

“El Roi: The God Who Sees ”
Sermon Notes

We are no different than Sarai, Abram or Hagar:

Act 1 (16:1-6): We doubt God’s promised blessings.

We conceive our own methods.

But our barren ways only give birth to strife.

Conflict ends in fight or flight.

Act 2 (16:7-16): El Roi is the God Who Sees.

He sees our rebellious sin.

He sees our alienation.

Therefore, humble yourself before El Roi, that in your wilderness wanderings he might restore you to life.

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of May 15th - 21st

Context

Hagar's story is a mixed bag of sin and suffering that happens in relational conflicts. Think about a conflict from your own life. What was that like? How did the conflict expand and develop over time? How was it confusing to tease apart the sin from the suffering?

Observation

Who are the characters in Genesis 16? Consider the names: Abram means "exalted father". Sarai means "princess". Ishmael means "God Hears". El Roi means "The God Who Sees". Beer-lahai-roi means "The well of the Living One Who Sees". How do these names factor into themes in this narrative?

Why do offspring matter in the story of Abraham (hint: Look back, starting in Gen 12)? In the story of Genesis (hint: Look back, starting in Gen 3:15)?

What is going on in the climax of tension in this historical narrative? What is the "wrong" that takes place? Why then does the "angel of the Lord" instruct Hagar to "return and submit"?

There are several words in this narrative that share the same Hebrew roots, but have slightly different meanings (dealt harshly; submit; affliction). These words emphasize one of the main lessons of the account, which is what?

Name all you learn about El Roi (God Who Sees). (There are at least 7 things, given the whole story).

Meaning

This story of Sarai, Abram, Hagar and the angel of the Lord has parallels, looking backwards and forwards in the biblical story:

- 1. What is similar about Sarai and Abram's behavior to that of God, Adam and Eve in Genesis 1-3?*
- 2. How does Hagar's experience foreshadow the experience of Israel? See Exodus 2:23-25 and 3:7-10 and Deuteronomy 26:7. Genesis 16 was written to Israel, at some point in their wilderness wandering. Why would it have been important for them to hear of El*

Roi - The God Who Sees?

- 3. How does Hagar's experience foreshadow Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4:1-42)?*

In a single sentence or two of your own, summarize the main idea of Genesis 16.

Application

What is something new you learned about God as El Roi, the God Who Sees?

What is hard to understand about this account? What modern lifestyles stand at odds with this account?

Where are you susceptible to doubt God's promises and conceive your own plans? In what ways have you made a mess of things in conflicts? Are you more prone to fight or flight? To break the peace or fake the peace?

What is one actionable way that your life changes, as you live in response to El Roi - the God Who Sees? Where do you need to "turn and humble yourself"?

Praise God for his grace for your sin and his mercy for your suffering.