go to Heaven. In fact, the writer of Hebrews states that Abraham:

Hebrews 11:10 ... looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

He expected a heavenly city for following God – and he received that. But God's salvation of Abraham was focused on *removing him from the pagan land of Ur of the Chaldeans, and on Abraham consistently following the Lord*. This meant that on areas where God had clearly spoken Abraham was to act. When God said “turn left” Abraham turned left. And he left all his pagan idols in Ur.

Look at the life of Hagar. Hagar had outlawed herself. She was where she was because she - pridefully - stood against her mistress Sarai. She was part of her own problem.

What did the Lord tell Hagar? Did He say **“Stay where you are, and I will bless you and your son Ishmael”**? No, not at all.

CONTEXT Genesis 16:9-11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. {10} And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. {11} And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a

son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

The Lord said "**Return to thy mistress and submit yourself under her hands, and I will bless you**". Repent. Turn away from where you are and go where God says go and you will be blessed.

Again we see no mention of Heaven, though I'm sure Hagar expected it. What did God demand of Hagar? REPENT! Go back to where you belong. Quit living your life for Hagar, and start living your life for God. When your child is born don't name him Don or Larry or Frank or David. Call him **Ishmael (which means "God has heard")** because

FOCAL Genesis 16:11 because the LORD hath heard thy affliction

We don't hear much of *repentance* nowadays because this is a bit inconvenient. **Our God sees.** He looks at the heart. God will save, but He always saves from the inside out. Before He would save Hagar she *must repent*. Dear friends, God will *never save you in your sins*. He can only *save you from your sin*. Hagar must **return to her mistress, and submit herself to the Lord**. Obedience – REPENTANCE – is required before the blessing is given. RETURN and THEN I will multiply thy seed. Name the Child "The Lord has heard" because the Lord said so. OBEY!

REPENT and BELIEVE are both required if you want to

be saved. Turn from following your idols and turn toward following God. Sin brought Hagar to this low place. She cannot wallow in her sin and be brought back to a high place.

You must repent and believe. You must return and trust. The two go hand in hand.

When the **Scribes and Pharisees murmured against Jesus, saying "this Person receives sinners and eats with them"** our Lord Jesus responded with several illustrations. He told the self-righteous:

Luke 15:4-7 What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? {5} And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. {6} And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. {7} I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Sinner, you *must repent*. You cannot wallow in sin and expect God to bless you. HAGAR YOU MUST GO HOME. ABRAHAM, YOU MUST LEAVE UR. You must turn from the evil that you do and turn to God so that He can bless you. The Lord says to all who will hear:

Isaiah 44:22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: RETURN UNTO ME; FOR I HAVE REDEEMED THEE.

Oh how the Lord loves you! But you must turn to Him and do as He says if you expect to be saved. Salvation is not mere inoculation for a future Heaven, but it is *a way of life*. Jesus said:

Luke 15:8-10 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? {9} And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. {10} Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Oh how God rejoices to save, but you must repent! Oh, how He wants to bless you, but you must surrender to Him!

You must recognize God as Lord if you would be saved. Belief - true saving faith - is *always accompanied by obedience*. If Hagar remained where she was she would die in her sins. Saving faith means recognizing **that God sees**, and responding knowing **that God sees**.

In the early Church – just as today - there were many

who said "I am saved, but I need not live for God. I am saved by faith in Him, but I can live after the manner of the common sinner". The Apostle responded:

James 2:17-24 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. {18} Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. {19} Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. {20} But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? {21} Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? {22} Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? {23} And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. {24} Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

True saving faith will always be evidenced by outward, godly works. **Go back home, Hagar, and you shall be saved** is what the Lord told her. God saves us - we do not save ourselves. But like Hagar we *must repent* and *follow Him Who is our Lord* if we would be saved.

3. God Saves Us From This Present Evil World

FOCAL Genesis 16:13 And she called the name of the LORD that spoke unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

God told Hagar to name her baby **Ishmael – the Lord hears me** – and she would. As a child of God she would be obedient. But also notice that Hagar – once a pagan worshiper of many gods – now gives God a name. She calls Him **El Roi³ or Almighty God Who Watches Over Me.**

What a wonderful name for our Savior. He is the God Who watches over His people. Hagar knew that she could return home for God was watching over her. No longer would be abused by Sarai, and no longer would she mock her mistress. God's children are under His all seeing eyes.

Romans 12:19-21 Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. {20} Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. {21} Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Do not stoop to the level of the unsaved when you are attacked. Live as if you are children of the Kingdom. Live knowing that God watches over you. When temptation and trials come your way know that **God watches over you.** He is faithful to His people:

3 אֱלֹהֵי רֹאֵי, 'él, (pronounced ale) rō'iy (pronounced ro-ee') = Almighty God Who Watches Over Me (or Sees Me).

1 Corinthians 10:13 There **hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.**

The Bible tells us that:

Galatians 1:3-5 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from **our Lord Jesus Christ, {4} Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: {5} To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

It is God's will that **we be delivered from this present evil world.**

Josh Hunt said “The early church did not throw their bodies to lions for a message about how to go to heaven when you die. They laid down their lives because their Lord said, “I have come that you might have life; life to the full.”. If we are children of the King then we are called to live our lives *as* children of the King.

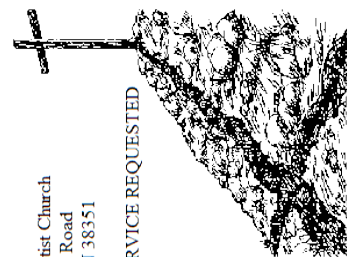
We who belong to Jesus are to live our lives for Him. **Having been justified (declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). It is through our LORD Jesus Christ that we have received the atonement (Romans 5:11). We who are saved are His workmanship,**

created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). We are not saved by our works, we are saved by God. But we are only saved when we *repent*, turning away from the evil and turning toward the Lord Who loves us.

Have you believed in Him? If so, then like Hagar you are called to live for Him. Do not believe for one moment that you can say “I’m a Christian” and live like the devil. The Apostle said:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

If you've been born again then **you are washed**. You are one who has repented, and has turned from this evil world and toward God by faith. When you sin – and you will sin – you will not wallow in it. Children of the King belong in the Kingdom. Children of the King – like Hagar – obey their Heavenly Father. Children of the Kingdom are lights in this present world, living for Jesus. May God lead you all to seek His face as He seeks you in love.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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{13} **CONGREGATION** And she called the name of the LORD that spoke unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

Romans 6:23; Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 12:16; Genesis 16:11 _____

1. God Is Looking For Sinners

Romans 6:23; Romans 6:16; John 20:31; John 10:10; Job 4:7-8; Proverbs 5:21-23; Proverbs 15:3; Luke 19:10; Matthew 11:19; Jeremiah 17:10; John 4:9; Luke 19:2; Mark 5:9; Mark 5:19 _____

2. God Saves Those Who Repent

Genesis 12:1-3; Hebrews 11:10; Luke 15:4-7; Isaiah 44:22; Luke 15:8-10; James 2:17-24 _____

3. God Saves Us From This Present Evil World

Romans 12:19-21; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 1:3-5; Romans 5:1; Romans 5:11; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 _____

